

**Examining Strategies that Promote Success for Adult Basic Education Students: A
Professional Development Seminar for Educators**

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Abstract

ABE writing courses have historically helped students develop White, westernized cultural capital. Yet they often fail to acknowledge community cultural wealth that students bring with them to the classroom or build upon these strengths that students possess, and this has a negative impact on student persistence. This dissertation argues that to increase retention and persistence, ABE writing instructors must look at how curriculum can center a diverse range of identities and better reflect the lived experiences of all their students. To address this problem of practice, this dissertation is divided into three parts. First, it explores ABE legislation and critiques it using critical theory and critical race theory, tying the legislation to classroom teaching practices and retention and persistence. Second, it provides a literature review focusing on andragogy, cultural and social capital, and community cultural wealth. Third, the dissertation presents a summary, participant feedback collected through an exit survey, and discussion of the dissertation's corresponding pilot seminar, ending with future directions and opportunities for future research.

Keywords: Adult basic education, cultural capital, community cultural wealth, persistence, retention

Dedication

This dissertation in practice can only be dedicated to Blayne Amson, my best friend, who has been there for me and supported my success for over ten years now. I would not be where I am today without his efforts. We did it!

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Examining Strategies that Promote Success for Adult Basic Education Students: A Professional Development Seminar for Educators

I came to teaching at the tail end of the Great Recession in the late 2000s as the U.S. housing bubble burst and the economy floundered. Fresh out of graduate school with a master's degree in English, I took a position at a rural outreach center which was part of a large community college in Western Oregon. I taught mostly pre-college and entry-level composition and study skills. The average age of my students were late twenties to early thirties. My students at the outreach center worked off campus, sometimes seasonally, sometimes year-round, and almost all were caring for children or other family members. This meant they were balancing the competing demands of maintaining a job, a household, and often raising a family while going to college sometimes part-time, often full-time. My students saw college as an investment, a means to achieve greater financial security amidst a badly damaged economy. Many were retraining after losing their jobs in the recession or attending college for the first time, and a college education translated to the promise of a job that would help them provide for their families. Teaching at the outreach center introduced me to community college instruction and almost immediately I realized I wanted to spend my career working with community college adult learners. I appreciated the diversity of ages, experiences, and backgrounds of the learners and the richness of classroom conversations that occurred as a result. As a former community college student, I also saw my work as a community college instructor as a way of giving back to the system that had set me on my higher education journey and influenced me so much. Over the next eleven years I taught at various community colleges in Oregon and Washington State, primarily focusing on teaching pre-college writing. Yet throughout my time at various community colleges, I noticed the continual conversation around increasing retention and

persistence, especially as the economy began to recover causing enrollment to fall while state funding never returned to pre-recession levels. It is this ongoing challenge, coupled with my own experiences as an adult basic education (ABE) writing instructor, that has led me to create the professional development seminar, “Examining Strategies that Promote Success for Adult Basic Education Students: A Professional Development Seminar for Educators” and write this corresponding dissertation in practice. My goal as an instructor and faculty member has always been to be useful, and I wrote both the seminar and the dissertation in practice with that goal in mind. I wish for both documents to be useful to other instructors as a resource, as a source of discussion, and as a tool for implementing the concept of community cultural wealth within their ABE curriculum.

Adult Basic Education is an umbrella term used to refer to courses and programs designed to support learners over the age of 16 who demonstrate competencies in subjects such as English-language reading, writing, and math below the high-school level (WSBCTC, 2020). ABE is present in all fifty states in the U.S. and as of 2018, 160,124 students were enrolled in some form of adult education program administered through the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE, n.d., p. 3). Because ABE is primarily focused on supporting learners to develop skills they will need in the workforce, the need for ABE courses is often framed in terms of deficits in the skills of the U.S. workforce that lead to unemployment and hurt the national economy. For example, the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (2016) argued workers in the U.S. are behind other countries in their English language literacy and math skills and found low literacy and math skills correlated with low incomes and higher likelihood of unemployment, thus making a case for the importance of formal education to address this gap. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and

Development (2013) also found that the U.S. had a higher percentage of adults with low levels of literacy and other basic skills than other nations, recommending numerous policy changes, including improving access to basic skills education, especially for marginalized populations.

ABE is often framed as an entrypoint for further education also. Bosworth (2008) explained that ABE or “remedial” (p. 75) courses are also commonly required for adult learners who enroll in college to earn an associate’s or bachelor’s degree, and according to the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (WSBCTC), the purpose of ABE is “to teach foundational skills... so adults can move through college and into high-demand jobs” (2020). The WSBCTC explained that the “foundational skills” that comprise the curriculum of ABE courses specifically includes English language proficiency as a key focus of instruction for students to move to college-level coursework and eventually, the work force. For this reason, ABE is often framed as integral to the economic success of the country (Bosworth, 2008).

Yet even though ABE is often presented as vital to the health of the U.S. economy, low persistence¹ rates are a common point of concern with community colleges as institutions, and specifically within ABE programs (Jha, 1991; Perin and Greenberg, 1994; Patterson & Mellard, 2007; Fike and Fike, 2008, Tighe et al., 2013; Fernandez et al., 2017; Idoko, 2018; Kappel,

¹ According to Comings and Cuban (2007), persistence and retention are two sides of the same coin. They define persistence as “Adults staying in programs for as long as they can, engaging in self-study or distance education when they must stop attending program services, and returning to program services as soon as the demands of their lives allow” (par. 2). For Comings and Cuban, retention is simply persistence from the institution’s perspective, keeping students enrolled throughout the course of their degree or certificate program. This dissertation will be using Comings and Cuban’s definition when referring to persistence and retention.

2018). Furthermore, as scholars have recognized how systemic oppression of historically marginalized populations has impacted ABE students, the literature has also expanded to focus on the fact that different minority populations have a higher rate of stopping out or dropping out of ABE programs (Holmes, 1995; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002).

Scholars have focused especially on ABE writing courses not only because of the federal and state guidance surrounding literacy as a key component of ABE, but also because these courses are often framed as providing opportunities for students to develop skills and competencies fundamental to their success in college-level coursework as well as their future career (Comings et al., 2000; Fernandez et al., 2017). Many associate and baccalaureate degree programs require students to meet specific levels of writing proficiency before they are permitted to take courses. In doing so, despite the community college's reputation as being an institution that provides access to students who might otherwise not be able to earn a college degree (Rosenbaum et al., 2006), prerequisite developmental education requirements prevent students from accessing higher education without first demonstrating they are college-level proficient. According to Attewell et al. (2006), critics of ABE argue that these courses can create barriers for students to continue in their education, a claim echoed by Siha (2012) among others. Yet according to Attewell et al. (2006), findings taken from data gathered from the federal National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) show that although public colleges are more likely to require remedial courses, the authors determined that these courses did not have a negative impact on a student's success. Rather, students in two-year colleges who had taken remedial courses were more likely to persist and equally likely to graduate as peers who had not taken remedial courses.

These positive findings about adult basic education highlight the benefits of ABE programs and their potential to support successful college students and encourage student persistence, a perennial concern among academic institutions. Yet there is still significant quantitative data that shows community college ABE courses struggle with persistence and retention. The question therefore becomes, how can a community college ABE program effectively foster persistence and retention through its writing courses? I argue that to increase retention and persistence, we must look at how our curriculum can center a diverse range of identities and better reflect the lived experiences of those who are marginalized. Utilizing Yosso's (2005) theory of community cultural wealth and integrating the six forms of capital can be an effective way to do this.

This dissertation is divided into three parts. The first, "An Introduction to Adult Basic Education" will summarize and then discuss major pieces of legislation pertaining to ABE, critiquing it using critical theory and critical race theory. Next it will examine the impacts this legislation has had on teaching and argue that teaching is a political act before moving to a discussion of how the legislation of ABE has influenced our thinking around persistence and retention. The second part of this dissertation is the literature review, focusing on andragogy, cultural and social capital, and community cultural wealth. The goal of this literature review is to explain each of these theories and present literature that uses and examines them to serve as a resource for ABE instructors. Finally, the third part will present a summary, participant feedback collected through an exit survey, and discussion of the pilot of my seminar "Examining Strategies that Promote Success for Adult Basic Education Students" ending with future directions this professional development seminar could take and opportunities for future research.

Positionality Statement

It is important to state my positionality to be cognizant of how my identity may impact my perspective in writing about this issue. I am a member of the Adult Basic Education faculty at an urban community college in western Washington State. I have taught writing courses including developmental writing for over eleven years. Although I attended a community college myself, I did not take adult basic education courses as a student. I identify as Chinese American while also recognizing my privilege as someone with light skin who was raised speaking standard English as his only language. Furthermore, I was raised in a household with many of the dominant Western European cultural beliefs and practices and this also carries privilege. I identify as a person with a physical disability that sometimes requires a supportive device but being able to “pass” as able-bodied carries privilege as well. I do not experience a cognitive disability which provides me with another kind of privilege attending and working in a higher education system that historically has not effectively recognized or supported neurodiversity or cognitive disabilities. Finally, I recognize the privilege I carry as a cisgender male in a system of education originally built for able-bodied, White males at the exclusion of people with disabilities, people of color, and women.

Part One: An Introduction to Adult Basic Education

A Summary of ABE Legislation

According to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2013), adult education has been sponsored by the federal government in some form since the Nineteenth Century with its initial focus on educating soldiers through programs such as specialized military schools and the creation of the GED in 1942. In the early Twentieth Century, the federal government sponsored naturalization programs for immigrants within public schools that focused on literacy and U.S. History among other subjects. However, in 1964 with the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act, the federal government created the Adult Basic Education Program, which sought to address growing concern over unemployment levels for segments of the adult population who were not finding success in existing vocational programs. The Adult Basic Education Program focused on language and math skills, and its goal was to help participants gain necessary skills needed to find employment. In stating its purpose, the Economic Opportunity Act (1964) reads: “The United States can achieve its full economic and social potential as a nation only if every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of his capabilities and to participate in the workings of our society” (p. 508). From its onset, Adult Basic Education’s function was to support learners in gaining the English language and math skills needed to contribute to the economic and social benefit of the country through active participation in the labor market. Even as the legislation around adult education changed in the decades to follow, this purpose would remain the same.

As part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Adult Education Act of 1966 continued the work begun two years prior with the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Adult Basic Education Program. According to Rose (1991), this new incarnation was focused

not just on education for vocational purposes, but on education to help students perform expected roles and responsibilities as members of society. The purpose statement of the act made it clear that its goal was to “encourage and expand basic educational programs for adults” (p. 1216) specifically naming “English language limitations” (p. 1216) as a primary barrier to employment and expanding this focus to “basic education” (p. 1216). This focus on English language literacy was a continuation of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 which also specifically named an inability to read or write in English a potential “substantial impairment” (p. 520). Like the legislative predecessor it replaced, the Adult Education Act of 1966 also emphasized “profitable employment” (p.1216), productivity, and responsibility as ideal qualities of citizenship, continuing a trend still seen in ABE legislation today. This act also supported the proliferation of ABE programming across the United States by providing initial funding to train teachers and establish ABE programs which states would then administer.

In 1978 Congress updated and amended the Adult Education Act. According to Rose (1991), this amendment was notable because of how it added to the purpose of Adult Basic Education and the Adult Education Act to include a broader social benefit rather than one that focused primarily on the economic benefit for the student and country. However, in looking at the text of the amendment, it is important to note that the values of employability, productivity, and responsibility continued to be codified in the stated purposes of the act (“Education Amendments of 1978,” p. 92 STAT. 2356). According to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2013), this amendment placed a greater emphasis on accountability including research and assessment of programs. It is also notable that it named an expanded list of local stakeholders and participants to be included in the creation of state ABE plans. Furthermore, the amendment required states to explain how they would diversify the delivery of ABE programs

beyond public school systems. The amendment specifically names, among others, “institutions of higher education” (p. 92 STAT. 2358). According to Rose (1991), this change greatly increased the number of participants attending ABE classes in other settings beyond primary and secondary schools such as adult learning centers and marked the beginning of a more individualized approach to ABE to meet the specific needs of individual, local populations.

The 1984 and 1988 amendments to the Adult Education Act worked to shift more of the cost of ABE programs to individual states and opened the responsibility for ABE to include for-profit agencies. According to Rose (1991), the Adult Education Act of 1984 changed the language of the act to specifically name English literacy as its driving purpose and a requirement for a socially functional individual. To support this purpose, the amendment provided guidance around the specifications of using unpaid volunteer staff members in ABE programs and the creation of grants to compensate for-profit agencies who could provide services not found through established public institutions or education at a cheaper cost. According to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2013), the Regan administration’s goal was to “contain the federal role as a stimulator of social experiments” (p. 17) and with this purpose in mind, also consolidated grants earmarked for specific groups to be combined into a larger pool of money to be parceled out and distributed by individual states.

In 1988 the Reagan administration continued to modify the Adult Education Act to prioritize literacy. This amendment again named English literacy as the specific goal of ABE and tied it to “effective citizenship and productive employment” (p. 102 STAT. 302). As part of this amendment, the act set aside funding for “criminal offenders in corrections institutions and for other institutionalized individuals” (p. 102 STAT. 306) and listed the institutions that would meet the criteria of the act. In addition to incarcerated individuals, the act also specifically

directed states to explain how they would meet the educational needs of “typically underserved groups” (102 STAT. 310) including “educationally disadvantaged adults” (102 STAT. 310) defined as possessing an education at the fifth-grade level or below, English-language learners, and people with disabilities in settings other than public schools. This portion of the legislation was in keeping with the trend of decentralizing where ABE students were served and where programs were located previously introduced into the legislation in the 1978 incarnation of the Adult Education Act. Furthermore, this amendment specifically set aside funds for “workplace literacy” (102 STAT. 314) and English literacy grants. In focusing on workplace literacy, the amendment specifically names partnerships between business and industry and educational institutions such as colleges. Rose (1991) cited Chisman (1990) to point out that the connection between ABE and the push for increased labor is brought into focus through the emphasis on workers’ literacy.

In 1991 the National Literacy Act further revised the Adult Education Act to focus on adult English language literacy, framing illiteracy as “a major threat to the economic wellbeing of the United States” (p. 105 STAT. 333). According to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2013), the National Literacy Act was drafted in response to a 1988 federal national study on literacy and a subsequent national goal set by President George H.W. Bush for the year 2000. This goal proposed eliminating adult illiteracy in the United States so each person could be competitive in the global economy and “exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship” (p. 20). Like previous legislation and initiatives around ABE, Bush’s statement also conflated an individual’s participation and contributions to the national economy with the duties of citizenship. However, according to Irwin (1991) the National Literacy Act instituted several important contributions to adult education. Among them, the NLA established the National

Institute for Literacy to “improve and expand the system for delivery of literacy services” (p. 11) through research, policy recommendations, and provide fellowship opportunities, fund literacy resource centers across the country to support and facilitate literacy programming and services, and a National Workforce Literacy Assistance Collaborative to help small businesses and labor organizations provide literacy programming. Furthermore, the NLA established grants to help build partnerships among local stakeholders like businesses and educational institutions to foster literacy development among local workforces and created and revised programs that supported family literacy, commercial drivers, and incarcerated individuals. According to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2013), by 1999, 44.5 percent of adults over the age of 17 had participated in an adult education program (p. 23).

Title II of the 1998 Workforce Investment Act was the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), which further cemented the partnership between industry, the government, and educational institutions to help provide basic education to adult workers. Like the National Literacy Act of 1991, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998 emphasized not only the importance of literacy for employment, but in the education of a family unit’s children as well, describing educated parents as “full partners” (p. 112 STAT. 1060) in their children’s education. The AEFLA also implemented criteria by which to measure the outcomes of adult learners in ABE programming through literacy development, “placement in, retention in, or completion of, postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement” (p. 112 STAT. 1064), or graduation from high school or an equivalent. It specifically identified placement, retention, and completion as metrics, three topics that are perennial areas of concern for ABE programs today. The act also required the programs to demonstrate “objective, quantifiable, and measurable” (112 STAT. 1065) progress, and

continuous improvement, thereby building in some of the same criteria used today to hold institutions and their programs responsible for not only the education of their students, but of reporting their progress and the progress of the program to the state. According to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2013), this was significant on a national level because this portion of the legislation created unity within the reporting system that had previously been missing from ABE that allowed the federal government to better monitor the success of the programs in each state and where they could improve.

