Teaching Journalism & Mass Communication | A journal published by the AEJMC Small Programs Interest Group

Vol. 12, no. 1 (2022), pp. 36–25 http://www.aejmc.us/spig/journal

Empowering Students Through Intersectional Critical Communication Pedagogy

Nathian Shae Rodriguez
San Diego State University

Abstract:

The study examines critical and discursive pedagogical strategies that can be utilized in media and/or communication courses to integrate intersectional critical communication pedagogy in direct response to systemic issues of oppression, power, and hegemony in the communication discipline. Employing a qualitative panel survey with 14 instructors of record in media and/or communication departments, the study analyzed the lived experiences inside the classroom and revealed a critical and dynamic four-step framework. An intersectional approach to CPP includes: reflection and self-identification of intersectional identities; discussions on lived experiences that students identify as impacting their daily lives; integration of real-world examples in real-time; and incorporation of intersectional mediated examples. The framework makes visible and relevant the intersectional identities of marginalized students and provides critical praxis for social justice.

Media and communication courses, like all educational spaces, foster critical dialogue, shaping and reshaping knowledge. Fassett and Warren (2007, 2008) theorized a critical communication pedagogy (CPP), built upon Paulo Freire's (1970) theoretical perspective of critical pedagogy (CP), that makes relevant critical and reflexive conversations in the context of basic communication courses. The purpose of this study is to expand upon their theorization and extend it to pedagogy that highlights intersectionality in media and communication courses.

General media and/or communication courses often are not as inclusive of traditionally marginalized identities in pedagogical content, and some educational institutions habitually deem content related to LGBTQ+, race, ethnicity, and gender as controversial or not relevant to "mainstream" media and communication topics (Rodriguez, 2020). This sentiment is often maintained by instructors who may feel unqualified to speak on specific issues of traditionally marginalized identities because their own personal positionality may not belong to those identity groups, among other complexities, or because they may have students who resist critical engagement for a variety of reasons. The goal of the current study is to provide a pedagogical framework that highlights intersectional identities in higher education through a theoretical lens of CPP by reflecting on the experiences of media and communication instructors in the United States.

This study employs interviews with instructors focused on phenomenological experiences and pedagogical practices that foster intersectionality in the

Keywords: Intersectionality; Critical Pedagogy, Critical Communication Pedagogy, Media & Communication

classroom. The data provide a pragmatic, yet intentional, four-step approach to intersectional CPP that can be incorporated across general media and communication curricula. I begin with a brief overview of critical pedagogy, critical communication pedagogy, and intersectionality. I then conclude with examples of critical and discursive pedagogical strategies that have been used in media and communication courses to integrate intersectional content.

Critical Pedagogy to Critical Communication Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy (CP), first introduced by Paulo Freire (1970), is rooted in activism and engaged teaching that is relevant, reflexive, and critically informed. Freire argued that individuals, particularly students, should question ideologies and practices they consider oppressive. Individuals should work both individually and collectively to respond to oppressive structures by constructing a critical view of the world through a process of dialogue with others. Through the exchange of critical dialogue, individuals are made aware of their interconnectedness and their responsibility to one another. Educational spaces, specifically, provide opportunities to foster critical dialogue, resulting in knowledge creation and sharing. Such opportunities are interdependent and involve both instructor and student working in tandem.

The instructor does not mirror traditional practices of pedagogy that echo oppressive society in educational settings, but rather facilitates a critical dialogic process with and among students. This process of CP results in a critical consciousness that Freire termed conscientizacão—"learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 35). Conscientizacão fosters a sense of self-affirmation and purpose in instructors and students. CP, therefore, is a transformation-based approach that enables students to question and respond to oppressive practices and ideologies.

Similarly, critical communication pedagogy's (CCP) primary goal is to "address the context of education within the framework of relevance," providing motivation and significance to the pedagogical experiences of communication educational settings (Kahl, 2013, p. 2). CCP and CP position instructors as transformative and possessing the ability to radically transmute culture (Sprague, 1992). Both theorizations also share the common foundational beliefs of empowering students and changing the imbalance of societal power through pedagogical practices of critiquing hegemony, class, and privilege, as well as through the development of critical consciousness of power differentials—who is privileged and who is oppressed (Allen, 2011; Kahl, 2013).

