1

Getting Inside the "Underside" of Service-Learning: Student Resistance and Possibilities

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"People come to the food pantry driving nice cars. If they can afford those cars, why do they need to get food for free?"

"What do you expect from kids whose parents don't care enough to read with them at night and help them with their homework, like mine did?"

"Why should I think about people with AIDS? I thought 'you got AIDS, don't bother me, go away, you're going to die.' I didn't care about them."

"When I walked into [homeless shelter] for the first time, my heart was ripped out of me and stomped on. I couldn't believe my eyes . . . I wasn't sure this was an environment I wanted to be volunteering in."

"I don't see why we have to do all these readings and papers. They don't seem to have anything to do with what I am doing at my service site."

Service-learning is often heralded as a pedagogical strategy with "transformative potential" (Jones 2002; Rosenberger 2000). However, as these illustrative quotations from undergraduate students enrolled in our service-learning courses suggest, not all students are immediately, or gracefully, transformed by their experiences. Further, students' abilities to engage with all aspects of their service-learning courses depend on the intersection of their own sociocultural backgrounds (which become very apparent in community service environments), developmental readiness for such learning to occur, and the privileging conditions that situate college students in community service organizations in the first place (Jones 2002).

Much of the discourse and research in service-learning focuses on the positive student outcomes associated with this educational strategy (e.g., Eyler and Giles 1999). We do not want to dispute the positive outcomes associated with service-learning, as we too have experienced the "transformative

potential" of engaging students in this work. However, scant attention is paid to the "underside" of service-learning. By "underside," we mean the complexities that emerge when undergraduate students engage with ill-structured, complex social issues present in the community service settings typically associated with service-learning courses. In such settings, previously held assumptions, stereotypes, and privileges are uncovered. When the "underside" is exposed, student resistance often ensues as the service-learning experience makes claims on students for which they are not prepared to process (Jones 2002; Kegan 1994).

We want to explore in this chapter, the *inside* of the *underside* of service-learning so that student resistance might be better understood and reconceptualized as a site for transformative potential. We engage this discussion of student resistance and possibilities through the lenses of a cognitive developmental theory of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda 1999, 2000a,b; Kegan 1994) and critical whiteness (Fine et al. 1997; Frankenberg 1993; Giroux 1997; Tatum 1999) in the context of a service-learning course taught as a critical pedagogy (Giroux 2003; McLaren 2003a). We refer to this integration of theoretical frameworks as a *critical developmental lens*. We place this theoretical discourse in dialogue with student voices through the presentation of three profiles of student resistance. These profiles are derived from our experiences of teaching undergraduate students in service-learning courses and from analysis of student papers and reflections on their experiences. We draw heavily from the words of students themselves and then turn a critical developmental lens on an interpretation of these words, in an effort to make meaning of how students are negotiating their service-learning experiences.

Drawing less from the service-learning literature and more so from the critical theory domain, "the concept of resistance emphasizes that individuals are not simply acted upon by abstract 'structures' but negotiate, struggle, and create meaning of their own" (Weiler 1988, p. 21). While student resistance can certainly emerge as a problematic and disruptive phenomenon in the classroom (Butin 2005), its presence reflects student negotiation with a meaning making process that holds open the possibilities for engagement with the "dynamics of power and privilege in service-learning" (Rosenberger 2000, p. 24), an oft-noted goal of service-learning, yet one rarely grappled with at great depth. Sonia Nieto (2000) captures well the dynamic interplay from which resistance in service-learning emerges:

> One cannot help but notice, for instance, that the primary recipients of community service are those who society has deemed disadvantaged in some way, be it through their social class, race, ethnicity, ability, or any combination of these. Those who do community service at colleges and universities, on the other hand, are generally young people who have more advantages than those they are serving.   (pp. ix–x)

In our service-learning courses, we found that undergraduate students are confronted with their own privileges and positions of power, often for the

first time. The complicated environments of community service sites situate students in a " 'borderlands,' where existing patterns of thought, relationship, and identity are called into question and juxtaposed with alternative ways of knowing and being" (Hayes and Cuban 1997, p. 75). The borderlands represent "sites both for critical analysis and as a potential source of experimentation, creativity, and possibility" (Giroux 1992, p. 34). The complex dynamics of student resistance, then, emerge in the intersections of negotiated student identities, encounters in the borderlands, and intentionally provoked classroom dialogues focused on power and privilege.