By 2014, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 had undergone multiple reauthorizations. With this latest reauthorization, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act included several significant changes, including to the definition of adult education. In the 1998 incarnation, the definition of adult education focused on addressing students' deficiencies, describing them as those who "lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills...; do not have a secondary school diploma..., and have not achieved an equivalent level of education to enable the individuals to function effectively in society; or are unable to speak, read, or write the English language" (112 STAT. 1060). However, in the 2014 reauthorization, the language was modified to focus instead on the students' development of skills, defining adult education as "academic instruction and education services" (p. H. R. 803—185) that increase students' skills they can use for the education and economic benefit of themselves and their families. While the core purposes of AEFLA remained similar to many former pieces of ABE legislation, the change in language from 1998 to 2014 demonstrated a shift from a deficit-based perspective to more of a strengths-based articulation of the role of ABE and its students. In addition to the change in language surrounding the purpose of ABE, according to the Congressional Research Service (2014), the 2014 reauthorization further unified the way in which states reported student

progress, requiring each state set up a common plan for all programs housed under the umbrella of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 including AEFLA. This unification was designed to create greater coordination between different WIOA programs and better support student progression out of ABE and into the workforce or college-level coursework. Furthermore, the reauthorization also created six common criteria to evaluate all WIOA programs, including adult basic education, instead of a set of criteria only applicable to AEFLA programming as was the case in the 1998 version of the legislation.

The 2014 incarnation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was set to expire in 2020, requiring a new reauthorization from Congress which would almost certainly mean changes to the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Act was extended through FY 2021 as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Congressional Research Service, 2021). As a result, as of the time of this writing, it remains to be seen how AEFLA will continue to evolve.

Applying Theory to ABE Legislation

The history and progression of adult basic education legislation in the United States is useful to understand because it shows how ABE's purpose reflects specific values that were then passed down to the classroom and the way in which some ABE programming has influenced the education of adult learners. Specifically, the legislation surrounding adult basic education has been informed by the belief that a person's value as a citizen relies on their economic success and contributions to the national economy and the need to standardize language based on a White, Western European English at the expense of the native languages and dialects of immigrants and other students for them to be economically successful. These beliefs can be

explored and problematized using the respective theories of critical theory and critical race theory.

Critical Theory

ABE legislation's focus on education as a means for a student to achieve economic success and therefore social worth is in direct conflict with the tenants of critical theory. According to Brookfield (2001), the Marxist conception of commodification where goods and services including human labor can be bought and sold can be applied to adult education. Using the example of learning to read, Brookfield differentiates between the "use value" (p. 11) and the "exchange value" (p. 11) of this skill. Students and instructors may prioritize the use value of literacy and how the student will be able to utilize this skill in more intrinsic ways such as learning about the world and transforming their sense of self within it. However, the people who write the laws and fund ABE are focused on the exchange value of literacy and how the use of that skill will translate to economic, extrinsic value for the student as they are able to move upwards in the workforce. Yet foundational to critical theory is the belief that inequalities between groups of individuals exist within the world and must be addressed to achieve a more just society (Bohman, 2005). Therefore, the use of capitalism and the reduction of labor to a commodity is antithetical to the goals of critical theory and its goal of an equitable society (Brookfield, 2001) and prioritizing the exchange value of literacy rather than its use value further commodifies the student who achieves literacy as a part of the capitalist system. The language of the legislation over the years makes this plain. Beginning in 1964 with the Economic Opportunity Act, the purpose of ABE has been to assist the United States in furthering "its full economic and social potential as a nation" (p. 508) by individuals participating in the labor market "to the full extent of his capabilities" (p. 508). Although a greater recognition of the

intrinsic benefits of ABE have become more prominent as legislation has changed adult education in the United States, at its foundation is an economic concern that seeks to leverage the education of adult learners for national economic gain.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964's pairing of economic and social potential when stating the purpose of adult education is indicative of the conflation of individuals' economic value and social value as it defines what it means to be a citizen within the legislation. This conflation continued throughout legislation dictating the purpose of ABE, such as the Adult Education Act of 1991 which framed literacy as necessary to contribute to a competitive national economy. Therefore, it was through literacy and adult basic education that students were then able to "exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (p. 20). According to English and Mayo (2012), citizenship is the ability for individuals to "contribute to the workings of an ever evolving [sic] democracy" (p. 37). Yet they argued that rather than focusing on the collective, conceptualizations of citizenship within adult education are individualistic and centered on how much a person can produce and consume. Through this lens, citizenship within ABE legislation is not a matter of participating in furthering the democratization of a nation to better serve its citizens, but as Brookfield (2001) noted, to further its economic interests at the cost of commodifying an individual's education and labor.

The redefinition of citizenship as participation in capitalism is troubling because in placing an individual's status of citizen within the context of their production of labor, individuals who cannot normatively contribute to the labor market are presented as lesser, a non-citizen and their worth within a capitalistic society is diminished. English and Mayo (2012) pointed out that there is a stigma around those who engage in non-waged work including older adults. The authors pointed out that of late, older adults have increasingly turned to continuing

education as more are required to work later in life because of diminished social safety nets that had previously ensured older people were financially secure. Furthermore, people with disabilities who cannot participate in the labor market are too often devalued as citizens through the consumerist understanding of citizenship (Robert, 2003) and according to Soldatic (2020), the implementation of new disability classifications such as “partially disabled” (p. 239) are used to force people with disabilities off government assistance and into the work force. Soldatic made the point that the new classification of “partially disabled” is part of an ongoing campaign within capitalist societies across the globe to shame people in poverty or unstable financial situations while calling into question the worthiness of an individual to receive social benefits. Through this method, Soldatic argued governments maintain control over the population and perpetuate a neoliberal capitalist system that divides the poor into categories of the deserving and undeserving. By defining citizenship as the ability to produce labor, ABE legislation contributes to the narrative that the older and the disabled are worth less than the younger and the able-bodied worker.

The framing of ABE as a program tied directly to economic value and capitalist production of wealth within the legislation has translated into the messaging about ABE that is often promoted to the student population which stands in contrast to traditional messaging around higher education. Longstanding messaging around higher education frames a four-year college education around the “college experience” which is just as much about building cultural and social capital and developing a sense of identity as it is about earning a degree to support a future career. The messaging around the college experience is dependent on a traditional-aged college student leaving high school, entering college, and transitioning to adulthood with their departure from college. It assumes affluence or at least a certain amount of middle-class financial

stability, and it assumes a four-year baccalaureate program as the default degree (Bogost, 2020). This messaging has also traditionally presented higher education as something that leads to the personal development of the student and improves the overall quality of society (Trostel, 2015). It is noticeable, however, that within the past few decades and the economic uncertainty ushered in by the Great Recession that the perception of a four-year university education has shifted to be more in alignment with the view of higher education as a private good that can translate into a higher-paying career for the individual (Abel and Dietz, 2014; Ellis, 2018).

While the narrative around a four-year university education has taken on a more pragmatic tone with a more competitive economy and a job market saturated with degree-holders, ABE has experienced the reverse: it originated from a primarily economic purpose, and only after its conception was the emphasis expanded to include personal enrichment. For this reason, it is no wonder that the messaging for ABE is focused on the practical: If students learn these skills, they will be able to financially provide for their families by gaining increased access to the job market. For individuals who are seeking a relatively fast way to develop applicable skills to be used in the workforce, this messaging is attractive. In the conversation around the theoretical, it is vital not to forget the practical: ABE's purpose is to provide education that will help workers gain skills to use in the workforce and increase their financial ability to support themselves and their families. Within a capitalistic system, the importance of this goal cannot be understated. However, given that ABE disproportionately serves people of color, first-generation college students, and people with disabilities (Gregg, 2012), it is important to consider how the goals, messaging, and curriculum of ABE can, without careful thought and consideration, support a system that presents education as an experience for White, upper-class, non-disabled students and an economic necessity for students who have historically been shut out or

underrepresented in higher education and who have often been looked to as sources of labor to move the economy forward (in the case of people of color, immigrants, and the working class), or as burden that need to be moved off of government assistance as much as possible (in the case of people with disabilities).

The problematic nature of equating an individual's value as a citizen with their ability to engage in the labor force and produce economic value is heightened when considering the implications for individuals with disabilities. The language in ABE legislation that equates good citizenship with economic production can be interpreted to reduce the value of a person with a disability if they cannot engage in the work force to the same degree a non-disabled person would. This is a familiar concept within disability studies, which critiques the western capitalist system as ableist in its valuation of an individual based on their ability to produce goods and services that can be measured in economic terms even as Robert (2003) found that employees with disabilities were often the subject of workplace discrimination, harassment, and abuse. For this reason, because ABE serves a disproportionately high number of students with disabilities (Gregg, 2012), programs must be aware of this narrative, and frame ABE as not just a means to engage in labor and create economic value, but one that can, with the right approach and curriculum, empower students with disabilities by providing them an opportunity to oppose the narrative around disabled individuals and their value within society while simultaneously supporting them in their academic and economic pursuits.

Critical Race Theory

Resisting dominant, harmful narratives should not be limited to ABE's support of students with disabilities, but rather, an ongoing practice among any marginalized population that it serves. The concept of the counternarrative originates within critical race theory, and

using a dis/ability critical race theory approach, Annamma et al. (2017) pointed out that disability and race are two identity categories that allow a society to marginalize individuals based on their physical appearance and ability to fit within the norm. Through ableism and racism, “differences are viewed as deficits and marked as abnormal” (p. 153). They argued that to subvert narratives that promote the othering of individuals who do not fit ableist or racist norms, they must be juxtaposed against multidimensional counternarratives. Like Annamma et al. (2017), Zamudio et al. (2011) also recommended counternarratives as a method by which individuals can dismantle racist narratives, specifically within the U.S. educational system. According to Zamudio et al. (2011), conceptions around race embedded in social systems help to shape the ways in which people think about different cultural products, traditions, and bodies of thought and knowledge. They pointed out that U.S. educational institutions are particularly complicit in this process with a hierarchy of knowledge that places White, Eurocentric culture and thought above all else while reinforcing racist ways of thinking about other cultures and races. For this reason, the narratives presented as part of the discourses within an educational system must be critiqued and alternative discourses must be introduced to counter the harmful, racist narratives currently in place.

Annamma et al. (2017) and Zamudio et al.’s (2011) critique around the framing of Whiteness as normal within the educational system is founded in critical race theory (CRT), which, according to Crenshaw et al. (1995), seeks to understand how White supremacy is embedded in the United States and oppresses people of color, and subsequently addresses this oppression through social change for the purposes of “human liberation” (p. xiii). Crenshaw et al. pointed out that CRT scholarship is not neutral in its approach but rejects the contemporary conceptions of racism as limited to “rare and aberrational” (p. xiv) intentional acts by a select

few bad actors within an otherwise just and colorblind society. Instead, CRT embraces “race-consciousness” (p. xiv), recognizing the role race and racism plays in every aspect of a society and its structures rather than seeing society as neutral and equitable. From this perspective, anti-racist work must take place on a systems level including within the law and legislation such as the English language mandates within the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and within the systems where the legislation is enacted, such as the U.S. educational system. The focus on English language skills for immigrants predates the modern conception of ABE (The Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 2013) and throughout ABE legislation, English Language Learning is a persistent goal, not just for immigrants, but for anyone whose mastery of English was perceived as an impairment (“Economic Opportunity Act of 1964”), limited (“Economic Opportunity Act of 1966”), or “educationally disadvantaged” (“Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998,” 102 STAT. 310). However, scholars have critiqued the focus on standardized English language learning as a tenant of educational curriculum, arguing that it centers and privileges a White, Western Eurocentric worldview and discourse and disadvantages people of color in their educational progress (Mutnick, 1996; Zamudio et al., 2011; Inoue, 2015).

ABE’s longstanding White Eurocentric approach to standard English language reading and writing, driven by legislative mandate, demonstrates how the hierarchy of culture that Zamudio et al. (2011) discussed is deeply embedded in a system of education ostensibly designed to support individuals marginalized within the United States. According to Mutnick (1996), the changing demographics within higher education as the student population increased demanded an increased need for “basic writing” (p. xiii). Yet Mutnick argued that labeling a student as a basic writer is a way of othering them based on race, gender, and socioeconomic status. Because basic writing is “sociohistorical, economic, and political” (p. xiii) in both its

implementation and content, she believed that basic writing programs needed to be reconceived in order to avoid a capricious “two-track system” (p. xiv) of education that placed some students in a basic skills track while elevating others to college-level coursework. Community colleges serve a disproportionately high percentage of low-income students, first-generation students, and students of color compared to four-year institutions, and nearly sixty percent of community college students who recently graduated high school took one or more pre-college courses (Finn and Avni, 2016). In their study of a New York community college, Finn and Avni (2016) discovered that in basic writing courses a linguistic bias prioritizing English as “the only language that matters” (p.381) aligned college readiness with specific types of writing and language to the exclusion of others. Furthermore, as Shore (2001) pointed out, the very andragogy of adult education comes from a White framework, including how many educators conceive of who adult learners are, the curriculum presented to students, and the ways in which educators engage with students in the classroom. Shore argued that because of widely accepted adult learning principles, a “universal form of adult education practice” (p. 48) has taken root in many adult education programs and influenced how educators teach their students within a narrow range of acceptable academic practices that prioritize and center whiteness in the classroom. The idea that the curriculum of basic writing courses is othering large segments of the student population and reinforcing an oppressive hierarchy of culture should be troubling to any community college educator who teaches ABE writing courses.

Impacts on Teaching

The purpose of this dissertation in practice is not to disparage the work of ABE programs and the faculty and staff that work hard every day to serve the students. After all, I too am a faculty member of an ABE program. ABE faculty and staff, in my experience, care deeply about

the education and well-being of their students. This is a field of education that calls people to service, and through our work, students who might otherwise struggle to find an entry point into higher education have access (Fike and Fike, 2008; MPR Associates, Inc, 2017). There is a very practical need for our students to be able to live within the existing capitalist system so they can provide themselves and their families with housing, food, and other necessities of life within the United States. A high school diploma is no longer sufficient to earn a living wage; further education is becoming more and more vital to economic survival, especially when recognizing the income inequality that people of color, people with disabilities, and women face in the work force (Kochhar and Cilluffo, 2018; Cheeseman Day and Taylor, 2019; Graf et al., 2019). In response to this need for additional education and training, ABE provides opportunities for job training and skill building that creates greater economic opportunities for many who struggle.

Yet as Sissel (2001) noted, adult education is not free of political influence, and this political influence can perpetuate the marginalization or oppression of student populations through power structures created on the policy level as well as in the classroom. Without an awareness of this political influence, instructors can unwittingly promote this oppression and replicate inequitable power structures in our teaching practices even as we may be thinking we are opposing inequity through our work. According to Sissel, every decision we make as a program or as individual instructors in our classrooms is steeped in politics and either replicates or resists systems of oppression. She wrote, “when adult educators, individually or collectively, choose to honor or ignore new information about differing cultures, learning styles, ways of knowing, or contextual influences, they are acting politically” (p. 9). She goes on to explain, “only when adult educators embrace a true commitment to try to understand the lived experiences and perspectives that diverse learners bring to educational settings can the interests

of both the educator and the learner be at the center” (p. 9). We as ABE instructors must recognize that what we do has an impact on larger systems of power, and we are all implicated in how these systems positively or negatively impact those who are marginalized or oppressed. We must work to change our approach to adult education so that we can push against these systems of oppression. I believe that in doing this work, we can not only make ABE programming a source of social justice and equity, but in accordance with this goal, increase the persistence and retention of our student population as well.

