focused course immediately derailed. By the end of the course, the written comments on my student evaluations not only charged that I was “racist against white people” but also questioned the legitimacy of covering racism in a course that “should” focus solely on women. This experience introduced me to the difficulties associated with emphasizing intersections and challenging cultural norms defining the category “woman.” In the years since that incident, my pedagogical identity continued to chase the possibility of complicating the paradigms students bring into the classroom.

In this chapter, we describe a student-instructor collaboration that attempted to transform a graduate-level women’s studies course. The original iteration of the course, Psychology of Women, perpetuated consistent learning obstacles as student expectations and assumptions collided with pedagogical learning objectives. Although I taught the original course with my own pedagogical goals for teaching and learning about intersectionality, or the ways in which race, class, sexuality, and nation interact with and inform gender, I never felt satisfied that these learning objectives were met. With the aim of redesigning the course to clearly focus on intersectionality, students (enrolled for the upcoming semester) and I came together to create a new framework for the course. Through this co-intentional process, a new course emerged that effectively integrates student voices, instructor experiences, and shared learning goals. The chapter provides reflections on the theoretical contributions of the intersectional framework on the collaborative course redesign inspired by feminist pedagogical practices (Fisher, 2001; Sinacore & Boatwright, 2005) as well as a narrative of student and faculty experiences as the new course unfolded.

“We Talk about Race Too Much in This Class!”

Within the field of psychology, the catalogue typically includes diversity courses focusing on “women” (gender) or “cross-cultural” issues (race or ethnicity). Not only do these limited options neglect a laundry list of social identities and oppressive systems, they also reinforce a hegemonic cognitive schema that marks clear boundaries between gender and race. Outdated and narrow, these curricular practices legitimize and perpetuate rigid categorization of social groups and identities by consistently dividing them into separate courses. If an instructor covers both gender and race within one course, the practice of separating them on the syllabus as part 1 and part 2 of the course remains quite common. In this context, how will students identify a space for discussing the social reality for women of color? Beyond race and gender,
psychology programs, as well as many more behavioral science disciplines, only rarely offer courses on sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, international perspectives, transgender issues, or identities involving immigrant status, disability, or religion. An intersectional analysis of such course offerings highlights the need for integrated courses that address various forms of social identity and oppression within one course.

As course readings, assignments, and discussions call cultural assumptions into question, student reactions often include negative evaluations of the learning environment. Students enrolled in my courses commonly expressed confusion as to why the course required them to wrestle with race, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic factors, transgender issues, and the experiences of women living around the world. Students entered the course assuming that the category "woman" described only white, heterosexual, middle-class, Christian, U.S. citizens. These invisible and unacknowledged expectations reflected student acceptance and endorsement of what Audre Lorde (1984) identified as the mythical norm. For example, a student felt the course "had an LGBT agenda to push." Although the course curriculum emphasized materials about gender equality, feminist values, and social activism for women's rights, students never complained about a "female agenda." When a course included lesbian and trans-women guest speakers and course materials by women that challenged heteronormativity, many students managed to define these women as something outside the boundaries of "woman." Many students attend the first class with diversity course schemas that promote strict categorical boundaries and essentialism. Student views that course coverage should be limited to only one aspect of oppression at a time often create conflict due to the widening gap between instructor and student expectations. For example, many students assume the category "woman" and the category "Native American" are mutually exclusive. Therefore, they conclude that a class about "women" or "gender" should not require students to understand how race affects the lives of Indigenous women. Educators must reflect methodically on innovative pedagogical strategies for addressing student assumptions and resistance in order to bring intersectionality to the forefront of diversity courses and the broader curriculum.

