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Preface

Advancing Women in Leadership On-line Journal was launched in 1997 with the intent of publishing manuscripts that report, synthesize, review, or analyze scholarly inquiry that focuses on women's issues. The intent of this journal is to encourage and support the proliferation of women in positions of leadership in all aspects of professional and corporate America. In the encouragement of advancing women in leadership, we present the following manuscripts. They are:

Women Faculty in Higher Education: Impeded by Academe by Dr. Dana E. Christman

Working Against the Grain: Rewards and Consequences of Developing a Personal Voice in Academia by Dr. Pamela LePage and Dr. Gretchen Givens-Generett

Creating Space for Subjectivity: Wandering Discourses of Female/Teacher by Dr. Donna K. Phillips and Dr. J. Camille Cammack.

Magazines: What Adolescent Girls are Reading and the Way They Shape Body Image by Dr. Rebecca A. Robles-Piña and Heidi Sauer

A Study of the Correlation Between the Motives of Female High Self Monitors and Emergent Leadership: A Literature Review by Charles Salter

Hispanic Female Superintendents in America: A Profile by Dr. Margaret A. Manuel and Dr. John R. Slate

Our intent is that this journal is viewed as a professional publication site for scholarly inquiry and perspectives that promote gender equity and advance women in leadership. It is our hope that you find this issue of Advancing Women in Leadership thought provoking, enjoyable, and that you look forward to subsequent issues. Suggestions for improvement, encouragement, and submission for upcoming issues are welcomed and appreciated. Genevieve Brown, Ed.D. & Beverly J. Irby, Ed.D. Editors

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Full Length Research Paper

Creating Space for Subjectivity: Wandering Discourses of Female/Teacher

Donna K. Phillips & J. Camille Cammack

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By analyzing what we ignore, we can glimpse the discourses of the unconscious that influence our actions and attitudes.

Introduction

In this paper, we draw from a cluster of stories to illustrate the need for new spaces in teacher education where preservice teachers can "speak the unspeakable" in order to open up possibilities in their teacher identities. We want to demonstrate how discourses surrounding what it means to be a teacher restrict preservice teachers' abilities to problem-solve and respond critically to important educational issues. We want to show how discourses silence students to a dangerous politeness where issues of importance are denied discussion. The stories told here lead us to theorize a need for a space where preservice teachers can "speak the unspeakable," and, through this, identify and deconstruct public discourses defining what it means to be "female" and "teacher." Ultimately, we believe that such discussions are imperative if preservice teachers are to be prepared to work with sensitive issues such as gender, race, and class.

As a metaphor for our work, we consider the natural beauty of such places as Zion National Park. Hiking in the area, one cannot help but notice that the landscape is punctuated with human-made warnings. Along the trails are signs such as "Danger! Sharp drop off!" and "Do not go beyond this point! Cliff ahead!" In the space of this park and the space of our collaboration as teacher educators, two opposing questions are raised: How are thoughts limited by the codified, persistent and authoritative warnings of danger? How do spaces uncharted by the persistence of our daily lives open up new possibilities for thought and action?

We relate this metaphor to our practice as teacher educators and our ongoing research into "how women construct their subjectivities within the limits and possibilities of the discourses and cultural practices that are available to them" (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 365). "Subjectivity" here refers to the site of self, a site constantly changing and being both assaulted and

wooed by competing powers, vying for allegiance. At this site of self, female preservice teachers struggle with what it means to be female and what it means to be teacher. There are "danger signs" warning them to conform and to not question authority. There are other signs reminding them to stay on the path of the popular notions of teacher. We want to explore how our preservice teachers (as well as ourselves as teacher educators) might resist these codified structures defining the teacher. We also theorize the possibilities for using this resistance to reinvent the teaching identity. One way of doing this, we propose, is to "speak the unspeakable" as a way to embrace desires, conflicts, tensions and questions, and as a space where we confront discourses of power.

Story Sources and Context for the Study

We first began studying how female preservice teachers constructed their teaching subjectivities within and among the cultural boundaries and discourses available in teacher education during two dissertation projects (Cammack, 1998; Phillips, 1998). Through Phillips (2002) close analysis of language we began to see the relationship between discourse and subjectivity. What became apparent was how the discourses of the codified, structured space of teacher education pressured participants into choosing between possible subject-forming positions. These dissertation studies helped us see the strong desire our students bring with them for a "tidy" or unified teaching identity. We noted the multiple and contradictory subject positions our students assumed to define female and teacher using labels such as feminist, care-giver, good wife, "girly" girl, business woman and religious woman. We also found participants unable to reconcile the contradictory nature of these subject positions. Competition between possible identities troubled their emerging teacher identities: What "female" or "teacher" should they become if they could only become one? Finally, we have noticed that their attempts to create and sustain a unified self ultimately

