School of Information Sciences Faculty Research
Publications

School of Information Sciences

1-1-2017

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Kafi D. Kumasi
Wayne State University, ak4901@wayne.edu

Chapter 7

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Introduction

Research suggests that it takes considerably more time to prepare to teach a class online that it does to prepare to teach one in a traditional face-to-face (f2f) format.[1] Similarly, teaching online courses that have a multicultural focus can be more challenging than teaching other subjects in a fully online format. Unlike most subject areas, multicultural courses are highly dependent on authentic interactions between students and require students to bring their personal backgrounds and cultural experiences into the course activities. In that way, multicultural courses are typically designed to help students engage in "courageous conversations"[2] about all types of human difference and societal ineq-

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1. Joseph Cavanaugh, "Teaching Online: A Time Comparison," *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration* 8, no. 1 (2005), http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/spring81/cavanaugh81.htm. Cavanaugh outlines some of the rigors of translating a course from a campus-based format to an online environment.

2. Glenn E. Singleton, *Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2014). This text

uities that exist along different axes of power and privilege. However, many students choose to take online classes not only out of convenience, but also out of a desire to be relatively anonymous in terms of their physical identity and presumed ability to talk more "freely."[3] For example, Merry Merryfield[4] observed several "paradoxes" between the students' behavior in her online vs. campus-based multicultural class. In the online version, she described the students as "more open, frank, expansive, curious, even confessional in their willingness to share and discuss prickly issues such as white privilege, racism, educational inequities, injustice, and xenophobia than teachers have been in the campus version of the course." This desire for and presumption of anonymity presents a challenge for teaching online classes where issues of identity are central to the subject matter.

In this chapter, I describe some of the instructional design challenges I faced in translating an exercise called "The Privilege Walk" into a fully online classroom environment. The online version of this exercise (hereafter referred to as "The Virtual Privilege Walk" or VPW) is based on a better known Privilege Walk exercise. The classic Privilege Walk exercise has been adopted in many higher education classrooms, particularly in courses on diversity, multiculturalism, or other forms of power differentiation.[5] The context in which the VPW exercise was developed and specifics about how the activity works will be discussed later in the chapter. I designed the VPW exercise for a three-credit elective course, "Multicultural Information Services and Resources." This course is part of a thirty-six hour Masters of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree program at a university located in the Midwest United States.

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is a seminal work in helping educators develop strategies for teaching about difficult issues of race and powers in contemporary and diverse classrooms.

3. Glenn Gordon Smith, David Ferguson, and Mieke Caris, "Online vs. Face-to-Face," *THE Journal (Technological Horizons in Education)* 28, no. 9 (2001): 18.

4. Merry M. Merryfield, "The Paradoxes of Teaching a Multicultural Education Course Online," *Journal of Teacher Education* 52, no. 4 (2001): 283-299.

5. Kelly Sassi and Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, "Walking the Talk: Examining Privilege and Race in a Ninth-Grade Classroom," *English Journal* (2008): 25-31.

By sharing my instructional design decisions and evaluating students' reflections on this exercise, this work may help other LIS educators become more intentional about the decisions they make when choosing to embed multicultural learning activities into their online classrooms.

Multicultural Education as a Social Justice Typology

Teaching a multicultural-focused course is in many ways connected to a larger social justice agenda. Both are concerned with changing social reality in ways that make life more equitable for people who have been marginalized or oppressed. The following definition of multicultural education articulated by scholars James and Cherry Banks, provides a clear basis for this comparison. In Donna Ford's *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education,* Banks and Banks's chapter describes multicultural education as, "A field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates, for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic and women's studies."[6]

The keywords within this description that coincide with the basic thrust of social justice ideals and language are "to increase… equity." Inherent in this phrase is a change-oriented goal that seeks to rebalance existing power asymmetries that benefit only a select few. This same transformative focal point is present in each of the five major social justice typologies described by Mehra, Rioux, and Albright: "justice as fairness," "utilitarianism," "justice as desert," "egalitarianism/equity," and "distributive justice."[7] The VPW exercise aligns most closely with the aims of the *justice as fairness* typology, which according to these authors embodies:

6. Donna Y. Ford, "The Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education" *Journal of Negro Education* 65, no. 4 (1996): xii.