**Weaving Instructor Identity into the Fabric of Learning**

Critical reflection on the part of the feminist educator requires careful consideration of how power dynamics impacts interactions with students in the classroom and during student-faculty collaborative work for change (Enns & Forrest, 2005). As instructors consider possible avenues for introducing students to the complexity of intersections in terms of both identity and the real-world impact of oppressive systems, reflection on one's personal social location in the matrix of domination (Collins, 1990) and privilege allows purposeful consideration of potential areas of weakness. In other words, my effectiveness as a teacher is strongly connected to my willingness and ability to consider how my own privileged identities might prevent me from creating an inclusive learning environment that promotes voices from traditionally marginalized groups (Sanchez-Casal & MacDonald, 2002). As someone who aspires to behave as an ally in the classroom (Neumann, 2009), I am aware of my own privileged identities (white, gender-conforming, heterosexual, able-bodied, U.S. citizen). These identities threaten to re-create and validate hegemonic knowledge in the classroom if not carefully counterbalanced by intersectional curriculum that highlights not only the experiences of women of color but also lesbian, bisexual, transgender, disabled, and transnational voices. Given my particular social location, I must consciously make an effort to not only include but also emphasize written, works by women from social locations that challenge my role as oppressor in the classroom. If instructors aim to serve as effective allies to marginalized students, we must "deal honestly with our values, assumptions, and emotional reactions to oppression issues" (Bell, Washington, Weinstein, & Love, 2003, p. 464). Effective intersectional pedagogy must include reflections on the process of developing ourselves as allies in the classroom and address privilege and power relations as a central driving force (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). More important, sharing these reflections with other educators will bring the pedagogical ally development process into the teaching commons (Huber & Hutchings, 2005) and normalize such discussions.

**Complicating the Essentialized "Woman"**

More than two decades ago, bell hooks (1984) and Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) argued that individuals occupy unique social locations based on combined characteristics, such as race, sexuality, nation, class, ability, and gender. Crenshaw (1989) introduced the term "intersectionality" to explain that complex identities sharply contrast with categorical generalizations as they experience unique real-life situations based on simultaneous and multiple characteristics. Therefore, deeper understanding of the reality of people's lives requires scholars to avoid focusing on a single characteristic to define entire groups (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). An intersectional theoretical framework
allows scholars to examine these social locations in relationship to disadvantage or privilege (Cole, 2009). Patricia Hill Collins’s (1990) explanation of the “matrix of domination” also provides a conceptual structure to aid current understanding of the various social locations that result from complex identities in both privileged and oppressed groups. More recently, scholars call for an intersectional focus to transform higher education (Berger & Guirrozo, 2009) and institutionalize intersectionality (Fitzs, 2009).

Dill (2009) points out “intersectional analysis is marginal in all of the mainstream disciplines” (p. 246). Overall, the field of psychology seldom integrates intersectionality as a fundamental aspect of diversity courses. As mentioned above, the intersectionality among various social categories such as race, ability, gender, nation, class, and sexuality are rarely taught in psychology, as these courses typically address only one aspect of oppression and fail to simultaneously integrate multiple oppressions or privileges. In fact, psychology diversity requirements often limit students to choosing a course focused on race or gender. While fundamental knowledge of the unique aspects of each social category and system of oppression is essential to learning, intersectional integration leads to deeper understanding of the impact of these systems on various populations that are rarely recognized when studied as distinct concepts.

As they incorporate intersectional analyses into course work, instructors begin to challenge “traditional disciplinary boundaries and the compartmentalization and fixity of ideas” (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 2) that currently dominate student learning environments. The intersectional approach provides instructors and students with a sophisticated critical framework for validating subjugated knowledge, unveiling power and privilege, examining the complexity of identity, and constructing a vision for change (Collins, 1990; Dill & Zambrana, 2009). In an effort to transform the learning environment, students and I (Kim) redesigned a graduate diversity course, serving psychology and women’s studies, with an explicit and persistent intersectional focus. Using a model of student-instructor collaboration, the course was transformed to explicitly emphasize intersectionality with respect to social identity and social forces that differentially impact people located at various positions within the matrix of domination and privilege (Collins, 1990).