Persistence and Retention

Student success as measured through the metrics of persistence and retention is a perennial concern within ABE. Historically, as ABE legislation progressed, more stipulations around reporting student progress, program improvement, and other metrics of success were built into the bills and attached to requirements around funding. For example, “Educational Amendments of 1978” required that state plans for ABE programming “set forth the criteria by which the State will evaluate the quality of proposals from local agencies, organizations, and institutions” as well as “provide such further information and assurances as the Commissioner may by regulation require, including information regarding the extent to which the goals of the program have been achieved during the preceding three years” (p. 92 STAT. 2359). It is noteworthy that in this legislation, states were responsible for establishing their own criteria of evaluation, although evaluation was an expected component of setting up ABE programming. More recently, the 2014 reauthorization of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) instituted six common criteria for ABE to be shared with any Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program, many of which are focused on student academic progress and degree or job attainment and retention (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). ABE evaluation

criteria have become more focused on student skill acquisition, progression through the program, and successful attainment of certification, a degree, or employment. As a result, student retention and persistence become vital for ABE programming to ensure the continued funding of these programs. But the federal government was not alone in its concerns around the effectiveness of ABE. Academic literature also worried about the ability for these programs to foster student persistence throughout a course and retention through the end of the program and into the next stage of their academic journey or into the workforce (Jha, 1991; Perin and Greenberg, 1994; Patterson & Mellard, 2007; Fike and Fike, 2008, Tighe et al., 2013; Fernandez et al., 2017; Idoko, 2018; Kappel, 2018). Furthermore, as scholars have recognized how systemic oppression of historically marginalized populations has impacted ABE students, the literature has also expanded to focus on the fact that different minority populations have a higher rate of stopping out or dropping out of ABE programs than those in the majority (Holmes, 1995; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002; Hurdt, 2018; Robinson, 2019).

To address the concerns around persistence and retention in ABE programming, the ways in which curriculum and teaching practices are inclusive or exclusive to varied ways of knowing and being must be considered and addressed. According to Hanson and Jaffe (2021), Adult education must be decolonized to address the unspoken norming of Western ways of thinking and bodies of knowledge as superior, and in doing so, “work to undermine and destroy beliefs, symbols, values, and epistemologies of the colonized to establish universal models that are prejudged as modern and rational” (par. 4). They argued that decolonization will improve adult education by establishing greater “equity, epistemic pluralism, and social justice” (par. 8). Like Hanson and Jaffe’s claim that Western ways of thinking and knowing become the accepted norm in education, Shore (2001) also wrote that because whiteness is an invisible force within the

educational system, its effects on pedagogy are unseen as well, forming the basis for what educators consider principles of adult learning. Critiquing the concept of andragogy, Shore argued that this conception of the adult learner is one that presumes the learner to be White and in doing so, imbues the generic (White) adult learner with qualities and preferences valued in Western culture. With this understanding of the pervasive nature of whiteness within education, Shore urged other White educators to consciously acknowledge the oppression that comes with this dominant culture and how it negatively impacts people of color. For Shore, “[White adult educators] need to be answerable for what our schooling has taught us to see... or not see” (p. 839).

Like Sissel (2001), Bounous (2001) also argued that teaching is a political act, and the educational system reproduces larger social inequities and disempowerment for students who experience marginalization in the world outside the classroom. She pointed out that this disempowerment comes from educational situations where “the experiences and knowledge they bring... are often not recognized or valued” (p. 2921). Yet like Hanson and Jaffe (2021) Bounous (2001) also argued that there is the possibility of resisting this disempowerment through “counterhegemonic practices” (p. 2921) and a radical reexamination of teaching practices. Citing Freire and Kreisberg (1992) as influences, Bounous (2001) recommended educators adopt a collaborative model of teaching that deconstructs the teacher/learner relationship and decentralizes the power of that relationship and shares it between both instructor and student. She points out that both students and instructors must trust each other if they are to learn how to share power and recognize the collaborative nature of learning. She pointed out that socioeconomic differences must be recognized and any stereotypes or assumptions about others

had to be recognized and addressed for a collaborative model of teaching and learning to truly function.

For ABE programs to achieve outcome-based goals and demonstrate persistence and retention in their programs, administrators and faculty must first recognize that ABE, like the larger system of U.S. education, is based in a values system that privileges some of our students while alienating others and reifies systems of oppression that some of our students encounter every day outside of our classrooms. The ABE classroom is not free of the prejudices, oppression, and politics that shape the larger narratives around race, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, or socioeconomic class. Without realizing it, instructors trained in dominant ways of thinking and knowing can create structures that reinforce structural challenges for those who are different to succeed. It is no wonder then that minority populations have higher rates of dropping out of ABE programs (Holmes, 1995; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002; Hurdt, 2018; Robinson, 2019). From the legislation that provides ABE its mission and funding, to the educational systems that have trained our instructors, to the frameworks to think about and teach our students, all draw from systems of oppression. I believe that ABE programs and the instructors who teach in them can and must do their best to support adult learners' educations by challenging the unstated norms that too often are left unnoticed within the systems we participate in and within ourselves as well. By challenging and rethinking how we teach adult basic education to better serve the students we engage with every day, we will begin to dismantle some of the systems of oppression within our programs and even our own classrooms while fostering student persistence and retention. With this goal in mind, in the next section, I will provide a review of relevant theoretical frameworks that can and do inform our teaching practices.

Part Two: A Review of Relevant Theoretical Frameworks in Literature

Literature Review Methodology

For this literature review, I began by searching for central concepts around adult learning including andragogy, social and cultural capital, and community cultural wealth as they pertain to adult basic education and adult learning. Each of these concepts have proponents, practitioners, and critics, and each are used to inform adult basic education. As Gouthro (2019) argued, to effectively teach adult education, instructors must understand the theories that inform practice. This is particularly true if instructors seek to challenge dominant and oppressive barriers for marginalized student populations and determine “good adult educational practices” (p. 72). To search for literature related to these concepts, I used the University of Washington’s online library databases as well as *Google* and *Google Scholar* searches. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was limited in my ability to go to the physical University of Washington libraries and access hardcopy texts. For this reason, if electronic versions of texts were unavailable through the university library system, I purchased them online as either electronic texts or in hardcopy to be shipped to my home. As I began to find sources related to these topics, I used the references sections to accumulate other sources that would potentially prove useful. While this literature review is not meant to be exhaustive, it is intended to provide the ABE practitioner with a foundation of literature to begin further research while synthesizing the ongoing discussions within adult basic education research around these theoretical concepts. For this reason, I have organized this literature review around each of these theories.

Andragogy

Andragogy is one of the most popular philosophies of adult learning. Sandlin (2005) called it “a cornerstone of adult education” (p. 25) and numerous practitioners have worked to

implement the concepts of andragogy in their classrooms and programs. Malcolm Knowles' work in Americanizing the existing European concept of andragogy was instrumental in establishing a different way of thinking about adult learners, separate from pedagogical approaches used with children. Through numerous volumes and over decades, Knowles established six assumptions about adult learners and presented strategies to support their learning. Because Knowles' version of andragogy is so influential, it must be included in this literature review. However, there is criticism of the Americanized version of andragogy that speaks to the idea that teaching is a political act that can reinforce or resist creating hierarchies of knowledge and language, as the first part of this dissertation presented. Therefore, this section of the literature review will first present the concept of andragogy and its six assumptions, problematize Knowles' work, and then present some of the responses to that criticism. In presenting this information, I argue that while there are useful concepts within andragogy, it is a mistake to assume that it can be used universally within any adult learning situation, and as adult basic education faculty, we must be aware of andragogy's shortcomings if our goal is to resist the systemic influences that can result in White, Eurocentric teaching practices and curriculum.

Although the first use of the term andragogy can be dated to 1833 in Europe (Loeng, 2018), Knowles is credited as "the Father of Andragogy in the United States" (Knowles et al., 2015, n.p.). He explained that he first conceived of andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (1980, p. 43) and placed it in contrast to pedagogy, "the art and science of teaching children" (1980, p. 43). Yet Knowles went on to explain that rather than seeing these two theories of learning as a dichotomy, they should instead be viewed within a spectrum in which any learner, either child or adult, progresses. Foundational to the theory of andragogy, Knowles named four assumptions about adult learners: that as children become adults, they become more

self-directed, they possess an increasing number of experiences to use in the learning process, their “social roles” (p. 45) direct their learning, and they see learned knowledge as useful in the immediate future to perform a task. Yet Knowles argued that because adults have been educated from primary school in the pedagogical model of learning, they can continue to expect a more passive learning experience in which they are the recipients of knowledge that is given to them by the instructor rather than taking an active, “self-directed” (p. 46) approach. Knowles also pointed out that adult learners may carry negative feelings and attitudes about education from childhood to adulthood, and these negative feelings may create barriers to learning in the adult education setting.

To address these challenges and teach to this different conception of an adult learner, Knowles (1980) presented implications of each of the four assumptions predicated andragogy. In response to the assumption that adults are more self-directed than children, he argued that adult learning must approach the learning environment, the attitudes of instructors, policies, and assessment with adults in mind. He argued adults want to be respected and treated like adults, rather than children. Knowles pointed out that adults should take an active role in the planning and creation of coursework and engage in self-evaluation instead of the pedagogical model of instructor-assigned grades. With the student empowered, Knowles argued instructors should take on the supportive role of a guide while the students take on the active role of learner. In response to the assumption that adults possess greater experience than children, and that their identities are directly tied to their experiences, Knowles recommended that instructors capitalize on these experiences and require students to draw on them to complete assignments and connect new knowledge to practical application. In response to the assumption that a student’s developmental stage in society has an impact on their learning, Knowles recommended that content be

structured in a logical progression. The most immediately important content should be presented first to provide a clear starting point. Instructors should also consider whether students should be grouped heterogeneously or homogeneously in their identities when the occasion arises to provide different or similar perspectives in completing the developmental assignment or task. Finally, with the assumption that adults are more task- or purpose-oriented in thinking about their learning, Knowles recommended that instructors organize content by what students need to know and be able to accomplish to complete external tasks or purposes that drive their need for further education. Rather than organizing curricula by complexity, he argued programs should group concepts around a central problem area that students are concerned about or need to address outside of the classroom. To determine what that problem is, instructors need to ask students what they would like to learn to establish a starting point for the course's curriculum. Knowles explained that in addition to these recommendations, it is understood within andragogy that adults are capable of learning and not hindered by their age, that learning must happen internally and cannot occur due to outside influences, and that not all teaching practices are equally effective.

In later years, the assumptions (later termed principles) around andragogy increased by two, with the addition of motivation and the need to know. Like the assumption that learning must happen internally and cannot be forced upon an adult learner (Knowles, 1980), Knowles et al. (2015) argued that learning is most effective for adults when the motivation is intrinsic rather than extrinsic, and that adults have an intrinsic motivation to grow and develop. The second addition to the list of andragogical assumptions is that adults need to have a reason why they should learn a concept or skill before starting the learning process. If learners see the need in

experiential terms or in terms of advancement in their lives, Knowles et al. believed this need becomes real to them.

Although the assumptions-turned-principles of andragogy are widely discussed and implemented, andragogical studies have found mixed success in its implementation and scholars of adult education have critiqued it for its perceived shortcomings. Rachal (2002) questioned the effectiveness of andragogy, given that there have been few studies that have examined whether andragogy is effective, and the studies that have been done have found mixed success. Rachal pointed to the numerous ways andragogy can be applied to a diverse range of settings explain why studies about the effectiveness of andragogy are hard to conduct. He also pointed out that many practitioners may have a distorted understanding of andragogy and think they are closely adhering to the principles of andragogy when they are not. Ultimately, he suggested that the “spirit of andragogy” (p. 224), rather than andragogy-as-science, should be what adult learning should work to incorporate in each of its classes. According to Sandlin (2005), critics have also argued that andragogy treats education as politically neutral, assumes the adult learner holds a dominant White, male, middle-class identity that promotes discrimination, “ignores other ways of knowing” (p. 27), ignores the larger connection between the learner and broader society, and reifies social inequalities. Duff (2019) elaborated on this last point by critiquing andragogy for its colorblind assumptions about the adult learner. He argued that andragogy was not an appropriate way to approach teaching Black men or other people of color given that it ignores the longstanding history of racism and prejudice against them within the United States. Loeng (2018) pointed out that Knowles’ theory of andragogy is different from other European interpretations, in that it focused on the self-improvement of the individual learner through “career and lifestyle” (p. 8) and argued that Knowles did not connect this self-improvement to

larger social change and improvement. While Henschke (2011) defended Knowles' conception of andragogy, like Loeng (2018), he also noted that the concept of andragogy has been applied differently in various global contexts and argued that the concept "should go beyond Knowles' version and include the world-wide perspective of others who have written and published on andragogy" (p. 36).

In response to the numerous critiques, Knowles et al. (2015) argued that the purpose of andragogy had been misunderstood by critics who pointed out the disconnect between Knowles' conception of andragogy and larger social change. According to Knowles et al., "Andragogy's critics are correct in saying that andragogy does not explicitly and exclusively embrace outcomes such as social change and critical theory, but they are incorrect in thinking that it should" (p. 74). Instead, Knowles et al. claimed that andragogy was intended to be transactional in its approach, rooted in pragmatism and focused on the individual. In fact, Knowles et al. rejected the idea that andragogy is a theory at all, instead labeling it a "transactional model" (p. 74) to be applied in various settings with adult learners, not just adult education. They argued that andragogy could be applied with other theories that are centered on issues of social change and justice but should not be applied to this purpose alone.

Cultural and Social Capital

Bourdieu's theory of cultural and social capital has been widely used to frame the ways in which education serves as a space for students to develop knowledge, skills, and relationships that can translate to economic capital (Lareau and Weininger, 2003). Within ABE, the concept of cultural capital, whether mentioned by name or not, influences the work we do as instructors. However, scholars have critiqued Bourdieu's theories of cultural and social capital and argued they have been used in higher education to justify a narrative around lower-income students and

students of color that presents them as culturally deficient and in need of acculturation through the educational system (Yosso, 2005; Townsend, 2008; Lo, 2015; O'Shea, 2016). Other critics of cultural capital point out that the default cultural capital that is most highly valued is White and middle-class, creating a norm around White culture that marginalizes and devalues the cultures of people of color and lower-income populations (Yosso, 2005). Still other scholars defend Bourdieu's work, arguing that cultural capital has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by critics (Lareau and Wieninger, 2003). For this reason, it is valuable for ABE instructors to be aware of Bourdieu's work, as well as some of the criticism surrounding it. Like andragogy, the problematic implications of the theory of cultural capital should encourage ABE instructors dedicated to social justice in their teaching practices to consider how this theory has informed their work. To that end, this section of the literature review will briefly summarize Bourdieu's theories around cultural, social, and economic capital and present some of the perspectives in the debate surrounding his work.

Bourdieu (2002) defined capital as "accumulated labor" (p. 280) that can be transformed into "social energy" (p. 280) which can then be accumulated, inherited, reproduced, and transformed into various kinds of tangible and intangible profits within society. According to Bourdieu, capital is what prevents success within its society a game of chance. Instead, "the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent structure of the social world... which govern its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success..." (p. 280). Here Bourdieu argued that not only is capital in its various forms a feature of a society, but it is also an integral part of a society's structure and how society functions for the individuals who succeed or fail within it. However, Bourdieu defined capital as more than economic, but in terms of cultural and social

capital as well. Economic capital is based on currency and property, cultural capital is based on education and can be converted into economic capital, and social capital can be thought of as interpersonal connections that could also be converted into economic capital or “institutionalized” (p. 281) into socially recognized forms of prestige.

Bourdieu (2002) further broke down cultural capital into three states: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. He likened the embodied form of cultural capital to muscular development where the individual must dedicate time and energy to its acquisition and the resulting capital is “assimilated” into the individual’s own body (p. 283). Therefore, embodied cultural capital cannot be easily transferred from one person to another the way economic capital can without destroying its value, and Bourdieu argued “it declines and dies with its bearer” (p. 283). However, he went on to explain that this form of cultural capital can be materially profitable depending on how scarce the capital is based on who else possesses it, and how valuable a society sees that capital. In this way, the fewer people who have cultural capital, the more powerful and influential the holders of capital become and the more they can determine how cultural capital is reproduced. Bourdieu argued that one of the most effective means of cultural capital reproduction was through families, where parents embodied with cultural capital could begin the process of acquisition with their children from the time they are born and use their childhoods to acquire greater cultural capital than someone who started the acquisition process in their adulthood. For this reason, Bourdieu believed that economic capital gave families an advantage to develop cultural capital, in that the longer someone could go without working, the more time they had to develop intangible forms of capital to be embodied. In contrast to embodied cultural capital, objectified cultural capital can be transferred from person to person and owned as it is in the material form of cultural products like artwork. However,

Bourdieu pointed out that to properly use objectified cultural capital, the owner must possess a certain degree of cultural capital themselves. In this way, some objects will have both an economic capital value and a cultural capital value.

