

**Engaged Encounters: The Role of Critical Pedagogy and Impact on Racialized Students in
Cultural Studies**

Safeera Jaffer



Department of Integrated Studies in Education

McGill University, Montreal

April 2024

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of Master of Arts.

© Safeera Jaffer, 2024

Abstract

When identity, history, and culture converge, the university classroom is not only confronted by uneven power relationships, but it also functions as a space of possibility and transformation. A major challenge of higher education in Canada is the systemic influence of capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism, and racism on everyday experiences of both faculty members and students. However, engaged, critical pedagogy has the potential to disrupt these norms and impact the life trajectory of students. This research study explored the university classroom as a space for resisting dominant ideologies and institutionally privileged voices in Cultural Studies. This study investigated how Cultural Studies faculty members used critical and engaged pedagogical practices to disrupt institutional hierarchies and what impacts these approaches had on racialized students. The theoretical frameworks that guided this research were critical theory and critical race theory, and institutional ethnography also inspired the methodology. This qualitative study included semi-structured interviews with three Cultural Studies faculty members and three self-identified racialized students. The study found that faculty members enacted alternative, transformational pedagogies that created positive, enjoyable learning experiences for racialized students. Findings also demonstrated how cultures of care and personal networks were entwined with pedagogical decision-making despite institutional challenges. Through their educational experiences within and outside Cultural Studies, students revealed how teaching practices both resisted and upheld dominant oppressive structures. This research contributes to understanding the ways that critical, engaged pedagogy can be creatively used within an academic institution through Cultural Studies.

Résumé

Lorsque l'identité, l'histoire et la culture convergent, la salle de classe de l'université n'est pas seulement confrontée à des relations de pouvoir inégales, mais elle fonctionne également comme un espace de possibilité et de transformation. L'un des principaux défis de l'enseignement supérieur au Canada est l'influence systémique du capitalisme, du patriarcat, du colonialisme et du racisme sur les expériences quotidiennes des enseignants et des étudiants. Cependant, une pédagogie critique et engagée a le potentiel de perturber ces normes et d'avoir un impact sur la trajectoire de vie des étudiants. Cette étude de recherche a exploré la salle de classe universitaire en tant qu'espace de résistance aux idéologies dominantes et aux voix institutionnellement privilégiées dans le domaine des études culturelles. Cette étude s'est intéressée à la manière dont les membres de la faculté d'études culturelles ont utilisé des pratiques pédagogiques critiques et engagées pour perturber les hiérarchies institutionnelles et à l'impact de ces approches sur les étudiants racialisés. Les cadres théoriques qui ont guidé cette recherche sont la théorie critique et la théorie critique de la race, et l'ethnographie institutionnelle a également inspiré la méthodologie. Cette étude qualitative comprenait des entretiens semi-structurés avec trois membres de la faculté d'études culturelles et trois étudiants racialisés s'identifiant comme tels. L'étude a révélé que les membres de la faculté mettaient en œuvre des pédagogies alternatives et transformatrices qui créaient des expériences d'apprentissage positives et agréables pour les étudiants racialisés. Les résultats ont également montré comment les cultures de soins et les réseaux personnels étaient liés à la prise de décision pédagogique malgré les défis institutionnels. Grâce à leurs expériences éducatives au sein et en dehors des études culturelles, les étudiants ont révélé comment les pratiques d'enseignement résistaient aux structures oppressives dominantes et les soutenaient. Cette recherche contribue à la compréhension des façons dont la pédagogie

critique et engagée peut être utilisée de manière créative au sein d'un établissement universitaire par le biais des études culturelles.

Acknowledgements: A Letter of Thanks

To my supervisor:

Dr. Nanre Nafziger, whose unwavering support throughout not only my thesis writing but my master's degree as a whole has equipped me to find joy and a profound sense of thoughtfulness in my research. It is forever an honour to be Nanre's first master's student. I share my sincerest gratitude for Nanre's guidance, wisdom, support, and commitment throughout this journey. From an initial question and idea to a full MA thesis, Nanre has been there. Nanre is generous, critical, thoughtful, and always challenges me to do my best work. I am grateful for leaving every meeting feeling rejuvenated with a new sense of motivation and excitement to continue my work. I have the utmost respect for Nanre as my supervisor and as a scholar, but also as a person. Her care and dedication is unparalleled, both within and outside the institution. She inspires me every day and always. I would not be here without her.

To the student participants:

The three student participants were a true joy to speak with. I am grateful for their time and knowledge and for sharing their experiences with me. As someone who has been a student in Cultural Studies, I felt their positivity, contemplation, frustration, and the whole range of emotions that come along with being a racialized student within a Canadian academic institution. I recognize that sharing stories, including those that have personally impacted us in significant ways can be difficult to explain or articulate. It takes strength, courage, and vulnerability to share, especially with someone new.

To the faculty participants:

The three faculty participants also provided me with new perspectives and reflections on Cultural Studies. The ways in which they spoke about their roles as teachers and mentors within

higher education were thought-provoking and illuminating. I am grateful for their time, wisdom, and unwavering support in this research.

To the land that I am on:

Throughout my degree at McGill University, I have conducted my research and learning in Tiohtià:ke, the unceded lands of the Kanien'kehà:ka. The University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus, the setting of my research, is located on the unceded territory of the Syilx people, where many of the research participants were also located. This acknowledgement is not a box to tick on my thesis checklist, nor is it a few lines of superficial text (âpihtawikosisân, 2016). Land gives life in the fullest sense, and I must recognize my own settler privilege and complicity as shaped by colonial realities. This text also represents a lifelong commitment to listening, learning, and acting in solidarity alongside those amongst whom we live.

To my family and friends:

Thank you. Life is always changing, and this time has been no different. Our strength lies in community, and what a joyous place to be.

I would lastly like to acknowledge that this research has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Canada Graduate Scholarship - Master's.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Résumé.....	3
Acknowledgements: A Letter of Thanks	5
Table of Contents	7
Chapter 1: Introduction	10
Situating Myself.....	10
Critical Pedagogy and Engaged Pedagogy	12
Rationale and Objectives	14
<i>Research Questions</i>	15
Thesis Plan and Outline	15
Chapter 2: Literature Review	16
Cultural Studies.....	16
Critical, Engaged Pedagogy and Teaching	18
Intersectionality and Pedagogy	22
Pedagogy and Teaching in the Context of Canadian Universities	23
Student Experiences in Pedagogy and Learning.....	26
Literature Review Conclusion	30
Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks	31
Critical Theory	31
Critical Race Theory	32
Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods	35
Institutional Ethnography.....	35
Methods.....	36
<i>Program Details</i>	37
<i>Participants</i>	38
<i>Interviews and Setting</i>	40
Data Analysis	42
<i>Transcription</i>	42
<i>Coding and Analysis</i>	43
Chapter 5: Research Findings	45
Theme 1: Understanding Cultural Studies	45
Theme 2: Rationale and Purpose of Critical Pedagogical Practices	46

<i>Key Values and Goals of Teaching</i>	47
<i>Students as Active Participants</i>	47
<i>Learning as Within and Beyond the Classroom</i>	49
Theme 3: Specific Practices Used to Enact Critical, Engaged Pedagogy.....	50
<i>Creative Assignments</i>	50
<i>Community-Based Group Work</i>	51
<i>Class Discussions</i>	52
<i>Syllabi Design</i>	54
Theme 4: The Impact of Practices on Racialized Students.....	55
Summary of Findings.....	58
Chapter 6: Discussion	60
Engaged, Critical Pedagogy is Deeply Personal.....	60
<i>Faculty Commitment to Care and Well-Being</i>	60
<i>The Impact of Personal Experience on Students</i>	62
Teaching and Institutional Challenges.....	63
<i>The Challenges of Engaged, Critical Pedagogy</i>	63
<i>Faculty Desire to Do More</i>	65
Impacts on Students Within and Beyond Cultural Studies Education.....	67
<i>External Courses</i>	67
<i>Uneven Course Experiences within Cultural Studies</i>	68
Limitations.....	70
<i>Program Size and Faculty Identity</i>	70
<i>Study Context and Setting</i>	72
<i>Researcher Positionality and Bias</i>	73
Chapter 7: Conclusion	75
Returning to the Research Questions.....	75
<i>Question 1</i>	75
<i>Question 2</i>	76
Summary.....	76
Implications and Future Considerations.....	78
References	81
Appendix A: Faculty Interview Guide	94
Appendix B: Student Interview Guide	95

Appendix C: Faculty Consent Form	96
Appendix D: Student Consent Form.....	98

Chapter 1: Introduction

When identity, history, and culture converge, the university classroom is not only confronted by uneven power relationships, but it also functions as a core space of possibility and transformation. Within the context of Canadian higher education institutions, faculty members encounter opportunities to purposefully use critical, engaged pedagogy (Duhaney et al., 2022; hooks, 1994). These encounters have the potential to impact racialized students in particularly meaningful ways. This research examines if and how engaged and critical pedagogical practices are used within Cultural Studies education at the undergraduate level and its impact on racialized students.

Situating Myself

While this thesis is an academic document, prepared for specific purposes in fulfillment of a Master of Arts degree at McGill University, this project is also a culmination of a web of thoughts, ideas, and musings that reflect my past, present, and future aspirations. This web continues to shape and be shaped by my learning, un-learning, and re-learning within and beyond academia. Considering my positionality as a racialized Muslim woman and settler subject growing up and studying on unceded, stolen lands, it is important to locate myself within my research and recognize my own complicated relationship to power and privilege. With the educational and financial privilege of being a graduate student, I must also situate how I am complicit in upholding systems of oppression. These systems include, but are not limited to settler colonialism, racism, sexism, ableism, and cisheteropatriarchy. My positionality has a direct impact on my academic research.

I have a distinct connection to Cultural Studies because I completed my undergraduate degree in the Cultural Studies program at the University of British Columbia's

Okanagan (UBCO) campus. This program in the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies shaped my educational experience. I still contemplate the four years I spent in that contested space, and this led me to revisit the field for my current thesis research. Within the space of Cultural Studies is where I found myself. My first introduction to Cultural Studies was through bell hooks and Dr. Ruthann Lee at UBCO. In the Cultural Studies 100 course, the first reading for the first day of class was a short chapter from bell hooks (2010) on critical thinking. Here, she discussed critical thinking as wonder, as joy, as excitement, as desire, as action, and as freedom (hooks, 2010). Little did I know that this first reading would not only shape my work in Cultural Studies but would also inspire my thesis research many years later.

Additionally, I would be remiss to not mention the over three years I spent at the University of Central Asia in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan. In this space, I was fully immersed in the world of higher education and understanding how unevenly pedagogical decision-making impacts students. The immeasurably difficult yet rewarding time I spent in this newly formed institution strongly influenced my desire to explore student experiences within higher education.

In situating myself, I also turn to my strong belief in the intellect. In my being, intellect takes on a spiritual understanding and commitment. It is through intellect that I understand myself and the world(s) around me. To help illustrate this, I turn to the words of His Highness the Aga Khan (2008):

Beauty and mystery are not separated from intellect – in fact, the reverse is true. As we use our intellect to gain new knowledge about Creation, we come to see even more profoundly the depth and breadth of its mysteries ... What we feel, even as we learn, is an ever-renewed sense of wonder, indeed, a powerful sense of awe – and of Divine inspiration.

This quotation guides my personal understanding of the purpose of knowledge, the purpose of education, the purpose of research, and to a certain extent, the purpose of life. As connected through the material and immaterial, the aspects of knowing and unknowing that shape our place within Creation are tied together through intellect. It is this commitment to intellect through inquiry that guides my work and purpose. This process is a continuous struggle of openness and learning. This thesis highlights several tensions and points of possibility within higher education; this struggle also exists within me.

Critical Pedagogy and Engaged Pedagogy

Ideas surrounding critical pedagogy were popularly described by Paulo Freire in his 1968 book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Seal & Smith, 2021). Also, the term critical pedagogy was further popularized in the 1980s by Henry Giroux, who is also a key figure in the field of Cultural Studies (Amsler, 2013; Mayo, 2013). Critical pedagogy is a practice of teaching that aims to question the status quo, disrupt power imbalances, and challenge inequality for social justice (Freire, 2018). Freire describes the banking model of education where alienated students collect and receive information like currency; in contrast to the banking model, Freire uses the concept of libertarian education to describe active, collaborative learning relationships between teachers and students. Freire's connection between education and capital is particularly salient as we consider the current state of higher education in Canada as dominated by a neoliberal corporate structure (Thobani, 2022). While critical pedagogy encompasses themes of the politics of knowledge, ideology, hegemony, and praxis, it is also related to creativity, imagination, and building solidarity among peoples (Amsler, 2013). While Freire's work has been highly influential and prominent in educational theory, this work has also been critiqued for its binary framework between oppressor/oppressed as well as the early omission of race, gender, and other

factors alongside questions of class (Roberts, 2015). Particularly in higher education, critical pedagogy is an essential component for cultural shifts and counter-narratives within academic institutions (Seal & Smith, 2021).

Engaged pedagogy, described by bell hooks (1994), also views “education as the practice of freedom” (p. 15). The foundational concept of engaged pedagogy will be further described in the literature review. Inspired by hooks’ efforts to challenge power dynamics in the classroom and critiquing Freire’s (2018) lack of feminist perspectives, feminist pedagogy in Canada distinctly shapes experiences of teaching and learning in higher education (Light et al., 2015). As a political project, feminist pedagogy draws on the gendered aspects of knowledge, authority, consciousness raising, and classroom practices, among others (Weiler, 2001). Feminist pedagogy actualized through “critical self-reflection” and “embodied engagement” disrupts complicity with oppressive logics and academic structures (Ramos & Roberts, 2021).

Critical, engaged pedagogy must also be examined not only from the faculty perspective, but also from the experiences of students, particularly Black, Indigenous, and racialized students. To illustrate the importance of pedagogical impact, Borges (2022) describes the invisibilization, tokenism, and additional workload that racialized students face without institutional support in neoliberal universities. This discussion stems from Dean Spade’s (2015) concept of trickle-up justice and model of liberation, which starts from those who are most marginalized. As emphasized by Borges (2022), “when I center the needs of marginalized students in the classroom, the rest will inevitably benefit and learn” (p. 206). Borges points to how approaching pedagogy in this way disrupts power dynamics in the classroom. Additionally, this interrupts the pattern of forcing racialized students to think from privileged, white positions (Borges, 2022).

Recognizing this perspective within Cultural Studies is imperative, and this emphasis also reflects my purposeful decision to only interview racialized students in Cultural Studies.

Rationale and Objectives

Cultural Studies is an understudied, emerging discipline in Canada, and research gaps currently exist in examining teaching practices within the field (Weiner, 2003). Even though some instructors incorporate alternative readings and texts, Cultural Studies textbooks and materials often rely on a particular “canon” of Cultural Studies history, which is male and white dominated (Lee, 2020). Cultural Studies, with its beginnings in the 1950s-1960s, has evolved over time (Hall, 2016). The field must be ready and able to respond to current challenges and struggles of the moment, especially within the space of academic institutions (Ang, 2020; Hickey & Johnson, 2022). Research that makes connections between pedagogy and Cultural Studies has also been seriously underrepresented (Weiner, 2003). Thus, Weiner (2003) argues for a cultural studies of critical pedagogy that provides students with a framework to “think creatively in the face of newly emerging cultural realities on one hand and hegemonic social forces on the other” (p. 58).

This thesis research provides insight into the ways that critical, engaged pedagogy can be creatively put into practice within an academic institution. This study aims to explore how pedagogy influences student experiences by making novel connections that centre voice, dialogue, and community (Lee, 2020). In turn, a larger objective of this work is to examine how both teachers and students can become catalysts for change who inspire larger “constellations of co-resistance” (Simpson, 2016, p. 27). My goal is to explore the university classroom as a space for resisting dominant ideologies and institutionally privileged voices within Cultural Studies education.

Research Questions

1. How do university faculty members use engaged, critical pedagogical practices to disrupt institutional hierarchies in Cultural Studies?
2. What impacts do these approaches have on students who self-identify as Indigenous, Black, or a person of colour?