interfered with their ability to think in creative or new ways about the complex problems of teaching. We began to wonder, as Ellsworth (1997) wrote, how do we give our students "future as undecidable, possibility as undeterminable"? (p. 173). How could we open up our classrooms to be a space for "emigrant thinkers who deterritorialize accepted notions of space" (Conely as cited in St. Pierre, 1997, p. 376), to strive not for resolution and acceptance of a "real identity" but rather embrace conflict and chaos and forever conflicting subjectivities? How could such a space be "liberating" for females donning the label "teacher" by opening up a kind of movement between what is "perpetual, without aim or destination, without departure or arrival" (Deleuze & Guattari, as cited in St. Pierre, 1997, p. 369). We also began to wonder if this re-invention of the teaching identity could give preservice teachers space to think in new ways about issues of gender, race, and class.

Through our ongoing work as teacher educators, we have collected numerous stories that illustrate the allegiance preservice teachers feel to the development of a coherent, consistent teaching identity and the inevitable fissures and slips in these identities. From these stories we have selected six that illustrate how the need for a fixed identity makes certain topics "unspeakable" or "taboo" and how the regulating nature of the "unspeakable" traps female teachers in closed systems of thought. Two types of stories are told here; those that illustrate how discourses restrict thinking, and those that show the limits of silenced politeness. Finally, we theorize how we can use these stories to help us work with preservice teachers to "speak the unspeakable" as an act of resistance that opens up new avenues of thought and practice.

Stories of the Unspeakable: How Discourses Restrict Thinking

The district recruiter. During a Gender Issues in Education seminar for preservice teachers, a recruiter from a local school district met with the students. One small group of students had a lengthy discussion about what the recruiter had said. Apparently the recruiter had specifically mentioned an interest in male elementary teachers. The female preservice teachers expressed fear over what this might mean to them as women. Two notable discourses were evidenced in this discussion. First, was the discourse that men entering teaching will add an important element that they, as women, cannot supply i.e., men can provide necessary authoritative male role models for children. One participant said, "I see that it's important to have male figures out there in the field." The other members of the group agreed. Another participant added, "It makes you wonder as a white woman, 'Are my contributions as meaningful because I am not a man?' I mean right away it makes you feel defensive." The conversation then wandered into territory that further positioned them as women inferior to men. These preservice teachers began to discuss whether or not men were better suited as "authority figures." Several told stories of young boys who did not respond when they gave directions, but did respond when a male teacher or counselor

gave directions, adding leverage to the recruiter's preference for males.

The second discourse present was that these preservice teachers trusted those doing the hiring. They assumed the recruiters would try to be "neutral" when selecting future teachers. They trusted those hiring to act in benevolent ways and do what was best for children. One participant said, "They want the best candidate." These preservice teachers were clearly troubled by what it might mean to assume the title "male teacher" as opposed to "female teacher," but they were unable to articulate these fears thus illustrating how the discourse of patriarchy can silence women learning to teach (Miller, 1997). Even within the space of a gender seminar, these preservice teachers could not speak outside the discourse of male superiority. The students took up a position of the submissive female. They lacked a way to analyze this situation believing those in authority must be "right" and know best thus rendering their fears, doubts, anger, or sense of injustice "unspeakable."

The angry father. Another story illustrates how discourses of gender regulate ways to think about solutions to problems. When discussing a scenario about an angry father, who was upset because his young son was playing in the housekeeping area at school, a group of preservice teachers struggled to find an acceptable way for the teacher to deal with this situation. They could only think of two possible ways to handle the problem. The preservice teachers decided they could either try to explain the activity to the parent or they could go along with his wishes. They discussed how they could explain the value of the activity to the father but they wanted to do this cautiously. They decided, "The way to approach it [is] that it is not a gender thing." They concluded that it might be more palatable to the parent if they sold the activity as a way to develop fine motor coordination. "What we are learning over here is how to button." They seemed satisfied with a solution that avoided the sticky issue of gender altogether. The students had a sense that there were conflicting desires related to gender here. They knew the father's desire for his son did not match the "educationally appropriate" desire for children to experience a wide range of gender roles that they, as teachers, are hailed to support. However, their discussion of this issue is circumscribed within the discourse of patriarchy; Father's wishes must prevail. Upholding the father's wishes demeans their own female identity and raises questions about their professional knowledge. To "keep the peace" they submitted to the male authority and the students were left feeling trapped by the power of this discourse.