In discussing the institutionalized state of capital, Bourdieu (2002) explained that when institutions such as academia confers official certification of cultural knowledge on a person, this act creates a form of cultural capital that provides a “conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value” (p. 285) for the person who possesses it. He argued that this kind of transmission of capital is powerful because it is a collective act, with society recognizing the tangible and intangible value that this kind of institutionalized capital provides. Through the institution, cultural capital can more easily be translated into economic capital, and cultural capital can be quantified and compared within individuals in the job market. However, that translation to economic capital does depend on how many individuals possess this capital, with fewer people possessing that cultural capital resulting in higher potential translated economic value.

The idea of the institutional state of cultural capital is related to the concept of social capital, in that, according to Bourdieu (2002), social capital is formed through interpersonal relationships formed within social institutions. Within these institutions, resources are compiled and used by members to accrue further social and economic capital. Bourdieu uses the examples of a prominent family name or academic institution to demonstrate how social capital is “socially instituted and guaranteed” (p. 286) by inducting new members into these organizations. These members are then responsible for adding to the accrued tangible or intangible capital mutually possessed by the group. Bourdieu wrote, “the network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at

establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term” (p. 287). Because social capital is dependent upon useable relationships-as-investments, who is permitted into that relationship is subject to scrutiny and what Bourdieu called “consecration” (p. 287), the act of institutional acceptance through the exchange of material or immaterial capital. The process of consecration allows the inductee to be recognized within the group and creates a barrier to limit others who have not undergone this process to be excluded. Because the terms of entry, parameters, and very identity of the group can be changed by members once they have been admitted into the group, Bourdieu pointed out that existing members of the group can have an interest in maintaining the homogeneity of the group and who is admitted, maintaining the status quo. Ultimately, Bourdieu (2002) argued that all capital is economic capital in more or less hidden forms, and only needs to be transformed at various levels of cost to see its economic form. But while there is an economic root to all forms of capital, there is an added value component to cultural and social capital that elevates their effect beyond the purely economic, something that is lost when capital is only thought of in purely economic terms.

In response to Bourdieu’s theories of cultural capital, critics have problematized the idea of some cultures having a high capital value while others seem to go unrecognized as valuable. For example, Lo (2015) agreed with Bourdieu that because cultural capital is valued when it belongs to the elite, it allows for the domination or exclusion of others. Yet she argued that undervalued cultural capital, what she termed “unrecognized cultural currency” (p. 126), can serve to undermine an oppressive system. For example, the use of language, hairstyles, questions framed as feigned ignorance, or “covert maneuvering” (p. 139), a kind of “covert negotiation with the system” (p. 139) can subtly counter dominant agendas, structures, and institutions that oppress those who do not possess the cultural capital valued in the dominant culture. In his work

with a diverse group of adult and community education (ACE) learners in Australia, Townsend (2008) studied the role of cultural capital reproduction within ACE programs and determined that rather than helping students develop cultural capital, ACE programs can reinforce social control and dominant White culture while the knowledge, experiences, and skills of the diverse group of learners was not recognized or included in the curriculum. He concluded that ACE needed “to develop an experiential and ecological (humanist and interactionist) approach to planning and facilitating ACE programs of diverse types for diverse individuals and communities” (p. 88) while building a curriculum based on a mix of teaching practices such as cultural activities, networking within a community, and classroom and workplace instruction. Compton-Lily (2007) examined cultural capital as it pertained to literacy for two Puerto Rican GED/CNA students and their child and grandchild attending kindergarten in the northeast of the United States. She argued that because of White, Eurocentric notions of social capital and racism embedded within the educational system, the capital passed down from parents and older family members to children is not seen by the educational system. Rather, White-coded behaviors around literacy are seen as more valuable social capital, even if the literacy skills themselves are less developed.

However, some scholars argue that Bourdieu’s conception of cultural capital is not limited to the knowledge and culture of the elite classes. For example, Lareau and Wieninger (2003) performed an evaluation of research examining cultural capital, arguing that Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital is often misconstrued in education literature and taken to refer to “‘highbrow’ aesthetic culture” (p. 568) with specific elite cultural knowledge associated with a higher socioeconomic status. This version of cultural capital is then traded in for greater academic success apart from students’ actual ability to master the content. However, Lareau and

Weininger also found that some scholars did not draw a clear distinction between social status and ability, and instead viewed cultural capital as cultural knowledge that allows a student to fit in to the academic environment, such as vocabulary, behavior in the classroom, and academic habits. As a result, critics of cultural capital believed that cultural knowledge allowed students to be more effective in the learning process which translated to higher grades, and teachers would reward students for behavior in line with cultural norms. This understanding seems to be more in line with their own definition of cultural capital that “allows culture to be used as a resource that provides access to scarce rewards, is subject to monopolization, and, under certain conditions, may be transmitted from one generation to the next” (p. 587).

The ways in which cultural and social capital reifies privilege and oppression within a society has been applied to ABE, with critics and researchers pointing out that educational institutions can either work against the replication of hierarchical cultural capital or reinforce it through their curriculum and teaching practices. To examine how adult education can better tailor curriculum to support immigrants’ needs, Gray (2019) classified a sample population’s existing human and cultural capital into five different groups and determined various levels of skill development in English reading, writing, and math, as well as other qualities such as volunteerism, social trust, and readiness to learn. Gray argued that determining these five classes helped demonstrate that ABE needs to take a differentiated approach to programming and curriculum to be more efficient and incorporate learners’ existing skills and knowledge while also expanding the definition of what is considered human and cultural capital. Taking the view that increasing social capital can create stronger bonds within a society and improve the larger community, Black et al. (2006) through their study of Australian adult learning cohorts argued that social capital is created through adult learning programs that supports participants in

creating stronger connections within their community in addition to the human capital such as reading and writing skills they develop. Moreover, the social capital students develop translates to economic capital as well. For this reason, Black et al. believed that efforts to encourage social capital building needs to be purposefully incorporated within adult education alongside curriculum focused on human capital. In Strawn's (2003) study of adult learners who had not finished high school, she found that the amount of social capital an adult student possessed helped to determine how likely they were to engage in ABE. For example, students with less familiar connections were more likely to attend ABE courses, and knowing someone with a college education decreased participants' likelihood to enroll in ABE. Strawn found that if an adult without a high school education had high social capital, they were less likely to pursue the human capital that ABE provides. Strawn hypothesized that high levels of social capital within their social network might negate the need for the skills and knowledge that they would develop in an ABE program, but pointed to this area for possible further research and inquiry.

Community Cultural Wealth

Yosso's (2005) conception of community cultural wealth is in direct conversation with Bourdieu's theory of cultural and social capital. By expanding the definition of capital and decentering White upper-class culture, Yosso applied a critical race theory lens to the idea that people accrue knowledge, skills, relationships, and other forms of intangible capital that they use in their everyday lives. Specifically focusing on people of color and the capital they bring to the educational setting, Yosso's theory has been applied to numerous educational settings with a variety of student populations, and in this way, her work has been applied to other marginalized identities beyond race. However, in my research for this literature review, I found scant research focusing on community cultural wealth within ABE. For this reason, I begin this portion of the

literature review by summarizing Yosso's theory of community cultural wealth, and then present some of the student populations where her work has been applied. While many of these works do not focus specifically on ABE programs, the student demographics that serve as the focus of these studies are present in our ABE courses. I believe that referencing these works here can serve as a starting point for researchers who may want to use these studies as a foundation for future research focusing on how community cultural wealth can be a resource for these student populations within the ABE setting.

Responding to Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, Yosso (2005) argued that cultural capital is often interpreted to align itself with the dominant, White, upper-class culture. As a result, people of color are assumed to lack cultural capital, needing educational systems to provide this knowledge and capital to achieve social mobility. To address this assumption, Yosso introduced six forms of capital within the umbrella term of community cultural wealth. They are aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital. She based these forms of capital on Solórzano's (1997, 1998) "five tenants of CRT that can and should inform theory, research, pedagogy, curriculum, and policy" (p. 73). First, the premise that racism is intertwined with other forms of oppression based on gender, class, and other identities. Second, that education and research cannot be colorblind or neutral in issues of racism and in fact promote White privilege. Third, CRT maintains a social justice and transformative goal that translates to what Bell termed "interest convergence" within research. Fourth, that the stories, experiences, and narratives of people of color is necessary for an understanding of racist systems of oppression, and fifth, that CRT incorporates multiple disciplines in its work. Yosso went on to explain that the six forms of capital she has identified "most often go unacknowledged or unrecognized" (p. 70) even though they are present in the classroom through the students of

color who accrue these forms of capital through their families and communities. She believed that because these forms of capital are ignored in the classroom setting, they are “under-utilized assets” (p. 70) for students and can be used to play a role in the transformation of education addressing systemic oppression based in race, class, and gender.

Yosso (2005) went on to argue that deficit thinking within education leads to racist perspectives about learners of color who are perceived as lacking cultural knowledge or an interest in education, and therefore earn low grades and are not successful in the educational system. She pointed out that this deficit approach creates stereotypes around the families of people of color and that instructors often take a colorblind approach to education without recognizing how it reinforces dominant White cultural norms. As a result, instructors often work to “fill up supposedly passive students with forms of knowledge deemed valuable by dominant society” (p. 75) and require students to conform to those dominant cultural norms. To address this problem, Yosso believed that instructors need to be challenged to examine their own thinking around issues of race, class, and gender and where there may be prejudice. She also argued that the conceptions of the “culturally wealthy” and “culturally poor” derived from Bourdieu’s work with cultural capital needs to be scrutinized for the way in which it standardizes White, middle-class culture and uses it as a measurement for all other culture and its value. To do this, Yosso reclassifies cultural capital in terms of community cultural wealth drawing on the “knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression” (p. 77).

Within her article, Yosso (2005) briefly explains each of the six forms of cultural capital and provides examples drawn from the literature. She defines aspirational capital as “the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers” (p.

77), linguistic capital as “the intellectual and social skills attained through communication in more than one language and/or style” (p. 77) including different genres and forms such as storytelling, music, or poetry. She went on to define familial capital as “cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin)” (p. 79) that includes extended and nontraditional understandings of family as well. She pointed out that familial capital can be created through community gatherings and a shared sense of connection around common challenges or problems. Yosso explained social capital as “networks of people and community resources” (p. 79) that can support an individual as they make their way through various institutions within society. She used the example of a student getting support from their community to find, apply for, and earn a college scholarship. Within this process, Yosso points out that not only would the student receive concrete support in the form of completing the application, but emotional support and reassurance as a form of social capital. Related to social capital, navigational capital was defined by Yosso as movement through inequitable or “racially hostile” (p. 80) institutions that require resilience from people of color to navigate. She pointed out that while the individual themselves must take agency, navigational capital is also built up by a community or network of support that helps the individual through. Finally, resistant capital encompasses “the knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality” (p. 80). Yosso wrote that examples of this capital included parents teaching self-worth within a culture that devalues them, and efforts to change oppressive societal structures.

Yosso (2005) focused on students of color in her theory of community cultural wealth, and numerous others have applied this concept to specific populations of students of color such as Latinx students in the community college (Butler et al., 2020). Butler et al. performed a literature review examining twenty-one studies pertaining to community cultural wealth and its

impact on student engagement for Latinx students. Grouping their findings around four themes related to community cultural wealth, Butler et al. found that building relationships through mentoring and with members of faculty and staff were important for student engagement, and recommended community colleges implement practices for Latinx students that focused on aspirational capital, navigational capital, and social capital as these three forms of community cultural wealth were dominant in their review of the studies. Perez (2017) examined how community cultural wealth fostered student persistence for twenty-one Latino undergraduates at two selective universities. He argued that familial capital was important for student success, and that colleges should develop activities and programs that foster this form of capital for Latino students to increase student engagement and academic achievement. Through a study of the role community cultural wealth plays in the mentorship of Latinx students, Gamez (2017) created a new form of community cultural wealth: relational capital, expanding on Yosso's (2005) work. Gamez (2007) explained that relational capital included three subthemes and eight tools that mentors used to connect with students, and with these seven forms of community cultural wealth, mentors were able to foster strong relationships with their mentees and support their academic success.

Beyond examining the impact community cultural wealth has on specific racial or ethnic student populations, others have expanded the application of community cultural wealth to other student demographics including first-generation students (O'Shea, 2016) and the benefits of peer coaching for first-generation students as a source of community cultural wealth (Symonds, 2020), students with limited or interrupted formal education attending ESL programs (Porter, 2013), bilingual students' linguistic and identity development (Lynch, 2018), and "mature, working-class students" (Hope and Quinlan, 2020). Burciaga and Kohli (2018) examined how

community cultural wealth has been applied to teachers of color, examining how their work performance is evaluated through White norms and cultural values and are sometimes found lacking based on the same kind of larger deficit-based stereotypes and racist beliefs students of color experience in education. Burciaga and Kohli argued that due to a dominant White culture in the schools they examined, the two teachers of color in the study were not recognized for the community cultural wealth they brought to the institution and their contributions to building successful learning communities founded on community cultural wealth. While the literature presented here is not specifically focused on ABE, it demonstrates the ways in which community cultural wealth can be used as a framework to examine other marginalized identities, including many who can also be found within ABE programs such as first-generation students, ESL language learners with interrupted formal education, bilingual students, older adult learners, and working-class learners. As Yosso (2005) noted, CRT is founded on “*the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination*” (p. 73, emphasis in the original). For this reason, community cultural wealth can resist not only oppression based in racism and White supremacy, but other intersecting forms of oppression disguised as dominant cultural norms as well.

Summary

This review of the literature is intended to provide a brief survey of three theories frequently used in adult education. While andragogy and cultural and social wealth are commonly applied to ABE, both are problematic in their conception, and need to be scrutinized if they are to be applied to the ABE classroom. Community cultural wealth, by far the most recent of the three theories presented here, has nevertheless been applied in a variety of ways to examine how to better serve a diverse range of student populations. However, the lack of literature applying community cultural wealth to ABE programs demonstrates that there is an

evident gap in the literature that needs to be addressed. My hope is that this dissertation in practice will encourage ABE educators to begin thinking about how community cultural wealth can be embedded within ABE programs and curriculum, and in this way, future research can be performed to determine whether the benefits of this expanded form of cultural wealth will carry over to ABE student populations in the same way it has been shown to do with similar student demographics in other college settings.

Part Three: Examining Strategies that Promote Success for Adult Basic Education

Students

Introduction

The professional development seminar, “Examining Strategies that Promote Success for Adult Basic Education Students” was born out of my own experiences as an ABE instructor. During my eleven years of teaching, primarily in community colleges and often in pre-college writing courses, I saw firsthand the balancing act most ABE students face when trying to attend classes while working, taking care of family, and navigating a host of other responsibilities and life challenges that come with adulthood and oftentimes, low-income status. Furthermore, I saw firsthand how the higher education system creates systemic barriers for marginalized students, arguably without malicious intent, but nevertheless having a detrimental impact. I also recognized how I, as an instructor, could unintentionally cause damage to my students if I was not intentional and mindful of the power structure granted to me first by my own identities and second by the institution reified within the traditional classroom structure. Despite my own marginalized statuses, as a gay, Chinese American with a physical disability, I possess identities that provide me with privilege as well: a cisgender male with light skin, raised in a middle-class family and steeped in Western culture using standard English language. I had used my privilege to attain a graduate degree in English and I had attained further privilege as an agent of the institutions in which I taught. Looking back, I recognize how unaware of my privilege I was, and it was through my experiences with students in the classroom, getting to know them, their lives, and their stories, that I began to recognize my own privileged status. Recognizing my own position of power also came with time and reflection when after the fact, I realized that I had made a mistake. Why couldn't I have given that extension or accepted that late paper? Why

didn't I check in with that student after that class conversation? From my experience, many instructors who come to the community college system with expertise in content areas hone their teaching practices through experience and whatever professional development opportunities are available at their institution or in their region. Especially for adjunct instructors, balancing multiple courseloads at different colleges makes attending professional development difficult, if not impossible. As a result, some instructors become better teachers through trial and error and by using teaching methods and philosophies, and ideas picked up through hallway conversations and informal mentorship relationships with older faculty and deans. While my own university background provided an excellent program to support graduate students in learning how to teach composition, it was through my experiences working with students, making the time and effort to attend professional development opportunities, and seeking out mentors at my colleges that I began to be more aware of the power structures in place in the classroom and the ways in which those power structures can reify larger social inequalities for marginalized populations, even if the instructor himself belongs to some of those groups. And it was with a return to the classroom as a graduate student that I was able to apply theory to the knowledge I had accrued through my own professional experiences in the classroom.