Setting the Context

A quarterly ten-week Leadership Theories course that incorporates service-learning provided the context for student experiences and our analysis. The course engaged students with the question of "leadership for what purpose?" through course readings, class discussions, small group reflection, and three hours/week of service at a local community organization. We designed the course with an intentional focus on social justice and to reflect the goals of multicultural education. As noted by O'Grady (2000):

> Without the theoretical underpinnings provided by multicultural education, service-learning can too easily reinforce oppressive outcomes. It can perpetuate racist, sexist, or classist assumptions about others and reinforce a colonialist mentality of superiority. This is a special danger for predominately White students engaging in service experiences in communities of color.   (p. 12)

Much is written in the service-learning literature about the appropriate goals for service-learning activities. Typically, this discussion is framed using the language of *charity* or *social change* (e.g., Kahne and Westheimer 1996; Morton 1995; Rhoads 1997). In short, an emphasis on charity situates students as those providing service *to* those in need (e.g., those "less fortunate") and feeling good about "helping" others. By contrast, an approach grounded in social change places students in relationship *with* those with whom they are serving and emphasizes the connections between student service and the larger social issues around which the community service sites are organized. Morton (1995) added the possibility of engaging in service in either "thick" or "thin" ways, distinguishing between service experiences that exhibit integrity, respect, and some connection to larger social structures and those in which relationships are not present, commitment to social issues is not cultivated, and students engage in their community service in potentially disingenuous ways.

   Our service-learning courses are rooted in a social change framework. We have cultivated and sustained relationships with our community service partners, several for over six years. The course is designed with an intentional focus on power, privilege, and social justice. Intended learning objectives included the development of an understanding of leadership and social issues

from multiple perspectives, as well as a personal philosophy of leadership through critical analysis of social issues and community involvement. Meeting these objectives occurred through readings that included both leadership theories and narratives capturing some of the life situations students would encounter at their service site, large class lecture and discussion, small group reflections, and a minimum of three hours/week at one community service organization for the duration of the quarter. The small group reflections consisted of all those students working at the same service site (never more than 10 students per group) and were facilitated by a graduate student with preparation in the theory and practice of service-learning.

The community service organizations partnering with the course represented a diverse array of social issues including HIV/AIDS, hunger and homelessness, and literacy. Relationships with these organizations were cultivated and sustained because of the close match between academic learning objectives and the mission and activities of the organization. Because research has demonstrated that direct service is linked to greater critical consciousness and understanding of complex social issues (Eyler and Giles 1999; Jones and Hill 2001; Jones and Abes 2003; Rhoads 1997), students at most sites provided direct service (e.g., preparing and delivering nutritious meals to people living with AIDS; providing one-to-one tutoring for kids struggling in school; packaging and distributing bags of food to individuals accessing the services of a food pantry; playing with children spending the day at a homeless shelter). In addition, students often had an opportunity to work side-by-side with individuals who utilize the services provided by the organization or other volunteers who have more deeply personal reasons for being there (e.g., loss of a friend to AIDS).

Students who enrolled in this elective course represented a variety of ages and academic majors. Nearly 70 percent of the students enrolled in this class are female and 80 percent are white. Our focus here is on the white students in the class as they represented all of those students who demonstrated resistance. Based upon what they indicated during the first class session, students' reasons for enrolling appear to represent a vast array of motivations including: requirement for a scholars program, heard good things about it from a friend, getting credit for volunteering was an easy A, wanted to build on leadership skills and community service experience from high school, and thought it would look good on a resume. The rare student articulated a vision for himself/herself that included increasing self-knowledge and deepening his/her commitment to social justice issues, equity, and civic action, some of our intended outcomes for the course. This course design, and the student resistance profiled, was consistent across sections and instructors each time the class was taught.

Turning a Critical Developmental Lens on Ourselves

As three highly educated, white, middle- to upper-middle-class women, we recognize that we bring to our interpretations of student profiles of resistance

the realities of our own privileged backgrounds. We are also deeply committed to teaching for social justice and are involved in this particular leadership theories course because we care about educating future leaders who will be more attuned to issues of inclusion, justice, and decency. In our beliefs about the role of education in creating a more just society we guard against "fuming" from our side of the bridge and exuding an arrogance of the self-proclaimed socially conscious.

We also acknowledge that teaching service-learning classes from a social justice perspective and wrestling with student resistance is uncomfortable for us. It is tempting at times to settle the resistance; after all, we have been taught (and evaluated) to "maintain order" and impart knowledge in the classroom. We also appreciate that to fully engage with student resistance (which we think is necessary for new knowledge to grow) we must learn to appreciate the "pedagogy of the unknowable" (Ellsworth 1994) and "teach paradoxically" (Kumashiro 2004). Our practice shows us this is no easy task.

Theoretical Frameworks

Exploring student resistance as a complex phenomenon necessitates drawing from several theoretical frameworks as well as the caution that students always remain larger than their categories (Perry 1978). Understanding student resistance as a process of struggle, negotiation, and meaning-making anchors our analysis in the literatures on self-authorship and critical whiteness. Earlier research on the developmental outcomes of service-learning pulls these constructs apart and examines each independently. Typically, domains of development (e.g., psychosocial, cognitive, moral) and the development of social identities (e.g., racial, ethnic, sexual) are treated as discrete domains (Evans et al. 1998). Rarely is the intersecting nature of these domains of development and the dynamics involved in such interaction examined, particularly sparked by the pedagogy of service-learning. One study addressed these connections and reported, "What is enduring about service-learning is the likelihood of increasing integration of these domains . . . Because students were introduced to and developed relationships with both individuals and social issues with which they were unfamiliar, previously held notions of self and other were disrupted, challenged, and reconstructed" (Jones and Abes 2004, p. 163).