**Student-Instructor Collaborative Course Design**

Student critiques of a master’s level Psychology of Women course offered insight into students’ curricular expectations. Students typically expressed surprise and discomfort with coverage of racism and white privilege in readings, discussions, and assignments. The first step in addressing student misconceptions involved updating the course title to Psychology of Gender, Race, and Sexuality as a more accurate reflection of content that also provides a pedagogical platform for introducing intersectionality. Next, the course design and pedagogical approaches were overhauled to meet articulated learning goals associated with conceptualizing intersectionality at the theoretical and applied levels. The strategic course redesign included careful textbook and reading selection, assignments emphasizing intersectionality, and most important, a student-instructor collaboration to reimagine the course.

Four master’s students in social science disciplines, including two authors of this chapter, met with the professor to develop pedagogical approaches for incorporating intersectionality into a women’s studies course in which they enrolled for the upcoming semester (fall 2010). The team agreed that graduate-level course work should challenge students to integrate new concepts with previous knowledge, and assignments should have a minimal amount of scaffolding, or instructional guidance, to foster creativity and diverse perspectives. Reviewing the syllabus from the previous course, the group discussed which assignments might best support student learning in the new class. The students expressed that response papers, an assignment requiring students to reflect and write about the weekly readings, benefited students by encouraging them to pinpoint new perspectives, apply the knowledge to their lives, and identify actions for social change. The group decided to keep a take-home midterm exam essay to assess student comprehension, integration, and application of concepts.

Two new assignments focusing on intersectionality included a photography presentation and a public education project. The first assignment, often referred to as “photovoice” (Chio & Fandt, 2007; Wang, 1999), asked students to take photos representing their personal social identity intersections or illustrating the overall concept of intersectionality. The redesign team felt this assignment encouraged students to apply intersectionality theory to their own lives and to integrate concepts, theories, and readings in their presentations. The final project required students to utilize their newfound knowledge of intersectionality for public education. For example, public education could be achieved by creating brochures, websites, videos, blogs, and workshops. Both assignments provided avenues for students to learn through application of intersectionality to personal social identities and lived experiences while sharing knowledge with peers and the wider community.
Student-Instructor Reflections on Learning Intersectionality

Refocusing this graduate course on intersecting identities and the benefits of intersectional analysis, I (Kim) came to realize my pedagogy has always included intersections. After all, my very first Psychology of Women undergraduate course required students to read essays by African American, lesbian, and working-class women. However, my approach illustrated a textbook case of the outdated additive model of diversity education (Andersen & Collins, 2009) rather than consideration of complex identities that grew out of marginalized and privileged aspects of the lived human experience (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). Although potentially inclusive of multiple perspectives, the additive model segregates various aspects of social identity such that courses cover gender separately from social identity based on race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, and more. This severely limits consideration of ways that identities impact each other and exist simultaneously to affect people’s lives. In contrast to previous courses, every instructional decision developed through my lens of intersectional pedagogical goals. When a student dropped by during office hours to discuss the photovoice project or the midterm exam, I repeatedly emphasized the necessity of demonstrating their use of an intersectional framework in designing their projects and writing their take-home exam papers. In class, when a student shared that the reading about the experiences of a gay Asian man (Han, 2009) introduced new perspectives in terms of complicating racism and heterosexism, I exclaimed, “That’s intersectionality!” Taking advantage of these seemingly small opportunities provided immediate feedback to help students identify intersections and the benefits of intersectional analysis.

In preparation for the first day of class, I grew anxious about moving students away from categorical assumptions and ingrained expectations of higher education and toward this major focus on intersectionality. Unlike my previous syllabi, this new syllabus included more than a full page devoted to theoretical frameworks for guiding our learning and the basic tenets and assumptions of each: intersectional theory, feminist theory, queer theory, critical race theory, and critical white studies. By including these approaches directly on the syllabus, I emphasized the importance of understanding and incorporating theoretical analyses into our journey as a cohesive unit of learners. The first day of class meant setting the stage for a cultural shift from traditional classroom lectures to a community space for sharing and growing as co-intentional learners (Freire, 1970). The majority of our first class involved my purposeful and repeated explanations of the multiple ways that this course was designed to utilize nontraditional approaches to learning, challenge assumptions, and emphasize intersecting identities and forms of oppression.