With my own personal and professional journey in mind, I set about to write this dissertation in practice to support other instructors who are searching for ways to best support their students and foster their academic and personal success to achieve their goals. Beginning my research with the concepts of andragogy and cultural and social capital, and then, with the guidance of my dissertation committee, moving to community cultural wealth, I discovered the critiques of Knowles and Bourdieu's work and the opportunities present in the reimagining of cultural capital as Yosso's (2005) theory of community cultural wealth. As noted in my literature

review (See Part Two of this dissertation), it appears that the application of community cultural wealth to the ABE classroom, and specifically ABE writing courses, is an area ready to be developed in the literature. For this reason, I focused this dissertation and the accompanying professional development seminar on introducing faculty to this relatively newer theory and providing an opportunity for them to begin implementing Yosso's six forms of capital in their curriculum.

The seminar consists of two parts: the first introduces the problem of practice explaining the disconnect between the idealized ABE student in the legislation and curriculum and the student population we serve. It examines how this disconnect decreases persistence and retention among ABE students who possess marginalized identities. To support this problem of practice, the first part of the seminar also presents ABE demographics within Washington State where the faculty attending the seminar work and live, and then moves into a brief explanation of andragogy and cultural and social capital, followed by a longer overview of community cultural wealth and Yosso's six forms of capital. In the second part of the seminar, participants engage in two activities to begin to think about how they can apply the six forms of community cultural wealth to their ABE courses and then spend some time designing assignments around these forms (See Appendix B). In the following sections, I will first discuss the methodology of implementing the pilot. Next, I will provide a summary of the pilot and subsequent video meeting with a student services staff member named Blue who missed the pilot but wanted to discuss the content. I will then provide an overview of participant feedback followed by a discussion of my observations after running the pilot and reviewing the participant feedback. Finally, I will discuss future directions for the pilot and opportunities for future research using this seminar.

The Pilot: Methodology

Participants

In planning who would attend this pilot, I originally focused on the ABE reading and writing faculty at Washington Community College² (WCC), a midsized urban community college in western Washington State. I am also a faculty member at this institution and teach in several programs within the larger department of Communication and Transitional Studies, including ABE. While I recognized the potential of bias³ in pilot feedback due to my status as a faculty member at WCC, I also viewed my status as a potential benefit because I could leverage my existing professional relationships with faculty members to encourage attendance and participation. Upon discussion with Dean Humboldt⁴, the dean of Communication and Transitional Studies at WCC, however, she and I decided to open the pilot to other colleges in the region as well, out of concern for the number of participants. Because IRB had determined my dissertation in practice as exempt, and with the approval of my dissertation chair, we moved forward with this plan. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the overwhelming number of conferences, instruction, and professional development in video format faculty were already facing, “Zoom burnout” was a common challenge. Dean Humboldt believed faculty would be reluctant to add a multi-hour, optional, online professional development seminar to their already busy schedules during the second week of spring quarter. To support enrollment in the seminar and meet my target participation goal of ten to fifteen participants, she volunteered to send my invitation email out to other community and professional and technical colleges in the area during the last week of winter quarter. I agreed, and Dean Humboldt sent out the invitation to

² The name of the pilot institution has been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants.

³ I will discuss steps taken to avoid bias in the participant feedback later in this methodology section.

⁴ All names have been changed to maintain participants’ anonymity.

both the WCC ABE listserv and to her contacts at the neighboring institutions (See Appendix A). In the invitation email, I introduced myself, the topic of the seminar, the date, and a brief bulletpoint overview of the seminar's schedule. I ended with my email and a request those interested RSVP so I could send them a follow-up email with the prereading and video conference link. In the email I specifically named ABE reading and writing faculty as I wanted the participants to have familiarity in the outcomes and curriculum of each other's courses. However, I did not screen out any interested participant if they wished to attend and the eight interested individuals included Blue who worked in student services at a neighboring college.

Over the course of spring break and during the first week of spring quarter, eight individuals contacted me with interest in attending. Six were from WCC and two were from neighboring institutions. Six days before the pilot, I sent a follow-up email to those who had contacted me about attending and included a reminder about the day and time, video conference link, and a PDF of the selected prereading (See Appendix A). The day before the pilot, I sent a final reminder email with the starting time, the same video conference link sent in the previous email, and a link to the SurveyMonkey exit survey. I encouraged participants to fill out the survey after the pilot and emphasized that the feedback would be anonymous (See Appendix A). Of the group of eight who expressed interest in attending, four participants attended, and one which I will call Blue in this dissertation, contacted me the day after the pilot explaining she had mixed up the date. Blue and I subsequently had a video conference where we discussed the content which I have summarized later in Part Three. The participants for this pilot seminar were instructors from WCC who taught ABE writing either as the focus of a course or in an ABE program with a heavy emphasis on writing. All were experienced in teaching other subjects as well, and this interdisciplinary approach influenced the conversation around how to implement

community cultural wealth into ABE curriculum. While I had planned on creating small groups for the two activities in the second part of the pilot, the small number of participants encouraged me to maintain a single larger group during the second half for the activities.

Setting

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, WCC's campus was largely closed, and most activities were held remotely through video conference. Accordingly, I held the pilot in a virtual space facilitating from my home office. Each of the four participants attended remotely through video conference and each of us kept our microphones and video cameras on for most of the time. This allowed for each participant to see each other's facial expressions and hear each other's tone of voice. All participants used a computer-generated background or positioned themselves in front of a wall designed to serve the same purpose. It was clear that each participant was by now accustomed to meeting through video conference. I shared my screen to display the PowerPoint presentation and referred to previous slides both when I thought there was something useful to reference and when asked to by a participant. Even though we were not physically on WCC's campus, I included WCC's land acknowledgement as part of the presentation and read it as part of the preface to the pilot (See Appendix B). I felt this was important to include. First, because of the ethical need to acknowledge the history of invasion and injustice towards First Nation people in the region. Second, by using WCC's land acknowledgement, I also wanted to encourage the participants to think of themselves as part of a group and foster a sense of togetherness even though each person was in a different physical location.

I had originally planned for the seminar to last four hours from start to finish. However, in consulting with Dean Humboldt, she recommended either splitting the pilot into two days of two hours apiece or shortening the seminar to a single three-hour session. I decided not to split

the pilot into two days as I thought that it would be challenging for participants to attend both days, and there would be risk of some participants attending one day but not the other which would influence feedback response rates and overall turnout. Based on this decision, I revised the presentation to roughly fit a three-hour session including several breaks to break up the content and provide an opportunity for participants to get up and move around. During the individual brainstorming and work periods within the second half of the pilot, I also encouraged participants to mute their microphones and turn off their cameras if they wished to support their creative process.

Procedure

As part of my introduction to the pilot, I notified each participant in writing that no identifying information would be included in the written dissertation. I also received both verbally and in writing through the video conference chat box written consent from each of the four participants to record the session. I began recording after receiving consent and only paused the recording during the break periods. For the subsequent video conference with Blue the next day, I did not ask to record the meeting but did ask and receive permission to include the content of the conversation in the dissertation while omitting any identifying information. After the conversation, I recorded a summary of the conversation based on my own recollection. As part of the introduction to the pilot, I also reviewed a brave space agreement (See Appendix B) which included a commitment not to share any personal information which each of the participants agreed to. At the end of the pilot, as part of my request for participants to fill out the end of seminar survey, I reminded participants that the survey was anonymous. This was my primary method to minimize potential bias in the feedback I received. I emphasized that I wished to use the feedback to continue to revise and improve the seminar and surmised that the anonymity of

the form would give participants more freedom to provide honest feedback. I received completed surveys from all four participants within two days of the pilot. The following morning after the pilot, I sent an email to each participant thanking them for their participation and attaching a file of the PowerPoint presentation and a sample student survey I created and reviewed with them the evening before. As part of this email, I encouraged them to contact me if they wished to discuss the content of the seminar further (See Appendix A).

The Pilot: A Summary

In total, there were four participants in virtual attendance for the pilot. Two taught ABE English (Adélie and Gentoo), one taught primarily ABE math and an independent-study ABE course with numerous written assignment options (Royal), and the fourth taught computer and writing skills within an I-BEST program for ABE students designed to serve as an entrypoint into an integrated technical degree program (King). All four instructors were employed at WCC and knew each other. For this reason, the tone of the discussion was friendly, and the participants were open to expressing their thoughts, ideas, and opinions to each other. Because I also teach at the same institution, I had already developed a rapport with some of the participants, and they seemed more comfortable answering my questions and engaging in the ideas of the seminar because of this existing professional relationship.

To begin the seminar, I started by introducing myself, providing some background about my experience teaching in both university and community college systems in western Washington and Oregon. I reviewed my credentials and explained that this pilot was part of my dissertation in practice, and that while I would be discussing the larger ideas and themes of the conversation that afternoon in my dissertation, I would not include identifying information in my write-up. I also mentioned at this point that the end-of-seminar survey would be anonymous as

well. I emphasized the importance of filling out the survey to ensure I would have their feedback about the pilot. I also asked the participants if it would be okay with them to record the session to support my own recollection and each agreed verbally and in the video chat message system. At this point I began recording the session, pausing the recording throughout the session only during breaks.

Next, I read the WCC land acknowledgement, which was developed as part of the college's "classroom standards and culture" document and approved by the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. I noted that while this pilot was virtual, it would normally take place in person on campus, which is why this land acknowledgement unique to the college would be relevant. After the land acknowledgement, I asked the participants to introduce themselves with their names and chosen pronouns and tell the group where they worked and their position. Anticipating faculty and staff from different regional institutions, I wanted to make sure participants identified their institution as well as position, but given the institutional uniformity of the participants, naming the institution was unnecessary and the participants seemed to recognize this. Instead, they focused on telling the group what they taught.

After introductions, I presented a brave space agreement and asked the participants if they had any experience or prior knowledge of brave space agreements. There was some knowledge of the concept, with Gentoo noting that she believed the concept "evolved" out of safe-space agreements. I agreed and explained that safe space agreements are sometimes used by people in positions of privilege to shut down conversations when they feel their privilege is being threatened by claiming they do not feel safe. Instead, a brave space agreement challenges individuals with privilege to engage in conversation and be mindful of that privilege in that space (Anti-Defamation League, 2021). After providing further opportunity for thoughts, I read ten

brave space agreements aloud and invited the participants to ask any questions, present any challenges or concerns they might have, or add further agreements. At this point Adélie asked if I used this list in my classes and whether it was longer, shorter, or different from this version. She noted that “it’s an interesting question of what students are able to digest” and brought up a U.S. History/ABE writing course she was teaching that examined the history of slavery and its impacts in the United States. Adélie explained that she included “a lot of disclaimer up front” to “tread carefully with each other’s hearts,” but she had not used the terminology of a brave space agreement. I explained that I usually ask students to come up with their own agreements and encourage them to include items in the agreement like these if they do not come up with them on their own. I told the group that the list in the presentation had come from the Anti-Defamation League and would send out the PowerPoint with the link to the agreements after the seminar.

Next, I presented the problem of practice. I began by talking about my own observations teaching at multiple colleges and seeing the same questions around retention and persistence in ABE programs and community colleges in general. I went on to explain that community colleges serve a disproportionately high percentage of marginalized populations and that according to Finn and Avni (2016), ABE serves a large portion of its community college population. I made sure to point out the cited literature associated with these claims and noted that each of these statements were common knowledge among the group of ABE practitioners based on their own professional experiences. I then introduced the argument that although ABE programs have tremendous diversity in their student populations, ABE has historically been centered on dominant cultural ways of knowing and being, taking care to specifically name White, upper-class culture as the dominant form of culture in the United States. After establishing this point, I presented the thesis of the presentation, that to increase retention and persistence, we must look

at how our curriculum can center a diverse range of identities and better reflect the lived experiences of those who are marginalized.

After presenting the problem of practice, I introduced slides showing demographics taken from a 2019 statewide performance report for Washington State compiled by the U.S. Department of Education (See Appendix B). In presenting this data, I noted where there was offensive, racist, or overly general language or classifications, including the framing of gender as a binary with only male and female genders represented, the use of the classifications “Asian” and “Hispanic or Latino,” and the use of the term “Employment Barriers” to refer to categorizations of ABE students such as being a single parent. In presenting this data I pointed out that these statistics show tremendous diversity in some ways, such as showing the diverse range of ages and high percentages of students of color, but they also obscure the identities of our students in other ways such as using the catch-all categories of Asian or Hispanic to group together diverse populations with individual cultures. Adélie also pointed out that the data also grouped English Language Learners and students with low literacy levels together regardless of whether they are native English speakers or they are learning English as a secondary language. Adélie observed that she thought the percentage of ABE students identified as having a disability in the data was low based on her own experience as an instructor. Royal noted that she thought that the percentage of single parents seemed low also. She went on to observe that the data was “dismissing students’ stories” and “trying to make a category for something that our students experience and label it as non-normative or label it as a barrier instead of looking at the whole of a person’s story and what they’re overcoming.” King added to the conversation that he thought it was interesting that the classification of “Low-income” is considered an employment barrier.

After examining the statewide ABE data, I posed the question, “What do you know about the students in your classroom?” King pointed out that it “depends on where you teach.” He went on to describe some demographics about his students in his program, identifying that many have over ten years of experience in the work force, that they are veterans, multi-lingual, single and working parents, and seeking a career change. Adélie explained that she sometimes felt “lost” in her classroom, finding it difficult to know who her students were. She told the group that historically she has taught a lot of students attending ABE course for job retraining, parents, and grandparents. She pointed out that all her ABE students have performed an “amazing balancing act” with “really full lives.” Royal added that especially during the COVID-19 pandemic many ABE students are supporting their children’s learning while also attending virtual classes and sharing devices with other members of their family. She explained that many of her students felt shame around needing to take math classes and that they wanted to learn math to support their children’s learning. I pointed out that the group’s understanding of their students is more nuanced than the data demonstrates, even if sometimes the experiences of the instructors matched the data trends in the presentation.

Transitioning away from data, I presented the following quote from Sissel (2001): “only when adult educators embrace a true commitment to try to understand the lived experiences and perspectives that diverse learners bring to educational settings can the interests of both the educator and the learner be at the center.” Upon reflecting on this quote, King pointed out that this is a concept that is slowly starting to be recognized within community colleges, but “more people need to hear this” including at the university level. Adélie stated she would like to see a competency-based curriculum design as a commitment to centering more of the lived

experiences and perspectives in ABE and bringing students and instructors together to address the learning needs of the student.

After a ten-minute break, I introduced the ideas of andragogy and cultural capital to the participants. Most of the participants had heard of andragogy and cultural capital, but with varying degrees of knowledge. After explaining these theories, I introduced the theory of community cultural wealth and Yosso's (2005) six forms of capital. Adélie pointed out that the six forms of capital presented opportunities for further professional development to support instructors as they incorporate them into curriculum. She noted, "You can acknowledge it, but how do you get it to go into curriculum and what does that look like?" King wondered if the use of the term capital could create resistance if not framed clearly within persistence, retention, and career choice, and that the different kinds of capital needed to be closely connected in how they work together to accomplish these goals. Adélie also observed that by incorporating community cultural wealth into curriculum, it would translate to greater retention and persistence, which would then result in increased "persistence tuition" as well.

Next, I presented a quote from Yosso (2005) who wrote, "community cultural wealth involves a commitment to conduct research, teach and develop schools that serve a larger purpose of struggling toward social and racial justice" (p. 82). I connected this quote back to Sissel's (2001) quote that I had shared previously in the discussion and pointed out that Yosso (2005) called on educators to go beyond recognizing the need for change and act through research, teaching practices, and larger program development. Adélie made the connection back to the beginning of U.S. education and that "it was a political act then, and those of us who are striving to do the right thing recognize it is a political act now, just the aims are different." In response, I pointed out that the purpose of ABE within its legislature had not changed very much

since its conception, and that the goal of ABE continues to be directed towards educating workers to join the labor force.