Self-Authorship

Self-authorship is one theoretical framework that does address intersecting domains of development. First defined by Robert Kegan (1994) self-authorship is:

> an ideology, an internal identity, a *self-authorship* that can coordinate, integrate, act upon, or invent values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and interpersonal states. [The person] is no

longer *authored* by them, [the person] *authors* them and thereby achieves a personal authority. (p. 185, emphasis in original)

Drawing on her longitudinal research following young adults, Baxter Magolda (1999) describes self-authorship as "an ability to construct knowledge in a contextual world, an ability to construct an internal identity separate from external influences, and an ability to engage in relationships without losing one's internal identity" (p. 12). The journey toward self-authorship depends upon the integration of cognitive complexity, interpersonal maturity, and intrapersonal (identity) development; and locates student development as a process of moving from more formulaic, externally derived understandings of self to "foundational" meaning-making characterized by internally generated values and beliefs (Baxter Magolda 1999). Self-authorship is prompted by experiences of cognitive dissonance (Baxter Magolda 1999). Service-learning provides an especially rich opportunity to promote students' development toward self-authorship because of the dissonance created between previously held conceptions of self and new experiences, reflection on this dissonance, and new learning that occurs as a result (Baxter Magolda 2000a; Jones and Abes 2004).

Kegan's (1994) conception of a "consciousness bridge" provides a metaphor and strategy for understanding the nature of the learning that occurs in service-learning classes, student resistance to this learning, and support for the journey toward self-authorship. Building on the work of William Perry, Kegan's idea of the consciousness bridge describes the nature of developmental transitions particularly when individuals are "in over their heads" and the meaning individuals make of such transitions. The traverse across the bridge is one of "developmental transformation, or the process by which the whole ('how I am') becomes gradually a part ('how I was') of a new whole ('how I am now')" (Kegan 1994, p. 43). Further, Kegan conceived of the bridge builder as having "equal respect for both ends, creating a firm foundation on both sides of the chasm students will traverse" (p. 278) and the bridge building as a process of co-creation between the bridge builder and students so that students would play a part in constructing a bridge that "they could choose to walk out on" (p. 279). Presumably, the journey across the consciousness bridge brings a student closer to a self-authored identity.

While the theoretical framework of self-authorship provides an analytic lens for understanding how students are making meaning of their service-learning experiences, it does not squarely focus attention on the complexities that emerge when students confront issues of power and privilege. A potential downside to analyzing student experiences solely through a cognitive developmental lens is that it centers students as the object of scrutiny and analysis and results in a comment such as "this student just didn't get it" (Butin 2005; Jones 2002). The perspective of critical whiteness helps to situate these individual student voices in a larger social context, both in terms of the complicated environments in which service takes place

and in addressing the issues of power and white privilege central to many service-learning courses.

Critical Whiteness

Critical whiteness is a theoretical framework focused on exposing the ways in which systems of oppression, inequality, and unearned advantage are racialized and inscribed by an ideology that places and supports "white" as the "normal," privileged, and most desirable racial identity (Clark and O'Donnell 1999; Delgado and Stefancic 1997; Fine et al. 1997; Frankenberg 1993; Giroux 1997; Grillo and Wildman 2000; Kincheloe and Steinberg 2000; Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995; Morrison 1992; Rodriguez 2000; Supriya 1999; Tatum 1999). Whiteness is, therefore, "a location of structural advantage, of race privilege . . . a standpoint and place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society . . . (and) a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed" (Frankenberg 1993, p. 1). Critical whiteness guards against a systemic desire to be color-blind, which sets up a condition that "allows us to redress only extremely egregious racial harms, ones that everyone would notice and condemn" (Delgado and Stefancic 2001, p. 22). This colorblindness leaves untouched the ways in which racism is deeply engrained in how white people see and make sense of the world, allowing racism and marginalization to permeate everyday social practices.

Service-learning from a social justice perspective seeks to name those cultural and social practices that support systemic racialized inequality and privilege. Resistance to awareness of these privileging conditions has been theorized in the critical whiteness and white racial identity literature (Frankenberg 1993; Helms 1993; Kincheloe and Steinberg 2000; Tatum 1992; Thandeka 2001). For white students, service-learning often places them in an unfamiliar borderland that proves very threatening to the unearned advantages associated with being white. White students respond to this new knowledge with a range of emotions including guilt, anger, avoidance, and confusion (Arminio 2001; Helms 1993; Tatum 1997), which are often manifested as resistance. Using critical whiteness as a framework to think about service-learning and student resistance helps focus the analysis, in part, on the ways power and privilege work and are questioned or reinforced in educational practice.