Thesis Plan and Outline

Following this introduction, chapter two begins with a review of the literature, focusing on five main areas: cultural studies, pedagogy and teaching, intersectionality, pedagogy and teaching in Canada, and student experiences. Turning to the theoretical frameworks, chapter three describes critical theory and critical race theory as they relate to this research. Chapter four describes the methodology, focusing on institutional ethnography. Chapter four also describes the methods, including the participants, setting, inclusion/exclusion criteria for faculty and students, semi-structured interview process, and data analysis. Next, chapter five outlines the findings of my research, providing quotations and excerpts from the data collected. The findings are divided into four key themes: understanding Cultural Studies; rationale and purpose of pedagogical practices; specific practices used to enact critical, engaged pedagogy; and impact of practices on racialized students. Chapter six includes a scholarly discussion of the findings, including limitations. Finally, chapter seven offers insights into the implications and future directions of my study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Several themes emerge in the literature related to critical, engaged pedagogy and teaching practices within the context of Cultural Studies and higher education. These themes include identity, power, coloniality, and hope. To provide an overview of these key themes and their relation to my research questions, the literature review is divided into five connected, yet distinct topics: Cultural Studies, pedagogy and teaching, intersectionality, pedagogy and teaching in Canada, and student experiences. These works form a conversation about how and why engaged, critical pedagogy must be connected to Cultural Studies to fill the gaps surrounding teaching practices and racialized students' experiences with the field.

Cultural Studies

Defined as an interdisciplinary field of study, it is important to first trace the roots of Cultural Studies, particularly through the influence of Stuart Hall (Johnson, 1986) and its links to higher education and pedagogy. Professor Stuart Hall and Professor Richard Hoggart founded the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in 1964 at the University of Birmingham (Hall, 1992). At the CCCS, many scholars were white men, but the Centre also included important exceptions to this including Stuart Hall, Angela McRobbie, Paul Gilroy, and others. Hall (2016) insists that the field was “born as a political project” (p. 7). My study extends the clear theoretical connections between Cultural Studies, politics, and literary criticism (Hall, 1996, 2016) to the current, everyday experiences of both faculty members and students within the field. Within the space of higher education and beyond, Cultural Studies aims to push disciplinary and cultural boundaries and serve as a “point of disturbance” (Hall, 1992, p. 11). This means that Cultural Studies asks new, important, and urgent questions about the world both inside and outside the context of the academy. Hall (1992) described the goals of Cultural

Studies as creating new insights from these questions by insisting on the “vocation of the intellectual life” (p. 11), which is also a key purpose of a university. In addition to the field’s role within and beyond academia, it also incorporates self-reflection. Hall’s work demonstrated the core of Cultural Studies, its role within the university, and its explicit aims to test the division between intellectual and social life. Because Stuart Hall (1992) was instrumental in creating the meaning and purpose of the field, it is crucial to revisit his ideas, especially considering the rapid global changes decades later.

Cultural Studies is an interdisciplinary field that relies on “radical contextualism” or a “theory of contexts” to understand complexities of power within the world (Grossberg, 1994, p. 5). The core of Cultural Studies focuses on “relations of culture and power” (Grossberg, 1994, p. 5). Instead of rediscovering oppressive practices and the structures of domination within education that we already know, Cultural Studies aims to understand the complexities of how these forces operate (Grossberg, 1994). Connecting the dynamics of culture to research, cultural pedagogy exemplifies the direct connections between Cultural Studies and critical pedagogy, among other theoretical traditions (Steinberg, 2012; see also Giroux et al., 1996).

A critical aspect of the field that particularly relates to my research is the fact that Cultural Studies comprises what Grossberg (1994) called a “double articulation” (p. 16). This means that a part of the discipline is looking introspectively at itself within specific historical and institutional contexts, which is precisely what my research questions and methodology aim to reveal. It is imperative to examine teaching practices themselves within Cultural Studies to understand how the field is situated within the current political, historical, social, and economic moment. In turn, this examination reveals crucial insights surrounding teaching and learning that can be traced back to the roots of the discipline. Cultural Studies’ connection to education is

clear through its pedagogical imperative (Green & Hickey, 2022). While equity and diversity are potential frameworks to enact change in higher educational spaces (Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011), Cultural Studies demands a more rigorous and transformative approach. Due to the emphasis on radical thinking as expressed by Hall (1992, 1996, 2016) and Grossberg (1994), this field is conducive to alternative teaching practices and methods. From these works, we must consider the relationship between Cultural Studies, teaching practices, and norms of the institution. The purpose of my research is to explore how Cultural Studies faculty can actualize the critical foundations of the discipline through engaged, critical pedagogy.

Critical, Engaged Pedagogy and Teaching

Accounting for the purpose, function, and disciplinary transgressiveness of Cultural Studies within higher education, it is pivotal to link this discussion to critical and engaged pedagogy. While I have purposefully relied on the work of Stuart Hall when describing the field, it is important to recognize the dominance of male and mostly white academics in the history of Cultural Studies. Initially, Cultural Studies was not centrally concerned with gender (Collins, 2015) in the history of British Cultural Studies, Marxist critiques, and the “Founding Fathers” of the Birmingham School (Lee, 2020; see also McRobbie, 2005). Additionally, it is imperative to note that:

The critical foundations and theories that inform Cultural Studies methodology sit within a Eurocentric epistemological space – with many being from the minds of European men. ... The language of Cultural Studies – like English – is the language of the settler; in its current form, it cannot easily speak for or to pedagogical approaches that sit outside of Western discourse and epistemology. Thus, even discourses that call for decolonization

of curriculum and pedagogy across all disciplines and fields require critical scrutiny.

(Bennett et al., 2022, p. 727)

Due to this critique, this section on engaged and critical pedagogy will emphasize perspectives that push back against the dominance of white male voices within the field. Particularly, feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial perspectives grounded in an intersectional framework point to the possibility of reimagining the critical, yet limited foundations of Cultural Studies.

Cultural Studies faculty members have a unique opportunity to enact alternative forms of pedagogy in their roles when inspired by engaged pedagogy. bell hooks' (1994) *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* is a foundational text that reflects on teaching methods and classroom experiences to counter hegemonic practices. While building upon ideas of critical pedagogy from Freire (2018), hooks (1994) also explained how white men and women dominate this field. While engaged and critical pedagogy are complementary, engaged pedagogy can require more effort than critical pedagogy because it emphasizes well-being and positions students and teachers as learning together (hooks, 1994). This book contributes to novel models of learning that employ a holistic approach. Instead of focusing on a "rote, assembly-line approach" to education, engaged pedagogy welcomes practices such as critical questioning, re-learning, dialogue, and sharing personal experiences (hooks, 1994, p. 13).

Engaged pedagogy is distinctly feminist and political (hooks, 1994). This work is a core piece of my research because it reveals the complexity of engaged practices in challenging power dynamics and not reinscribing oppressive practices in the classroom; engaged pedagogy leaves space for opening up new ways of teaching and learning that place emphasis on the shared experience rather than the individual. Because of the critical foundations of Cultural Studies, this form of pedagogy is well-aligned with the discipline (Hall, 1992). By transforming higher

education classrooms into critical, engaged spaces, these pedagogical methods can centre collective voices, practice resistance, build community, and engage in important dialogue. Each of these practices can be catalysts for change and for critical reflection that can lead to liberation. Although hooks' work is limited in its investigation of practices in Canada, her legacy extends globally and has evolved since the 1990s (Au, 2022). My research will further hooks' ideas within the context of a current Cultural Studies program, and I will discuss the Canadian context specifically in the following section below.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1989) describes the context of white, male-dominated institutions as well as the importance of decolonizing pedagogical practices. While acknowledging these challenges, Mohanty focuses on opening spaces of hope and agency. Students come to the classroom as "speaking subjects," and pedagogy allows them to transform their thinking to creatively "link knowledge, social responsibility, and collective struggle" (Mohanty, 1989, pp. 152-53). This transformation of worldviews occurs both within and outside of educational institutions. Mohanty's perspective on the role, agency, and value of student experiences within higher education must be further examined as demonstrated by my second research question and by interviewing students. Mohanty described how changes in curriculum and pedagogy must be accompanied by larger, cultural changes in academia and beyond, which distinctly connects to the function of Cultural Studies (Grossberg, 1994). This is particularly relevant because Mohanty made important theoretical and practical links between race, gender, and the academy. Mohanty both critiqued educational spaces and demonstrated the foundational importance of this institutional critique. However, a crucial part of this work is also incorporating the role of hope and possibility in creating new spaces because future educators must take responsibility in making these discussions central. Due to the radical nature of Cultural Studies,

Mohanty's (1989) emphasis on resistance is well suited for interrogating how alternative teaching practices can be used within the discipline and impact students.

Sara Ahmed's 2012 book, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, continues the discussion on power and identity. Ahmed showed how despite claims about the language of diversity, institutional spaces still reproduce whiteness and privilege certain bodies. Specifically, she explained that "institutional spaces are shaped by the proximity of some bodies and not others" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 35). Diversity becomes performative and diversity work is shown through the metaphor of the institution as a brick wall, something unmovable that people continue banging their heads against (Ahmed, 2012).

Ahmed's (2012) work is critical, innovative, and provides much depth to understanding institutional forces related to racism and diversity. Ahmed's emphasis on the institution and its implications particularly for racialized folks studying and working within the system is crucial to consider. Because the institution is built on the foundations of white supremacy, whiteness is woven into the fabric of academia and the institution is overcome by the effects of this whiteness. This is a major barrier particularly for non-white faculty and students. This also means that it is increasingly difficult to incorporate alternative ways of teaching; these pedagogical choices are often easier for faculty members with increased privilege due to their social positioning within the institution. If Cultural Studies aims to disturb institutional academic norms, it will be imperative to investigate if and how the field itself is constrained and/or co-opted by the forces of whiteness that Ahmed (2012) emphasizes.

Furthermore, Jacqui M. Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2010) presented several important ideas about the boundaries between the academy and community. The authors not only re-emphasized the neoliberal nature of the academy, but they also troubled the

“cartographic rules that normalize the position of the academy at the pinnacle of this knowledge-making hierarchy” (Alexander & Mohanty, 2010, p. 32). Understanding this assumed role of academic institutions allows us to also understand how knowledge is produced and what connections can be made between the academy and state, corporate, or other institutions. Considering transnational feminisms in the academy, Alexander and Mohanty argued that “questions of responsibility and accountability need to be central to this pedagogy” because the academy is a “contested space of knowledge” (p. 41). Building off the authors’ ideas of looking inwards at the university, these statements connect back to Hall’s (1994) emphasis on the role of “intellectual self-reflection” in Cultural Studies (p. 11). The need to understand ourselves, our practices, and our role within Cultural Studies and more broadly higher education is crucial for change. Related to my research questions and methodology, we also must consider the academy within the context of other, larger institutions and examine the assumed hierarchy of the academy. Alexander and Mohanty (2010) demonstrate the importance of collective learning not only within the local, but transnationally as well.

Intersectionality and Pedagogy

A crucial topic to consider related to the literature of critical, engaged pedagogy is the role of intersectionality in education. Intersectionality, a term coined by critical legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), examines how people’s multiple identities are subject to forms of oppression when understanding social constructions of the world. While the term itself was coined by Crenshaw, several Black women scholars and activists had previously practiced this approach (Johnson & Joseph, 2020). Intersectionality acknowledges that identities are overlapping and interconnected, not mutually exclusive (Harris & Patton, 2019). Intersectionality is “not a simple sum of identities and categories;” rather, “it is about the consequences of the

interplay of different oppressions” (Guimarães Corrêa, 2020, p. 829). This emphasis reveals that the relationship between race, power, privilege, and oppression does not exist in a vacuum; rather, racism functions together with other forces such as colonialism, patriarchy, ableism, and capitalism to impact socio-political systems, including education (Harris & Patton, 2019).

Using an intersectional lens helps us understand how both faculty members and students are impacted by their educational experiences within and outside Cultural Studies in unique and different ways. In the context of education and Cultural Studies, it is imperative to consider the role of intersectionality because its goal, along with critical race theory, mirrors my research’s aim “to work toward transformative and radical social justice” through engaged, critical teaching practices (Harris & Patton, 2019, p. 348). Intersectionality is foundational to Cultural Studies because it demonstrates the ability for the field to shift from its white and male-dominated beginnings and to carefully consider transformation from the margins (Guimarães Corrêa, 2020).

Pedagogy and Teaching in the Context of Canadian Universities

Building upon the general ideas of critical, engaged pedagogy, it is important to also review the literature in the context of Canada because this is where my research is situated. Sunera Thobani (2022) provided various insights on “the university as a prime site for the organization of racial injustice and settler colonial relations” (p. 5). While Thobani focused on the Canadian context and the multiple ways colonial and racial violence underpin the foundations of the university, the authors in this edited collection also emphasized a “collective analysis and resistance” (Thobani, 2022, p. 6). Interweaving analyses of issues such as the organization of capital, nation and state formation, dispossession, dehumanization, and belonging, Thobani and other scholars (see Douglas, 2022; Haritaworn, 2022; Simpson, 2022) make global connections to racial, academic institutional, and state hierarchies. This work

contains astute and profound discussions that spark new understandings of the role of the university in perpetuating colonial and racial logics of domination. While highlighting capitalization, Thobani also made connections that are related to hooks (1994), Mohanty (1989), Ahmed (2012), and Alexander and Mohanty (2010)'s discussions on the power and authority exercised by institutional structures.

Similarly, Dua and Bhanji (2017) explained how Canadian universities have adopted specific policies and institutional structures in an attempt to address racism. In their study, the authors examined three mechanisms for how universities address racism: human rights, equity frameworks, and diversity frameworks. Out of 49 universities, 36 employed a human rights mandate whereas only 12 had an equity mandate and only one had a diversity mandate. The authors' research found that institutional frameworks for equity are "in a state of flux," and this "contradictory and shifting terrain points to the complexity of equity policies in the neoliberal period" (pp. 203-4). While institutional policies can be important, this work shows that the implementation and practice of these written values is more impactful in academic settings. While these policies emerged from the 1980s, it is abundantly clear from other research that issues of racism are still overwhelmingly present (Dua & Bhanji, 2017).

The above data provides context for understanding the personal student and faculty experiences in the classroom within the wider institutional and national context. In Canada, a neoliberal model shaping these policies impacts everyday experiences of faculty and students in all departments and classrooms, including Cultural Studies (Henry & Kobayashi, 2017). While institutional policies directly and indirectly influence faculty and student experiences, faculty members also have the authority to distinctly implement certain values within their own classroom settings. For example, due to neoliberal policy agendas that commodify education and

recruit international students for economic gain, faculty members are faced with a difficult task to recognize the colonizing logics that infiltrate Cultural Studies classrooms (Tang & Cornell, 2021). Because of the institutional nature of equity policies, it is crucial to understand their links to institutional hierarchies and the impact of these forces on teaching practices.

In the context of Canadian academic institutions, one critique of Cultural Studies as a critical field relates to the theme of coloniality. Aimee Carrillo Rowe and Eve Tuck (2017) address my research question's connection between pedagogy and Cultural Studies. Settler colonialism is a "persistent societal structure" in Canada and has "meant genocide of Indigenous peoples" and "the reconfiguring of Indigenous land into settler property" (p. 5). Despite the critical foundations of Cultural Studies discussed by Hall (1992) and Grossberg (1994) that consider race and colonization, one major issue is that Cultural Studies' theoretical work has not yet seriously engaged with the "politics of settlement" (Rowe & Tuck, 2017, p. 7). Through this lens, the authors examined how Cultural Studies reproduces oppressive practices by contributing to the "erasure of Indigenous genocide" (p. 7). Rowe and Tuck's argument is extremely critical because these issues of settler colonialism cannot be an afterthought in Cultural Studies; instead, they are central to understanding the dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression within settler academic institutions within the settler state called Canada. It is imperative to not only investigate the pervasiveness of colonialism within and beyond Cultural Studies, but also to commit to educational transformation (Dei, 2016). My research extends Rowe and Tuck's (2017) findings by considering how faculty members attempt to dismantle oppressive systems such as colonialism through their pedagogy, especially because Cultural Studies is designed to critique systems of power.