Fassett and Warren (2008) argue that the need for relevance in basic communication courses is best exemplified by the "detached" writing styles found in communication textbooks, the use of culturally specific theories that are positioned to students as "universal," and the framing of diversity without providing context or rationale on how or why it matters (p. 2). The field of communication has undergone a paradigmatic shift toward more reflexive and critically informed pedagogical practices (in both teaching and research), and a connection between course content and its pedagogy (considering experiences of human lives) is warranted (Fassett & Warren, 2007; 2008).

CPP positions language and meaning as central to all social interaction and extends CP by examining the role language and meaning play in the maintenance and dissemination of power and hegemony in society (Fassett & Warren, 2007). Scholars who operate within the area of CCP study social interactions to better understand power, specifically, how "everyday interactions help to (re)produce knowledge, (re) construct identities, and (re)iterate ideologies" (Allen, 2011, p. 108; Deetz & Mumby, 1990; Kahl, 2013). Employing CPP in communication courses will ensure students meet the goals of: "(1) heightening awareness of hegemony, (2) identifying avenues for praxis, and (3) taking steps toward praxis—determining how to respond to instances of hegemony when they discern them" (Kahl, 2013, p. 2626).

I argue that the same process and goals of CPP can be applied to media and communication courses. The current study applies CPP to intersectional marginalized identities (particularly sexuality, race, ethnicity, and gender) to better understand the role of communication as a pedagogy of relevance—a pedagogy that acknowledges "the need for understanding communication as constitutive (and, thus, constraining) of our understandings and relationships" (Fassett & Warren, 2008, p. 5).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality illuminates multiple systemic oppressions and discriminations an individual experiences as their marginalized identities overlap and

intersect (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989; 1990). Oppression, Collins (2000) argues, "cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice" (p. 18); it is crafted and recrafted by both micro (intersectional) and macro (interlocking) processes. The term has historically been anchored in the oppression and lived experiences of Black women, evidencing those identities of race and class created differences in quality of life, social status, and lifestyle (Davis, 1983; Hooks, 1984).

Although intersectionality has been employed by Black feminists since the 1980s to critique how issues of women of color were neglected in feminist discourse (Davis, 2020), Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989; 1990) is credited for the introduction of intersectionality into the academic lexicon (Collins, 2015). Crenshaw conceptualized the term using race and gender to evidence identity categories are not mutually exclusive, but rather intersect to create multiple discriminations in Black women, specifically in the workforce and with domestic abuse. These issues were the direct result of power and oppressive institutions. Other scholars have noted that intersectionality operates on the notion of difference, particularly how some identities are excluded, whereas others are inherently included because of their privilege in society (Nash, 2008). Identity categories are socially constructed and emphasize differences between and among identity groups, differences that are then perpetuated and reinforced by social systems of power (Gillborn, 2015).

In more recent scholarship, intersectionality has been applied to individuals of different genders, races, ethnicities, sexualities, and social classes, particularly among students (Bracho & Hayes, 2020; Rodriguez, 2020, 2021). The strength of intersectionality lies in its capacity to provide a broad theoretical framework for examining the diversities of identities and institutions of power (Carbado, 2013). Intersectionality remains a lens through which power is made visible—where "power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects" (Crenshaw in Columbia, 2017, para. 4). Power in classroom settings lies in the hands of instructors in the form of academic freedom.

Intersectional Pedagogy

Educational institutions have an "obligation to protect the rights of students who possess marginalized identities," and they must "provide an environment conducive for all students to learn, thrive, and become productive citizens" (Carver, 2020, p. 17). Previous studies examining intersectionality in educational settings have examined teaching techniques, content, dialogue, and the students and instructors themselves (Bracho & Hayes, 2020; Rodriguez, 2020, 2021). Intersectional pedagogy primarily focuses on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and disability; employs methodologies such as ethnography, autoethnography, and interviews; and often couples intersectionality with other theories such as Critical Race Theory, Queer of Color Critique, and Feminist Theory.

Studies centering the lived experiences of instructors examined their intersectional positionalities and how they were placed in precarious situations between structural oppressions and their students, often having to both reconcile and engage their race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality (Johnson, 2020; Mobley, Taylor, & Haynes, 2020). Intersectionality also has been used as a lens with other theories to formulate pedagogical techniques and curriculum. In a recent study (Rodriguez, 2020) I theorized a pop culture pedagogy by incorporating intersectional pop culture media in course content. I implemented real-world examples, streaming media shows and movies, music videos, and podcasts to help facilitate a critical dialogue with and among students. Aguilar-Herández (2020) queered critical race pedagogy using an intersectional lens to disrupt forms of hegemony, including heterosexism. He argued that using representations of queers of color in the classroom, course materials, and historical actors as pedagogical practices significantly combats the silencing and erasure of marginalized student identities, as well as inspiring social change.