In our experiences with undergraduate students engaged in service-learning, resistance, or oppositional behavior, is associated with a perceived threat to their positions of privilege and power and the subsequent need to maintain these positions. Never before confronted with their own unearned advantages (McIntosh 2001), we find white students resisting the critical and personal reflection necessary to produce new knowledge and awareness. Similarly, Kumashiro (2002) described this resistance to anti-oppressive education as a desire for repetition, the constant inscribing of what is known and taken-for-granted. Drawing from the work of Britzman, he explained

"to learn in anti-oppressive ways, students need to do much more than learn that which affirms how they already understand themselves and what they already believe" (Kumashiro 2002, p. 70).

Our Praxis: Connecting Theory with
the Practice of Service-Learning

As noted earlier, our service-learning courses are informed by the principles of critical pedagogy. As such, we work to make visible the ways in which knowledge is inscribed by a dominant ideology (e.g., whiteness) so as to raise consciousness about it and promote social, egalitarian, and transformative change (McLaren 2003a). Many of the tenets of critical pedagogy resonate with the goals of service-learning educators. McLaren (2003b) makes this connection explicit, suggesting that critical pedagogy is grounded in:

> . . . "walking the talk" and working in those very communities one purports to serve. A critical pedagogy for multicultural education should quicken the affective sensibilities of students as well as provide them with a language of social analysis, cultural critique, and social activism in the service of cutting the power and practice of capitalism at its joints. Opportunities must be made for students to work in communities where they can spend time with economically and ethnically diverse populations, as well as with gay and lesbian populations, in the context of community activism and participation in progressive social movements.   (pp. 170–171)

It is exactly these "opportunities" afforded by service-learning that bring students face-to-face with power and white privilege and create the conditions for student resistance.

Reading Resistance: "Don't Nobody
Bring Me No Bad News"

The witch from the acclaimed Broadway show *The Wiz* captures our concern in offering student perspectives on their experiences with service-learning. On the surface, these quotations from written student reflections will *read* as a potentially negative commentary on their abilities to engage with the class. Further, these student "resisters" do not comprise the majority of the students who take the class. We also don't presume to know the basis for why resistance is performed by students in different ways; we do, however, see how resistance is performed via classroom and community contexts. We offer these profiles not as stable or discrete categories of resistance, but as illustrations of the complexities that emerge when engaging students in encounters with power, privilege, and the material conditions that produce the social inequalities in evidence at their service sites. What follows here are several thematic profiles of resistance and a critical developmental lens through which to examine them. In these stories of resistance, we find great authenticity and agency. We see authenticity in students presenting themselves exactly "how

I am" and agency in their struggle to make meaning of new experiences and knowledge. Through authenticity and agency, we seek to get *inside* the *underside* of service-learning.

Profiles of Student Resistance

We decided to explore the resistance demonstrated by students who seem to be academically ready for the course material, but who resist content and new knowledge for complex reasons. These are not the students who are challenged by the course material due to what we attribute to an issue of academic preparedness. We did not include these students in our analysis of resistance and instead focused on those white students for whom resistance seems to result from the complex intersections of the development of self-authorship and challenges to the previously unscrutinized privileging conditions exposed at their community service sites and through the readings for the course.

We purposely identified these student voices as "profiles" rather than types or categories because they are not clearly delineated, stable, or discreet units of analysis. Instead, the profiles, and the student perspectives they represent, are intended to capture some of the complex dynamics we experienced as students encountered the challenging environment of the service-learning classes and community settings. We also do not see these profiles from a hierarchical perspective suggesting that one response to resistance is "better" than another.

"The Good Volunteer"

"The Good Volunteers" are typically very good "helpers." They are usually very happy to help out at their service sites, although rarely discuss their experiences at the site as disrupting preconceived attitudes and beliefs about those with whom they come into contact. In fact, staff at the community service sites often comment that these students are their best volunteers. In class, they are generally quiet and acquiescent, in ways that might be interpreted by faculty as a silent, though begrudging, compliance or intellectual disengagement.

These "Good Volunteers" express their resistance through their written work and in class conversations that demonstrate an absence of critical thinking about the connections between complex social issues, power/privilege, and the very need for their community service work. When pushed to think in more depth, these students often react by asking the instructors and the service site leaders for more "contact" with the service recipients, as if being able to "see" a person living with HIV/AIDS will reveal some new insight. However, the "good volunteers" are not asking for a relationship with recipients, nor do they demonstrate any effort to get at the root of the social issues they are witnessing. Instead, they exhibit an attitude of entitlement in expressing that if they are going to help "those people" out, then they ought to be able to see first hand the results of their contributions.

"Good Volunteers" often expressed they should get more out of their experience at the service site than the individuals they are serving. In his article about the usefulness of service-learning, Butin (2003) writes that we need to be asking if our service-learning courses are ". . . a better comprehension of course content? . . . Or, . . . a voyeuristic exploitation of the 'cultural other' that masquerades as academically-sanctioned 'servant leadership?' " (p. 1675). We often receive requests to *see* the recipients of service from students who are working at a food pantry stocking shelves and loading boxes for needy families. One student stated, "The service site, [food pantry name], is really boring me. I just do manual labor. I don't get any interaction with people who come in . . . not that I'm ungrateful or anything." The question of gratitude for one's service comes up often from the "Good Volunteers." Implicit in the need to *see* the recipients is the expectation that students will receive thanks for their good work and individual effort.