7. Bharat Mehra, Kevin S. Rioux, and Kendra S. Albright, "Social Justice in Library and Information Science," in *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences,* 3rd ed., ed. Marcia Bates and Mary Niles Maack (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2009), 4820-4836.

The idea that societies must safeguard the rights of citizens based on rational and unbiased notions of fairness. It was put forth by the American political philosopher John Rawls, who asserts that fairness is based on principles of justice that: 1) ensure extensive and equal liberty; and 2) promote societal benefits to be arranged in such a way that the least disadvantaged persons obtain the greatest benefits possible. [8]

To some extent, the VPW exercise helps lay the foundation for anti-discrimination by helping students see the privileges they enjoyed while growing up. Doing so can be seen as a necessary precursor for those who enjoy the most privilege to take affirmative actions to help level the playing field for disadvantaged groups.

Contextualizing the "Virtual Privilege Walk" Exercise

While some students may assume that classes with the word "multicultural" in the title will automatically mean learning about "other" (aka non-white) cultures, I approach teaching such classes from a critical standpoint that centralizes issues of power and white privilege. This approach stems from my belief that understanding how whiteness functions in American society is a key component to developing multicultural competence. As a faculty member of color, one of the ways I help my students, who are often from majority white backgrounds, contextualize the concept of privilege is by explaining that "white privilege is my history being taught as elective and yours being taught as the core curriculum." This statement often helps students understand that multicultural education itself emerged as a response to the overwhelming whiteness of mainstream American curricula.[9] The precursor to multicultural education were Ethnic Studies programs, which began in the 1960s when blacks, Latinos, and other communities of color mounted activist campaigns on college campuses.[10] The demand then was for

8. Ibid.

9. Diane Ravitch, "Multiculturalism: E Pluribus Plures," *The American Scholar* 59, no. 3 (1990): 337–354.

10. Christine I. Bennett, *Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1986).

more faculty of color to be hired and for the curriculum to reflect the history and culture of students of color on campus. To continue honoring this struggle toward a more inclusive curriculum, multicultural classes should not be taught as mere celebrations of minority cultures. They should also attend to the white power structure that created the need for multicultural education itself. [11]

Yet, some students still have difficulty understanding the concept of privilege. This difficulty can be particularly acute for whites, who Peggy McIntosh argues, "are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege…I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets."[12] Within McIntosh's now famous article entitled, "Unpacking the Knapsack of White Privilege," she offers a series of statements directed to white people, which describe the various conditions under which whites often enjoy unearned advantages. There are twenty-six statements about privilege featured in the 1990 article. The first three read as follows:

> 1. I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
> 2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
> 3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.[13]

This article is known for helping whites in particular to confront the privileges they benefit from on a regular basis. For me, McIntosh's article was also compelling as a person of color in that it made the effects of macro-level racism easier to detect on a micro-level. It becomes more difficult for white students to argue that racism does not exist in the post-Civil Rights era after they read McIntosh's article. Part of the reason for the belief in a post-racial America has to do with a desire to see

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11. Sonia Nieto, *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education* (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1992).

12. Peggy McIntosh, "Unpacking the Knapsack of White Privilege," *Independent School* 49, no. 2 (1990): 31-36.

13. Ibid., 32.

America as a fundamentally just society.[14] This kind of belief system is bolstered, for some, by evidence of a growing black middle class and the election of the nation's first black President, Barack Obama. Yet, Atwi Akom[15] asserts that this sort of thinking is an illusion and perpetuates a myth that he describes as "Ameritocracy," which combines the words "American" and "meritocracy." Contrary to this myth of Ameritocracy, Akom argues that "full acceptance into this society is restricted on the basis of racial identity and other forms of social difference."[16]

The "Privilege Walk" Exercise

Undoubtedly, McIntosh's 1990 article on white privilege influenced what later became known as the "Privilege Walk" (PW) exercise. While various facilitators may have revised the PW exercise, its basic instructions[17] remain fairly standard. The participants are instructed to line up in a straight line as a list of statements related to privilege or obstacles are read. Each statement is followed by the instruction to take a step backward or forward. For instance, "If you are a white male take one step forward." Or, "If there have been times in your life when you skipped a meal because there was no food in the house take one step backward." Once all statements have been read, the students are spread out in the room based on levels of privilege. The person in the front is declared the "winner" and the participants have a chance to debrief the activity as a group.