Developing a Culture of Student Engagement

Students’ eyes widened as I explained that the classroom space would be transformed each week into a circle and that everyone in the room held shared responsibility for discussion and engaged learning. By transforming the room to allow us to face one another, our space directly challenged the traditional model that reinforces the power of the instructor lecturing at the front of the room. The circle setting made the classroom environment more student centered, rather than instructor centered, and incorporated everyone’s knowledge while promoting shared responsibility for learning. We (Angela and Shaprie) felt this inclusive environment helped us to get to know our classmates on a more personal level. By building these relationships, we began to see that our diverse social identities contributed unique world perspectives to the class discussions. Although the majority of the class consisted of white heterosexual females (including Angela and Shaprie), the class also included gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, Black, Asian, and biracial students. A range of religions included Christianity, Judaism, atheism, and agnosticism. These varied perspectives enabled us to see how intersections of our social identities shape our individual perceptions enhancing our understanding of intersectionality. Each week of the class, I (Kim) intentionally created ways to remind students of our commitment to supporting one another as a community of learners working to complicate the social constructions that perpetuate oppression and privilege within the matrix of domination (Collins, 1990). Upon recognizing that previous friendships created clique-type situations in class, I used one class meeting to assign seats so that every single student was sitting beside two people they did not know prior to the course. The next week, during each activity I required students to choose partners with whom they had never teamed up previously. The group bonded as they grew together creating a culture of support, teamwork, and safety with one another that allowed uncomfortable moments to develop into powerful instances of shifting paradigms.

During our fifth class meeting and discussion, one female and one male student (pseudonym Donny) began speaking at about the same time. Donny, also African American and gay, paused and said, “Oh, ladies first,” indicating that the white female student, Tiffany, should comment before him. His comment sparked a direct, yet friendly, challenge to the gendered nature of
this framework from his classmates. The class erupted in laughter and verbal recognition of his gendered behavior in that moment. When he responded that he was “raised to be a gentleman,” he received even more enthusiastic objections to his gendered constructions. Although this moment could have caused Donny to feel chastised, perhaps leading him to retreat or completely shut down, the class approached the challenge in a warm, friendly way. Their responses allowed him to understand they were not judging him, but merely challenging him to reflect on the relationship between his words and the perpetuation of social constructions. Due to the students’ community building and sense of shared responsibility for learning, Donny processed the feedback from female classmates as positive rather than as an attack. In fact, he reminded us of this challenge almost seven weeks later as an illustration of moments that helped him reflect on his own areas for improvement. This particular situation represents a key turning point for the class as a community of learners. From that moment going forward, students advanced to a higher level of shared responsibility for the learning taking place among their peers and colleagues.

As students in the first class to experience this redesigned course, we (Angela and Shaprie) felt the new format of the class created an inclusive social environment and encouraged an open learning style, one in which we felt free to explore, debate, and critique controversial subject matter. For instance, viewing and discussing the film Race: The Power of an Illusion (Episode 2) (Adelman & Cheng. 2003) shed new light on racial social constructions and efforts to maintain socioeconomic class boundaries that privilege whites. In-class learning opportunities helped to spark debate and brought up ideas that instructors typically avoid in class.

Promoting Active Learning, or “Keeping Students Awake”

My (Kim’s) strategy to maximize student engagement involved creating in-class activities that required a high rate of student involvement and incorporated new concepts to build a concrete foundation of intersectionality principles. I designed these customized activities to help students remember the terminology and to foster the application of theories to real-world experiences. Given that intersectionality was new to the majority of the students, essential to the foundation of the course, as well as abstract and difficult to grasp, I planned an activity to motivate students to think more deeply about defining the concept for themselves. After reading Dill and Zambrana’s (2009) explanation of the tenets of the theoretical approach, I gave students 60 seconds to brainstorm as many words as they could that they associate with intersectionality. After individually brainstorming, they spent 5 minutes with a partner sharing the associated word lists and explaining connections to intersectional analysis. Finally, the class as a whole transferred all of the words to the board and identified themes and patterns emerging from the collective list. This activity allowed students to spend individual, paired, and learning community discussion time working with complex and abstract terms that was critically essential to the foundation of their learning for the entire semester.