In relation to class time and the service experience, some "Good Volunteers" indicated they enjoyed their service but saw no connection to the class concepts and theories. One student wrote, "I don't see why we have to do all the readings and papers. They don't seem to have anything to do with what I am doing at my service site." Another student expressed, "Reading is not one of my most favorite things unless it interests me. Some of our readings seem to be complaining and sob stories. I am sensitive to people with less fortunate conditions than myself, although I don't agree with overdoing it." These students are not actively resisting the material in the course; however, they do not see any relevance to their work in the community or to their own sense of responsibility. Most good volunteers appear to be passionate about performing charitable works. There is no resistance to the community service component of the class, but resistance emerges in the disconnect between the service and the objectives of the course.

"The Politely Frustrated" Volunteer

The "Politely Frustrated" students are similar to the "Good Volunteers" in that they do not wish to be disruptive and comply in order to get a good grade. The "Politely Frustrated" differ from the "Good Volunteers" in their emerging recognition of power structures at work at their service sites. The "Good Volunteer" may be well-intentioned but understands his/her work as helping out those "in need" or "victims" of bad luck. The "Politely Frustrated" students begin to see power and privilege, although they remain unapologetic about their own position of privilege (e.g., my family worked hard to get where they are).

The "Politely Frustrated" express their resistance through written work and course evaluations, rarely in public discourse, such as class discussions or in reflection groups. These students tell us in their final thoughts on the class that in their previous written work they were primarily telling us what they thought we wanted to hear, and holding firm to a view of education and service as apolitical. Their essays quietly express blaming service recipients for

their own situations, no sense of individual responsibility for addressing complex social issues, and a lack of understanding between the connection between class readings/discussions and their work at the community organization. A student summed up this point of view in a course paper when he stated, "I do care about programs that help the less fortunate. I care about these as long as the people who benefit from them are trying to get work and get by and not just living by a check in the mail."

Another "Politely Frustrated" student wrote about feeling challenged when confronting issues of white privilege and systemic racism. She described feeling guilty and hurt after reading some of the course material, yet was unwilling to see this issue from any other perspective than her own. She believed that because she was not doing anything to personally oppress other people, systematic oppression did not exist. She wrote, "I don't think that just because I am white I have any more advantages than someone who is not white. I don't think that someone looked at my college application and said, 'oh, she's white, let her in.' . . . I received the same public education that everyone in the state of Ohio receives." This student and other politely frustrated resisters often feel attacked and hurt, and if they are not personally doing anything to perpetuate the system, they do not see their responsibility to confront the wrongs of the rest of the world.

While the "Good Volunteer" does not engage with the class, the "Politely Frustrated" students express that their time has been wasted during the class meetings and are increasingly frustrated by the service experience. One student, in the final course evaluation, offered some feedback, common among these students, about the course's reading materials. "The stories were awful. I got very little out of them and they had nothing to do with leadership, just about people's depressing lives . . . I liked my community service site but I feel like after this class I was supposed to feel so fulfilled that I made a difference, but I don't really think I did, nor did I really learn anything about myself."

Another student offered a common critique about the class content—the perceived focus on "diversity." Responding to the question about the most educational aspect of the course, this student wrote, "The service aspect. The classroom was not, in my opinion, educational. It just felt like most of the time it was 'OSU's diversity is great and all minorities and people that aren't middle class or upper class are like that way because they could not have helped it.' Which is so not true."

A male student who was a member of a selective, "leadership and service" scholars program took issue with the course and expressed strong resentment to course material that dealt with privilege and power. He identified himself as a "normal American" whose Christian values collided with some of the issues at his community service site, an AIDS service organization providing meals and nutritional support for people living with HIV/AIDS. His demeanor in the first hour was quiet and his body language, often sitting with his hands crossed at his chest and frequently, though quietly, sighing, communicated much discomfort.

In his final paper, he described his surprise in the times he let himself open up and learn while at the AIDS service organization. He could not, however, engage similarly during the class. In his final evaluation of the course he offered the following points of feedback. "I don't enjoy the preaching of a debatable agenda in the first hour. Perhaps teaching from a more balanced perspective would be better than 'isms are keeping us down.' " In response to what could be improved he offered, "More emphasis on community service. Less on ideologically driven readings and lessons."

"The Active Resister"

The "Active Resister" can be both hostile and disruptive throughout the entire service-learning experience. These students aggressively argue concepts presented in class in an open and confrontational way. They often try to garner support for their ideas (and critique of the class) from other students. These students also tend to be very problematic at the service site by making statements of blame pertaining to the service recipients and the situations in which they find themselves. The written work and class evaluations of these students make clear their opposition and resistance to the foundations of the course. These "Active Resisters" do not connect in any way with the course, not even at a superficial level.