Academic institutions at large have been criticized for failure to address intersections of students' identities and responding, instead, to only one facet of a student's needs (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). Students are often seen as monolithic, and the jurisdiction of responsibility to attend to overlapping needs is sometimes not clearly defined in institutions (Bešić, 2020). Communication as a discipline is not exempt from these critiques. Traditionally marginalized identities in communication "exist on the fringes of the discipline," as most faculty are white and syllabi abound with white scholarship (James, 2019, p. 412). Intersectionality can help attend to this criticism by providing a multiple-axis approach that incorporates equity and social justice in a more comprehensive framework and by disrupting the status quo (Bešić, 2020; Carbado, 2013; Masri, 2019). The current study is positioned in service to those most impacted by

systems of power—students identifying with multiple marginalized identities. Thus, I ask what critical and discursive pedagogical strategies can be used in media and communication courses to integrate intersectional critical communication pedagogy?

Data Collection

A qualitative six-wave panel survey was administered to university instructors of record in U.S. media and communication courses. Participants were recruited through social media and snowball sampling. The sample consisted of 19 instructors. It included more women than men, and more participants taught in conservative states (see Table 1). Participants were monetarily compensated for their participation.

Participants were asked to access *Penzu*—an online-website that hosts digital diaries—once a week for six weeks and answer open-ended survey questions focused on pedagogy. Qualitative online-digital diaries aid methodological issues of self-reporting bias and are well suited for capturing ongoing insights as they develop (Cohen et al., 2006). The longitudinal design also allows assessment of attitude and behavior change as it relates to pedagogy over time. A total of 130 diary entries composed the units of analysis.

Data were extracted from *Penzu* and placed in ATLAS.ti, qualitative data analysis software. Coding was performed in a process mirroring that of DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, and McCulloch (2011). To create data-driven codes, raw information was reduced into smaller units by grouping levels of meaning together. Themes within the subsamples were identified and codes were re-examined to determine if a code needed to be expanded or whether a new code had been created. Finally, the codes were compared to theoretical tenets of intersectionality and critical communication pedagogy.

Reflecting and Self-Identifying

> *I asked students to reflect on their various identities and how they intersected. Many realized they were so much more than just their race or gender. They were able to see how their other identities like class, sexuality, religion, and even sports affiliation affected their other identities and themselves holistically* (Adam).

Reflecting on identities is an important strategy to allow students to self-realize their past, present, and

Table1: Instructors of Record Interviewed

Name	Gender	State	University	Home Department
Adam	M	California	Private	Mass Communication & Journalism
Chastity	F	Delaware	Public	English
Fernando	M	Florida	Public	Journalism & Media
Kyle	M	Kentucky	Public	Journalism & Broadcasting
David	M	Maine	Public	Mass Communication & Journalism
Mark	M	Maryland	Public	Media & Communication Studies
Lori	F	Massachusetts	Private	Law, Taxation, & Financial Planning
Laura	F	Minnesota	Private	Mass Communication
Barbara	F	North Carolina	Public	Communication
Diane	F	North Carolina	Public	Communication
Patricia	F	Ohio	Public	Journalism
Jessica	F	Pennsylvania	Public	Communication Studies
Rachel	F	South Carolina	Public	Communication
Hector	M	Texas	Public	Behavioral Sciences
Isela	F	Texas	Public	English
Karina	F	Texas	Public	Psychology
Nancy	F	Texas	Public	Media & Communication
Olivia	F	Texas	Public	Communication Studies
Sylvia	F	Texas	Public	Women's & Gender Studies

***Note**: Each individual wrote their own online diaries. Pseudonyms were assigned to maintain anonymity. Names are listed in alphabetical order of state. N=19*

future. Many instructors had students write reflection papers with specific prompts that helped them look inward and actualize the many facets of their identities—where they intersect, and which were more salient at specific times. Chastity asked students to define their own personal culture: "Many students wrote about their ethnic backgrounds and the importance of accepting and loving these particular cultures." Her students wanted "to get out of their privileged understandings of the world and engage with others unlike them in order to adopt a larger and more nuanced understanding of difference and the areas in which separate cultures intersect."