In a 2015 lecture by Eve Tuck at the University of Regina entitled “Biting the Hand that Feeds You: Theories of Change in the Settler State and its Universities,” Tuck explored issues surrounding decolonization, settler colonialism, and higher education. In her lecture, Tuck asked the question, “what does it mean to bite the university that feeds us?” (Spooner, 2015). Tuck questioned the necessity of research itself due to research crimes, emphasizing “inquiry as invasion” to produce settler colonial knowledge for the academy while discussing theories and ethics of social change as well as the meanings of power. Tuck’s analysis implicates the university as a colonial institution that exerts the pressure of coloniality on faculty members working within its systems. Tuck’s lecture demonstrates the importance of sharing knowledge orally and through different modes of learning and technology. Through specific examples, Tuck shows the challenges that faculty members face when pushing the boundaries (Spooner, 2015). Tuck’s emphasis on resistance helps to frame this study and the need to go beyond providing evidence of oppression, which is well established, but rather to focus on the possibility of resistance for change. While Cultural Studies is not immune to these forces of oppression, it also presents unique opportunities to counter dominant norms.

Student Experiences in Pedagogy and Learning

In addition to the distinct institutional challenges and points of possibility for faculty members in Cultural Studies, my research considers the impacts and influence of teaching practices on racialized students. Related to student experiences, Benita Bunjun’s (2021) *Academic Well-Being of Racialized Students* examines themes of capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism within academic institutions. This edited collection brings together the voices of Indigenous, Black, and racialized students in Canada on Turtle Island. This work connects to Thobani’s (2022) examination of academic hierarchies by highlighting how the Canadian

curriculum is overwhelmingly Eurocentric, relying upon a “pedagogy of displacement” that omits certain histories (Bunjun, 2021, p. 9). Bunjun defined academic well-being as “the capacity of academic institutions to carefully conceptualize and implement with relevance the policies, pedagogies, curricula, and services that promote the mental, physical, and intellectual wellness of students” (p. 3). A major strength of this book is its variety of research methods; authors foreground personal stories, poetry, and reflections.

Through this collection, students themselves also shared their experiences and reflections in academic settings. For example, Desmond (2021) shared how many of his academic experiences were Eurocentric, but one pre-law course at Dalhousie University contained a curriculum including his African history that “reflected us as learners” (p. 77). The impact of these curriculum and pedagogical choices created a “welcoming,” “inclusive,” and “safe” learning environment for racialized students (Desmond, 2021, p. 77). Additionally, another example of students' experiences was shown by Jotika Chaudhary Samant (2021) who described her time in a social work program as filled with microaggressions, including a professor showing a racist, infantilizing video in class. While progressing on her healing journey, she expressed the feeling that “academia did not value the ways I have survived, the ways I learn, and the strengths I bring to my life” (Samant, 2021, p. 148). Although these instances did not take place within a Cultural Studies classroom, they are important examples of how oppressive forces permeate academic spaces and negatively shape the experiences of racialized students within higher education. When considering the internationalization of higher education, racialized students in Cultural Studies classrooms are also faced with material that does not necessarily reflect their own identities (Tang & Cornell, 2021). For example, focusing on readings by authors such as Raymond Williams, who is considered part of the canon of Cultural Studies literature, was

critiqued by students when assigned by a non-white faculty member (Tang & Cornell, 2021).

The classroom environment and pedagogical choices made by faculty members distinctly shape the learning experiences of students both outside and within Cultural Studies.

Bunjun's (2021) collection pushes the boundaries of the status quo of academic knowledge by foregrounding art, photographs, and poetry along with thesis chapters and academic papers. The authors demonstrated the importance of considering how strongly students are impacted by pedagogical and curricular choices from faculty; even if faculty members' intentions are not to cause harm, this can be the impact, and racialized students are affected in "deep ways" (Samant, 2021, p. 142). This is especially true in institutions where the setting and actions compound by feeling the "sea of whiteness" (Samant, 2021, p. 144). This book provides a solid background and reflections on colonialism, institutions, academia, and issues surrounding personal identities within the context of Canada. It is critical to highlight these student reflections from Desmond (2021) and Samant (2021) because they demonstrate the everyday realities faced by racialized students; this is what my research aims to do in Cultural Studies. Bunjun (2021) also foregrounds specific examples to create meaning, resistance, and communities of care, which point to the opportunities for these practices to also exist within Cultural Studies.

Moreover, as racialized professors, Andrew Campbell and Ardavan Eizadirad (2022) argue that there are no safe spaces, focusing on the importance of cultivating *brave* spaces for students in classrooms. The authors explain the importance of being attentive to the needs of racialized students and students from minoritized groups due to microaggressions they may have faced in other aspects of education. Instead of avoiding tensions, remaining comfortable, and replicating deficit thinking models, brave spaces engage students in new perspectives of understanding and "harnessing energy" to "mobilize for personal and systemic change" (p. 24).

As an alternative to grades, students in Eizadirad's course only received feedback for improvement and participated in a variety of ways such as online discussion boards, verbally in class, or through reflections (Campbell & Eizadirad, 2022). Cultivating spaces where engaged, critical pedagogy is utilized can pose challenges both for faculty and students, especially when the faculty members themselves are racialized. However, this chapter demonstrates the complexity of classrooms as spaces where faculty members across disciplines can integrate creative, non-normative teaching methods. Students are inevitably influenced by these teaching methods, and it is crucial to consider their experiences.

Similarly to Bunjun's (2021) work, Sara Motta (2013) emphasized how "solidarity, care, and community" are key tenets to combat neoliberalism and individuality in education (p. 90). Motta explained how patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism define certain logics within higher education, but fostering different, multiple knowledges and pedagogical practices can challenge those. Through her own experience using critical pedagogy in a higher education course, Motta identified some resistance from students due to the absence of traditional lecturing. Specifically, sentiments such as a desire for an "expert" and "teacher" to lead the class rather than learning with other students were expressed by white middle-class and revolutionary middle-class students with high academic achievements (p. 95). However, students from non-traditional backgrounds (e.g. white lower middle-class or mature working class) were more open to different perspectives and teaching methods. When considering student perceptions, Motta (2013) shows that it is a challenging and intricate task to incorporate critical, engaged pedagogy because ideological forces of learning have been so deeply ingrained in our minds and being. Moving beyond these bounds is uncomfortable, yet necessary. The chapter provides important,

practical examples for how critical pedagogy can be used, which is a core aspect that my research will interrogate within the field of Cultural Studies.

Literature Review Conclusion

Overall, each of these works provide important insights on how engaged pedagogy, academic institutions, and student experiences are central to understandings of higher education in Canada. However, these ideas must be extended and investigated within the context of Cultural Studies because of its radical underpinnings. I also recognize and honour the work of the scholars, academics, artists, and all those who have come before me to help shape this literature review and thesis as a whole. Citation is political, purposeful, and helps us find our way (Ahmed, 2017). Despite the important research previously conducted on this topic, there are still major gaps within the field of Canadian Cultural Studies and its connection to engaged pedagogy and critical teaching practices. Moreover, no research to date has expanded these specific ideas to understand the impacts of pedagogy on students in Cultural Studies who self-identify as racialized.

Stemming from my core research questions, it is imperative to fill the gaps in the literature by specifically asking: how do dominant Canadian practices of the university as a capitalist institution become inscribed into Cultural Studies teaching despite its efforts to confront these? How are professors making meaningful actions to counter ideologies of higher education teaching and how do these shape student experiences? Through Cultural Studies, if the classroom is transformed into a site of struggle, how does this happen? These questions connect engaged and critical pedagogy, racialized students' experiences, and the field of Cultural Studies in novel ways that have not yet been explored. My study will expand these ideas to provide a new lens on how power operates in Cultural Studies as well as opportunities for resistance.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Theory

Critical theory investigates how social and political structures shape people, their thinking, and their actions (Beyer, 2001). Even though critical theory's origins emerge from Marxist thought, critical theory also extends economic discussions to focus on social and cultural approaches (Garlitz & Zompetti, 2023). While Frankfurt theorists, particularly Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, critiqued mass culture through a discussion of the culture industry, critical theory and the Frankfurt School became equivalent in meaning (Thompson, 2001). The Frankfurt School's attention to culture as a mode for ideology was mirrored in British Cultural Studies and its insistence that culture could resist capitalist hegemony (Kellner, 2021).

Related to education, critical theory examines how socio-political ideals and values are embedded within educational practices (Beyer, 2001). In this context, critical theory helps understand how educational policies and practices mirror larger ideological realities (Beyer, 2001). As Beyer (2001) describes, "it is precisely in understanding the normative dimensions of education and how they are intertwined with social, structural, and ideological processes and realities that critical theory plays a key role" (p. 154).

In its understanding of social structures, critical theory is distinctly social justice oriented (Razack, 1993). This means that it is crucial to understand how interlocking, political structures of oppression connect to personal privilege (Razack, 1993). Critical theory is not only about understanding, but it is also about acting (Vaandering, 2010). For Cultural Studies, critical theory must be viewed as dynamic rather than unchangeable; critical theory must expand beyond the work of influential white men who are most often attributed to the history of the Frankfurt School as described by Garlitz and Zompetti (2023). Therefore, instead of being fixed in its

history, critical theory must be mobilized to include queer, anti-racist, and feminist “entanglements” (Keeling, 2014, p. 684). Similarly, Byrd (2009) articulates how indigeneity must be centred within critical theory and Cultural Studies to focus on radical justice instead of liberalism and tolerance. Connecting back to engaged and critical pedagogy, the work of bell hooks (1994) and Paulo Freire (2018) is certainly aligned with critical theory (Vaandering, 2010). Critical theory is a useful lens for examining teaching strategies in higher educational institutions because of its commitment to justice and resisting dominant structures. These understandings of critical theory also demonstrate the necessity for critical theory to adapt because of its white, male-dominated emergence with the Frankfurt School (McArthur, 2022). Therefore, it is imperative to look at critical theory dialectically with critical race theory.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory stems from critical theory, critical legal studies, and feminism (Yosso & Solórzano, 2005). This theoretical approach can be considered interdisciplinary and also applies to the context of higher education. Critical race theory asserts that race is socially constructed (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2021). Instead of being inherently fixed or having a biological existence, race is a socially invented and shaped category (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The social and ideological forces that shape categories of race are distinctly rooted in racism, which rely on racial superiority and white privilege to operate (Yosso & Solórzano, 2005). The theoretical Marxist contributions of capitalism and ideology on critical race theory must also be acknowledged as both a significant influence and point of convergence (Bakan & Dua, 2014). Critical race theory examines how “unearned advantages directly come from being white” because whiteness is privileged and valued in modern Western society (Savas, 2014, p. 508). For example, in the United States and Canada, white people have control over and

access to significantly more “educational and financial resources in contrast to non-white people” (Savas, 2014, p. 508).

While critical race theory originated in the field of law within the United States, this theory has also been applied to educational settings (Mills & Unsworth, 2018). Moreover, racism functions both at individual and systemic levels because it is “embedded in the ... social structure” (Savas, 2014, p. 508; Yosso & Solórzano, 2005). For example, critical race theory critiques the racist logics of colourblindness and assimilation, which permeate educational spaces (Mills & Unsworth, 2018). Critical race theory’s emphasis on the embedded nature of racism demonstrates how this oppressive force is deeply woven into the foundations of society in subtle, yet insidious ways (Savas, 2014).

The approach that critical race theory takes also acknowledges how discussions on white supremacy include other, connected components such as class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and ability, among others. Critical race theory aims to challenge multiple forms of subordination and oppression (Savas, 2014). This emphasis links back to the previous discussion on intersectionality and how it provides an important framework as part of critical race theory. Racialized oppression is layered (Yosso & Solórzano, 2005).

My research aligns with the goals of critical theory and critical race theory by examining engaged, critical practices that inform pedagogical decisions in Cultural Studies, thus centralizing critiques of structural oppression. Even though white, male voices dominate higher education, critical race theory aims to draw on the lived experiences of racialized peoples (Savas, 2014). This focus informs my research because engaged teaching practices facilitate liberatory learning (hooks, 1994). Due to the micro and macro functions of race, this research examines

individual realities within the context of racism as embedded in educational institutions (Tate, 1997).

I applied critical race theory through a methodology inspired by everyday experiences of how faculty's pedagogical practices impact the lives of racialized students; the research methods of semi-structured interviews as described in the following chapter closely align with critical race theory's focus on voice. Specifically, voice and stories communicate the educational realities of racialized people (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). My research uses critical race theory to highlight how teaching methods push back against racial and other hierarchies in higher education as well as the impacts of this pedagogy on racialized students.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

Institutional Ethnography

The research methodology and paradigm that inspires this work to investigate my research questions is Dorothy Smith's Institutional Ethnography (IE). This approach, originating in feminist and Marxist epistemology, examines how people's everyday experiences connect to larger institutional processes (Smith, 2006). IE makes the everyday visible within the larger social relations that shape our lives and realities (Earles & Crawley, 2019; Smith & Griffith, 2022).

Smith and Griffith (2022) define ruling relations as "relations that, though we participate in them, impose their objectified modes upon us" (p. 7). The entanglements of relations are not only observed in the physical setting, but also extend to include, for example, the role of habits or traditions (Smith & Griffith, 2022). Ruling relations are "extraordinary yet ordinary" (Smith, 2005, p. 10) that shape and organize academic discourses (Smith & Griffith, 2022). Related to the concept of ruling relations within IE, Smith (2005) describes the term standpoint. Standpoint creates a subject position and entry point that begins with the individual and leads to the discovery of the social (Smith, 2005). In this research, the standpoint begins with faculty members and students in Cultural Studies and the institutional ruling relations are of higher education.

This methodology connects well with my research because it uniquely situates the pedagogical practices employed by faculty (and subsequently experienced by students) within the academic institution. The connections between everyday experiences and institutional relations are grounded in my research question which aims to examine institutional hierarchies. As a master's level study, while my research approach was inspired by IE, it did not necessarily

examine the University of British Columbia (UBC) as an academic institution itself along with its policies, procedures, and practices that influence faculty pedagogy. Rather, I examined the view and role of the institution through the realities and lived experiences of participants. This was done specifically through the faculty participants and my interview questions and follow-up questions. I further describe the interviews and process as well as their connection to IE in the methods section below. Within IE, the institution does not solely represent one university or one academic establishment, but instead can be understood as a collection of ruling relations organized around a specific function, such as education (McCoy, 2006). These experiences represent specific institutional interactions that function both on individual and structural levels.

Additionally, IE is appropriate because it provides space to situate “embodied actualities” within the larger context of history and power (Smith, 2006, p. 6). This demonstrates how practices and experiences within academic institutions do not solely remain in this realm; rather, they are situated within broader systems and contexts. Smith’s (2006) emphasis on connecting the everyday to institutions also fits well into Sara Ahmed’s (2012) discussion of higher education institutions. Ahmed describes institutions not only as nouns, but as verbs as well. Specifically, she explains how “institutional realities become given” through “doing” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 21). Institutionalizing actions makes them a part of the fabric, which allows certain everyday experiences to become solidified within this structure. Through my study, I endeavour to practice IE’s focus on “inquiry, discovery, [and] learning” (Smith, 2006, p. 2).

Methods

This research is a qualitative study focusing on the UBC Okanagan (UBCO) Campus Cultural Studies undergraduate program. My study examined the pedagogical practices of faculty

members and their subsequent impact on racialized students. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews.

Program Details

UBCO's Cultural Studies program is the first of its kind in western Canada, making this study a significant influence for future scholars (The University of British Columbia, n.d.-a). This 4-year program grants students a Bachelor of Arts degree. Students can complete a Major in Cultural Studies, Combined Major with Cultural Studies (with Art History and Visual Culture, Creative Writing, or English), or a Minor in Cultural Studies (The University of British Columbia, n.d.-b). The Cultural Studies program offers two streams: Media and Popular Culture and Identities and Power. To complete a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Cultural Studies, students complete a total of 120 credits, including 81 required courses credits and 39 elective credits. Two of the mandatory required courses include CULT 100: Media and Popular Cultures in Global Context and CULT 101: Cultural Studies Practices. From the 200 and above level courses, students choose between various Cultural Studies courses to fulfil their requirements. For example, in year two, students can choose one of the following courses at the 200-level: CULT 230: Foundations: Reading Across Borders, CULT 250: Foundations: Indigenous Literature, or CULT 275: Interdisciplinary Theory and Method in Literary Research. Accounting for the interdisciplinary nature of Cultural Studies, students also complete courses from non-Cultural Studies programs including Art History and Visual Culture, Anthropology, Creative Writing, Digital Humanities, Geography, Gender and Women's Studies, Indigenous Studies, Sociology, Theatre, and Visual Arts (The University of British Columbia, n.d.-b).