The presentation then moved its focus inward as I introduced the group to four questions and invited them to answer whichever ones spoke to the participants. The questions were:

- In what ways did you or did you not see your background and cultural knowledge valued in your college experience?
- How did your lived experience (example: education, upbringing, cultural identities) inform the work you do at your institution?
- Who is the student we picture in our minds as we think about our work? Are we recognizing the diversity of our student population?
- How are we centering student stories and experiences? How might the work we do better incorporate the knowledge, skills, and experiences they bring to the classroom and campus?

Gentoo reflected on how she focuses on female ABE students in male-dominated programs and fields when she pictures students in her mind. She explained that she thought about single mothers she had taught who took care of children while going to school and how they involved their kids in their studies, teaching their children the same material they were learning. King spoke next, telling the group he thought about students who had lived all or part of their lives overseas and the deficit approach they faced within the educational system when they enrolled in education in the United States based on their use of the English language. He connected this situation back to the theories of cultural capital and community cultural wealth by pointing out that these students' experiences were often overlooked because they were different and did not

follow the cultural ideal. King explained that as an instructor, he was very careful not to unintentionally isolate or discourage these students because “one little sentence gone the... wrong way or is dismissive of that experience can be very isolating and last a long time.” This understanding shaped the way he taught and the way he worked with students. He also pointed out that the selective centering of students’ stories in the classroom could be used to reinforce “the safe parameters of whatever the dominant narrative.” King argued there were ideals around populations of students such as the ideal refugee or ideal first-generation college student and as a result, those who fit in those narratives gain additional cultural capital and support whereas those who do not have less access to cultural capital and support, which then translates to the student’s ability to achieve their educational goals.

The group then connected the ideas around community cultural wealth to the COVID-19 pandemic and the way in which the pandemic had highlighted the connection between cultural capital and economic capital. Gentoo began this portion of the conversation by asking how the pandemic connected to the ideas of cultural capital and community cultural wealth. I pointed out that the ability to use a computer required both cultural capital and economic capital according to Bourdieu’s theory, because to have access a computer in the home, economic capital is needed, and then the ability to use the computer required cultural capital. I also pointed out that because the use of a computer is so necessary in modern society, a lack of cultural capital around using a computer would compound economic capital disparities because these skills have become so highly valued and necessary in our society. Connecting back to Yosso’s (2005) six forms of community cultural wealth, I pointed out that the current situation with elearning during the pandemic demonstrated the need for navigational capital as students faced the problem of navigating WCC as an institution without ever stepping on campus. I shared with the group that

some of my students had felt so lost trying to navigate the elearning system they had wanted to quit school, and that I had to think about how I could foster navigational capital in the courses I taught. This experience reminded me that knowing how to operate an elearning system was “a kind of cultural capital that was predicated on a White, upper-class normality.” Gentoo responded by questioning what the world would look like when people started returning to the physical classroom, whether we would go back to the classroom, and what that would look like in terms of curriculum for students. She explained that as a faculty member working on developing curriculum, she wanted to make sure that all six forms of community cultural wealth were represented in the curriculum she developed regardless of online, hybrid, or face-to-face format. Adélie responded to Gentoo’s thoughts by musing about how easy it would be to take all six forms of capital and create an “introduction/reflection paper” where the instructor explained each of the kinds of capital and students wrote down their specific forms of capital and shared them with the class.

Referring to the question “How are we centering student stories and experiences?.” Adélie argued that she thought the college was failing in this area and needed to incorporate more student voices in planning course sequences and programming. She referenced a former instructor at the college who would use the stories of her students to continue to develop her curriculum to make her course student-centered. Adélie explained she would like to see the college support faculty in doing more of that work such as creating literature lists that could serve as a resource for instructors. She noted that trying to balance curriculum development that centers student voice while teaching and fulfilling other faculty duties is difficult, but the revised curriculum would be powerful and help students feel a greater sense of belonging. In response, King questioned how ABE could create stronger pathways for students while centering students’

stories and experiences. Adélie responded by arguing that she thought the college was taking steps to create stronger pathways for students, but their voices and stories needed to be centered more. King thought that I-BEST could be further implemented into the ABE program. He believed that by couching I-BEST courses within more of the ABE program, students would feel like they are making progress on their degree programs and not like they were “spinning their wheels.” Adélie agreed and pointed out that community cultural wealth needed to be “weaved in” to the program so it was not a “one and done,” but rather, integrated throughout ABE. I returned to Yosso’s (2005) quote included earlier in the presentation and reminded the group that Yosso saw embedding community cultural wealth as something that needed to be a collective effort within all the areas of a school. Royal then pointed out that having advisers who knew the campus and the students and could guide the students through the program would help students build navigational capital. Adélie next stated the college should implement cohort-based advising, and King pointed out that WCC’s ABE program had navigators dedicated to ABE students who helped students build navigational and social capital and could invest in more navigators to help students through the program. I pointed out that navigators can serve to help students build resistant capital as well, helping students develop skills to challenge inequality.

Because of the small number of participants, I decided to eschew the breakout group format and keep the group whole to brainstorm a list of community cultural wealth practices they could implement in their courses. I had planned on writing their suggestions on a blank slide within the PowerPoint presentation, but because I was sharing my screen in the virtual conference space, I decided to act as notetaker and leave the six forms of community cultural wealth on the screen that I shared with them while typing their thoughts on a second screen. After the seminar concluded, I copied and pasted their responses into the blank slide (See

Appendix B). Adélie was the first to vocalize an idea as part of the brainstorming activity, pointing out that WCC's ABE program required each course to include a goalsetting activity, and this would correspond to building aspirational capital that could be built out further. Gentoo suggested bringing in guest speakers from various professions who could discuss various aspects of community cultural wealth. Royal pointed out competency-based learning is important because students can choose how they want to "express their learning" in a less-structured way with greater choice and agency while using their experiences in the classroom. I suggested Royal's thoughts about competency-based learning could be seen as a way of continuing to build aspirational capital as it helped students think about their goals for the future.

I went on to share that I centered my reading units on topics that fostered a recognition of resistant capital. For example, having my students read about the digital divide in the first half of a course and then about technology and disability in the second half, and how the digital divide is replicated in terms of technology and disability. I explained that the goal is to introduce these ideas and then ask students to question how they can resist these inequalities and address them in society. Adélie then returned to the idea of additional learning communities that combine student success skills curriculum with ABE English classes themed to cover all six of the community cultural wealth forms of capital. King followed by suggesting an assignment where students connected a concept in the lesson to an experience they had in their own lives. He explained he had done an assignment like this in his courses, and it had helped create context around the lessons while fostering student engagement, especially in online courses during the pandemic. I then suggested using an assignment in which students collected resource information to help them develop navigational capital and wondered how this idea could be applied to different ABE courses. Royal pointed out this kind of assignment would also help a student develop social

capital because it would help students develop networks of community resources, seeing the college as a resource.

For the second activity, I asked the participants to work independently to revise or create an assignment for their courses using the brainstorming we had done. The goal was to leave the seminar with an idea or a rough draft of what they could do to implement community cultural wealth in their curriculum. Because of the size of the group, and because the class session was running slightly behind schedule, I asked the participants to stay in a larger group rather than move to breakout groups and gave them ten minutes to get started developing an idea with the goal of sharing out what they came up with. I invited the participants to mute their microphones and cameras or work with each other to come up with ideas. The participants chose to work quietly on their own, and after ten minutes, I reconvened the group. Adélie explained that because she taught reading and writing, she liked the idea of taking linguistic capital and incorporating that more into her assignments where students could bring their backgrounds and languages into the classroom. She spoke about inviting students to use non-verbal forms of language as well, and asking them “How are you a really good communicator? How are you a unique communicator? What strengths do you bring to the communication table?” and share their responses with their peers. Gentoo looked at social capital and explained that form of capital would really help her students. She thought about creating a word cloud of resources that students could add to throughout the quarter and post the completed word cloud of resources that could be shared not just with the class that compiled the resources but future classes as well. Royal spoke next and referred to previous conversations about applying concepts in the classroom to their own lives. She came up with the idea of using discussion posts for students to share how they could apply math concepts learned in class to their own lives and goals. She saw

this activity as a way of building aspirational capital, but also helping to form connections between students. King expanded on a group project he regularly assigned in his classes and developed a series of questions that would require students to go out into the community and find information to complete the project. He explained this assignment would capitalize on aspirational, familial, and social capital forms of community cultural wealth. The conversation then turned to the idea of celebrating the achievement of goals, which King had built into his assignment, and the group discussed the importance of celebration and how it can be done differently in different cultures. King shared how he would bring food to share with the students in his I-BEST course, and how this would create a sense of community with students bringing food of their own to share with their peers.

The final portion of the seminar was introducing a sample student survey with the participants. I explained I had designed the survey to help determine the effectiveness of the assignment the participants had started creating in the seminar in utilizing students' community cultural wealth (See Appendix E). I emphasized that participants could use all or some of the survey and embed it in elearning quizzes or online surveys. After briefly reviewing the survey with the group, Gentoo asked if she could take this back to the end-of-course survey committee and share it with that group, and I gave my permission for her to share it out. Finally, I asked the group if they had any final thoughts or questions, and requested they complete the End of Seminar Survey (See Appendix C) using the survey link I had provided in an email sent out the evening before (See Appendix A). I ended the seminar thanking the participants for attending and their conversation. I invited the participants to contact me if they wanted to discuss the topics of the seminar further, and then closed the meeting after the last participant logged off.

A Video Meeting with Blue

The day after the pilot presentation, I received an email from one of the individuals, Blue, who had initially signed up to participate, letting me know she had mistaken the date of the pilot, and wanted to know if there was another opportunity to participate. Blue was different from the participants in the pilot in that her background was in student services rather than instruction and she worked at a different institution than the other participants. When she had initially contacted me about attending, she had wondered if it would be appropriate for her to attend, given that my target audience had been ABE writing faculty. However, I encouraged her to come to the pilot and assured her that the group would benefit from her insight. In response to her email the day after the pilot, I offered to meet with her individually to discuss the content of the presentation, and we had an approximately hour and a half long video meeting. As part of this conversation, I explained the problem of practice within my dissertation and presentation, and briefly reviewed concepts of andragogy and cultural capital, and community cultural wealth. We discussed the idea that education can serve to reinforce White, male, upper-class norms, and in doing so, helps to create a higher value of cultural capital that privileges these dominant forms of knowledge.

Within ABE, we discussed how the purpose of education is focused on helping students acquire specific kinds of knowledge so they will be better sources of labor in the workforce and support the larger economy. In response, Blue questioned how ABE could both resist oppression while meeting the standards set down by state and federal governments who dictate ABE funding. I acknowledged this challenge and suggested that some might argue that since the entire system is founded on a racist premise, it must be replaced. However, I asserted that the concept of interest convergence might be relevant here. Although faculty and programs may have different goals that are more social-justice oriented than state and federal governments who are

primarily concerned with the economic benefits of ABE programming, the result still provides an entrypoint to higher education and the development of skills that can be used to address the very real need for education to earn a living wage in the modern economy. In this way, ABE presents an example of interest convergence (Bell, 1980) that can resist systemic inequity while also satisfying a larger system that has an ulterior purpose in education of increasing the labor force and bettering the economy.

As we continued to discuss the previous evening's pilot, Blue asked for examples of the kinds of curriculum changes participants had brainstormed in the pilot the night before, and this led to a discussion of the challenge of the digital divide and barriers students experience with elearning, especially during the pandemic and a fully online educational system. We connected this concept to Yosso's (2005) six forms of community cultural wealth, focusing specifically on social and navigational capital. She and I also discussed the challenge instructors sometimes have empathizing with their students and their situations, especially when instructors come from different cultural backgrounds from their students. This led us to discuss the disparity between the racial and ethnic makeup of college faculty compared to the student populations they serve. (Davis and Fry, 2019). We acknowledged that the challenges in persistence and retention identified in community colleges can directly impact the racial and ethnic makeup of college faculties. If students of color are not persisting and earning degrees, including graduate-level degrees that are required to obtain a teaching position in a community college, faculty within those colleges will continue to lack the representation and diversity found in the student population.

As part of this conversation, Blue and I also discussed the idea of decentering the instructor in the classroom to diffuse power away from that position. Decentering was a new

concept she had not heard before, so we briefly discussed some ways in which I have tried to decenter power in my classroom by encouraging small group discussion and student-led learning. We also talked about grading and the power dynamics involved with an instructor giving grades. I spoke about my preference to grade assignments as pass/no pass as a way of removing the grading component from much of my writing courses and further decentering power within my classroom. Within this portion of the discussion, I noted that instructors can accidentally do damage to their students by not recognizing the power they hold and the impact they have on their students. I shared a few examples of times, as an instructor, that I had unintentionally caused damage, and only upon reflection, realized the impact that I had on the student. Blue then asked how I learned how to become more aware of this power structure and the potential for damage. I responded that listening to students, understanding where they are coming from, and recognizing that teaching is an act of service helped me to become more understanding of the power dynamics in the classroom. I also told her that attending a master's program in education helped me to better understand the larger educational system and think about teaching in different ways that I could take back to my practices as an instructor in the classroom.

Finally, we discussed the way in which some departments and programs within a community college can become hierarchical and reinforce oppressional structures. This led us to consider how challenges in communicating with supervisors or peers through unofficial organizational norms prevents larger systemic change, and we recognized that these power structures are only effective if everyone agrees to abide by these rules.

The Pilot: Participant Feedback

All four participants who attended the pilot provided feedback through the SurveyMonkey version of the survey using the link I sent out the night before the pilot (See Appendix C). Because Blue did not attend the pilot, I did not ask her to fill out the survey. The survey was a mix of Likert scales paired with space to provide written feedback, one dichotomous yes/no question, and several open-ended questions. The participants provided written feedback in addition to selecting options within the Likert scale, and in most questions, there were several comments from participants explaining their Likert scale ratings, suggesting where they felt the seminar was effective, or areas where changes could be made. For each question including a Likert scale, I created a range of 1-4 with 1 being the lowest score and 4 being the highest. I structured the scale in this way to avoid a middle number participants could choose. With four numbers, a participant would have to select an option either on the lower or higher end and could not remain neutral. For the first question in the survey, “How much did you know about community cultural wealth prior to this seminar?,” there was a distribution of responses, with one participant selecting 1 (Nothing), two participants selecting 2, and one participant selecting 3. No participants selected 4 (Very Knowledgeable). In the comments, one participant suggested limiting the initial explanation of community cultural wealth for faculty while another commented that I was “very knowledgeable on the topics presented.”

In response to the second question, “In your opinion, how effective was the seminar content in explaining the concept of community cultural wealth and its impact on ABE student retention and persistence?,” three of the participants responded with 4 (Completely effective) and one participant responded with 3. This participant explained in the comments that they selected a 3 because they felt less time spent defining adult learning and cultural wealth would “allow more

time for the richer discussions of impact on ABE students.” Another participant noted they liked the narrow focus on the six forms of community cultural wealth.

For the third question, “In your opinion, how effective was the seminar content (readings, PowerPoint, handouts, etc.) in helping to explain the concept of community cultural wealth and its impact on ABE student retention and persistence?,” participants responded on the higher end of the scale. However, there was an anomaly in the number of respondents with five responses instead of four. Two participants rated this area a 3 while three participants rated this area a 4 (Completely effective). Because the survey responses are anonymous, I cannot tell if a participant took the survey twice, or whether an individual originally slated to attend took the survey without attending the seminar by clicking on the link in the email I sent out the night before. In the comments section, one participant explained they scored this question a 3 because they did not find the prereading of Yosso’s (2005) article easy to read and would have liked a summary in addition to early access of the article as a prereading. Another participant saw the focus on how to make an impact in the classroom with assignments as important. A third participant described this area of the seminar “clearly defined” and noted the use of examples.

For the fourth question, I asked the participants “How much do you feel you learned in this seminar?” Three participants selected 4 (Comprehensive Understanding) and one participant selected 3. One participant explained they had not heard of the categories of community cultural wealth before and found that information “new and valuable.” Another participant also noted the seminar contents were new to them and that they learned a lot about critical race theory and cultural capital. Another participant made a connection between using the concepts and understanding the topic.

For question five, I asked, “In your opinion, do you feel time was allocated adequately for the learning and intent of the professional development?” Three participants gave this question a 4 (Adequate allocation of time) and one participant gave the question a 3. In the comments, one participant reiterated their previous suggestion about more time devoted to discussion. Another participant noted that at first, they would have thought three hours was too long, but after the seminar they felt the conversation in the small group and the two breaks helped the time go by quickly.