During this same class meeting, students experienced the “grab bag” activity by reaching into a deep bag and pulling out an item. Students were instructed to grab an individual object from the bag before being given any additional information on what the activity entailed. After each student chose an object, I gave them 3 minutes to make a connection between the item and intersectionality theory or the assigned readings for that week. The student who pulled a key out of the bag used it to discuss the access granted to those with privileged social identities that unlock doors to new opportunities. The cassette tape became a metaphor for recording history from the perspective of the group in power and connecting the tape to the reading “A Different Mirror” (Takaki, 2009). The ball of rubber bands transformed into a visual representation of the matrix of oppression, with each band serving as a specific identity either centralized (center of the ball) or marginalized (outer edges of the ball) by systematic oppression. The grab bag exercise positioned each student to think critically about intersectionality, concepts, and readings in ways that would enhance learning for the broader community of learners in the course. Out of this grab bag discussion, the metaphor of intersecting roadways emerged. A single student discussed his vision of intersectionality as a major highway intersection with six roads coming together at once. Several more students chimed in with ideas for expanding this metaphor, such as green lights for the privileged while marginalized groups navigated roadblocks, police barricades, and red lights. This synergistic moment in the classroom produced a new framework for student understanding of intersectionality that students consistently returned to throughout the rest of the term.

Expanding on the success of the grab bag, I asked students to bring items to the class the next week as representations of their personal cultural heritage or social identities in some way. Later in the course, we revisited this show-and-tell exercise with a focus on food items that shared some aspect of their cultural or family heritage. In both scenarios, each student shared the object (or food item) with the class, explained the cultural or identity connection, and explicitly tied the object to course concepts or readings. For example, Angela presented a pasta spoon her Italian grandmother used to serve the
family traditional Italian cuisine and raised the issue of cultural expectations requiring women to cook and serve others. She related the spoon to several readings that discussed divergent familial expectations that required women to serve the family. By sharing and discussing their own backgrounds, students used personal applications to successfully link intersecting identities with course concepts and readings.

After three weeks of readings, I sensed students were struggling with the long list of new concepts developing from the extensive readings. I felt an urgent need to provide an intervention to aid their learning without defaulting to a traditional lecture about terminology. Alas, I was faced with the task of making terminology fun and engaging. The resulting activity, which I named “Terminology Rotation,” promotes community-based learning in advancing phases.

- In phase 1, each student pair draws 3 cards, each with 1 concept or conceptual phrase from the course readings.
- During this phase, students add to each terminology card by providing a definition, illustrative examples, and associated readings that match the given concept. The team had exactly 5 minutes to add to the cards and then rotate cards to a new team.
- By the end of phase 1, the terminology cards rotated through half of the student teams, with each team adding more content to build a comprehensive review of the particular concept.
- Phase 2 changes the focus to team learning, and student pairs get 5 minutes to review and discuss the concepts completed by other teams.
- After several rounds of team learning, all student pairs had spent time with every single terminology card in either phase 1 or 2.

Students responded well to this activity, indicating that it helped them clear up term confusion and better grasp the distinctions among similar terms and phrases. They also expressed an increased ability to integrate the assigned readings, real-world examples, and terms as a result of the Terminology Rotation. Following up on the activity, I created games to put their progress to the test. As students completed crossword puzzles and attempted to identify the correct terms on their intersectionality BINGO cards (as I called out definitions and examples), I overheard conversations utilizing the terminology cards from the previous activity to determine correct game answers. Along with these customized exercises to promote student engagement, learning took place through the two major projects designed to focus on intersectionality.