Participants

Participants consisted of three faculty members at UBCO as well as three adult (18+) students. These numbers were determined to conduct a comparative analysis between groups for a balanced sample.

After researching the current faculty members at UBCO based on the university's public website, I made a list of professors who fit the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Faculty members were contacted via their publicly available institutional email addresses. This email invitation contained a description of the research and study details along with the faculty consent form (Appendix C) for review. Faculty members were interviewed first before students were contacted.

To recruit students, the current Cultural Studies Program Coordinator sent an email on my behalf to all program majors, minors, and recently graduated students with the study information, student consent form (Appendix D), and my contact information. There were 55 majors and minors and 5 recently graduated students who were contacted by the Program Coordinator. Students were then able to contact me directly by email to express interest in participating. While faculty participants did not receive any compensation for partaking in the interviews, student participants were offered a \$20 electronic gift card of their choosing as a token of appreciation for their time.

Faculty Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria. Faculty participants needed to fit into the following criteria:

1. The faculty member has taught at least one mandatory course in the Cultural Studies undergraduate degree program.

2. The selected faculty members are diverse in terms of their subject areas as well as identity.
3. The faculty member cannot have been in the department for less than 4 years.

These criteria were set in order to select faculty members with significant experience and a solid understanding of the Cultural Studies program at UBCO. Meeting these criteria would mean that the faculty members have interacted with a variety of students at various levels of their studies and would have experienced a full cycle of the typical length of the undergraduate program (4 years).

Students Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria. Student participants needed to fit into the following criteria:

1. Students who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, or a person of colour.
2. Students who are majoring or minoring in Cultural Studies (or have taken at least three Cultural Studies courses).
3. Students who are going into their third or fourth year of the program or have recently graduated in 2023.
4. Students have taken a course by at least one of the three interviewed faculty members.

These criteria were set in order to examine the impact of faculty members' pedagogical approaches on racialized students, which is a key component of my research questions. The stage in their program was also significant because it demonstrated that students had experience in multiple Cultural Studies courses and have taken the mandatory, prerequisite courses for the degree.

Interviews and Setting

Each of the six interviews were conducted virtually over McGill University's Microsoft Teams platform from June to July 2023. Due to the recording and transcription function to accommodate participants' privacy, the calls were conducted using audio without video. Both the interviewer and interviewee participated in a private space such as homes or individual offices. The interviews were approximately one hour in length and ranged from 48:57 minutes to 1:01:51 minutes. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main data collection method because they allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of both faculty and student perspectives of critical, engaged pedagogy. Interviews provided important insights about participants' experiences, which allowed me to analyze and discern practical, creative strategies that reimagine the "tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought" (Lorde, 1984, p. 113).

The semi-structured format of the interviews meant that I prepared an interview guide with major questions (Appendix A and Appendix B), but often asked follow-up questions for more details or to gain a better understanding of ideas expressed. These questions flowed in a natural, conversational way. The interview guides were different for faculty and student interviews, and the questions were not always asked in the order written on the guide depending on participants' responses. Interviews are a commonly used method in IE to understand the experiences of research participants (Campbell & Gregor, 2002).

While I specifically asked faculty participants about their previous education and current Cultural Studies experience within the institution (UBCO), conducting semi-structured interviews also allowed for the flexibility of follow-up questions. Specifically, part of my process while reviewing and preparing for the interviews meant adding notes of potential follow-up questions to gain a fuller sense of the institutional relationship at hand. For example, I wrote

notes signaling to myself to remember to ask about “institutional hierarchies” that faculty members noticed around them. Particularly considering their own position, I also made a note to ask about “institutional challenges” they may have faced during their teaching tenure if and when the topic was raised. This process allowed me to follow IE’s emphasis on bringing “the institution into view,” both visually in my notes and through the interview questions (McCoy, 2006, p. 124).

In terms of questions, the faculty interview guide (Appendix A) was divided into two major themes: background and teaching practices. The former included questions about the faculty member’s positionality/identity, education, and their understanding of the foundations of Cultural Studies as an academic discipline. The latter included questions about critical, engaged pedagogy, their teaching methods, chosen assignments, goals, and student feedback. Faculty members were not provided the questions or guide prior to the interview.

The interview guide for students (Appendix B) was divided into three major themes: background, learning experiences, and impact. The first section on background included questions about their identity, education, and understanding of Cultural Studies. The second section emphasized their learning experiences in Cultural Studies courses such as class structure, assignments, personal learning, and unique experiences compared to other, non-Cultural Studies courses they may have taken. Lastly, the impact section focused on students’ challenges; how their future plans may (or may not) have changed due to their experiences; and how their time in Cultural Studies affected them personally, professionally, and academically. Students were provided the option to request the questions prior to the interview as recommended by the Program Coordinator. This choice was made to acknowledge the importance and potential challenges of asking racialized students to share their experiences. Particularly for Black,

Indigenous, and racialized students, I wanted to ensure that the entire interview process was safe and comfortable. In order to establish trust and alleviate potential concerns of the students about difficult and sensitive questions, I made the option of sharing questions beforehand available to students. However, none of the three student participants requested the questions in advance. Overall, I believe that creating and maintaining a positive relationship with study participants is paramount.

Data Analysis

Transcription

To analyze the data collected from the six semi-structured interviews, I first converted the audio into written transcriptions. While I used the auto-generated transcription created by Microsoft Teams as a starting point, I manually corrected the transcript to ensure its accuracy. I listened to each interview multiple times on 0.5 speed to confirm that the text matched the audio and my experience conducting the interview. Because the live transcription feature in Microsoft Teams often makes mistakes, I relistened to different portions of the interview several times. While preparing the interview transcriptions, I also removed any personal identifiers or portions of the interview that one participant asked to have removed. To respect the confidentiality of the research participants, I inserted [de-identified] in place of any people's names or other distinctly identifying remarks.



The transcription process is based on specific, purposeful decisions (Riesmann, 2008). Also, the way that text is presented impacts interpretation and analysis - these decisions are not neutral (Riesmann, 2008). Knowing this fact and that text from the transcripts would be directly quoted as data in my findings chapter, I chose to write semi-verbatim transcripts. This meant that I included everything in the transcript except false starts, repeated words, ums and uhs, verbal





pauses, filler words such as “like,” and stutters. This decision allowed me to create a detailed record of the conversation; however, patterns of speech were not as important as content and ideas presented by the research participants. This decision also aligned with discussions of transcription in IE, particularly around the negotiation process between the researcher and the interview transcriptions (Earles & Crawley, 2019). The negotiation process that takes place between the researcher and interview transcript has also been referred to as a “data dialogue” (Walby, 2013, p. 141, as cited in Smith, 2005, pp. 135-139).

Coding and Analysis

I coded the data from my interview transcripts manually and did not use any specific software to assist with this process. I used descriptive coding to organize my data and summarize topics (Saldaña, 2011). For this coding process, while my transcriptions were created in Microsoft Word, I wrote comments in the margins of the documents (Terry & Hayfield, 2020). This initial method of using descriptors as codes allowed me to categorize the data in an organized way for further analysis (Saldaña, 2011). Among many others, descriptive codes included words such as “critical framework,” “evolution,” and “power.” These codes were semantic because they were close to the words and meanings directly from the transcript texts (Terry & Hayfield, 2020).

Next, I highlighted text with various colours to identify and group the data into six emerging themes (Terry & Hayfield, 2020). The colour names were assigned based on the labels provided in the Text Highlight Colour function on Microsoft Word. These six colours and themes included the following:

-  (Yellow) = Definitions
-  (Bright Green) = Change

-  (Turquoise) = Institution
-  (Pink) = Teaching Whys
-  (Teal) = Teaching Whats
-  (Dark Yellow) = Student Impacts

The coding process through comments and highlights assisted me in restructuring and describing larger themes which formed the basis for the organization of my findings.

While data analysis in IE has not received significant attention (Walby, 2013), many studies in IE have used thematic analysis in order to interpret and further explore data (Malachowski et al., 2017). To identify, organize, and explain key themes within the data, I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, which they later prefer to name reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Thematic analysis is defined as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This process includes interpretation and creativity (Braun & Clarke, 2019). From the initial themes, I expanded the ideas to generate larger patterns within the data and reflect them in the following four themes that are described in-depth in my findings chapter: a) understanding Cultural Studies; b) rationale and purpose of pedagogical practices; c) specific practices used to enact critical, engaged pedagogy; and d) impact of practices on racialized students.

Chapter 5: Research Findings

Following the processes of transcription, coding, and analysis, I organized the findings into four key themes: understanding Cultural Studies; rationale and purpose of pedagogical practices; specific practices used to enact critical, engaged pedagogy; and impact of practices on racialized students. While the specific findings with examples are presented here, an analysis and further depth of the sub themes will be presented in the discussion.

Theme 1: Understanding Cultural Studies

Both faculty members and students identified their core understandings of Cultural Studies in similar ways. Between faculty and students, while each one had their own ways of describing the field, the most common key words that participants used included critical thinking, power, identity, and representation. For example, one of the most common ideas was power relations, which three faculty members and two students identified as a key component within their answers. While these common threads were apparent in both groups' responses, it was also clear that each one approached the question from the perspective of their role as an instructor or student.

This meant that faculty members addressed the question differently from students by giving more detailed answers and referring to history, scholarly influences, and the complex nature of the discipline. Both Faculty A and B mentioned the history of the Birmingham School in England, specifically describing how Cultural Studies “comes out of the Birmingham School, for instance, as one trajectory, the Frankfurt School, and so it has this history of Marxist analysis and analysis that’s very attuned to questions of power and identity and subject position” (Faculty A). Faculty C also referenced British materials and activists, such as Stuart Hall who was one of

the founders of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (Hall, 1994).

On the other hand, students were more succinct in their understandings of Cultural Studies and focused on aspects that personally resonated with them in their classes. For example, Student C discussed how the field was about learning how “aspects of identity sort of influence or dictate people's experiences in the world. ... To think critically about identity and systems of power and oppression ... it really became a space or a safe space to explore those.” Additionally, Student A noted:

What I saw in Cultural Studies so far ... it felt more rooted in contemporary issues and activism like queer representation, Indigenous representation. ... Observing plus thinking critically about it. So, our views on marriage, on distribution of resources, on sexuality, and critical race theory ... it's more of a critical lens rather than just learning and observing it.

These two quotes from student participants illustrate how Cultural Studies was mainly explained through people-centred and identity-based descriptions in relation to critical theories and larger systems of power. Students did not refer to Marxism, the Frankfurt School, or the Birmingham School in their responses. While there were common understandings of Cultural Studies, both faculty and students approached their descriptions in ways that aligned with their position within the academic institution.

Theme 2: Rationale and Purpose of Critical Pedagogical Practices

Before engaging in the *how* of my research questions, we must understand *if* and *why*. From my interviews, I found that all faculty spoke to using critical, engaged pedagogy in varying ways. While they did not necessarily use that specific language, they demonstrated strategies that

work for them and their teaching styles. In this section, I describe the major ideas that informed faculty members' pedagogy and why they made certain pedagogical choices.

Key Values and Goals of Teaching

Firstly, faculty members clearly emphasized their key values and goals of teaching. These goals included learning from different perspectives, enabling ways for students to think deeply, and considering their roles as instructors. For example, Faculty A described the logic behind their teaching "to ensure that students are gaining critical perspectives as well as work from worldviews or epistemologies that are different" from the norm. Faculty B also described their values through course design:

I want to give you a kind of inquiry-based structure that will allow you to sort of self-reflect and kind of question things. ... There is a whole lot of structure to what I'm doing and it's some teaching. I'm modeling how to integrate, how to interrogate a text, and how to interrogate things. But ultimately, it's so that you can do those interrogations. You can ask those questions. You can think a little bit further.

Lastly, Faculty C discussed how instructors have more than just one role in the classroom. Specifically, while they view the instructor as a "manager" and "facilitator of Cultural Studies and social change and praxis," they also "motivate and may also entertain students to some extent." (Faculty C). Due to these multiple roles, teaching "involves even manual labour and then intellectual labour and emotional labour" (Faculty C). Each of these examples demonstrate some of the major values that inform pedagogical practices and teaching goals.

Students as Active Participants

Another major rationale for faculty members' pedagogy included viewing students as active participants within their courses rather than passive learners. This was expressed by all

three faculty members. Firstly, Faculty A described teaching as “deeply participatory and student-centered” and approached courses from:

The idea that it means something to the students. So, approaching courses in ways that, where students see themselves a part of it right from the beginning. I guess that's a kind of a core framework. And so doing things like you know, in the classroom, in the first class, a community and participation sort of guidelines, but also activities that ask students to kind of place themselves in the work.

Because this work has meaning in the lives of students and students are a part of making that meaning, this also allowed Faculty A to “destabilize myself as the knowing subject of the front of the room.” While seeing students as taking an active role, Faculty B and C clearly demonstrated the deep care and consideration for where students were coming from. Similarly to Faculty A, Faculty C also viewed students as part of the learning process:

I don't want to make my students skeptical, but more actively critical and creatively critical and feel really empowered. So, what I really hope and [am] trying to do is to give them the feel, like a sense of empowerment, sense of I think self, even like self-efficacy. So, they should be able to feel that they can do something, and they can change something and they are part of this community.

These examples demonstrate how Faculty A and C view student participation and empowerment as central to the classroom environment. Also, along these lines of care, Faculty B noted the importance of “thinking about the aspects of cultural safety and about who’s in the room” and designing courses and assignments “that might actually help [students] after they leave the university, but also kind of help them kind of find themselves and think about ideology.”

This idea of being an active member of the class was also reiterated by the student participants who stated that they were encouraged to “share your experience, share your opinions, see how we experience this topic ourselves and how we relate to each other or how we differ” (Student A). Similarly, as active participants, “we as students would be building on top of each other because one of the first things that are laid down is that you have to listen to each other, you know, listen and comment and engage with each other” (Student B). In this way, students were not only viewed as consumers of knowledge in Cultural Studies; rather, they took an active role in their learning.

Learning as Within and Beyond the Classroom

Moreover, faculty members emphasized how learning takes place not only within the space of the university classroom but also beyond. For example, Faculty A explained how a previous course project was “politically engaged, had particular social meaning for the community, was innovative” in community spaces both inside and outside the university. In this approach:

Students take the lead on things where the classroom is not a space where I lecture ...

Yeah, I lecture, and students listen. But where students have to do kind of problem-based work and inquiry-based research, that they're designing their own kind of concerns and problems and then defining then what they want to do with that work. (Faculty A)

Reaffirming Faculty A's sentiment about students connecting knowledge in and out of the classroom, Faculty C discussed their goal to “to transform this classroom knowledge into actual practice. So ... they can actually apply the knowledge into actual practice and then transform themselves and then this environment and society eventually.” Highlighting that knowledge does

not simply exist within the Cultural Studies classroom was a key factor in the motivations of faculty members for their pedagogical choices.

Theme 3: Specific Practices Used to Enact Critical, Engaged Pedagogy

Considering the goals of faculty members as discussed above, the participants described specific ways that critical, engaged pedagogy was embedded within the frameworks of their courses. This was specifically done through creative assignments, projects outside the classroom, class discussions, and syllabi design.

Creative Assignments

Within various Cultural Studies courses, students described the possibility of completing creative assignments beyond traditional essays or multiple-choice exams. All faculty members indicated that they tried to use a mix of types of assignments in their courses. For example, Faculty B described one option of a final research assessment where students can:

Create an object or a performance, and then write an artist statement that uses the knowledge that you learned in the course because the research is your creative intervention. And that, to me, has been really, wonderfully generative ... I want that metacognitive kind of level of self-analysis. And the artist statement, to me, kind of does that ... answering three really simple questions. What did I do? How did I do it? And why did I do it?