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14. Garrett Albert Duncan, "Critical Race Theory and Method: Rendering Race in Urban Ethnographic Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (2002): 85-104.

15. Antwi A. Akom, "Ameritocracy and Infra-Racial Racism: Racializing Social and Cultural Reproduction Theory in the Twenty-First Century," *Race Ethnicity and Education* 11, no. 3 (2008): 205-230.

16. Ibid., 205.

17. See for example State University of New York at Albany, School of Social Welfare, "Module 5: Privilege Walk Activity," (Albany, NY: SUNY, 2009), http://www.albany.edu/ssw/efc/pdf/Module%205_1_Privilege%20 Walk%20Activity.pdf.

Overall, the "Privilege Walk" exercise is intended to create a visual depiction of the distance between those who have more privilege and those who have less privilege. In theory, the visible gap places onus on those with more privilege to take responsibility and help disrupt the status quo of oppression in their personal realms of influence. At the same time, the facilitator should take care to debrief from the activity with the participants by asking questions such as:

- What is your "gut reaction" to where you find yourself at the end of this list of privileges?
- Are you surprised at where you are? How does it feel to be in front? In the middle? In back? Did you come to any new realizations? If so, which one had the most impact?

This exercise can work well within a group whose goal is to centralize privilege and help those born with certain advantages to begin to unpack the guilt of privilege while also taking responsibility for dismantling it.

Guiding Questions

Teaching is a reflective practice that requires routinely reflecting on one's classroom practices and its impact on student learning. Day writes that to practice teaching effectively means "engaging routinely in conscious, systematic collection and evaluation of information about these areas and the relationship between them which affect and result from practice."[18] To that end, the following questions represent an attempt to hold my teaching practices up to scrutiny and to make visible how students perceive their own learning within this Virtual Privilege Walk exercise:

- What pedagogical considerations should educators make when designing a fully online, spatially dependent class activity such as the Virtual Privilege Walk (VPW)?

18. Christopher Day, "Researching Teaching through Reflective Practice," in *Researching Teaching: Methodologies and Practices for Understanding Pedagogy,* ed. John Loughran (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 1999), 216.

- What do the reflective responses of students who participated in the VPW exercise reveal about the complexities of teaching online classes with a multicultural focus?

Instructor's and Students' Reflections

This section discusses the design and delivery of the VPW exercise from both the instructor and the students' viewpoints. As the instructor, my reflections center on the pedagogical considerations, or teaching and learning strategies that I employed in creating this exercise. Such considerations might be relevant to other LIS educators who wish to refine or replicate this activity in their own online classroom. The students' reflections focus more on the conceptual aspects of teaching about issues of diversity and race in cyberspace. Their perspectives are drawn from two classroom activities in which they were asked to reflect on their experiences in the VPW exercise.

Pedagogical Considerations

The success of the VPW activity was dependent upon several teaching and learning strategies that I employed. It should be noted that I did not make these pedagogical decisions alone. I collaborated with our former technology Graduate Student Assistant (GSA), Kevin Barton, who consulted with me on the conceptual design and technical aspects of facilitating the VPW activity. Based on our collaborative discussions, Kevin designed the virtual room where the activity took place. He also provided technical assistance to the students in the class before, during, and after the VPW activity.

Consideration 1: Choosing the online platform.
Perhaps the most influential (and difficult) decision I had to make was deciding where in "cyberspace" to conduct the exercise. With a myriad of choices in today's Internet-based tools for discussion and collaboration, the possibilities seemed endless. I took approximately two weeks to try out different Internet-based tools before the class began. Both Kevin and our former e-Learning lecturer, David Foote,

provided me with suggestions for online tools to consider. Many of the tools required registering for two different accounts using two different email addresses so that I could see how the site functioned from both the administrator (instructor) and the user (student) view. Some of the major features I was initially looking for in these Internet tools were: 1) multiple video pods for students to see each other simultaneously during the activity, 2) audio capabilities for students and the instructor, 3) a whiteboard space to allow students to participate in the activity using their own mouse, 4) a chat feature for students to ask questions in case the audio capabilities were not working, and 5) a file space for uploading documents related to the activity.