A male student wrote in his evaluation, "I would not recommend this class to a friend. I would not allow my friend to have to listen to the things that are taught that are out of the spectrum of truth." Another student wrote, "You should never be forced to change your values. I would not recommend this class unless all you want to talk about is poor people." Finally, another student reflected on the readings about people struggling to live in the context of complex social issues and inequities and offered the following commentary about the insight he gleaned. "The people in the stories were worthless and inexperienced."

Another "Active Resister" was consistently angry about his involvement with the course. He was required to take the class for his "leadership and service" scholars program. We got off to a rocky start at the beginning of the quarter when he labeled a neighborhood adjacent to the University as "the ghetto." The students in the class had been brainstorming positive and negative attributes of a community and his "ghetto" comment was offered at the end of a discussion about the growing population of Somali people in the city. Given the oppressive racial and class implications of this label, the instructor immediately offered her perspective on what was damaging about the word "ghetto" and the ways in which such labels and stereotypes ran contrary to building capacity, which was the point of the exercise. White students and students of color seemed to take this opening as an opportunity to express their displeasure and offense at the use of his term as well. The student left the room feeling attacked and refused emails and personal approaches to check in with him. He did not, however, shrink from future classroom discussions and frequently interrupted students to share his point of view, naming it "the truth."

His final paper summed up his experience in the class and strong resistance to both the content and his work at the AIDS service organization:

> My main objection (to the class) came from the fact that the service seemed political in nature, more specifically, servant of a particular agenda endorsed by both the class and (the scholars program), which I resented.
>
> I wish this class would focus more on service and what really happens in the real world and not try to make all people look like victims when in reality it is mostly their own faults. When I am at [AIDS service organization] and I see a client, I know it was their fault they have AIDS, and if for some reason the person has AIDS by something not of their causing, they will be the very small percentage that is that way. If you choose a way to live, and the consequence causes you to be in a position where you need to rely on a non-profit organization to survive, then you must first realize it is your fault for that.

Another male student frequently shared in class, in his written work, and at his service site that this course was a waste of his time. He did not like working with children, though he chose to tutor at an after school program. Throughout the course and in follow-up conversations and evaluations after the course, he was consistent in expressing his frustration. He wrote:

> The best part of the course was that it was only one day a week. The most challenging was trying to answer questions that really didn't interest or pertain to me. It's hard to have opinions or feelings about something you aren't specifically passionate about. Like volunteering for a specific organization when (students in his leadership and service scholars program) in general just like helping out and volunteering, not because they want to strive to correct a social problem, just because they like helping out.

This student openly acknowledged that the focus of his service was his own self-gratification and no amount of reading, large group, or one-on-one discussion during the quarter would evoke any movement from this position. Finally, he felt that the best time to take this course was, "The first quarter of the freshman year, because they can just get it out of the way and forget about it."

Reading Student Resistance: Discussion and Implications for Practice

Where does resistance come from? What are the dynamics at work that foster the expression of resistance in the service-learning context? How might we *read* resistance so as to best understand the basis for its presence in service-learning and to transform resistance from a somewhat aggravating and potentially disruptive force to a site of critical thinking, creativity, and possibility? These are questions we ask ourselves when resistance appears in our service-learning classes (and it always does).

What makes *reading* student resistance in the context of service-learning so vexing is that it is not always easily discernable or translatable into practice.

Integrating the theoretical frameworks of self-authorship and critical whiteness provides one way to understand resistance because it focuses on *what* students are resisting (e.g., their own positions of power and privilege), *why* they are resisting (e.g., developmental readiness), and the *context* that sparks awareness of resistance (e.g., critical service-learning). Commenting on the cognitive restructuring necessary to promote racial/ethnic identity, Torres and Baxter Magolda (2004) aptly capture the importance of integrating theories of self-authorship with critical whiteness in understanding student resistance in service-learning:

> Although the *content* of reconstructing White privilege among majority students is very different than the *content* of reconstructing oppressive social images for ethnic and racial minorities, the *process* for both groups is dependent upon the interrelationship of cognitive and identity development. (p. 334)

Our *reading* of student resistance suggests that you cannot pull these constructs apart. To understand student resistance as only developmental obscures the powerful hold of privilege on student identities. To only focus on a critical whiteness approach fails to explain why some students grapple more readily with white privilege than others and their own complicity in the perpetuation of the structures of inequality they witness at their community service sites. Our findings suggest that student resisters in our courses do so in part because of deeply ingrained privileges, lack of exposure to those different from themselves, and absence of the developmental complexity required to recognize privilege in the first place.

No one template (despite the presence of many statements of "principles of best practice" in the service-learning literature) assures that all students will engage fully with the complexities of service-learning or that all service-learning educators will design experiences that "work." Further, much of what gets constructed as service-learning fits uncomfortably within a social justice approach and looks more like charitable work. What we offer here are a few implications for practice that grow directly out of our working through the real demonstrations of student resistance in our service-learning classes. These implications are informed by a critical developmental framework that integrates theories of self-authorship and whiteness.