Additionally, students each shared a variety of creative assignments that they completed in their Cultural Studies courses, including designing illustrations on a card, creating a podcast, or making a video with a voiceover. Even though students and faculty members indicated that essays were still often required as potential assignments, student participants explained that there was flexibility in the content. This flexibility meant that students could choose topics that were

meaningful, relevant, and timely for their learning. For example, Student A described how they “got to incorporate my art into my essay and sort of look at my own personal relationship with the land” in their Cultural Studies course on Indigenous literature. In addition to allowing flexibility in the format of assignments, participants also explained the creative aspects of assignment content.

Community-Based Group Work

While students engaged in creative assignments within their classrooms, faculty members also assigned projects outside the realm of the classroom space and in the community. All three faculty participants emphasized the use of group work in their courses. The goal of conducting work outside the classroom was to enable students to engage with issues that were meaningful for the community (Faculty A). For example, Faculty B described a course assignment that involved working with an external client and producing advertisements for them in a team. For this project, Faculty B described how “we're going to do real world stuff where we're going to produce stuff and you're going to work in a team ... that is kind of more what, you know, activism works, looks like outside of the university.” These projects aimed to build a sense of community amongst the students with the broader community outside the university campus setting.

When trying to enact engaged practices in teaching, Faculty B also described the feelings that emerged by making an analogy about swimming. Specifically, Faculty B noted:

I'm always paddling, you're always half drowning, but then you have to kind of keep your head above the water. I'm a terrible swimmer. ... so being in water is a terrifying thing to me, and I would say engaged pedagogy is kind of like that for me, that it's this necessary, and when it works, it's like... This is great! ... Nobody sees how hard I'm paddling, but

they're all engaged and enjoying it, and I can see they're thinking about stuff and that's, that to me, that's the work that needs to be done.

Through this analogy, Faculty B demonstrated how engaged pedagogy is a necessary element of their teaching, but these practices also require a constant effort to stay afloat, similarly to swimming. Through various forms of pedagogy, including community-based group work, faculty members engaged students in new ideas and experiences even though the process itself can be strenuous.

Class Discussions

Moreover, there was a major emphasis on the classroom practice of discussion. For example, Faculty B recognized the role of conversation when they described that “I'm kind of the mind that, in the libertarian classroom, that that's what the perfect kind of class is. It's about conversations and whether it's conversations where it's sharing and pairing or in small groups.” Additionally, education is that “libertarian education about you asking questions and you poking and prodding things. And so ... I kind of feel like every year I'm getting better at kind of pushing students to engage in that libertarian education” as inspired by Paulo Freire. Through discussion, Faculty B involved students in a thinking and learning process where they played a significant and crucial role.

According to Faculty A, lecture notes were provided ahead of the class to allow the classroom space to be focused on listening and discussion; this choice was made for accessibility and as part of “trauma-informed practices.” Specifically:

I need to provide students a lot of information before the class, before readings, before certain weeks so that they can come to the class or choose not to come to the class with a good understanding of what they're going to be confronted with. And that has to do with

sexual violence, that has to do with racism, that, you know, there's this tendency to think well, there's this kind of, this filter of scholarly kind of work that is not as significant, and realizing for racialized students, this stuff is personal in ways. (Faculty A)

This example demonstrated how faculty members value students' agency and personal experiences not only during class discussions, but prior to the classes as well. Furthermore, Faculty C described how "I tried to do this classroom discussion as much as possible ... so that they can stay more interested, motivated, more engaged." Faculty C's quote indicated how they saw the value of class discussions in retaining student interest and engagement in the course material.

From the perspective of student participants, every student also mentioned the significant and major role that discussion played in the classroom. Discussion was facilitated in participatory ways. For instance, while professors assisted in prompting the class, students expressed the positive nature of leading these discussions:

I felt like often we were allowed to lead the discussion as well. So as if they were looking for a specific answer, they just sort of guided us and responded to us. But whatever was on somebody's mind we would kind of go in that direction. And so, it was really, it was really great in that we were able to really open it up to so many different perspectives and the discussions were really, really, really moving at some points. And I feel we sort of opened up in a way that you don't really see in other classes. I felt a little bit of a therapy session sometimes, but in a good way. So I enjoyed that. (Student C)

These expressions pointed to how class discussions were personally meaningful for students because of their ability to engage with their peers and contribute to the classroom learning

environment. From both faculty and student responses, discussion played a significant role in pedagogical practices.

Syllabi Design

In addition to specific classroom practices, the design of course syllabi also reflected faculty members' goals. Faculty were acutely aware of how they created their syllabi, including who the students were reading and the types of texts they were reading. For example:

To ensure that the vast majority of the texts that I put on a course syllabus are by people, whether scholars, typically scholars or activists, who identify as Indigenous, Black, or people of color and women. And so there is a purpose on some level, it's a purposeful consciousness to make sure that more than 50% of the readings are by people who identify as women, or at least as not men. And, you know, at least 80-90% are people who identify as Indigenous, Black, and people of color. (Faculty A)

In addition to considering who students are reading, faculty participants also considered what they were reading. For example:

I tried to show them some up-to-date kind of materials. Increasingly, I try to introduce more non-academic materials such as a newspaper or Wikipedias, or even advertisements and so on. But still I think, I wish I could bring more non-academic, up to date, out of campus material that can be really relevant to their everyday life. I have noticed for the past several years, students' demography is changing so they are less and less interested in the foundational Cultural Studies material which are written like a few decades ago. (Faculty C)

These examples from Faculty A and Faculty C demonstrated their purposeful decisions to include non-white authors and non-academic texts in their syllabi. Student participants also noticed this variety in readings. Student B noticed that:

There was a lot of Global South texts. Even if it was in North America and Europe, it would have been from groups that would have been marginalized or minorities or POC or whatever, you know, so I really appreciated that.

Similarly, Student C also recognized that there was:

Not a lot of canonical reading ... sometimes they would have to revert back to those white, old white man readings, I like to call them. ... When it came to some little pieces of theory here and there, and the more foundational things. But for the most part, they tried to veer away from that which not, which is not the case in a lot of other courses.

Students noticed the inclusion of readings from marginalized groups and the decisions to veer away from canonical texts written by white men. These observations demonstrated how students were aware of faculty members' pedagogical decisions regarding their course materials. While faculty members reflected their teaching goals through the texts included in their syllabi, students also expressed an appreciation for the variety of authors and style of readings assigned as part of their Cultural Studies courses.

Theme 4: The Impact of Practices on Racialized Students

While faculty members shared some feedback and reactions they received from students, directly or indirectly, about the impact of their teaching and courses, this section focuses on the reflections from the student participants themselves.

Firstly, students emphasized their feelings of community and safety due to pedagogical choices such as active participation through class discussion. Each student participant shared

positive reflections about the classes' structure and each student also used the descriptor of "fun" when describing their Cultural Studies courses. For example, the significant role that discussion played fostered a sense of community within the classroom and amongst students because "it was just like a really fun conversation to hear each other's experiences. ... It's a sort of a connection because the things we talked about in class impact each of us" (Student A).

The level of comfort also increased with these discussions amongst students. As Student A described:

Because we're used to having discussions, we feel a lot safer, talking about the harder topics because we know that we're here to engage and while we challenge perspectives, we also understand why each of us might think differently or why we might not be culturally positioned in a way to have seen something that others might not have seen or realized before. So getting used to talking about our own experiences of, let's say, racism or discrimination, it's just the classroom space makes it easier to talk and engage in that sort of discussion.

The classroom spaces that Cultural Studies faculty members curated guided students through important, yet sometimes uncomfortable discussions and helped them "navigate that emotion" (Student A). Referring to Cultural Studies courses, Student A also mentioned that "personally, I think it's made me more open minded."

Considering the deeply personal aspects of teaching and learning, participants were also impacted specifically because of their positionality and identity as racialized students. For instance, Student A described an assignment where they had the opportunity to connect their personal experiences with the course subject. Consequently, this experience "made me feel, kinda hard to say, listened to, but yeah, listened to" (Student A). As such, this assignment:

Kind of made me feel more connected to the culture that I'm a guest at. Right. And then having, being able to share that in an essay with the professor just made it feel, you know, sort of a personal journey, I guess. And it was really fun and felt like a moment of growth for me. (Student A)

This experience tied Student A's personal life to their studies in a meaningful way. Additionally, because of Student B's positionality as a Black international student, knowing that the course readings and materials were more diverse made a significant impact. This allowed Student B to participate in Cultural Studies courses without having their guard up or feeling defensive from the outset like in other courses.

I was able to sit down and kind of relax myself a little bit and stop worrying about whether the information that I was receiving was going to be tinged with some kind of weird colonial, imperial whiteness of some sort. (Student B)

Recognizing how these courses impacted people in personal ways because of their identity, the stakes were different. This point was explained by Student C:

I also became very aware that certain people in the class were experiencing that physical or that emotional labor, while others were not, and I became very aware of that. That certain things just would resonate differently with people. And I really started to be hyper aware of the differences between my experience and other people's experiences, how people would relate to things even though we're all in the same course and having the same discussion.

This sense of awareness was directly related to the student's identity. Student C also described their path and connection to Cultural Studies:

I didn't really feel comfortable identifying as Black, or as a person of color until really recently ... and that's sort of what led me into Cultural Studies, was that whole journey of self-discovery in terms of race ... Once I found Cultural Studies and once I started taking the courses, I just became so much more motivated, and my grades were up. And I just genuinely enjoyed going to school. And so then I realized that it's really important to find that passion in academics as well. Yeah. And that really changed my outlook on school and being able to sort of dictate my own experience in that way.

Each of these quotations and examples indicated how teaching practices and especially class discussions uniquely impacted students because of their racialized identity. Students spoke of their joy and positive feelings surrounding the content and structure of their Cultural Studies classes.

Summary of Findings

Considering the rationale, goals, and specific practices that faculty members used in their Cultural Studies courses, students noted mainly positive impacts of critical, engaged pedagogical practices. Understandings of Cultural Studies surrounded conceptions of power relationships, identity, representation, and critical thinking. While faculty members took a more historical and elaborate approach to describing the field, students focused on their interpretations and personal experiences.

To understand the rationale and purpose of faculty members' pedagogical practices, faculty explained their key values and goals when teaching based on various perspectives, inquiry-based course design, and introspectively recognizing their roles as the instructor. All three faculty members also expressed a clear intention and practice that regarded students as active participants in the classroom. As part of their goals, faculty members acknowledged how

learning also took place outside the physical classroom space. Faculty members used specific practices to enact their pedagogy. These practices included creative assignments such as performance or art, community-based group projects, engaging students in class discussions where they also took the lead, and designing syllabi that accounted for both who and what types of texts students were reading. Lastly, because of their racialized identity, the three students explained how and why their Cultural Studies courses impacted them not only academically, but personally as well. These findings warrant a more in-depth discussion surrounding the role and complexities involved in teaching and learning Cultural Studies within a Canadian academic institution to be further explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Based on the findings outlined above, this chapter presents a scholarly discussion of my study results. Specifically, I will consider the personal nature of pedagogy, challenges of working within a neoliberal institutional context, and the experiences of students that demonstrate the uneven nature of Cultural Studies courses.

Engaged, Critical Pedagogy is Deeply Personal

The impacts described by both faculty and students in my findings emphasize how personal this work is for everyone involved; pedagogy is distinctly personal, emotional, and sensitive (hooks, 1994). During the virtual interviews, I observed that each of the discussions with participants were grounded by a deep sense of care and passion towards this subject matter. This was also an observation that I reflected on post-interviews. In addition to describing their teaching and learning experiences and how they have evolved over time, participants were also open and willing to share how their community and home settings have shaped their educational experiences.

Faculty Commitment to Care and Well-Being

For faculty members, the labour of pedagogy had an intrinsic connection to well-being and care. As outlined in the findings chapter, when discussing their values of teaching, Faculty C mentioned the types of labour involved in teaching Cultural Studies. Through this discussion, Faculty C demonstrated how it was important to consider the well-being not only of themselves as the instructor but also the personal and emotional well-being of their students. These comments show how instructors must consider the impact of their teaching and the content in which they are teaching, especially because Cultural Studies material aims to challenge dominant perspectives (Grossberg, 1994; Hall, 1992).

Faculty C's emphasis on well-being also demonstrates how pedagogical practices in Cultural Studies stem from care. Care directly pushes back against the neoliberal model of the academy (Alexander & Mohanty, 2010). Grounded in a sense of love, critical theory and critical pedagogy view caring for ourselves and others as justice-oriented, political, collective, and transformative (Flores & Alfaro, 2022). As hooks (2003) describes, dominant education is fear-based where students have been conditioned to fear their teachers; however, the ways that Cultural Studies faculty described their role as teachers and emphasized the well-being of students directly contradicted this norm. This is an important aspect of critical, engaged pedagogy.

The emphasis on care and well-being also aligns with Motta's (2013) discussion that considering the neoliberalization of higher education and "intensification ... of patriarchal colonial capitalism," the politics of care are even more potent and powerful within this climate of education (p. 90). As Motta (2013) describes, neoliberalism "produces a space of hierarchy, competition and individualism through the eradication of spaces of solidarity, care and community" (p. 90). However, Cultural Studies faculty who emphasize the well-being of themselves and their students push back against these neoliberal models to build communities within the classroom as critical spaces for learning. The Cultural Studies faculty participants aimed to challenge these neoliberal practices through their work. To further illustrate this point, Faculty C mentioned that:

The university kind of requires in terms of this evaluation assessment system is often, I feel like it's a focus on individual development ... the long-term question is how to develop this sense of connected or networked empowerment at university not based on

competition, but based on yes, a sense of growing up together or developing together and then contributing together.

This focus on thinking about and questioning less individualized practices within Cultural Studies education clearly demonstrates even though the field is not immune to neoliberal forces of the academic institution, faculty members deeply consider and care about this topic.

The Impact of Personal Experience on Students

In the same ways that Faculty C discussed emotional labour, students did as well. As mentioned in the findings, particularly for racialized students, classroom conversations in Cultural Studies were often heavier because they were deeply personal. For example, Student C mentioned that “negative stories,” for example about experiences of racism, were upsetting and “really hit home.” While it was challenging for Student C to have these conversations knowing that students in other disciplines or departments were not engaging in similar topics, it also made them “hyper aware” of differences between their own and others’ experiences. This reflection aligns with hooks’ (1994) discussion of how “personal experience may be more constructively challenging than simply changing the curriculum” (p. 148).

Listening and telling stories in the classroom allows students to connect with course content as well as the philosophical or theoretical underpinnings of the material. To have students begin thinking about positionality without necessarily naming it as positionality, Faculty B started their classes with a story about their personal identity and where they were raised. Storytelling is a powerful form of social critique and is a crucial consciousness-raising activity (Martinez, 1999). Within critical race theory, storytelling and counter-storytelling are also considered powerful tools to question and shift dominant assumptions (Gillborn, 2006). As a method of communication, storytelling also has the power to be a jarring and interruptive force

against racist societal norms (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Incorporating personal experience in teaching illustrates how not only the content, but the methods of teaching matter in Cultural Studies because of how they impact students in various ways because of their positionality.

Teaching and Institutional Challenges

Similarly to the important focus on student well-being to resist neoliberal norms, it is important to understand the challenges described by faculty members when considering their everyday teaching experiences within the context of the institution. Considering the framework of Institutional Ethnography (IE), rather than emphasizing the theory that guides faculty members and becoming “preoccupied with the textual,” the interviews focused on examples of teaching experiences and activities that guided their daily experiences (Smith, 2006, p. 6).

The Challenges of Engaged, Critical Pedagogy

One major theme that emerged from the findings is that faculty engagement in critical, engaged pedagogy within the institutional context can be challenging. Diverting from the status quo, particularly in assignments or final projects for evaluation was logistically difficult. For example, as described in the findings section, one of Faculty B’s projects included working with an external client to produce an advertisement; this assignment allowed students to get involved in community activism outside the university setting. However, it was “kind of risky and it’s an immense amount of work” because of the growing class sizes in the undergraduate program and expectations to teach theory on top of the practical elements of the course (Faculty B).