Ultimately, I decided to use the Adobe Connect platform. This decision was driven by a number of factors, but mainly because the School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) where I teach provides free access to this software for faculty and students. Having such access was a benefit in that students would not need to create any additional profiles or user credentials and they have likely used the program to watch instructor-created content (e.g. lectures) or attend virtual meetings hosted by the school.

Consideration 2: Creating a sense of physical space.

As its name suggests, the 'Privilege Walk' exercise is highly dependent on physical movement. As mentioned previously, the purpose of the exercise is to help the participants be able to physically see their unearned privileges position them in relation to the other participants. This is done by asking them to step forward or backwards in response to a set of questions that are asked by the facilitator. With that in mind, special considerations had to be made to ensure that the element of physical space was somehow embedded into this online classroom exercise in order to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

To that end, one of the first decisions I had to make was to attain permission from the students to host a special synchronous or live session in this otherwise asynchronous class. I polled the students for their availability and granted extra credit for student participation. Whereas the course mainly took place asynchronously over Blackboard, our

university's Learning Management System, this special live session took place via Adobe Connect.

In terms of envisioning the online space, I drew a grid on a piece of paper to convey to Kevin my sense of what the virtual room would need to look like in order to make the parameters of the space visible to everyone. The grid design would function similarly to a chessboard, where students could move their virtual selves around the room using their computer mouse. Students were free to move their icons forward or backwards in a way that mimics taking a step forward or backwards in a physical space.

Kevin replicated the sketch grid within the whiteboard space of Adobe Connect (see **Figure 1**). The whiteboard option allows participants to make synchronous movements that the entire class can see. Kevin created a brief tutorial to show students how to use the whiteboard menu options to move themselves about in the virtual classroom. Essentially, they were to click an arrow menu option to activate movement then to drag their self-icon to a desired location. Having the freedom to move themselves about was one of the reasons that the grid design was useful. It provided a structure for movement that helped to minimize confusion about how students were intending to respond to the set of questions (see **Appendix A**) that were asked throughout the activity.

Consideration 3: Issues of visibility and silence

Online classrooms often generate a sense of presumed anonymity among students. Many students elect to take online classes precisely because they do not have to attend a physical classroom and deal with issues of visibility. This is one of the reasons I did not use the video camera feature within Adobe Connect. Furthermore, Adobe Connect only allowed for two cameras at the licensing level our unit had purchased. This was not necessarily a limitation of the tool because having video camera pods would distract from the whiteboard space where the main activity for the VPW exercise took place. Ultimately, I chose to eliminate the use of video cameras for this activity as a way of simplifying matters and in keeping the focus of the activity on the questions and responses concerning privilege.
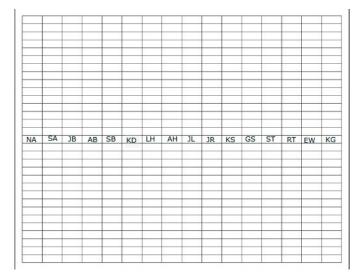
NA	SA	JB	AB	SB	KD	LH	AH	JL	JR	KS	GS	ST	RT	EW	KG

Figure 1.

A related issue that instructors should keep in mind when designing multicultural activities in online spaces is dealing with silences from students during the learning activity. Research suggests that silence can be used as a form of resistance in classrooms, particularly for students of color in mainstream white school settings.[19] Educators can leverage silence within a classroom if they are intentional about addressing issues of silence in their lesson planning. For example, there may times in the exercise where students experience feelings of awkwardness, confusion, embarrassment, or shame related to the silence. One way to deal with these sorts of feelings is to design instructional moments to stop and reflect on what is happening and to candidly ask students how they are feeling in that moment.