Turning a Critical Developmental Lens on Student Resistance

The framework of self-authorship reminds us that students come to our service-learning classes from different developmental places that influence what they see, know, and understand. It also suggests that many traditional aged college students are still relying on external sources that *author* them (Baxter Magolda 2000b). We see in our profiles the result of these dynamics as students resist new knowledge and experiences that counter what they are accustomed to. We also see that the experience of cognitive dissonance,

prompted by their service-learning encounters, created some impetus to think differently, and more complexly, about their own identities in relation to what they were learning.

Because our service-learning course content is explicitly focused on complex social issues and the dynamics involved in their perpetuation, students' resistance can be understood as avoidance of any new knowledge that disrupts these external formulas and current ways of negotiating their place in the world. Some of our students found that engaging with service-learning becomes messy and tense, so a decision that class material is "irrelevant" creates a passage through which to avoid the conflict in the first place. "Irrelevance" can be interpreted as unwillingness to engage with questions of power and privilege or inability to understand the questions asked of them. This is both an identity and a cognitive issue. For example, the "Good Volunteer" does not seem to have a framework through which to analyze concepts of the course and therefore, only interacts with these issues in a superficial way and does not experience any challenges to the taken-for-granted (e.g., whiteness) assumptions about race. External formulas are currently working for them and they are not experiencing any cognitive dissonance.

To promote self-authorship through service-learning, a holistic approach to learning and development must be adopted. A holistic approach is one that incorporates "opportunities for complex cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development" (Baxter Magolda 2000b, p. 94). In particular, Baxter Magolda suggests: viewing students as capable participants in the journey to self-authorship, providing directions and practice in acquiring internal authority, establishing a community of learners among peers, and supporting the struggle inherent in exchanging older, simpler perspectives for newer, more complex ones. Further, we suggest that whiteness provides a conceptual framework for thinking about student resistance and self-authorship provides the pathway for analyzing resistance from a developmental perspective. We place our own reflections on implications within the context of these four themes integrated with a perspective from concepts from critical whiteness.

Viewing Students as Capable Participants in the Journey

The implication in this theme is the importance of engaging students where they currently are in their own development, rather than as Kegan (1994) exhorts, "We cannot simply stand on our favored side of the bridge and worry or fume about the many who have not yet passed over" (p. 62). The importance of respect and support for students' current realities cannot be underestimated in this work. This includes recognizing that many white students have never before been encouraged to examine their racial identities or the accompanying privileges. Because many of our students are still relying on external formulas, establishing an interpersonal connection with

them is important as they construct meaning of their experiences (Ignelzi 2000) and learn to trust the experience they are having. Further, given the developmental readiness of many students and the role of external forces in self-authoring, it is important for service-learning educators to remind themselves of the power and responsibility that comes with serving as an authoring figure in students' lives.

Assessing early on the developmental readiness among students in service-learning classes may also prove useful in transforming resistance into an educational opportunity and promoting self-authorship. Incorporating into early assignments an opportunity for students to describe the nature of their previous community service involvement, views on service, and their motivations for taking the class may provide some clues. We incorporate into our classes an essay assignment that asks students to situate themselves in terms of their social identities and the intersection of these identities with community service. This provides insight into student self-knowledge regarding race, class, gender, sexual identities. Providing a mechanism for student choice in service site selection may also alleviate some of the risk of doing harm in the community, as well as provide instructors some information about how willing students are to engage with challenging community settings. Because students are expected to engage in the community service component of the class early in the quarter, they develop ownership for their own learning experience.

We suspect that providing students with multiple ways to engage with the course and express themselves helps educators understand where students are in their own development and then how best to promote new understanding and knowledge. For example, if students are resisting discussion about privilege in regard to race, the instructor might consider another social identity (e.g., gender, social class, religion) with which they might identify. Ongoing instructor feedback to student written reflections is another strategy for affirming students' developmental realities as they move through the borderlands of service-learning.

Providing Directions and Practice Acquiring Internal Authority

If service-learning educators strive to promote self-authorship and move toward anti-oppressive change, these efforts must be intentional, clearly explained to students, and reflected in all aspects of the course. Attention to the nature of student involvement in the community, class readings and discussion, and the connection between the two must be ongoing and deliberative. As summarized by Baxter Magolda (2000b) self-authorship is promoted through use of ill-structured problems (community service), exercises in perspective taking, dialogue on complex topics, personalizing learning through reflection, inviting students to say what they really think, and take risks in the classroom.

While the community service experience may serve as a catalyst to students' resistance, a space in the classroom must be made to enable students to voice

their thinking. Because we have learned to expect resistance, the challenge becomes transforming resistance into an opportunity for dialogue and learning. One of the strategies to promote such learning and self-authorship is to facilitate discussions that do not silence the resisters while also not intimidating others in the class. Active resisters need to know that their voices are heard too, but sometimes follow-up with these more vocal resisters can't happen in front of the entire class, but instead outside of the classroom environment that may be less threatening.