Deviating from standard or traditional assignment types is challenging because it necessitates additional commitment from faculty. Faculty members are required to dedicate extra time and resources to ensure the feasibility of community-based projects with larger numbers of students. This sentiment reaffirms the findings of a study conducted in Ontario, Canada on

neoliberalism's impacts on faculty members who consider themselves critical pedagogues (Lawrence, 2015). Aligned with Faculty B's comments on the increase in numbers and larger class sizes, the danger of neoliberal education is that it closely counts the number of seats and becomes product-oriented and market-driven (Lawrence, 2015). Between the imposed neoliberal objectives of the university and their own critical teaching strategies, pedagogical decisions become challenging and a source of tension for faculty members.

Stemming from Faculty B's swimming analogy as presented in the findings chapter, this example shows how the work that instructors do is not only difficult, but often unseen. hooks (1994) speaks to this challenge when she described that "it takes a fierce commitment, a will to struggle, to let our work as teachers reflect progressive pedagogies" (p. 143). Starting from this story, Faculty B's experience of their everyday teaching practices illuminates the core of how engaged pedagogy resists the pressure of institutional hierarchies. Like water when swimming, institutional forces are all surrounding. This story is one example of how the actualities of faculty members' lives reveal powerful forces of not only the weight of institutional processes but the constant effort it takes to combat dominant ruling relations (Smith, 2005). Cultural Studies faculty set an example for important, yet difficult actions for teaching within the context of higher education.

Part of this challenge also emanates from university requirements for certain courses. Faculty C described how first and second year courses must include formal, written final exams. Because this is mandated across the university, students have certain expectations for these courses, which speaks to how "certain ways of doing things seem natural" and "automatic" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 25). This is a dilemma because instructors have requirements from the institution such as giving numerical grades at the end of a course and following the

predetermined evaluation system (based on individual development), yet they also want to follow the goals of Cultural Studies and challenge this system (Faculty C).

The institutional policies and regulations referenced by Faculty C are examples of what IE considers “governing” or “boss” texts, which “manage how actualities are selectively attended to ... giving concrete substance in the actual situations of people’s ongoing work of delivering the everyday reality of the ruling relations” (Smith & Griffith, 2022, p. 94). Working within these university requirements can be challenging for faculty members who want to divert from the status quo and implement more radical practices. This challenge closely aligns with Chesler’s (2013) discussion on how faculty members are not isolated because they are constrained by the departments and organizations in which they work. Faculty C’s reflection reaffirms Chesler’s (2013) comments on how research-oriented universities privilege individual achievement and “universalistic norms/definitions of merit and the utilization of standardized—universally applicable, assumed to fit to everyone regardless of cultural background or style—tests or criteria as indicators of such merit” (p. 3).

Faculty Desire to Do More

Even accounting for structural limitations and the neoliberalization of higher education, faculty members expressed a clear desire to do more in terms of their pedagogical practices. Stemming from the practices already employed, Faculty A mentioned that over time, “I’ve realized in some ways I need to actually push the boundaries more.” Similarly, Faculty C “really hope[s] to do more group work, more work outside campus” despite practical limitations such as classroom setup with immovable chairs or time. While group work can be viewed positively in educational spaces, neoliberal colonial education prioritizes individual student success. In particular, neoliberal education conditions students to strongly pursue individual excellence and

ownership of knowledge under the guise of merit-based success rather than community-based or group learning (Brady, 2017). In Hall's (1996) discussion of the theoretical legacies of Cultural Studies, he describes "a different metaphor for theoretical work: the metaphor of struggle, of wrestling with the angels" (p. 265).

In the same way that Hall describes the foundations of Cultural Studies as a struggle with theory, I extend this discussion beyond theory to *practice*. I relate Hall's (1996) metaphor to what the faculty I interviewed have done when expanding their pedagogical practices. While Hall describes this idea of wrestling with theory with the scholars of Marxism, faculty today continue this struggle by navigating the systemic limitations of a neoliberal institution with their desire to do and teach more, especially in reaffirming the critical foundations of Cultural Studies.

The experiences shared by both faculty and students demonstrated this sense of grappling and contending with various forces to create and participate in academic spaces of learning and growing. Ultimately, the faculty members' desire to expand their pedagogical practices is also a reflection of their aspiration for change in the face of institutional challenges. Shared between critical race theory and IE, both frameworks are committed to not only understanding and documenting social structures, but enacting change (Gillborn, 2006; Smith & Griffith, 2022). Wrestling with theory can also be applied to the struggle with Cultural Studies itself as a field of study. Specifically, faculty members' desire to do more relates to applying an intersectional framework when teaching Cultural Studies to push back against its white, male-dominated academic history (Lee, 2020). Understanding this role of incorporating different, non-hegemonic perspectives is central to rejecting hierarchies in Cultural Studies history (Guimarães Corrêa,

2020). The notion of wrestling as part of the formation of Cultural Studies, both with theory and practice, continues to this date.

Impacts on Students Within and Beyond Cultural Studies Education

Even though students expressed mainly positive impacts in the interviews about their Cultural Studies education, I extend the data presented in the findings to illuminate how these sentiments are not absolute or unconditional. While significant research has proven the oppressive forces at play within higher education (Ahmed, 2012; Bunjun, 2021; Mohanty, 1989; Thobani, 2022), these findings were reaffirmed in my study. However, student reflections also revealed that these systemic issues permeate within Cultural Studies as well.

External Courses

Because many students fulfil their course requirements through courses outside of Cultural Studies, they are still exposed to a wide variety of pedagogical practices within the social sciences and humanities. For example, Student C described an experience in an Anthropology class:

I had a professor literally write the n word on the board one time as part of our discussion because one of the students brought it up. It was a linguistics course, so we were talking about how different groups of people use language differently, and one of the students used that as an example, how Black people use the n word and so she wrote it on the board, which I thought was kind of weird, and it was very nonchalant. And then we just moved on like nothing happened, which I know would not be the case in a Cultural Studies class.

This example is jarring, and the “nonchalant” nature of the interaction demonstrated how subtle, normalized, and ingrained racism truly is within academia (Ahmed, 2012). Racism permeates the

institution. Related to intersectionality, Patricia Hill Collins (2002) describes the matrix of domination as a historically created social organization where interlocking forms of oppression “originate, develop, and are contained” (p. 228). This system also clearly operates within higher education institutions. While Student C explained how they appreciated that Cultural Studies courses would not move on so quickly from this topic, this example shows how students must navigate various settings, within and outside Cultural Studies, throughout their degree. Student C was not the only participant who described instances like this one.

Uneven Course Experiences within Cultural Studies

While the former example takes place outside of Cultural Studies, not all courses are created equal even within the field. For example, Student B described their experience in a Cultural Studies course on posthumanism and animal rights. While the course discussed “connections with different oppressions,” there were also disturbing connections made to “the transatlantic slave trade” and white people criticizing Indigenous whaling practices (Student B). As the only Black student in the class, when Student B explained the harm of these comparisons, ask questions, or simply disagree, it became “like a class full of white people arguing with me.” The impact of this course was serious both in the short and long term. In the short term, after trying to explain why comparing animal treatment to slavery is “hurtful” and being argued with in the online class, Student B said that “I just started crying. I was so frustrated. I was so, so, so frustrated.” In the long term, Student B described how the draining nature of this course led to “a six-month long burnout” that negatively affected their grades in other courses.

As Stratton and Ang (1996) explain, “we must recognize, for starters, that the culture of cultural studies, too, is not exempt from power relations” (p. 361). Courses such as this one may cover critical topics. However, the reading materials, framing of arguments, and content can also

reinforce and reproduce harmful, racist tropes, particularly anti-Black and anti-Indigenous sentiment. These two factors can be true at once. The experiences emphasized in IE are demonstrated through the daily encounters that participants faced on the basis of race, class, and gender within an institutional setting that validates and legitimizes certain knowledge (Collins, 2002; Smith, 2006). Even within a critical department like Cultural Studies, pedagogy is uneven and racism and white supremacy are still present.

These two examples shared by students implore us to understand how Cultural Studies itself functions within a web constrained by the academic institution and other oppressive forces that shape pedagogical practice. While interview findings showed overwhelmingly positive responses to Cultural Studies courses taught by specific professors, there were also issues that impacted students in negative ways and caused them harm.

It is crucial to recognize that racialized students' experiences are not monolithic. While the three interviewed students self-identified as Black and/or people of colour, their experiences do not and cannot speak on behalf of all racialized students in Cultural Studies. Considering intersectionality, racist inequity and experiences are shaped by multiple other factors such as gender, nationality, dis/ability, and sexuality (Gillborn, 2015). In education, while class and/or gender play a significant role, race impacts students' experiences in specific and detailed ways (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). As Lorde (1983) explains, "there is no hierarchy of oppression" and it is paramount to resist multiple forms of oppression because of their connections (p. 9). In this regard, intersectionality emphasizes building coalitions for activism and advocacy rather than divisively viewing identity categories within the axes of oppression (Gillborn, 2015). While the experiences of racialized students differ in multiple ways based on their distinctive, unique

identities, the experiences shared also enable us to interrogate the systems of oppression that shape students' lives from numerous angles.

On a personal note, while my goal for this research was to focus on resistance and transformative pedagogies, racism is so pervasive within the institution that it could not be ignored. Despite my original aims, these topics naturally occurred in my conversations with racialized students who described their negative experiences in university alongside the positive. I included these stories here in my discussion in order to demonstrate that they function within larger conversations of power relationships within academic institutions (Ladson-Billings, 2021). Even though my student interview questions (Appendix B) did not specifically ask about experiences with racism, oppression, or discrimination within the context of higher education, these instances and examples still arose.

Limitations

There are three main limitations of this study that I identified: structurally about the program, related to the study context, and personally about bias.

Program Size and Faculty Identity

The first major limitation of this study is related to the small program size of the interviewed faculty members. Despite questions about identity during the interviews, I could not provide a discussion surrounding the race, gender, nationality, or other identity-related aspects of participants due to the small number of faculty members who fit my inclusion and exclusion criteria. As a researcher, I must first and foremost respect the confidentiality of participants. Therefore, while my study emphasized the impacts on racialized students in Cultural Studies, I could not provide similar insights on faculty members due to confidentiality. This limitation highlights not only the small size of the program, but also challenges with institutional hiring

practices over time. Despite recent efforts to hire diverse faculty members with expertise in a variety of subjects including media, environmental justice, and queer and trans theories (Faculty A), Faculty B explained how “you're hiring but you're within an entire system that is so tilted towards white candidates.” In line with Ahmed (2007), the institutional dominance of whiteness functions habitually, a bad habit that must be critiqued and consistently opposed.

Related to this limitation, while I could not directly analyze these effects, several questions emerged surrounding the ease of comfort in sharing and participating in qualitative research: who is speaking and how are they speaking? Who mentions that they will speak candidly and who hesitates to ensure that their words are clear? Who is aware of what they cannot or should not say? Who asks follow-up questions about how privacy and confidentiality will be accounted for? These types of questions caused me to think critically about white academics' ability to share stories and information with ease and without fear of potential ramifications. I believe that this is due not only to race, but also tenured status within the institution.

In future research, it will be important to extend my study's discussion of racialized students' experiences to also include the impact of teaching practices on Cultural Studies faculty members. It will be crucial to investigate racialized faculty members' experiences (in addition to students) within Cultural Studies because of the subject matter around power relations. Even though the power dynamics are different with faculty, Cultural Studies was revealed to be deeply personal for students and this concept should be investigated for faculty as well. For example, it will be important to consider how faculty members' positionality impacts their efforts in teaching topics related to power relationships, identity, representation, and oppression. Eizadirad and Campbell (2021) share their experiences as racialized faculty members in Canada who

experienced microaggressions from a variety of groups, including colleagues, students, administrators, and community members when teaching about white supremacy, anti-Black racism, and other equity-related topics. This discussion should be extended to Cultural Studies.

As explained by Mohamed and Beagan (2019), in Canada, faculty experiences on race and racism are under researched. The forces of everyday racism, institutional and epistemological racism, and neoliberalism “entrench a toxic culture in which racism is subsumed into normalized practices and performance measures” (Mohamed & Beagan, 2019, p. 339). This context creates intense demands on racialized and Indigenous faculty in Canada (Mohamed & Beagan, 2019). These impacts should be further explored in Cultural Studies. Both students and teachers are “exhausted from navigating white, ableist, heteropatriarchal spaces in and outside the university” (Borges, 2022). While these discussions are taking place in other areas of higher educational institutions, they have not yet been discussed within Cultural Studies.

Study Context and Setting

My research focuses on one university in Canada with its own unique creation as a Cultural Studies program. Because the 2008 emergence of the Cultural Studies program at UBCO began with the creation of a new UBC campus and institution itself in 2005, opportunities existed to create new, critical courses “with very little pushback” (Faculty A). However, as Faculty A also mentioned:

As an academic discipline, I think one of the reasons it hasn't really established itself in Canada ... and it doesn't necessarily have a strong presence as a discipline internationally ... it kind of resists disciplinary frameworks, which has been I think in certain ways a benefit, but also ways that's a real detriment to it kind of growing.

Cultural Studies is so niche, differently interpreted around the country (and world), and can be considered as Faculty A describes, a “transdiscipline or a multidiscipline.” Therefore, it is a challenging subject area to investigate. However, although this is a challenge, Ang (2020) also explained how the “lack of fixed topical boundaries” adds to the agility of Cultural Studies and its ability to engage with emerging world phenomena related to culture and power (p. 287).

While specific to this setting and program at UBCO, this study provides insights into the *how* and *why* of engaged, critical pedagogy as well as the impacts of pedagogy on racialized students. In future research, it will be important to understand how the critical foundations of Cultural Studies relate to other Cultural Studies departments across Canada. It will also be important to consider how these programs are related and institutionally connected to various departments such as English, Gender and Women’s Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Indigenous Studies, and other fields despite Cultural Studies’ unique critical approach.

Researcher Positionality and Bias

Lastly, because I completed my undergraduate degree in the same Cultural Studies program featured in my study, I had to take extra careful consideration during each stage of the research process to be mindful of my own potential biases. Before beginning my study, I consulted with not only the McGill Research Ethics Board, but also shared all my study details with the UBCO Behavioural Research Ethics Board. I communicated openly and clearly with all prospective interview participants about my past involvement in the program, providing this context both in the recruitment letter and at the start of the virtual interviews. Additionally, I made an extra effort during the coding, analysis, and writing stages to look at the data presented in the interviews and not conflate any of my experiences with the ones presented. This was particularly the case for when I was considering students’ stories. Even though my work

presented the data collected in this study rather than any of my personal experiences in Cultural Studies, it is also important to note that “institutional ethnography works reflexively; there is no other way for inquiry to proceed except from where the explorer is located. As with all research, the researcher’s interest guides their science” (Smith & Griffith, 2022, p. 78). While it is impossible to ignore my own experiences as a racialized student previously in Cultural Studies, I was continuously aware of this limitation and made efforts to mitigate any potential influences.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Returning to the Research Questions

This study asked two research questions: 1) How do university faculty members use engaged, critical pedagogical practices to disrupt institutional hierarchies in Cultural Studies? 2) What impacts do these approaches have on students who self-identify as Indigenous, Black, or a person of colour? These questions guided my study from start to finish; I wrote the research questions at the top of my interview guide, notes, and all subsequent documents when completing my analysis. This strategy helped me to focus my work and stay connected to the core of my research.

At the beginning of this conclusion chapter, I return to the research questions and revisit how and why they were answered as well as add additional reflections.

Question 1

The first research question emphasized exploring the ways faculty members use specific practices to disrupt institutional hierarchies within Cultural Studies. The answers to this question relied heavily on the faculty responses surrounding the rationale behind their pedagogical decisions and their personal goals for teaching amid their understanding of Cultural Studies as an academic field. The engaged and critical pedagogical techniques employed by faculty demonstrated their ability to counter dominant racist, colonial, ableist, and cisheteropatriarchal norms within Canadian academic institutions. These strategies were shown through creative assignments, syllabi design, and community-based work as well as their emphasis on classroom practices such as empowering students as active participants in discussions. While these practices were not isolated from institutional challenges, faculty members aimed to continue

pushing the established normative boundaries to not only use these practices, but to enhance them.