Students' Reflections

Immediately following the VPW exercise, students were encouraged to reflect on their experience in an open-ended discussion board on Blackboard, our university's learning management system. In addition,

19. Carter, 2007. ??

I created a survey that students could complete anonymously to share their candid thoughts about various aspects of the exercise. There were a number of themes that emerged across these two sites of reflection that have been teased out below for discussion.

The Aura of Positivity

One of the recurring themes within the students' reflections was the idea that the online nature of this exercise actually helped create a sense of honesty and anti-bias among the participants. In particular, when I asked students to "Please comment on how participating in this activity 'virtually,' or in an online space affected your experience. Were there any benefits or drawbacks to this online setting, in your opinion?"

For example, one student was forthright in her opinion that the online experience provided a "safe environment for honesty." This same student went on to say, "I was not intimidated to move or respond to the questions. It allowed me to put myself out there. No drawbacks that I can identify." Another student commented that the anonymous nature of the activity where students saw "just initials, not a face" was beneficial because "it makes us avoid stereotypes and grouping certain people together without really knowing them." This idea of the positive benefit of not seeing the other student participants was echoed a number of times by other students with comments such as "I think it was also easier to be honest because we were not all in the same place looking at each other" and "in person I might have felt more uncomfortable being truthful."

There was a single outlier response, which spoke to the drawbacks of online teaching and learning. One student stated, "I think I missed the visual feedback of being with others physically —seeing their faces, body language, hearing their tone of voice. I might have felt more of a bond with classmates if we were doing this in person. That's just one of those things you learn to live without when you take online classes, though." Perhaps most students who take online classes are those who have already reconciled the trade-offs that go along with it. As a result, they may not readily acknowledge the trade-offs or negative consequences to online learning and instead only highlight the positive benefits.

Sameness Versus Difference

A conflicting idea emerged within the students' responses, which centered on notions of sameness versus difference. While there seemed to be consensus that some people enjoy more privileges than others, there was also a tendency to overlook that difference in the name of "equal access"—a common library mantra. For example, one student commented that, "Going forward, I hope I can take my experience with me into the library field. We don't just hope to serve the privileged but to give the same exemplary service to all." It is not clear from this response whether the student believes that "exemplary service" should or even could be the same for ALL library patrons. Yet, the student acknowledges that not everyone enjoys privilege and therefore providing specialized or targeted outreach to underprivileged and historically marginalized groups is important in his context. This is one of the challenges in teaching about multicultural populations where the normative benchmark for what ALL means tends to be framed within the backdrop of an affluent, white, male, heterosexual, Anglo Saxon Protestant experience.

This dual message reflects the paradox of teaching about multicultural issues regardless of the learning format. There is a basic conundrum of how to be inclusive without either minimizing one group's experience with oppression over another group's experience, or creating a binary between white and non-whites that can reinforce a hierarchy of white supremacy and further objectify and pathologize non-whites.

Broadening the Dimensions of Oppression

A final theme that emerged from the student responses was the idea that there were some aspects of privilege that the exercise did not recognize. The main dimensions of oppression that were raised in the exercise were race, class, and gender. Yet, a few students commented that issues of obesity and sexual orientation were perhaps areas that should be incorporated into the exercise going forward. For example, one student wrote:

Someone else mentioned sexual orientation at some point, and I think it would be really interesting to have the Privilege Walk updated since it was written a generation [sic] ago and addressed slightly different (fewer) factors. Including factors like sexual orientation (which might read something like "I can walk down the street holding the hand of the partner of my choice and not be afraid that we will encounter violence because of our genders).

Another student who wanted to include weight as a dimension of privilege/oppression echoed this comment. The student wrote:

I think that there should be other factors included other than race/ethnicity, religion, sex, etc. I think that how you look and your weight are huge factors in how you're treated. At my very heaviest, I know that I was not chosen for a job because of my size, and a friend who worked there later confirmed it after I'd dropped the first 50 lbs.

I was challenged to provide some shape and coherence to this line of thinking that was gaining traction. This is one of the more difficult realities about teaching multicultural education courses. Students come to the classroom with very different ideas about the meaning and purpose of multicultural education. For that reason, I continually open the class with an activity which requires students to choose from one of three definitions of multicultural literature found in the Cai text.[20]

1. Include as many cultures as possible, with no distinctions between dominant and dominated.
2. Focus on people of color, or those who have been most excluded or marginalized.
3. All people are multicultural; there should be no distinction.