Questions six and seven were paired together, with question six formatted as a dichotomous yes/no question and question seven formatted as an open-answer follow-up question. Question six asked: “Do you see yourself using the concepts and curriculum you have worked on in this seminar in your current or future courses or position?” and all four participants responded yes. Question seven asked: “If so, how? If not, why not?” In response to this question, one participant wrote that they would need more time with their ideas and would like to see “examples of how some of that might look in a classroom.” Another participant wrote that they would create the lesson they developed in the seminar as well as others. A third participant noted they would use the curriculum of the seminar “As a tool to guide class content development.”

In response to the open-ended question of “What worked well in this seminar?” participants noted the slides in the PowerPoint, “Constant probing for discussion,” and my knowledge and “the background information.” In response to the question asking for suggestions for the seminar’s improvement, one participant referred me to their previous comments, which I take to mean their thoughts on additional time for discussion. Another suggested discussing the connection between critical race theory and community cultural wealth in more detail, and a third participant suggested less of a focus on theory and more of a focus on practical application

of community cultural wealth in ABE. When asked if they had any final thoughts about the seminar, one participant wrote, “I love getting the opportunity to talk with colleagues about meeting students where they are, and this PD helped me to put cultural capital into action immediately. Thank you.”

The Pilot: Discussion

Usefulness

The engagement and discussion of the participants coupled with the participant feedback demonstrates that the seminar is useful in introducing the concept of community cultural wealth to ABE instructors and provides them with an opportunity to begin developing curriculum around these ideas. All four of the participants were engaged throughout the group conversation, and King’s comment that “more people need to hear this” speaks to the excitement the group felt in learning about this theory. The fact that the group’s conversation continued to move towards implementation demonstrated that the participants were eager to put the concepts to use, something their feedback echoed when all four affirmed they saw themselves using the concepts and curriculum they worked on in this seminar. The seminar also demonstrated this affirmation with the speed in which each participant was able to implement community cultural wealth into their classroom, given the short amount of individual work time. Furthermore, Adélie, Gentoo, and King’s discussion of program curriculum and the ways in which community cultural wealth could be used to address a gap where students’ stories and voices were missing from the curriculum is important to mention here. This portion of the discussion shows how the group was connecting these ideas to not only their own immediate courses, but the larger ABE program to affect systemic change. Gentoo’s request to take the survey back to the survey committee also speaks to the potential this seminar could have in affecting larger conversations about

community cultural wealth throughout the college. Finally, the video conversation with Blue also demonstrated that there is opportunity beyond WCC to present this professional development seminar. Blue's positive response to the concept of community cultural wealth and her interest in learning more about ideas from the pilot group for incorporating these forms of capital into their classes echoes the excitement and interest the pilot group demonstrated in the seminar.

Seminar Length

While the seminar appears to have been successful overall, there are also opportunities for refinement. First, the length of the seminar needs to be reconsidered. The size of the group and their familiarity with each other allowed for the conversation to move faster, and with a larger group with less immediate familiarity, more time may need to be allotted to discussion to account for a warming-up period where participants begin to get comfortable speaking. This is particularly important if there are participants who are less inclined to agree with the premise of the seminar focusing on systemic inequality and cultural privilege within ABE legislation and curriculum. This is a foundational premise of the seminar and if necessary, there must be time to discuss this point carefully using the tenants of the brave space agreement. Based on the participant feedback, more time spent with Yosso's (2005) article might also be helpful as some participants may not find her work easy to read or may not have time before attending the seminar to read the article at all. Another participant requested bringing more information about critical race theory to connect to community cultural wealth, so incorporating more of this content will require additional time as well. A repeated piece of feedback from the pilot participants was to provide more time for discussion of the six forms of capital in community cultural wealth and how they could be applied to ABE courses while cutting back on the introduction of theory. One option may be to eliminate the andragogy portion of the theory

section as it is not as directly relevant to community cultural wealth. However, other participants found the discussion of cultural capital and the explanation of community cultural wealth valuable, so I am hesitant to eliminate those portions entirely, especially since they inform the six forms of capital. For this reason, eliminating andragogy from the curriculum would not free up enough time and extending the seminar is still something I must consider. Allowing more time for any of these portions of the conversation would also require rethinking the format of the seminar, potentially splitting the seminar into two, two-hour sessions as Dean Humboldt suggested. A potential challenge with expanding the time of the seminar is the same one I identified when running the pilot: ensuring the participants return for the second day of the seminar. To address this challenge, an incentive, such as a complementary meal or refreshments, door prizes, or financial compensation from the department for attendance would all possibly encourage continued attendance.

Seminar Format

In terms of the format of the seminar, I believe the online format was an acceptable substitute for a face-to-face meeting. At over a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, all the participants seemed comfortable with the format, and given their level of engagement, I do not believe it had a negative impact on the conversation. However, Bailenson (2021) and Bennett et al. (2021) have noted that video conferencing requires more energy from participants than a face-to-face meeting, and for that reason, if this seminar were to continue to use video conferencing as its primary medium, the added energy required by participants would need to be considered. Bailenson (2021) recommended closing the self-view window to avoid the sensation of being stared at, decreasing the cognitive load that comes with overmonitoring of non-verbal cues, the negative “mirror” effect, and the decrease in mobility. Bennett et al. (2021) discovered that when

a video conference occurs has an impact on the level of fatigue participants experience and recommended earlier meeting times to limit the amount of corresponding fatigue. For this reason, I may want to consider holding the seminar earlier in the day, rather than in the late afternoon which was when the pilot was scheduled. While this may limit the number of participants who can attend, the trade-off with less fatigue may be worthwhile. Bennett et al. also found that a sense of belonging can reduce video conference fatigue, which may account for the generally high level of engagement and energy among the participants. Like Bailenson (2021), Bennett et al. (2021) also discovered that turning off the video camera to “reduce attentional demands” (p. 21) reduces fatigue. The explicit statement that video cameras are optional may be useful in future seminars based on this finding. While all four participants left their video cameras on for most of the seminar, I did not issue an explicit direction to either turn on or off the video camera, nor did I provide directions around muting the microphone. In a larger group these directions may be necessary. Bennett et al. found that fatigue is lessened through active participation as well, which may also account for the generally high level of energy within the seminar. Both Bennett et al.’s findings and positive feedback from a participant about the “small group willing to talk” demonstrates that the number of participants needs to be carefully managed, and in the event of a large group, smaller group discussion will be necessary to mitigate potential fatigue and encourage conversation. Given the ongoing challenges around controlling COVID-19 case counts in Washington state at the time of this writing, even with the arrival of a vaccine, online professional development will likely be a continuing practice for the near future.

Participant Attendance

Although there were enough participants to have a robust conversation, it is useful to consider how a greater number of participants could be encouraged to attend. Some of the challenges to garnering greater attendance have been discussed in this section already, such as the length of the seminar, the video conference format, challenges around “Zoom fatigue,” and the time of day when the seminar is held. However, I must also consider the time of the academic year when this seminar is presented. The pilot was held during the second week of spring quarter and given the busy time of the year this tends to be, coupled by the added challenges of the pandemic, and demands of online teaching, it is not surprising that participant turnout was low. Ideally, the seminar would be held towards the beginning of fall quarter, perhaps during WCC’s professional development festivities scheduled the week before the start of the new academic year. That being said, the seminar must continue to be voluntary, as it will only be effective if participants have a desire to learn about community cultural wealth and to implement it in their classes. As Kennedy (2016) noted, professional development is not effective when instructors are forced.

The Pilot: Future Directions

The participants’ acknowledgement that they were unfamiliar with this theory both verbally during the seminar and in the End of Seminar survey feedback shows there is an opportunity for further education, and additional informal surveys within the ABE program at WCC could be performed to determine whether the rest of the ABE faculty has familiarity with community cultural wealth and whether there is future interest in running the seminar again at another point in the academic year. As discussed in the previous section, scheduling the seminar to correspond with existing professional development time set aside before the beginning of fall

term may be the most ideal, and in addition to determining whether there is interest with faculty in attending a future session, I will need to contact administrators at WCC to determine whether the seminar can be included in the “Week Zero” schedule of trainings and seminars.

Following up from the pilot, it is important to check in with pilot participants to see if they continued to develop and then utilize the ideas they came up with in the seminar. A common challenge around professional development is the tendency to revert to prior ways of teaching, even after participants learn new skills or ideas (Kennedy, 2016). Following up with the four participants will help to continue the conversation started in the pilot, which encouraging them to try and implement their ideas. Following up will also provide an opportunity for future research as I can measure the longer-term effects of the seminar on instructors and their curriculum. As part of this research, checking with participants to determine if and how they have used the student survey provided as part of the seminar will be useful (See Appendix D). Learning which questions were used will demonstrate which aspects of community cultural wealth the instructors have implemented, if any.

The student survey can also be used to determine the larger effect of the seminar on the persistence and retention of students within courses taught by participants of the seminar. Using the survey in its entirety to measure the integration of community cultural wealth in the classroom and then monitoring students’ persistence and retention levels can potentially tell a researcher something about the effect the seminar has had on the course and student success. Administering the survey to ABE courses led by instructors who had not taken the course as well as those that had and comparing persistence and retention rates would allow for greater understanding of the potential effects of this seminar while also adding to the overall body of literature surrounding community cultural wealth and its application in the ABE classroom.

Researcher Reflection

I wrote this dissertation in practice and the corresponding professional development seminar in the 2020-2021 academic year during the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a result, it had a direct influence on this finished product. Earlier in my doctoral program, I had anticipated performing firsthand qualitative research interviewing ABE students at WCC to identify how ABE writing courses helped students transition to college-level coursework and foster persistence. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic spreading in March of 2020, college campuses across Washington State were closed per Governor Jay Inslee's order and all instruction and college activities were moved online. Due to this change, I was concerned about the ability to find enough participants for my research, and with the requirement that all interviews would have to occur using video conferencing, I recognized that access and operation of technology would most likely be a barrier for those who did volunteer to participate. Ultimately, I decided to rethink my dissertation and focus on the role ABE writing instructors play in fostering persistence and how they can help students develop cultural capital that can be drawn from in future college courses. Upon presenting my proposal to my committee, I was advised to focus on community cultural wealth, and from that feedback, I further shifted my dissertation and professional development seminar to its current form.

As noted earlier in this dissertation in practice, the COVID-19 pandemic also influenced how I performed my research and the format for the professional development seminar pilot. With the university library closed through much of the dissertation writing process, and the ability to check out books or request books through the interlibrary loan service limited or nonexistent, I was required to rely on electronic copies of texts, ebooks, and purchasing books online to have them shipped to my home. While I managed to find the sources I needed, the

pandemic complicated the process and made it more expensive to acquire some secondary sources. There was also a delay at times waiting for articles to be scanned or books to arrive by mail, and this also complicated the research process. I have analyzed the online format of the pilot in my discussion section of Part Three, but I will say here that during the early stages of designing the seminar for my proposal, I had held out hope that a physical pilot would be possible and had planned for this possibility. Ultimately this did not come to pass, but the online pilot has demonstrated that this seminar can be delivered effectively using a video conferencing system and it would not be difficult to convert the online pilot to a face-to-face format.

I would be remiss not to mention the way in which the COVID-19 pandemic challenged me as an individual while writing this dissertation. It is common knowledge that writing a dissertation is mentally and emotionally challenging under the best of circumstances. It is significantly harder in the middle of a pandemic. Converting my own courses to an online format and supporting my students as they negotiated the sudden move to online learning required me to invest much of my creative energy into this transition. However, as the pandemic went on, and with the help of my support system, I found my footing and I was able to devote the needed mental and emotional energy into my dissertation. Completing a doctoral degree during a pandemic has given me insight into some of the challenges, anxieties, and pressures my students experience, and I believe completing this degree during the COVID-19 pandemic has made me a better instructor.

Conclusion

There is tremendous value in ABE. It provides an entry point for many to higher education, helps workers develop skill sets they can then use to financially provide for their families, and serves as a place for students to develop networks and support systems. But this dissertation has shown that ABE legislation has continually presented adult basic education as economy-driven and can be critiqued as equating a person's value as a citizen and individual with the benefit they provide the national economy. The skills and knowledge mandated in this legislation as learning objectives centered White, middle-class values, and in doing so, has contributed to the centering of White, middle-class ways of knowing and being in the classroom while marginalizing people of color and other non-dominant groups. For this reason, ABE programs and the instructors who teach in them must recognize the ways in which teaching is a political act, and how education, including adult basic education, can reify larger systemic forms of oppression that hurt marginalized populations. As ABE instructors, we must consider how the theories of andragogy and cultural and social capital, with their focus on White, male, middle-class ways of knowing and being, have influenced our teaching practices and made this single set of identities the default. We must recognize the diversity in our student population and teach in a way that speaks to all our students, not just a few. It is not easy to do this. And yet, if we want our classrooms to be places where students feel they belong, and if we want to resist White supremacy, we must act. My hope is that the professional development seminar I have created will assist in this process and make it a little bit easier. As ABE instructors, we must make the commitment Yosso (2005) wrote about and "develop schools that serve a larger purpose of struggling toward social and racial justice" (p. 82). If we do so, I believe we will not only be doing the right thing, but we will also see persistence and retention increase as well.

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Appendix A: Faculty Emails

Faculty Invitation Email

Dear fellow faculty members,

My name is Andrew Brottlund and I am completing a doctorate in educational leadership with the University of Washington, Tacoma. For my dissertation in practice, I have created a professional development seminar focused on supporting Adult Basic Education reading and writing faculty as they develop curriculum using the critical race theory concept of community cultural wealth. Persistence and retention are two common challenges within many ABE programs, and the research shows that by designing our curriculum with the community cultural wealth of our students in mind, we can increase persistence and retention, not just in our classes, but in the classes our students take in the future. The concept of community cultural wealth informs the idea that students come to our classrooms with a variety of lived experiences and cultural knowledge that they can draw upon to be successful in the classroom. However, I believe it is up to us, their instructors, to make a conscious effort to invite our students to use these valuable bodies of knowledge to master the skills they will learn in our courses. By creating lessons and other content that encourage students to draw on their community cultural wealth, we can support our students more effectively and encourage persistence and retention within our ABE programs.

I am reaching out to invite you to the pilot of my professional development seminar. This seminar will be an approximately three-hour session on **April 5, 2021 from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm**. Because of COVID-19 gathering restrictions, this seminar will be happening virtually through Zoom. As a member of the faculty, I recognize your time is valuable, so to make the most of our time together, I am asking you complete one short pre-read that will inform our discussions and work. The seminar will include the following content:

- A discussion around the concept of community cultural wealth and its impact on retention and persistence for ABE students.
- A brainstorming session around how we, as ABE reading and writing instructors, can help to encourage students to use their community cultural wealth in our classrooms while they are developing their reading and writing skills in our courses.
- A workshop with large and small group work to develop course content that invites students to use their community cultural wealth in our courses.
- A short debriefing period and an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on the seminar.

I am excited to present this opportunity for us to come together and discover new ways to support our student body. If you are interested in participating, please send an email RSVP to [redacted]. You will receive the prereading and Zoom link in your confirmation response.

If you have any questions, please let me know. I hope to see you there!

Best,

Andrew P. Brottlund, M.A., M.Ed.
Professor of Developmental Education
Washington Community College

Faculty Follow-Up Email One

Hello all,

Thank you again for signing up for the pilot of Examining Strategies that Promote Success for Adult Basic Education Students. I am including the Zoom link below and attaching the recommended prereading. The article attached is Tara J. Yosso's "Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth." Please take a look at this reading if you have the time, but do not feel like you must have read this article to attend. I recognize the beginning of the quarter is a hectic time! In addition to the recommended prereading, I would also ask that you consider before the seminar:

Who are the students you serve in your classroom?
What do you know about them?

These two questions will be central to our discussion and work together.

I look forward to seeing all of you on April 5 from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm! If you have any questions before the seminar, please send me an email.

Best,

Andrew

Faculty Follow-Up Email Two

Hello all,

I am excited to see each of you in tomorrow's pilot session at 3:00 pm. I am including the Zoom link below once more to make sure you have it and I am also including the link to the post-session survey. I would appreciate it very much if you would fill this anonymous survey out after our session tomorrow evening so I can receive feedback and continue to make improvements to the seminar.