Question 2

The second research question was primarily concerned with the effects and impact of faculty members' practices on students who self-identify as Indigenous, Black, or people of colour. Student responses revealed the overall positive impact of practices employed by all three faculty members interviewed in this study. Students were impacted not only academically to continue thinking about and working on topics central to Cultural Studies, but they were also deeply impacted in personal ways by the pedagogical choices. While students mainly described the positive, beneficial, thought-provoking, and encouraging elements of critical, engaged pedagogy in Cultural Studies, one student's reflections also revealed how these impacts were not absolute across the field. Due to the true pervasiveness of oppressive forces in academia, students are still subjected to racism and colonialism, even within Cultural Studies. It is important to note that while this research question aimed to include Indigenous students, I did not interview any student who self-identified as Indigenous. When recruiting students for the study, I did not have any Indigenous students email me with an interest in participating. I am also not aware of the number or composition of students who met my inclusion and exclusion criteria within Cultural Studies, so I do not know if there are any Indigenous students who fit my criteria.

Summary

When faculty members in Cultural Studies use engaged, critical pedagogy, these practices reverberate through students and the institution. Remembering the critical roots of Cultural Studies and its male and white-dominated emergence (Grossberg, 1994; Hall, 1992), it

is crucial to connect these foundations to feminist perspectives and engaged pedagogy (Ahmed, 2012; hooks, 1994; Mohanty, 1989). The context of pedagogy in Canada and Canadian academic institutions was also explored because of my study's geographical focus (Rowe & Tuck, 2017; Thobani, 2022). Due to the second research question's focus on students in Cultural Studies, student experiences were examined from the literature (Bunjun, 2021; Motta, 2013). Even with important previous research, significant gaps exist within Cultural Studies in Canada and the field's connection to engaged pedagogy and critical teaching practices.

This study explored the connection between faculty practices and student experiences at the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO) campus through semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted virtually with three Cultural Studies faculty members and three students who self-identified as Black, Indigenous, or a person of colour.

The findings of this study included describing Cultural Studies itself as focused on critical thinking, power relations, identity, and representation. The rationale of faculty practices included viewing students as active participants and recognizing that learning happens both within and beyond the space of the physical classroom. Specific pedagogical practices included creative assignments, community-based projects, class discussions, and choices about syllabi design. These practices uniquely impacted students in meaningful and positive ways due to their racialized identity. Research findings revealed larger discussions about how faculty practices stem from a personal sense of care and well-being for themselves and their students, which resists institutional neoliberal practices. Considering these institutional norms and constraints, implementing engaged, critical pedagogy is challenging even though faculty members have a strong desire to do even more through their teaching. Despite the positive impacts on students in

many courses in the department, students still faced racism and harmful teaching experiences in courses both within and outside Cultural Studies.

Implications and Future Considerations

Overall, the implications of this research are that teaching practices have the potential to change the life trajectory of students. Due to both content and methods of teaching, faculty members inspire students to continue thinking critically about topics related to Cultural Studies through their future academic and professional pursuits. The three student participants shared how they will think more specifically, critically, openly, and creatively in their future work. While these experiences are specific to this context at UBCO, it will be important in the future to understand how Cultural Studies programs compare (and contrast) across Canada. It will also be important to consider if and how the specific strategies employed by faculty members at UBCO could be implemented within other courses in the social sciences, humanities, and potentially beyond. As a part of the feminist future of Cultural Studies, this research on pedagogy must take a multitiered approach to resist the oppressive function of the institution (Ali, 2020).

Another important future consideration will be to understand how engaged, critical pedagogy merges with the digital realm. Multiple faculty members and students mentioned the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their educational experiences, which cannot be overlooked. The pandemic provided an opportunity to think within precarious circumstances and opened potential pathways for shaping future research in Cultural Studies (Stephens et al., 2020). This future work would connect to studies exploring online classrooms through the lens of embodied feminist pedagogy (Dhala & Johnson, 2021) and collaborative, networked learning (Sobko et al., 2020). Couldry (2020) also argues that we must reinvent and re-understand Cultural Studies by considering not only the institutional and cultural, but also the sociotechnical

factors that face society. The role of digital technology in technological and pedagogical transformations within the university, including Cultural Studies, must be examined (Goggin, 2012). Despite potential constraints around knowledge sharing and surveillance, digital spaces present opportunities for change and new possibilities for critical, engaged pedagogy.

Lastly, I want to reemphasize my research's main goal to not reproduce work that has already proven that oppression thrives in academic institutions (Ahmed, 2007; Bunjun, 2021; Dei, 2005; Thobani, 2022). The findings and discussion of this study distinctly point to positive openings and further work that can change the landscape of Cultural Studies education in Canada despite institutional constraints. Resistance, transformation, and change are of the highest importance; they have been possible, are possible, and will remain possible. To summarize the hope and mindset that is needed to imagine that another world is possible, I turn to the words of Harsha Walia (2013), who explains:

I think the notion of dreaming in a time where we are told that it is foolish, futile or not useful is one of the most revolutionary things we can do. To have our lives determined by our dreams of a free world--instead of reactions to a state-imposed reality--is one of the most powerful tools of decolonization. (p. 112)

Considering the research objectives to explore the connections between pedagogy, Cultural Studies, and personal experiences in higher education, this study has presented new insights into the everyday realities of both faculty members and students. This study connected theory, faculty experiences, and student experiences as a starting point for additional research on pedagogy in Cultural Studies. Filling in the gaps within the field on pedagogical practices in Cultural Studies, research findings demonstrated how both faculty and students create opportunities for resistance within academic institutions in Canada. Through knowledge building activities, creatively

critical pedagogical endeavours, and impacting people's personal lives, teachers and learners within Cultural Studies create openings for change. These openings are points of possibility and resistance both within and outside the classroom. Ultimately, through engaged, critical pedagogy, faculty members in Cultural Studies have the potential to not only transform student lives, but the landscape of learning in higher education.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2007). A phenomenology of whiteness. *Feminist Theory*, 8(2), 149–168.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700107078139>
- Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Duke University Press.
- Ahmed, S. (2017). *Living a feminist life*. Duke University Press.
- Alexander, M. J., & Mohanty, C. T. (2010). Cartographies of knowledge and power: Transnational feminism as radical praxis. In A. L. Swarr & R. Nagar (Eds.), *Critical transnational feminist praxis* (pp. 23–45). SUNY Press.
- Ali, I. (2020). The feminist futures of cultural studies. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 17(1), 62–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1725583>
- Amsler, S. (2013). Criticality, pedagogy and the promises of radical democratic education. In S. Cowden & G. Singh (Eds.), *Acts of knowing: Critical pedagogy in, against, and beyond the university* (pp. 61–84). Bloomsbury Publishing.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472552747.ch-003>
- Ang, I. (2020). On cultural studies, again. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23(3), 285–291. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877919891732>
- âpihtawikosisân. (2016, September 23). *Beyond territorial acknowledgements*.
<https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/>
- Au, A. (2022). A Black feminist approach to antiracist qualitative research methods: Commemorating the legacy of bell hooks. *Current Sociology*, 1–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00113921221146583>

- Bakan, A. B., & Dua, E (Eds.). (2014). *Theorizing anti-racism: Linkages in Marxism and critical race theories*. University of Toronto Press.
- Bennett, R., Uink, B., & Martin, G. (2022). Cultural studies and critical allyship in the settler colonial academe. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 36(5), 723–739. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2022.2049213>
- Beyer, L. E. (2001). The value of critical perspectives in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(2), 151–163. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487101052002006>
- Borges, S. (2022). Trickle-up pedagogy and queer healing: Navigating historical trauma in the neoliberal university. *Feminist Formations*, 34(2), 197–213. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ff.2022.0028>
- Brady, J. (2017). Education for whom? Exploring systems of oppression and domination. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education*, 8(1), 116–126.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589–597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>
- Bunjun, B. (Ed.). (2021). Centring the academic well-being of racialized students. *Academic well-being of racialized students* (pp. 2–30). Fernwood Publishing.
- Byrd, J. A. (2009). In the city of blinding lights: Indigeneity, cultural studies and the errants of colonial nostalgia. *Cultural Studies Review*, 15(2), 13–28.
- Campbell, A. B., & Eizadirad, A. (2022). Cultivating brave spaces to take risks to challenge systemic oppression. In A. Eizadirad, A. B. Campbell, & S. Sider (Eds.),

- Counternarratives of pain and suffering as critical pedagogy: Disrupting oppression in educational contexts* (pp. 19–37). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003205296>
- Campbell, M. L., & Gregor, F. M. (2002). *Mapping social relations: A primer in doing institutional ethnography*. Garamond Press.
- Chesler, M. A. (2013). The state of research with faculty identities in higher educational classrooms and institutional contexts. In M. A. Chesler & A. A. Young Jr. (Eds.), *Faculty identities and the challenge of diversity: Reflections on teaching in higher education* (pp. 1–19). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315634685>
- Collins, P. H. (2002). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Collins, P. H. (2015). Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41, 1–20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24807587>
- Couldry, N. (2020). Cultural studies can we / should we reinvent it? *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23(3), 292–297. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877919891733>
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Danowitz, M. A., & Tuitt, F. (2011). Enacting inclusivity through engaged pedagogy: A higher education perspective. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 44(1), 40–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2011.539474>
- Dei, G. S. (2005). Racism in Canadian contexts: Exploring public & private issues in the educational system. In W. J. Tettey & K. P. Puplampu (Eds.), *The African diaspora in Canada: Negotiating identity and belonging* (pp. 93–110). University of Calgary Press.

- Dei, G. S. (2016). Decolonizing the university: The challenges and possibilities of inclusive education. *Socialist Studies*, 11(1), 23–61. <https://doi.org/10.18740/S4WW31>
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York University Press.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J (Eds.). (2013). *Critical race theory: The cutting edge* (3rd ed.). Temple University Press.
- Desmond, W. (2021). My long search for safe spaces for Black learners. In B. Bunjun (Ed.), *Academic well-being of racialized students* (pp. 75–78). Fernwood Publishing.
- Dhala, M., & Johnson, S. (2021). Taking bell hooks on zoom: Embodying feminist pedagogy in a graduate theological classroom. *Teaching Theology & Religion*, 24(3), 165–174. <https://doi.org/10.1111/teth.12593>
- Douglas, D. D. (2022). Access denied: Safe/guarding the university as white property. In S. Thobani (Ed.), *Coloniality and racial (in)justice in the university: Counting for nothing?* (pp. 245–265). University of Toronto Press.
- Dua, E., & Bhanji, N. (2017). Shifting terrains: A picture of the institutionalization of equity in Canadian universities. In F. Henry, E. Dua, C. E. James, A. Kobayashi, P. Li, H. Ramos, & M. S. Smith (Eds.), *The equity myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian universities* (pp. 171–205). UBC Press.
- Duhaney, P., Lorenzetti, L., Kusari, K., & Han, E. (2022). Advancing critical race pedagogical approaches in social work education. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 31(3-5), 151–161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2022.2070898>

Earles, J., & Crawley, S. L., (2019). Institutional ethnography. In P. Atkinson, S. Delamont, A.

Cernat, J. W. Sakshaug, & R. A. Williams (Eds.), *SAGE research methods foundations*.

<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526421036759274>

Eizadirad, A., & Campbell, A. (2021). Visibilizing our pain and wounds as resistance and

activist pedagogy to heal and hope: Reflections of 2 racialized professors. *Diaspora,*

Indigenous, and Minority Education, 15(4), 241–251.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2021.1937600>

Flores, J., & Alfaro, A. R. (2022). Critical pedagogy: Loving and caring within and beyond the

classroom. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 52(3), 385–396.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2022.2072665>

Freire, P. (2018). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. (M. B. Ramos, Trans., 50th anniversary ed.).

Bloomsbury Academic. (Original work published 1968)

Garlitz, D., & Zompetti, J. (2023) Critical theory as post-Marxism: The Frankfurt school and

beyond. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 55(2), 141–148.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2021.1876669>

Gillborn, D. (2006). Critical race theory and education: Racism and anti-racism in educational

theory and praxis. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 27(1), 11–32.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300500510229>

Gillborn, D. (2015). Intersectionality, critical race theory, and the primacy of racism: Race, class,

gender, and disability in education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 21(3), 277–287.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414557827>

Giroux, H. A., Lankshear, C., McLaren, P., & Peters, M. (1996). *Counternarratives: Cultural studies and critical pedagogies in postmodern spaces*. Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203699102>

Goggin, G. (2012). Borderlands or enclosures? Technology, the university, and cultural studies. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 34(1-2), 8–22.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2011.643727>

Green, B., & Hickey, A. (2022). Cultural studies and education: A dialogue of ‘disciplines’? *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 36(5), 631–643.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2022.2083583>

Grossberg, L. (1994). Introduction: Bringin’ it all back home - pedagogy and cultural studies. In H. Giroux & P. McLaren (Eds.), *Between borders: Pedagogy and the politics of cultural studies* (pp. 1–25). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315021539>

Guimarães Corrêa, L. (2020). Intersectionality: A challenge for cultural studies in the 2020s. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23(6), 823–832.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877920944181>

Hall, S. (1992). Race, culture, and communications: Looking backward and forward at cultural studies. *Rethinking Marxism*, 5(1), 10–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08935699208657998>

Hall, S. (1996). Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies. In K-H Chen & D. Morley (Eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies* (pp. 261-274). Routledge. (Reprinted from *Cultural studies*, pp. 277-286, by L. Grossberg, C. Nelson, & P. Treichler, Eds., 1992, Routledge)

Hall, S. (2016). The formation of cultural studies. In J. D. Slack & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Cultural studies 1983: A theoretical history* (pp. 5–24). Duke University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822373650>

Haritaworn, J. (2022). Dreaming big in small spaces: Prefiguring change in the racial university
In S. Thobani (Ed.), *Coloniality and racial (in)justice in the university: Counting for nothing?* (pp. 387–402). University of Toronto Press.

Harris, J. C., & Patton, L. D. (2019). Un/doing intersectionality through higher education research. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 90(3), 347–372.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2018.1536936>

Henry, F., & Kobayashi, A. (2017). The everyday world of racialized and Indigenous faculty members in Canadian universities. In F. Henry, E. Dua, C. E. James, A. Kobayashi, P. Li, H. Ramos, & M. S. Smith (Eds.), *The equity myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian universities* (pp. 115–154). UBC Press.

Hickey, A., & Johnson, L. (2022). The location of cultural studies: a contextually contingent account of cultural studies' praxis. *Continuum*, 36(5), 740–750.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2022.2071838>

His Highness the Aga Khan. (2008). *Inaugural ceremony of the delegation of the Ismaili Imam, Ottawa* [Speech transcript]. Aga Khan Development Network.

<https://the.akdn/en/resources-media/resources/speeches/inaugural-ceremony-delegation-ismaili-imamat-ottawa-his-highness-the-aga-khan>

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.

hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. Routledge.

hooks, b. (2010). *Teaching critical thinking: Practical wisdom*. Routledge.

Johnson, R. (1986). What is cultural studies anyway? *Social Text*, 16, 38–80.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/466285>

Johnson, M., & Joseph, R. L. (2020). Black cultural studies is intersectionality. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23(6), 833–839. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877920953158>

Keeling, K. (2014). Critical theory and popular education. *Cultural Studies*, 28(4), 676–689.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2014.902264>

Kellner, D. (2021). Cultural Marxism, British cultural studies, and the reconstruction of education, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 1–13

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2021.1926982>

Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). Critical race theory—What it is not! In M. Lynn & A. D. Dixon (Eds.), *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (2nd ed., pp. 32–43). Routledge.