Although these definitions refer specifically to multicultural literature, the concept can be applied more generally to education and library services or any sector. Many students come to the class with a sense that the first definition is most appropriate. Inevitably, I am challenged to

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20. Mingshui Cai, *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults: Reflections on Critical Issues: Reflections on Critical Issues* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2002).

acknowledge that there are other less accepted forms of disadvantage (e.g. weight) that typically get overlooked in conversations about diversity and culture. Yet I inform students that it is important to avoid the laundry list approach to diversity discourse where everyone's pain or oppression is placed on an even field (e.g. short people, heavy people, vegetarians, etc.). I assert that advantage and disadvantage is more nuanced and systematic.

To help students unpack diversity while also attending to its related power dynamics, I begin the class with an assignment called the "Cultural Mosaic" essay. This assignment is designed to help students understand the layers (or tiles to use the mosaic metaphor) of their own cultural identity as a precursor for developing a broader sense of cultural competence. I refer students to an article by Chao and Moon, entitled "The Cultural Mosaic: A Metatheory for Understanding the Complexity of Culture." The article breaks culture into three underlying dimensions of demographic, geographic, and associative.[21]

While the Chao and Moon article is useful in helping students grasp the complexity of the concept of culture, it does not address the inherent power dynamics associated with the term, in my opinion. Therefore, I infuse various readings and activities that insert a critical race perspective, which recognizes the permanence of race and racism in the fabric of U.S. society.[22] I also share my own cultural mosaic essay with students at the start of class. Within the essay, I model the nuanced interplay of diversity and power by discussing the ways in which race and racism dominate my own cultural mosaic. For example, in the intro I wrote:

> The primary tiles of my cultural mosaic, or the **main identities I claim** and occupy on a daily basis are: African American, female, Christian,

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21. Georgia T. Chao and Henry Moon, "The Cultural Mosaic: A Metatheory for Understanding the Complexity of Culture," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 90, no. 6 (2005): 1128-40.

22. Adrienne D. Dixson and Celia K. Rousseau, *Critical Race Theory in Education: All God's Children Got a Song* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2006). This text is relevant in its treatment of how educational scholars are applying Critical Race Theory frameworks in their practices some decades after CRT broke into the realm of education research.

Hip Hop generation/bi-centennial baby, mother, daughter, sister, friend, native Detroiter, college professor, and former school librarian. I'd have to say that the primary hue that would weave through the cracks of my mosaic would be black. I would choose this color because: 1) my blackness is an identity that has been chosen for me by the larger society and, unlike other facets of my identity, I cannot mask or hide this facet of my identity to the world— nor would I choose to. And 2) because being black for me means being part of a legacy of people who have survived racism, genocide, and all kinds of human atrocities to still become some of the worlds greatest thinkers, artists, musicians, athletes, and politicians.

My cultural mosaic reflects my attempt to model the interplay between diversity discourses and critical race perspectives, which often reside as independent spheres of thought.

Another way I insert critical perspectives into the discourse on multiculturalism and diversity is by dissecting political cartoons that are increasingly available on the Internet. In particular, there is one cartoon[23] I use to help students recognize the differences between equality and equity. The cartoon I use shows two side-by-side images of three people standing on podiums being recognized for some unknown achievement. The image on the left has the word "equality" written underneath while the one on the rights says "equity." The three podiums on the left side are the same height for each person. However, due to the height differences of the three winners (one tall, one medium, one short), it appears that the shortest person is still somehow less than the others. Meanwhile, the photo on the right has the same three individuals standing on a podium. However, this time the three people appear to be on equal footing. In looking closer, the tall person is not standing on a podium and is still tall as the others. The medium height person stands on the same size podium as on the left-side image to achieve equal footing. Most strikingly, the shortest person now stands on top of two stacked podiums to achieve equal footing with the other winners. In this way, all three individuals on the "equity" sided photo appear to be the same height, but they got there by different means. In juxtaposing the two

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23. This political cartoon image can be easily accessed via an Internet search using the words "equity," "equality" and "cartoon".

photos, the message is clear. Equality is insufficient as a social justice goal whereas equity is a more corrective approach that actually helps level the playing field. Equity helps the person with the least advantage while not taking away anything from those with unearned privilege or advantage. One can believe in equality but also recognize that certain people need additional assistance in getting on an equal footing with others due to their circumstances of birth.