Photovoice Project Student Outcomes

For my photovoice presentation, I (Angela) used a game theme to describe the concept of intersectionality. First, I set up a Scrabble game with the word “intersections” spelled diagonally across the board. Then I added in crossword fashion the socially constructed categories of oppression and privilege, such as race, age, gender, class, and ability. I presented this photo as an introduction and used subsequent photos to connect the concept of intersectionality to real-world social issues. As I set up various games, such as Monopoly, Life, and Risk, I consciously worked to go beyond an additive approach. In contrast, my photos highlighted intersections of socially constructed characteristics combining to impact people’s lives. Using a Monopoly board, for example, to represent intersections of race and class in housing discrimination, or “redlining,” I sectioned off the low-cost property spaces with a red piece of yarn between the “Go” and “Jail” corner spaces. As a result of this project, intersectionality theory helped me unravel the social and psychological complexities connecting socially constructed identities and lived experiences.

To demonstrate the concept of intersectionality, I (Shaprie) presented close-up pictures of the parts of a sunflower and invited students to identify the object. Upon revealing the whole sunflower, I explained that focusing on individual identities prevents understanding the whole person. For instance, examining gender without considering race blocks the full view of an individual’s experiences. In an attempt to connect micro-level everyday activities to macro-level social forces, I also analyzed how simple daily activities served as intersectional examples. While doing laundry at home, I realized that my high-tech, high-cost machine emphasized my intersection of class and gender. Because of this realization, I chose to use a picture of my washing machine in my presentation as a symbol of gendered division of labor intersecting with my middle-class status. The definition of intersectionality I developed as I prepared my project emphasized careful consideration of multiple identities and their complex interactions.

One presentation stood out for many students in the class and resonated with them as an aspect of intersectionality they had never considered. A Jewish woman in the class explained that her religion and gender combined to shape her identity as well as outsider judgments of Jewish women as unattractive. Displaying photos of female Jewish celebrities, on the other hand, she pointed out these women rarely disclose their Jewish identities. On the other hand, male Jewish celebrities often proclaim their Jewish identity without fear of losing sex appeal. Another woman who identifies as biracial (Black and white), bisexual, and tri-cultural presented her photovoice as a unique crossword
puzzle visual aid illustrating her realization that she can effectively serve as a bridge linking many social groups that tend to maintain rigid boundaries.

**Intersectionality Project Student Outcomes**

As described above, the final project for this course required students to create an avenue for public education with regard to intersectional theory or some particular aspect of intersectional identities. Given no more than the goal of the project, students expressed extreme discomfort and requested additional direction from me (Kim). Rather than appease this request, I explained that less direction from me allowed them to develop their own unique vision for the project, improve their planning and organizing skills, and create their own map for arriving at the final project destination. Although unsettled and uncomfortable with this news, the students rose to the challenge and exceeded my expectations. I attempted to make the major contributions to my grading of these projects clear to all students well in advance. As we traveled through the course from the first week and moving toward the project due date, I explicitly reminded students that successful integration of intersectionality would be the greatest factor in assessing their performance. I also informed them that achieving the goal of public education was a major influence on the final project grade.

For my final project, I (Angela) decided to create a handout on intersectionality theory for pedagogical use in the college classroom. As an aspiring college professor, I wanted to create something for my own future classroom. The handout included several of my photovoice game-themed pictures, plus additional pictures such as a completed Rubik’s Cube to emphasize the multidimensionality of the “matrix of domination” (Collins, 1990). As I worked on the project, I realized that although I had been learning the intricate aspects of the theory through a myriad of readings and activities in the course, the people I aimed to reach would likely never get that opportunity. Recognizing the need to convey extremely complicated concepts in a small amount of space, I chose simple wording to maximize accessibility for those new to the concept of intersectionality. After completing my handout, I offered it to sociology, women’s studies, and education faculty to share with their students. I provided copies, asked them to post the handout online for their classes, and requested 5 minutes of class time to speak to each class. Several instructors on our campus took the offer and used the handout in their courses. This quick guide to intersectionality theory provides an easy way for faculty to incorporate a more complex analysis into their courses.