The nature of the community service experience also is integral to promoting self-authorship. Without tapping into students' meaning making through active reflection, students are left to come up with their own analysis that may serve to reinforce inaccurate information and stereotypes. In addition, students may make comments at the community service site that are harmful and hurtful; and as one of our community partners stated, ". . . they just blurt out their opinions without thinking about who might be in the room with them . . . I really don't want to hear about it." Direct service and the opportunity to develop relationships with individuals at the community site are integral to shifts in thinking and awareness of power and privilege. The opportunity to personalize complex social issues and to see the real effects of social and public policies on the life situations of certain individuals does more to disrupt taken-for-granted assumptions than anything else we have designed into our service-learning courses. However, there is also a risk in this approach as some students may not be developmentally ready for what they may encounter at certain sites and retreat—or resist—new learning. As service-learning educators, it is important to negotiate the balance in asking community partners to potentially serve as a place where students make mistakes with the real contributions students can make in advancing the goals and activities of the community organization.

Establishing Communities of Learners Among Peers

For students relying on external formulas to make meaning, the support of peers is important (Ignelzi 2000). Peers provide both affirmation and challenges to move toward more internally defined definitions. At least half of each of our class meetings included small group reflection where students are grouped according to their community service sites. In these groups, students find a space to both speak up and defend their points of view as well as challenges to their ways of thinking by their peers. They often find themselves in the presence of multiple perspectives on issues that promote critical thinking and greater self awareness. We also have found that students are more likely to take risks if they see their peers engaging in new ideas and different experiences, rather than if the instructor suggested such activities. However, facilitators of reflection and class discussions must be attuned to the amount of "air time" some students take. Given the nature of the topics discussed in classes, some students may perceive this time as appropriate to air previously held opinions about issues rather than draw from what they

have read or witnessed at their community service sites. Discussions and reflections must be designed so that all students may be heard and opposing viewpoints discussed in a space that is perceived as safe.

During the course of the quarter, students in our classes also participate in group projects structured around the issues at their community service site. This serves the dual purpose of establishing a community of learners working at a common community site and encouraging the development of multiple perspectives around complex social issues. For example, each small group must research and present, to the entire class, the social issues prevalent at their community service organization. The results of this research usually help students see these issues more complexly and begin to challenge more simplistic notions about why individuals are accessing the services of a particular organization.

Supporting the Struggle Inherent in the Journey

The concept of the "consciousness bridge" is useful to understanding this theme. The bridge foundation must support the journey across as well as invite students to make the journey in the first place. Students will quickly become "in over their heads," and resist, if course designs and expectations require capacities and skill in unfamiliar areas. In order to anchor the bridge on both ends *and* pay attention to the crossing, the structure of the design of service-learning must be "*meaningful* to those who will not yet understand that curriculum and *facilitative* of a transformation of mind so that they will come to understand that curriculum" (Kegan 1994, p. 62). Support for the journey is imperative. Inviting student reflections and providing feedback is one way to provide the support necessary to encourage new ways of thinking.

Further, when integrating self-authorship with critical whiteness, the "how I am now" is less a fixed sense of self, but instead one negotiated in relation to the contextual influences of the service-learning experience and the nature of the bridge supporting the crossing into the borderland. Student resistance in the context of service-learning cannot be understood without attention to both the foundation and the crossing over of the bridge. In this focus on both the structure and the crossing, we find the integral relationship between the development toward self-authorship and new awareness of power and privilege.

When white students first begin to acknowledge and understand some of the consequences associated with power and privilege, a full range of emotions can emerge (e.g., guilt, anger, sadness, hesitation). This is very tough work that often puts students into conflict with their families and peers. Instructors sharing their own journeys (and mistakes) help students appreciate that this is life-long work and cannot be easily resolved. Faculty anticipation of the emotional responses to such learning and development is important as is awareness of other resources around the campus and community that support student understanding of whiteness.

Conclusion: Getting Inside the Underside

Our experiences teaching service-learning courses suggest that the underside of service-learning is always present. Sometimes it lurks just beneath the surface and emerges tentatively and sporadically. Other times, it is very visible and present in how students navigate all aspects of the service-learning course. By bringing together a critical whiteness approach with a developmental one, educators have an opportunity to get inside the underside of service-learning and understand student resistance in new ways. Such an integrative framework acknowledges the developmental realities students bring to their service-learning experiences, the privileging conditions that situate students in service environments, the structures of inequality that produce the need for community service organizations, and the potential of service-learning as a critical pedagogy that opens up the possibility for anti-oppressive change. As bell hooks (2003) reminds us, getting inside the underside is ultimately a "pedagogy of hope," stretching the boundaries of educational practice to include "the life-enhancing vibrancy of diverse communities of resistance" (p. xvi).

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