Concluding Thoughts

Upon reflection, the VPW exercise accomplished the student learning outcomes I initially established for students, regardless of the online delivery format. I intended for students to discover their unearned privileges and to see how they were positioned in relation to their classmates to invoke a sense of "critical cultural consciousness."[24] In reading the students' comments about their learning, the exercise certainly provided the right environment for this awareness to occur. For example, one student observed:

> I think that this privilege walk was very important because in order to know how to prevent discrimination one needs to understand their position in society, and how that can help or hinder their advocacy. I no longer want to be embarrassed about the privileges I have had, I would like to channel those feelings into constructive action. I am lucky, and I would like to help others not have to depend on luck.

Knowing how race, power, and privilege intersect, and where we each fall on the spectrum of privilege and domination is a part of being a "culturally competent professional."[25] However, more often that not,

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24. Geneva Gay and Kipchoge Kirkland, "Developing Cultural Critical Consciousness and Self-Reflection in Preservice Teacher Education," *Theory into Practice* 42, no. 3 (2003): 181-187.

25. Kafi Kumasi and Renee Franklin Hill, "Are We There Yet? Results of a Gap Analysis to Measure LIS students' Prior Knowledge and Actual Learning of Cultural Competence Concepts," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 52, no. 4 (2011): 251-264. This article represents my scholarship

future library and information science students are earning their MLIS degrees online or in non-traditional classroom spaces where multicultural learning activities may be more difficult to replicate.[26] This chapter demonstrates that students can reap the benefit of multicultural learning activities while also having the convenience of online learning. Given the realities of online learning in today's higher education institutions, instructors should not shy away from these critical learning opportunities simply because of the learning modality. It may take deliberate action on the part of energetic faculty, but teaching about issues of diversity and race is possible—even in cyberspace!

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Carter, 2007 ??

Cavanaugh, Joseph. "Teaching Online: A Time Comparison." Online *Journal of Distance Learning Administration* 8, no. 1 (2005). http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/spring81/cavanaugh81.htm.

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related to the development of cultural competence among future library and information science professionals.

26. See Maria Haigh, "Divided by a Common Degree Program? Profiling Online and Face-to-Face Information Science Students," *Education for Information* 25, no. 2 (2007): 93-110 for a discussion on the issues and trends in online education within Library and Information Science.

Chao, Georgia T., and Henry Moon. "The Cultural Mosaic: A Metatheory for Understanding the Complexity of Culture." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 90, no. 6 (2005): 1128-40.

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Appendix A: Virtual Privilege Walk Questions

- If you are right-handed, please move one-step forward.
- If you are a female under 5-feet tall, please move one-step forward.
- If you are a white male take one step forward.
- If there have been times in your life when you skipped a meal because there was no food in the house take one step backward.
- If you have visible or invisible disabilities take one step backward.
- If you attended (grade) school with people you felt were like yourself take one step forward.
- If you grew up in an urban setting take one step backward.
- If your family had health insurance take one step forward.
- If your work holidays coincide with religious holidays that you celebrate take one step forward.
- If you feel good about how your identified culture is portrayed by the media take one step forward.
- If you have been the victim of physical violence based on your race, gender, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation take one step backward.
- If you have ever felt passed over for an employment position based on your race, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation take one step backward.
- If you were born in the United States take one step forward.
- If English is your first language take one step forward.
- If you have been divorced or impacted by divorce take one step backward.
- If you came from a supportive family environment take one step forward.
- If you have completed high school take one step forward.
- If you were able to complete college take one step forward.
- If you are a citizen of the United States take one step forward.
- If you took out loans for your education take one step backward.
- If you attended private school take one step forward.

- If you have ever felt unsafe walking alone at night take one step backward.
- Please take one-step forward: If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school.