<http://doi.org/10.4324/9781351032223-5>

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146819509700104>

Lawrence, M. (2015). Beyond the neoliberal imaginary: Investigating the role of critical pedagogy in higher education. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 13(2), 246–286. <http://www.jceps.com/archives/2648>

Lee, R. (2020). Politics of identity and difference in cultural studies. In P. P. Trifonas (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research in cultural studies and education*. Springer.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-56988-8_26

Light, T. P., Nicholas, J., & Bondy, R (Eds.). (2015). *Feminist pedagogy in higher education: Critical theory and practice*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

- Lorde, A. (1983). There is no hierarchy of oppressions. *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin: Homophobia and Education*, 14(3-4), 9.
- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Crossing Press.
- Malachowski, C., Skorobohacz, C., & Stasiulis, E. (2017). Institutional ethnography as a method of inquiry: A scoping review. *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 13(4), 84–121.
<https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.13.4.04>
- Martinez, T. A. (1999). Storytelling as oppositional culture: Race, class, and gender in the borderlands. *Race, Gender & Class*, 6(3), 33–51. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41674894>
- Mayo, P. (2013). *Echoes from Freire for a critically engaged pedagogy*. Bloomsbury Academic & Professional.
- McArthur, J. (2022). Critical theory in a decolonial age. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 54(10), 1681–1692. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2021.1934670>
- McCoy, L. (2006). Keeping the institution in view: Working with interview accounts of everyday experience. In D. E. Smith (Ed.), *Institutional ethnography as practice* (pp. 109-125). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- McRobbie, A. (2005). *The uses of cultural studies: A textbook*. SAGE.
- Mills, K. A., & Unsworth, L. (2018). The multimodal construction of race: A review of critical race theory research. *Language and Education*, 32(4), 313–332.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2018.1434787>
- Mohamed, T., & Beagan, B. L. (2019). ‘Strange faces’ in the academy: Experiences of racialized and Indigenous faculty in Canadian universities. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 22(3), 338–354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2018.1511532>

- Mohanty, C. T. (1989). On race and voice: Challenges for liberal education in the 1990s. *Cultural Critique*, 14, 179–208. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1354297>
- Motta, S. C. (2013). Pedagogies of possibility: In, against, and beyond the imperial patriarchal subjectivities of higher education. In S. Cowden & G. Singh (Eds.), *Acts of knowing: Critical pedagogy in, against, and beyond the university* (pp. 85–107). Bloomsbury Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472552747.ch-004>
- Ramos, F., & Roberts, L. (2021). Wonder as feminist pedagogy: Disrupting feminist complicity with coloniality. *Feminist Review*, 128(1), 28–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01417789211013702>
- Razack, S. H. (1993). Teaching activists for social change: Coming to grips with questions of subjectivity and domination. *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education* 7(2), 43–56. <https://cjsae.library.dal.ca/index.php/cjsae/article/view/2230>
- Riesmann, C. K. (Ed.). (2008). Constructing narratives for inquiry. *Narrative methods for the human sciences* (pp. 21–51). SAGE Publications.
- Roberts, P. (2015). Paulo Freire and utopian education. *Review of Education, Pedagogy & Cultural Studies*, 37(5), 376–392. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2015.1091256>
- Rowe, A. C., & Tuck, E. (2017). Settler colonialism and cultural studies: Ongoing settlement, cultural production, and resistance. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 17(1), 3–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708616653693>
- Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. Oxford University Press.
- Samant, J. C. (2021). Towards healing: Lessons in surviving academia from a queer, brown femme. In B. Bunjun (Ed.), *Academic well-being of racialized students* (pp. 131–149). Fernwood Publishing.

- Savas, G. (2014). Understanding critical race theory as a framework in higher educational research. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 35(4), 506–522.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2013.777211>
- Seal, M., & Smith, A. (2021). *Enabling critical pedagogy in higher education*. Critical Publishing.
- Simpson, A. (2022). The state is a man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders, and the gender of settler sovereignty. In S. Thobani (Ed.), *Coloniality and racial (in)justice in the university: Counting for nothing?* (pp. 135–162). University of Toronto Press.
- Simpson, L. B. (2016). Indigenous resurgence and co-resistance. *Critical Ethnic Studies*, 2(2), 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.5749/jcritethnstud.2.2.0019>
- Smith, D. E. (2005). *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people*. AltaMira Press.
- Smith, D. E. (Ed.). (2006). *Institutional ethnography as practice*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Smith, D. E., & Griffith, A. I. (2022). *Simply institutional ethnography: Creating a sociology for people*. University of Toronto Press.
- Sobko, S., Unadkat, D., Adams, J., & Hull, G. (2020). Learning through collaboration: A networked approach to online pedagogy. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 17(1), 36–55.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2042753019882562>
- Spade, D. (2015). *Normal life: Administrative violence, critical trans politics, and the limits of law* (Revised and expanded ed.). Duke University Press.
- Spooner, M. (2015, August 12). *Eve Tuck biting the hand that feeds you* [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXEEzqIjA3I>

Stratton, J., & Ang, I. (1996). On the impossibility of a global cultural studies: 'British' cultural studies in an 'international' frame. In K-H Chen & D. Morley (Eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies* (pp. 360–392). Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203993262>

Steinberg, S. R. (2012). Critical pedagogy and cultural studies research: Bricolage in action. *Counterpoints*, 422, 230–254. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42981761>

Stephens, E., Sellberg, K., & Donaghy, P. (2020). Precarious futures: Cultural studies in pandemic times. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 34(6), 807–815. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2020.1842120>

Tang, S., & Cornell, C. (2021). Teaching gender and cultural studies in Australia as part of Asia: Reflections on classroom politics and pedagogies. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 42(4), 394–405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2021.1939274>

Tate, W. F. (1997). Critical race theory and education: History, theory, and implications. *Review of Research in Education*, 22, 195–247. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1167376>

Terry, G., & Hayfield, N. (2020). Reflexive thematic analysis. In M. R. M. Ward & S. Delamont (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research in education* (2nd ed., pp. 430–441). Edward Elgar Publishing.

The University of British Columbia (n.d.-a). *Cultural studies*. Retrieved July 4, 2023, from https://you.ubc.ca/ubc_programs/cultural-studies/

The University of British Columbia (n.d.-b). *Major in cultural studies*. Retrieved March 18, 2024, from <https://fccs.ok.ubc.ca/student-resources/undergraduate-academic-planning/major-cultural-studies/>

- Thobani, S. (Ed.). (2022). Introduction: Present pasts: The anxieties of power. In *Coloniality and racial (in)justice in the university: Counting for nothing?* (pp. 3–46). University of Toronto Press.
- Thompson, K. (2001). Cultural studies, critical theory and cultural governance. *International Sociology*, 16(4), 593–606.
- Vaandering, D. (2010). The significance of critical theory for restorative justice in education. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 32(2), 145–176.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714411003799165>
- Walby, K. (2013). Institutional ethnography and data analysis: Making sense of data dialogues. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 16(2), 141–154.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2012.661207>
- Walia, H. (2013). *Undoing border imperialism*. AK Press.
- Weiler, K. (Ed.). (2001). *Feminist engagements: Reading, resisting, and revisioning male theorists in education and cultural studies*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203902653>
- Weiner, E. J. (2003). Beyond doing cultural studies: Toward a cultural studies of critical pedagogy. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 25(1), 55–73.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714410309614>
- Yosso, T. J. & Solórzano, D. G. (2005). Conceptualizing a critical race theory in sociology. In M. Romero & E. Margolis (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social inequalities* (pp. 117–146). Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470996973.ch7>

Appendix A: Faculty Interview Guide

Theme 1: Background

1. Please tell me about yourself, specifically about your identity/positionality (e.g., gender, race, nationality, etc.).
2. What is your educational background?
3. How long have you been teaching in Cultural Studies and at the University of British Columbia Okanagan campus?
4. How do you understand Cultural Studies as an academic discipline? Does this impact your teaching strategies?
5. Who has informed, inspired, or impacted your teaching style (both academic and non-scholarly)?

Theme 2: Specific Teaching Practices

6. What does engaged, critical pedagogy mean to you?
7. How would you describe your teaching practices?
8. What are your main goals when designing the curriculum and syllabus for your class(es)?
9. What is the structure of a typical class like for you?
10. Beyond written exams, what types of assignments and/or projects do students complete for evaluation in your classes?
11. Why do you make these choices? Have they changed over time?
12. What types of feedback have you received from students about these practices?

Appendix B: Student Interview Guide

Theme 1: Background

1. Please tell me about yourself, specifically about your identity/positionality (e.g., gender, race, nationality, etc.).
2. What is your educational background? What year are you in? Are you majoring in Cultural Studies?
3. Based on your experience so far, how do you understand Cultural Studies as an academic discipline?

Theme 2: Learning Experiences

4. What is the structure of a typical class like for you?
5. What types of assignments and/or projects have you completed for evaluation in your Cultural Studies classes (with instructor x)?
6. Have you noticed anything unique about the teaching (e.g. syllabus, teaching methods, type of work assigned) compared to your other, non-Cultural Studies courses?
 - a. Did you appreciate any of these differences?
7. What are some of the most major things you've learned in your Cultural Studies courses?

Theme 3: Impact

8. Have you found anything in your classes challenging or uncomfortable?
9. How have your Cultural Studies courses affected you - personally, professionally, and academically? Why?
10. Have these courses or teaching practices changed your future plans in any way? If so, how?

Appendix C: Faculty Consent Form



Department of
Integrated Studies
in Education

Département
d'études intégrées en
sciences de l'éducation

Faculty Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: Engaged Encounters: The Role of Critical Pedagogy and Impact on Racialized Students in Cultural Studies

Researcher:

Safeera Jaffer, Master of Arts Student
McGill University, Department of Integrated Studies in Education
safeera.jaffer@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Nanre Nafziger, Assistant Professor
McGill University, Department of Integrated Studies in Education
nanre.nafziger@mcgill.ca

The following information is provided to tell you about this research project and your potential involvement in it. Please read this form carefully and feel free to ask any questions you may have about this study and the information given below. You can reach the student researcher at any time (contact information above), and your questions will be answered. Also, you will be given a copy of this consent form. This letter describes what we will do in the research.

Sponsor(s): Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

Purpose of the Study: This research study aims to understand the ways that critical, engaged pedagogy can be creatively utilized within an academic institution. A major challenge of higher education in Canada is that curricula are influenced by capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism, and racism, but Cultural Studies provides a unique opportunity to disrupt these norms. Therefore, we must understand how the university classroom functions as a space for resisting dominant ideologies and institutionally privileged voices within Cultural Studies education. Engaged approaches may uniquely impact the life trajectory of racialized students, and this study will explore these potential effects.

Study Procedures: This research will take place through virtual semi-structured interviews using the McGill University Microsoft Teams platform. Interviews should be conducted in private spaces for both the interviewer and interviewee. The duration of the interview will be approximately one hour in length. The interviews will be audio-recorded solely for the purposes of analysis for this research. You are not required to participate by video; therefore, you may leave your camera off if you wish. You may also be requested to provide de-identified course syllabi to the researcher for the purpose of analysis as related to findings during the interview; please note that this is voluntary.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may decline to answer any question(s) and may withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw consent at any stage, your data will be promptly destroyed, unless you give permission otherwise. If you choose to withdraw before completing the study, all information obtained up until that point will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise. However, once the data has been combined for publication, it

may not be possible to withdraw the data in its entirety. We can only remove it from analysis and from use in future publications. The data will be de-identified in seven years, after which time we will no longer be able to link the data with you. Study materials such as consent forms, recordings, interview transcripts, and any course syllabi provided by participants will be kept for seven years upon completion. After seven years, these materials will be destroyed.

Potential Risks: There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Potential Benefits: Participating in this study will allow you to reflect on your teaching/learning experiences and gain additional insight on critical, engaged pedagogy in Cultural Studies. Because Cultural Studies is an understudied, emerging discipline in Canada, this research will also be beneficial for the field's understanding of its teaching practices, both within and beyond the context of the UBC Okanagan Cultural Studies program.

Compensation: Compensation is not provided to faculty participants for this research study.

Confidentiality: The collected information will include personal information such as names, course information, student/faculty status and level, information about your identity/positionality (e.g., race, gender, nationality, etc.). The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. However, all of this data will be kept confidential and coded to remove any personal identifiers. The information collected during interviews will solely be used for the purpose of analysis by the researcher, and only the researcher and supervisor will have access. Data will be securely kept on an external hard drive and laptop for 7 years with both the files/folders and devices password protected.

Dissemination of Results: Results will be disseminated in a Master's thesis and potentially for academic presentations and publications. Results can also be provided to participants upon request.

Questions: If you have any questions or concerns about the research study, please contact Safeera Jaffer (safeera.jaffer@mail.mcgill.ca) or Dr. Nanre Nafziger (nanre.nafziger@mcgill.ca). If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the Associate Director, Research Ethics at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca citing REB file number 23-02-059.

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. To ensure the study is being conducted properly, authorized individuals, such as a member of the Research Ethics Board, may have access to your information. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Student Consent Form



Student Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: Engaged Encounters: The Role of Critical Pedagogy and Impact on Racialized Students in Cultural Studies

Researcher:

Safeera Jaffer, Master of Arts Student
 McGill University, Department of Integrated Studies in Education
 safeera.jaffer@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Nanre Nafziger, Assistant Professor
 McGill University, Department of Integrated Studies in Education
 nanre.nafziger@mcgill.ca

The following information is provided to tell you about this research project and your potential involvement in it. Please read this form carefully and feel free to ask any questions you may have about this study and the information given below. You can reach the student researcher at any time (contact information above), and your questions will be answered. Also, you will be given a copy of this consent form. This letter describes what we will do in the research.

Sponsor(s): Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

Purpose of the Study: This research study aims to understand the ways that critical, engaged pedagogy can be creatively utilized within an academic institution. A major challenge of higher education in Canada is that curricula are influenced by capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism, and racism, but Cultural Studies provides a unique opportunity to disrupt these norms. Therefore, we must understand how the university classroom functions as a space for resisting dominant ideologies and institutionally privileged voices within Cultural Studies education. Engaged approaches may uniquely impact the life trajectory of racialized students, and this study will explore these potential effects.

Study Procedures: This research will take place through virtual semi-structured interviews using the McGill University Microsoft Teams platform. Interviews should be conducted in private spaces for both the interviewer and interviewee. The duration of the interview will be approximately one hour in length. The interviews will be audio-recorded solely for the purposes of analysis for this research. You are not required to participate by video; therefore, you may leave your camera off if you wish. You may also be requested to provide de-identified completed coursework to the researcher for the purpose of analysis as related to findings during the interview; please note that this is voluntary.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may decline to answer any question(s) and may withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw consent at any stage, your data will be promptly destroyed, unless you give permission otherwise. If you choose to withdraw before completing the study, all information obtained up until that point will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise. However, once the data has been combined for publication, it

may not be possible to withdraw the data in its entirety. We can only remove it from analysis and from use in future publications. The data will be de-identified in seven years, after which time we will no longer be able to link the data with you. Study materials such as consent forms, recordings, interview transcripts, and any course assignments provided by participants will be kept for seven years upon completion. After seven years, these materials will be destroyed.

Potential Risks: There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Potential Benefits: Participating in this study will allow you to reflect on your teaching/learning experiences and gain additional insight on critical, engaged pedagogy in Cultural Studies. Because Cultural Studies is an understudied, emerging discipline in Canada, this research will also be beneficial for the field's understanding of its teaching practices, both within and beyond the context of the UBC Okanagan Cultural Studies program.

Compensation: Compensation of 20 CAD in the form of an electronic gift card is provided to student participants after completing the interview.

Confidentiality: The collected information will include personal information such as names, course information, student/faculty status and level, information about your identity/positionality (e.g., race, gender, nationality, etc.). The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. However, all of this data will be kept confidential and coded to remove any personal identifiers. The information collected during interviews will solely be used for the purpose of analysis by the researcher, and only the researcher and supervisor will have access. Data will be securely kept on an external hard drive and laptop for 7 years with both the files/folders and devices password protected.

Dissemination of Results: Results will be disseminated in a Master's thesis and potentially for academic presentations and publications. Results can also be provided to participants upon request.

Questions: If you have any questions or concerns about the research study, please contact Safeera Jaffer (safeera.jaffer@mail.mcgill.ca) or Dr. Nanre Nafziger (nanre.nafziger@mcgill.ca). If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the Associate Director, Research Ethics at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca citing REB file number 23-02-059.

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. To ensure the study is being conducted properly, authorized individuals, such as a member of the Research Ethics Board, may have access to your information. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____