Due to my (Shaprie’s) interest in the topic, I chose to discuss the intersection of race, class, and the educational system. For my project, I created a video (PowerPoint with voiceover) explaining links between oppression, race, and access to education and resources. Upon completing the video, I distributed it via e-mail to many of the education faculty on campus with a brief note describing my class project and its potential relevance for their students (preservice K-12 teachers). In addition, I offered to visit and provide a brief presentation to their students on this subject matter. To reach a broader audience, I also raised awareness by posting the video to Facebook and writing a blog to discuss the topic, inviting others to post personal stories involving race, class, and education. Although some video viewers vocalized their opposing views, it appeared they were struggling to recognize their privilege. In fact, I encountered less resistance than I expected from those who viewed the video. I found it to be quite rewarding compared to traditional final projects that require students to simply stand in the front of the class and present material the class has talked about all semester.

Other students’ projects focused on a variety of public audiences as target groups. One male student connected with a community group to provide workshops on masculinity, homophobia, and human trafficking to boys in juvenile detention. Another contacted a nonprofit immigrant advocacy group and developed brochures for distribution to migrant domestic workers to inform them of their legal rights. Projects also included a documentary on images of race and gender in popular films and a board game designed to teach players about oppression, privilege, and intersectionality. Students expressed their enthusiasm as the public audiences responded with interest and curiosity to their specific projects. By expanding their learning beyond the classroom walls, students recognized the possibilities for applying intersectionality to social problems, identifying concrete avenues for raising awareness, and effecting social change through public education.

**Pedagogical Lessons and Implications**

Overall, the redesigned course helped students accomplish the goals of understanding intersectionality both theoretically and in applied practice. The inclusive and open environment brought the class together to form a bond as a community of learners, which fostered lively discussion and debate. Each class meeting included customized activities structured for team learning and peer support. As the instructor, I (Kim) consistently motivated learners with engaging exercises and group work that promoted collaboration and a
supportive learning environment. Students learned how to transform their knowledge for presentation to audiences outside the classroom. Giving students only limited instruction for the two major course projects provided enormous flexibility that allowed students to personalize the course to their own unique interests. With greater agency, students committed to creating change and became fully engaged in designing projects with maximum impact through public education. The course’s connection to raising awareness beyond the classroom walls brought intersectionality to life for a meaningful opportunity for learning. Some students even expressed that they planned to continue their public education and outreach that developed from their projects long after the course ends. Given that this course was taught at the graduate level, an undergraduate course might benefit from some lectures mixed in with interactive activities, along with more detailed instructions for each major assignment.

Teaching this course brought with it unexpected gifts for me (Kim) as an instructor. Witnessing the sense of community as it developed and watching several students transform from slightly resistant to deeply invested in complex lived experiences and intersectionality, I experienced my own framework shift. Originally, the thought of redesigning a course with students made me quite nervous. Stepping away from traditional models of instruction toward more feminist and liberatory pedagogical practices (Enns & Forrest, 2005; Freire, 1970; Sinacore & Boatwright, 2005) became more comfortable for me as the semester progressed. My approach to class discussion became more flexible each week and began to flow with students’ immediate learning needs rather than confined by preconceived, rigid plans. Instructors aiming to emphasize intersectionality may find the ideas implemented in this course useful and potentially transformative to their own pedagogical philosophy, as I did.

Although the student-faculty collaboration to redesign the course occurred well before the semester started, the cooperative learning model extended throughout the term. Promotion of student involvement in the learning process, peer support, and action for public education created a classroom space reflective of the tenets of intersectionality theory. For example, the intersectional framework calls for applying theory to practice for social action, and student projects that educated the public achieved that goal. By centering the course on intersectionality using a student-faculty collaborative learning model, students moved from margin to center and became responsible for building knowledge throughout the semester and potentially beyond the course itself.

\[\text{Notes}\]

1. Although APA style requires capitalization of all race categories, we chose not to capitalize the words “White” and “whiteness” as a challenge to white privilege and racial hierarchy.
2. Essentialism refers to the belief that groups of people are naturally different at a biological level.
3. The matrix of domination was introduced by Patricia Hill Collins (1990) and described the interlocking systems of oppression, privilege, and identity that have simultaneous impact on individual lives and experiences. These systems, based on race, sex, religion, gender identity, age, sexuality, socioeconomic class, ability, and more, are traditionally conceptualized and studied separately rather than as interdependent and complex.

\[\text{References}\]