"I'm a sexist." One preservice teacher who was a participant in the dissertation research defined herself in a way she saw appropriate to the setting, "Okay, I admit it, I'm a sexist," she confessed. Later, however, she finds herself unable to fit this definition into her teaching identity. "Yes, I did feel that way. But now, I mean, I don't feel that way at all because I was trying to help kids that needed help. And to me, now I'm going back to what's the purpose of me? Who am I and what's

my purpose? My purpose is to help children. And so if I was helping those students, who were lower than other students, oh well. So, I'm kind of, I don't know this gender thing is getting to me." While the preservice teacher could use language sanctioned in the educational setting (Okay, I admit it, I'm a sexist.), she could not sustain this language against a more powerful discourse of teacher as helper and, believing a need to choose between the two, returned to a more familiar definition of herself as a gender-neutral teacher.

Stories of the Unspeakable: Silenced Politeness

MAT interviews. The next story illustrates how preservice teachers come to teacher education already steeped in discourses of "silenced politeness" that limit their speech acts. During the interview process for candidates applying to the Master of Arts in Teaching program at one of our universities, prospective teachers are asked the following question:

Imagine that it is a year from now and you have just accepted a job in a fourth grade classroom. The class is 78% boys and 22% girls. The students are ethnically diverse with the majority of students being African American, Asian, and Hispanic; the minority is white. The school is located in a lower socio-economic neighborhood. What are your hesitations, questions, and wonderings as you consider this position?

Most candidates display physical signs of nervousness when this question is posed and are unable to engage (or refuse to engage) in the issues presented. During a typical interview cycle, only two of the multiple candidates interviewed even addressed gender and class as issues. Most respond with something like this, "I would be concerned about creating a sense of community. It would be important in this situation to make sure everyone learned to respect one another and to appreciate the different cultures present. I would want to teach tolerance." This constitutes their "discussion" of race. Although the question gives license for the candidates to discuss "hesitations, questions and wonderings," few are able to voice hesitations, questions and wonderings but rather form their response as I would statements of intention, using acceptable language like community, respect, appreciate and tolerance. This is clearly a situation where prospective teachers need to please, impress, and be correct. Use of polite and appropriate language limits opportunities for exploration of possibilities. They are not able, then, to problem-solve or think critically; the discourse of silenced politeness denies them the ability to even "wonder or "question." Acceptable language seems to deny the importance of race, class, or gender so that they remain unseen by the classroom teacher.

Delpit reading. A second story concerning silenced politeness has to do with a white female graduate student's reading of Lisa Delpit (1988). Students in a graduate level initial certification program read and discussed a portion of the book for each class meeting. This student had shown signs of agitation in prior discussions but on this day blurted out, "I just

don't get this. I mean, look here she says one thing and earlier she said something different. Which way is it supposed to be? I just don't get this!" After a moment of silence, the student quickly smoothed over her statement with the help of other students. "Politeness" reigned in the situation and students resumed the discussion using "correct" terms and expressions.

What else might the student have said given a different kind of space to engage with conflictual discourses and defining moments of subjectivity? The frustration was directed at Delpit for a lack of "alignment" of perceived concepts but the student stopped short of deconstructing what seemed wrong with the reading based upon her position as a white woman preservice teacher or how she saw this as "one more thing to do" in the classroom.

African American male. A final story involves a white female undergraduate student during her student teaching experience. Daily, the student teacher faced conflict with a young African American male in her class. At every student teaching seminar she would bring up her frustrations with the student. Her comments were couched in terms "appropriate" for discussing classroom management in the academic setting. As the term continued, it became apparent the student teacher had grown to dislike the student and saw him as a hindrance to her own success in the classroom. She began to dread dealing with him and, in fact, dreaded going to teach. While she physically demonstrated signs of anger, the student teacher's careful language only occasionally leaked convictions that the situation was really one of race and gender. The topics of gender and race were touched upon but this was clearly territory the student teacher did not feel she could, or did not want to, trespass. In this case we see the student trapped in a sort of "political correctness" that keeps her from exploring the range of her own emotions. Unable to reconcile her dislike of this student with her ideas about race and appropriate behavior for a teacher she is unable to problem-solve.

How might exploring the unspeakable, as illustrated in these stories, be used to create new spaces and new ways for preservice teachers and us to think about these issues? We theorize that it is the very attention to the conflictual constructions of gender and race across discursive fields that allow for critique of the teacher identity.

St. Pierre (1997) worked with images from Deleuze and Guattari in describing "smooth space," spaces that "gnaw and tend to grow in all directions" (p. 369). This space unlike striated space, which is "coded, defined, bounded, and limited", has a nomadic quality. While smooth space does not promise "liberty" and is constantly being reversed to striated space, it "always possesses a greater power of deterritorialization than striated space" (Deleuze & Guattari as cited in St. Pierre, p. 369). How would such nomadic space allow for female preservice teachers to "play" with discourses defining their subjectivities? How would such space resist efforts that code and bind? How would such space allow preservice teachers to say the scandalous and proper, allowing them to embrace

conflicting discourses, rather than attempting to resolve them? How would it allow them to resist the dangerous territory of "aligning" a "true" self to pedagogical decisions? We return now to stories from the data to first identify patterns of existing space in teacher education and then to propose possibilities for alternative space.