Best,

Andrew

Faculty Follow-Up Email Three

Hello all,

Thank you again for attending the pilot yesterday afternoon. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to share my work with you, and for the thoughtful and engaging conversation we had. I am including my PowerPoint presentation as an attachment to this email as well as the student survey template. I am always happy to talk about these ideas further; please feel free to get in touch.

Best,

Andrew

Appendix B: Examining Strategies that Promote Success for Adult Basic Education Students PowerPoint Presentation

Examining Strategies that Promote Success for Adult Basic Education Students: A Professional Development Seminar for Educators

Andrew P. Brottlund, M.A., M.Ed.

1



About your facilitator

2

- Writing instructor for twelve years, six years at WCC
- M.A. in English
- M.Ed. in Leadership in Higher Education
- Ed.D. in Educational Leadership (ABD)
- This seminar serves to fulfill part of my Ed.D dissertation in practice
- No identifying information provided by participants in this seminar will be included in the written dissertation.



Agenda

3

Part One:

- Welcome/Introductions
- Problem of practice
- Who are the students we serve?— ABE demographics
- Common theories around adult learning
- The role of community cultural wealth in the ABE writing classroom

Part Two:

- Activity One: Compiling community cultural wealth practices
- Activity Two: Assignment workshop
- Final thoughts?
- Survey

WCC Land Acknowledgement

4

We are so fortunate that WCC is located on the ancestral territory of First Nations peoples. The Puyallup tribe, a member of the Coast Salish tribal peoples have called this area home since time immemorial. In 1854, the Medicine Creek Treaty forcibly removed them from their lands and onto the Puyallup reservation.

The state of Washington has the 7th largest Native American population in the U.S. with 29 federally recognized tribes represented, as well as several unrecognized tribes. We recognize that the privilege of our campus being on the land on which we now stand comes at great cost to the Coast Salish peoples.

We gather here knowing that our presence is part of an ongoing invasion and that these lands were and continue to be forcibly and unlawfully taken from their original indigenous inhabitants. We acknowledge that these injustices are true here and also for indigenous communities around the globe, like the First Peoples of Mauna Kea, Papua and New Zealand, just to name a few.

“Washington Community College classroom standards and culture.” (2021)

Welcome and introductions

5

Please introduce yourself with the following information:

- Your name and pronouns
- Your institution and position



Brave space agreement

6

- Be open to different and multiple viewpoints and perspectives, especially those that differ from yours.
- If people share experiences and feelings that are different or unfamiliar to you, show respect by taking it seriously and understand the impact of your response.
- Explore, recognize and acknowledge your privilege.
- Even if you are uncomfortable or unsure, contribute and take risks.
- Make space by sharing speaking time; try to speak after others who have not spoken.
- Listen actively, even and especially when people say things that are difficult to hear.
- View the candor of others as a gift.
- Find ways to challenge others with respect and care and be open to challenging your own points of view.
- Work hard not to be defensive if people challenge what you say or the impact of your words.
- Commit to confidentiality and not disclosing what people say; at the same time, take responsibility for sharing important messages and themes outside the group/class. One way to think about this is: "stories stay, lessons leave."

"Moving from safe classrooms to brave classrooms." (2021).

Problem of practice

7

- Retention and persistence is a common point of concern with community colleges as institutions, and specifically within ABE programs (Jha, 1991; Perin and Greenberg, 1994; Patterson & Mellard, 2007; Fike and Fike, 2008, Tighe et al., 2013; Fernandez et al., 2017; Idoko, 2018; Kappel, 2018).
- Community colleges serve a disproportionately high percentage of low-income, first-generation, and non-white students compared to four-year institutions, and nearly sixty percent of community college students who recently graduated high school took one or more pre-college courses (Finn and Avni, 2016).
- Historically, ABE legislation and curriculum has centered dominant cultural ways of knowing and being to the marginalization of others (Shore, 2001; Finn and Avni, 2016).
- As an ABE instructor, I argue that in order to increase retention and persistence, we must look at how our curriculum can center a diverse range of identities and better reflect the lived experiences of those who are marginalized.

Who are the students we serve?

8

What are the statewide demographics of students enrolled in ABE programs?



Within Washington State:

9

- July 2018-June 2019: 44,371 students served
- 59% female, 41% male (NRS does not account for non-binary identities or provide data on non-responses)
- 54% aged 25-44
- 23% aged 16-24
- 22% aged 45-above

"Statewide performance report." (2019).

ABE student races in Washington State:

10

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| • American Indian or Alaskan Native | <2% |
| • Asian | 20% |
| • Black or African American | 12% |
| • Hispanic or Latino | 30% |
| • Native Hawaiian or Other PI | <1% |
| • White | 32% |
| • More than One Race | 3% |

"Statewide performance report." (2019).

“Employment Barriers” for ABE students in Washington State:

11

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| • Displaced Homemakers | 2% |
| • ELL, Low Levels of Literacy | 69% |
| • Ex-offenders | 2% |
| • Homeless/Runaway | 1% |
| • Long-term Unemployed | 5% |
| • Low-income | 15% |
| • Individuals with disabilities | 4% |
| • Single Parents | 7% |

“Statewide performance report.” (2019).

12

In looking at the statistics gathered in the National Reporting System by the U.S. Department of Education, what do you notice?

Do the statistics tell the whole story about who our students are? What’s missing?

Who are the students you serve in your classroom? What do you know about them?



14

In order to understand who our students are, we must think of them as more than statistics. We must recognize them as individuals that come to the classroom with strengths, knowledge, and cultural wealth.

We cannot operate from a deficit-based approach.

15

“only when adult educators embrace a true commitment to try to understand the lived experiences and perspectives that diverse learners bring to educational settings can the interests of both the educator and the learner be at the center.” (Sissel, 2001)

16



Ten-minute break

Common theories around adult learning

17

- Andragogy (Malcolm Knowles)
 - “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1980, p. 43).
- Cultural Capital (Pierre Bourdieu)
 - “accumulated labor” (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 280) that can be transformed into “social energy” (p. 280) which can then be accumulated, inherited, reproduced, and transformed into various kinds of tangible and intangible profits within society.
 - Three forms of capital: cultural, social, and economic.

Both theories have value when thinking about adult learning. But do these theories reflect the diverse student population we serve and value their knowledge, skills, and culture?

Community cultural wealth

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- Community cultural wealth originates from critical race theory.
- Bourdieu’s work has been used to argue there is a divide between the “culturally wealthy” and “culturally poor” (Yosso, 2005, p. 76).
- White, middle class culture becomes the norm by default to judge other cultural capital.
- Yosso argues cultural wealth should be considered in greater terms than cultural, social, and economic capital.

Community cultural wealth (continued)

19

- Aspirational capital
 - “the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers” (Yosso, p. 77)
- Linguistic capital
 - “the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style” (p. 78)
- Familial capital
 - “cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition” (p. 79)
- Social capital
 - “networks of people and community resources” (p. 80)
- Navigational capital
 - “skills of maneuvering through social institutions” (p. 80)
- Resistant capital
 - “knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality” (p. 80)

Community cultural wealth

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“community cultural wealth involves a commitment to conduct research, teach and develop schools that serve a larger purpose of struggling toward social and racial justice” (Yosso, 2005, p. 82).

Community cultural wealth in ABE

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- In what ways did you or did you not see your background and cultural knowledge valued in your college experience?
- How did your lived experience (example: education, upbringing, cultural identities) inform the work you do at your institution?
- Who is the student we picture in our minds as we think about our work? Are we recognizing the diversity of our student population?
- How are we centering student stories and experiences? How might the work we do better incorporate the knowledge, skills, and experiences they bring to the classroom and campus?



22

Ten-minute break

Activity one: Compiling community cultural wealth practices

23

- In breakout groups, develop a list of community cultural wealth practices for the classroom or your position using the six forms of community cultural wealth. (15 minutes)
 - Be sure to choose a notetaker and spokesperson
 - Come up with as many practices as you can in the time allowed. This is a brainstorming activity—be creative and don't overthink.
 - We will come back together and share our thoughts.

Our list: Compiling community cultural wealth practices

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- Goalsetting activity—Refine, make more of it.
- Speakers in the profession—Variety, Discuss areas of community cultural wealth
- Competency based—Does it address these forms of capital? Choice? Tied to aspirational capital.
- Resistant capital within curriculum and reading/writing units.
- Student success skills curriculum HD101-learning communities with English
- Apply a concept from the lessons to an experience they had in the past--Context
- Finding resources as an assignment. Connects to navigational and social capital.
- Navigational capital—Navigate Canvas, digital divide

Activity two: Assignment workshop

25

- In breakout groups, work independently with the support of your peers to revise or create an assignment for your class that incorporates themes and practices of community cultural wealth. (25 minutes)
 - Use the practices we have brainstormed
 - The goal of this activity is to leave today with at least a rough draft of an assignment you could incorporate into your curriculum.
 - Be prepared to share out with the larger group what you have produced.

26



Sample student survey

Final thoughts?

27

- What final questions or thoughts do you still have?
- Please complete the following survey for feedback on this seminar: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6NVGFT6>

Thank you!

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For a PDF copy of the PowerPoint presentation, please email andrew.brottlund@gmail.com.

Appendix C: End of Seminar Surveys

End of Seminar Survey (Electronic Version)

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6NKGFT6>

End of Seminar Survey (Hardcopy)

End of Seminar Survey

Thank you for completing the pilot of this professional development seminar! I hope this has been a valuable and informative session. To help me continue to improve this project, I would appreciate your feedback through this short survey. It should take no longer than 10-15 minutes to complete. Please answer the questions honestly as this survey is anonymous. **Please do not write your name on this survey.** You may answer as few or as many survey questions as you wish with as little or as much detail as you are comfortable giving. However, please note that the responses will be stripped of any identifying information, aggregated, and analyzed within my dissertation. All participants of this seminar will be given an opportunity to review a draft of my dissertation before it is finalized.

1. How much did you know about community cultural wealth prior to this seminar?

Nothing

Very Knowledgeable

1

2

3

4

Please provide any written feedback you wish to include below (use the back of the survey for more room as needed):

2. In your opinion, how effective was the seminar content in explaining the concept of community cultural wealth and its impact on ABE student retention and persistence? (Circle your preferred number.)

Not at all effective

Completely effective

1

2

3

4

Please provide any written feedback you wish to include below:

3. In your opinion, how effective was the seminar content (readings, PowerPoint, handouts, etc.) in helping to explain the concept of community cultural wealth and its impact on ABE student retention and persistence?

Not at all effective

Completely effective

1

2

3

4

Please provide any written feedback you wish to include below:

4. How much do you feel you learned in this seminar?

Nothing

Comprehensive Understanding

1

2

3

4

Please provide any written feedback you wish to include below:

5. In your opinion, do you feel time was allocated adequately for the learning and intent of the professional development?

Not at all adequate

Adequate allocation of time

1

2

3

4

Please provide any written feedback you wish to include below:

6. Do you see yourself using the concepts and curriculum you have worked on in this seminar in your current or future courses or position? (Circle your preferred answer below.)

Yes No

7. If so, how? If not, why not?

8. What worked well in this seminar?

9. What suggestions do you have for the seminar's improvement?

10. Please provide any final thoughts not covered earlier here.

Appendix D: Student Survey Template

Examining Strategies that Promote Success for Adult Basic Education Students

Community Cultural Wealth Student Reflection Survey

To the instructor: The following is a sample student survey that you may wish to use to gather feedback on the effectiveness of your course in implementing the six forms of capital within the theory of community cultural wealth. If you do not give an end-of-quarter survey, this can be used in its entirety, or its questions can be added to an existing survey. Feel free to amend or change these questions as you see fit. You may also wish to use these questions as a template to create assignment-specific questions.

Sample introduction of the survey to the students: Thank you for being part of this course! It is important to me as an instructor that the course and its content helps you to foster a sense of belonging in the classroom and on campus. To help me continue to improve, please complete this survey. Answer the following questions with as much or as little detail as you wish. This survey will be anonymous, so **please do not write your name on it.**

1. Did this course provide opportunities to think, write, or talk about your goals for the future? These goals could be focused on your academic journey, your career, or other aspect of your life.

Yes No

2. Did this course help you to accomplish or better understand those goals? If so, how? If not, what might you like to see in the course content to help you achieve your goals?

3. Did this course provide useful opportunities to use different languages or forms of communication? **(For the instructor: This could include communicating in different forms like stories, essays, poetry, or visual art.)** If so, how?

4. Did this course provide useful opportunities to connect course topics and assignments to your family, friends, or community? Were you given an opportunity to read/write/talk about your culture and/or identity (however you define it)? If so, how?

5. Did you rely on friends, family, or other support systems to help you succeed in this course? If so, how?

6. Did this course help you to find and use campus support such as your peers, faculty, the library, the tutoring center, or student clubs or organizations? If so, which ones? Did you find them helpful? Why or why not?

7. Academic disagreement is a healthy way to explore ideas and gain different perspectives. Did you ever disagree with the views or opinions of your peers in class discussions?

Yes No

8. If you did disagree with the views or opinions of your peers, how comfortable were you voicing that disagreement to your peers?

Not at all comfortable

Totally comfortable

1

2

3

4

9. If you did not feel comfortable voicing your disagreement, what could the instructor have done to help you feel more comfortable?

10. Did you ever disagree with the ideas of the course presented by your instructor?

Yes No

11. If you did disagree with the ideas of the course presented by your instructor, how comfortable were you voicing that disagreement to them?

Not at all comfortable

Totally comfortable

1

2

3

4

12. If you did not feel comfortable voicing your disagreement, what could the instructor have done to help you feel more comfortable?

13. Please provide any final thoughts not covered earlier here.

Appendix E: Sample Lesson Plan

The following is a sample lesson plan focused on the concept of the digital divide that incorporates community cultural wealth into the ABE writing classroom. I assign this topic because it is relatable to many students and encourages them to think about the way in which technology can serve as a barrier to various social systems if it is not readily available. For many students, this issue is something they have personal experience with, and for others, this is an opportunity for them to learn about a social inequity that they may not have recognized previously.

1. Introduce the concept of the digital divide to the class through readings and discussions. Please see below for some sample readings I have used in my classes:

Anderson, M. & Kumar, M. (2019, May 7). Digital divide persists even as lower-income Americans make gains in tech adoption. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/07/digital-divide-persists-even-as-lower-income-americans-make-gains-in-tech-adoption/>

Irving, L. (2020, August 31). The digital divide may be news, but its not new. *Internet Society*. Retrieved from <https://www.internetsociety.org/blog/2020/08/the-digital-divide-may-be-news-but-its-not-new/>

The two readings are written in different styles for different purposes, introducing students to different ways of using language. Students are encouraged in group discussions to talk about how each piece is written and the impact of purpose and audience on those linguistic choices. Through conversations around different linguistic styles, students have the opportunity to discuss the different languages they use every day in different situations and apply this concept to academic and professional spaces.

As part of the discussion around the digital divide, ask students to consider through class discussion and individual writing how the digital divide may impact individuals' ability to access aspects of society such as education, employment, etc. and how the divide might be symptomatic of larger systems of inequality such as racism. I have my students practice summary and response writing by summarizing an article and responding to a prompt asking them to think critically about the digital divide and its impact on individuals. This also supports linguistic capital building by writing about the issue in multiple ways using different composition skills. Students often will relate the topic to their own lives or those of their friends and family. They may share with their peers about their own experiences with the digital divide and how they struggled with this challenge and often how they addressed it using various forms of community cultural wealth such as familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital.

2. Once students have learned about the digital divide and have started to make connections between this issue and larger systems of oppression, I assign an expository essay where students practice basic research skills to find sources about the effect of the digital divide on their local community. I specifically ask students to examine what is being done on a local level to address the digital divide. This encourages students to begin to develop their research skills and they learn about potential local solutions. This assignment not only helps students to learn to write an expository essay, but they can use this opportunity to foster social, navigational, and resistant capital as well by finding and sharing information with each other and working together to consider how this barrier to information, education, and employment can be addressed. In doing so, students may draw on aspirational capital as well.
3. Throughout the writing process, students are utilizing elearning systems to submit work, read feedback, and in the case of online or hybrid courses, navigate discussion boards and online instructions. This process supports students' navigational capital building as they draw on previous experiences with technology and continue to learn to use the elearning system. These are skills they can carry over to future courses so the elearning system will gradually become more familiar and less of a barrier to students unfamiliar with navigating this online system of education.