The Unspeakable and Alternative Space

We see common patterns in each of these stories that illustrate why students were unable to critique conflictual constructions of gender across the various discursive fields. We see in these stories the space of teacher education being one that "binds" and "codes" students' responses and their subjectivities. But we also see in each story, the student cannot control the language she uses to react to the situation. "One speaks a language that is never fully one's own" (Butler, 1997) so who else is present in these outbursts? Whose language is speaking? Ellsworth (1997) calls this the "third participant" (p. 64), or the unconscious voice. The preservice teachers in these stories find their unconscious voice speaking using discourses that express anger, frustration and/or hopelessness. The unconscious interferes with the conscious use of "politically correct language" in these brief seconds. Students want to dismiss this participant once they hear the words. They want to dismiss the object of unspeakable-ness (the recruiter, Delpit, and the African American male student) because to address the object would be to address a supposed "misalignment" of character, that is, a misalignment between the perceived "good" teacher identity and the leaked response. Why does each response make the student feel angry, frustrated and/or hopeless? One explanation is that if the recruiter, Delpit, or the African American male student is "right" then they are "wrong" and the student teacher becomes implicated. In part, this is the result of the belief in an essentialist self that forces a choice between "right" and "wrong" rather than allowing a space where the conflict of discourses can be deconstructed and exposed.

How could space in teacher education be re-invented as nomadic space allowing for students to "play" with these conflictual discourses defining their subjectivities? How could such space allow for the discourses of the outburst and blurts to be confronted? We suggest that as teacher educators we need to pose the unspeakable for students. We need to pose the questions and re-frame them not as an implication of "self" but as a history of implications. Imagine a student teacher that is learning to "hear" such implications, the very implications she speaks in moments of uncontrolled outbursts, as implications of discourses of historicity. Imagine the same student teacher learning to interpret and to place such outbursts into a nomadic space that moves in multiple directions at the site of subjectivity. Imagine a seminar where students ask, "Where, when I read this author, do I get stuck, do I forget, do I resist? Where, when I listen to a classmate's response to this reading, does my own project of 'becoming a teacher' get shifted, troubled, unsettled - Why there? Why now?" (Ellsworth, 1997, p. 73.) What if we would have asked of the students in the first group, "Why do you want to believe the district will hire the

most qualified candidate and do what is best for children?" What if the white graduate preservice teacher would have received a response like, "How does Delpit bother your image of "teacher"? How does it make a difference that you are white and female?" And what if the white female preservice teacher was questioned with, "What is it about the fact that this student is male and African American that makes you feel most out-of-control? What is the picture of control that you believe is rewarded in this situation?"

This kind of questioning can open up a space that is otherwise pushed aside and as Felman (1997) said, "ignorance itself can teach us something--become itself" (p. 26). By analyzing what we ignore, we can glimpse the discourses of the unconscious that influence our actions and attitudes. In the stories told, preservice teachers actively refuse to engage with the language of their outburst, but such engagement can be instructive. Learning to re-position ourselves as teacher educators from a place where we engage with what both our students and we resist, with what is ignored, allows us to imagine a space where interpreting discourses, myths, teacher descriptions, and pedagogical choices becomes a space of possibility and change. In such instances where we speak the unspeakable for students, we embrace conflict and controversies, resisting a goal of resolution; we use ignorance as an instructive tool. By speaking the unspeakable, we take back some of the power of discourses to subject students to a teacher identity coded in genderless terms of neutrality. Student teachers, interpreting their own responses, begin to see how discourses return, implicate, and subjugate, but in the naming of these discourses, they can restructure their own imagined image of "teacher." In this space of positioning, we see the returning of ignorance, the returning of the discourses that seek to bind and code, into a powerful form of resistance where female preservice teachers may find alternative visions of what it means to be "teacher."

How could such a space "shatter the illusion of arriving?" (Ellsworth, 1997, p. 163.) We realize that preservice teachers all stand in different spaces on the never-ending converging circles of their lives, but a space in teacher education programs that 1) actively identifies "myths" of female/teacher, 2) uses multiple "languages" or discourses to deconstruct such myths, 3) provides alternative descriptions of power-conflicting terms like "woman," "feminist," "care," and "dedication," and 4) approaches pedagogical choices as intersections of larger discourses of time and place, would be a step away from regulated teacher education and a step towards nomadic space where subjectivities are honored.

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