Privilege is an identity that some students grapple with or ignore altogether. Jessica's students wrote down their co-cultural identifications along a continuum of saliency in their life, including privilege. "Several of the students noted that little by little it was becoming easier to not only identify their co-cultures but understand how different aspects of their identities are privileged or marginalized, sometimes depending on the situational context." This allowed students to see how their identities (or co-cultures) intersect and afford opportunity and/or oppression.

Race and ethnicity were the most cited identities that students reflected on. Therefore, the instructors directly addressed race and ethnicity in greater detail during class discussions to be more inclusive. Sylvia stated then-President Donald Trump's potential repeal of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program directly impacted some students, "so the reflexive conversation we had in class about this legislation was facilitated by the week's earlier reading on the emotional tolls of immigration." Sylvia combined the reflection with readings "on affect and feeling Brown that José Muñoz and Bernadette Calafell theorize." This aided in students' self-actualization and "seemed to give them a vocabulary that helped them make sense of their experiences." Through in-class reflections, Adam realized his Latina students felt left out of macro conversations of race, so he modified his pedagogy to include more examples and discussions of Latinas in media.

Many of the instructors did not select course examples until after the self-reflection process. Olivia stated, "I ended up not selecting the semester's course readings until after I met the class for the first time and took their temperature in terms of interests related to intersectional issues of social justice & feminism." Reflecting and self-identifying intersectional identities not only provided a way for students to connect to their cultures, but also provided an opportunity for instructors to realize those identities that were most salient to students and incorporate them into their pedagogy to make lessons more relevant.

Impactful Lived Experiences

> *As a teacher, I want to give students the tools to not only do thoughtful analysis of popular culture texts, but to be reflective about the ways that public discourses impact the materiality of their lives. This feels good as an instructor, and it helps me feel more connected to my students* (Sylvia).

Instructors encouraged students to speak on real-life events that had impacted their lives, fostering an atmosphere of sharing, safety, and bravery. "It seems to really open up a space for their peers to share more about their own experience," stated Sylvia. Rachel also noted that in such an environment, "even more very conservative students want to engage in the conversations in respectful, but conflict embracing, ways." The most cited events students encountered in their daily lives predominantly revolved around their race, gender, and immigration status. Isela stated, "I had one student claim that she is worried about her mother, since she is not here 'legally'… and she is afraid to visit family now, because she might not be able to come back." Kyle's students continually brought up loaded terms such as "illegals" and "terrorists" that had been used toward his Latinx/a/o and Muslim students and questioned how media practitioners use them.

Police brutality and Blackness also was cited by every instructor. Jessica recounted one student became very emotional describing how he felt learning of Philando Castile's murder: "The pain involved in his story was so heartbreaking, but I think it gave those in the audience, including myself, a different perspective on the issue." Olivia noticed a similar affective trend in her students' personal lives: "A number of my students of color very openly shared their experiences of feeling scripted into identities & expectations that have marginalized them." Her students articulated "their experiences of acting not 'white enough' and/or being culturally (and sometimes literally) policed through dangerous racialized discourses." Another instructor mentioned "the students of color spoke of their experiences being stopped by the police, profiled while shopping, and being expected to dismiss their fears as paranoia, or even 'reverse racism,' in this 'post-racial' society."

Issues germane to misogyny, objectification, and sexual assault also were noted. Carlos mentioned that some of his Latina and Black students felt they were disproportionately affected by sexual violence and that media perpetuated their situations. Laura acknowledged that her Latina students were more active during Day Without Immigrants, one of them even missing class to attend a protest because she was personally affected. Laura also noted a young gay man from the United Arab Emirates was surprised at how "open" the discussions about gender and sexuality were in the United States: "I don't think he's heard a woman talk about sexuality or gender before—especially in school."

The intersectional practices employed by the instructors are essential in identifying the interaction of multiple factors that lead to discriminatory practices in education (Bešić, 2020). Adam noted, "It was an eye-opening experience for students to see how, even if they share the same race or gender as another student, other intersectional identities made their lived experiences qualitatively different from one another." Listening and acknowledging the lived experiences of their students allowed instructors to integrate intersectional examples of communication and social justice into their pedagogy-examples that were timely and relevant.

Integrating Real-World Examples in Real Time

> *We move into discussing issues of power in culture, and my goals are to use current events (and not so distant events) to show how complex ideas like "hegemony" and "canonicity" operate in the day-to-day lives of citizens* (Chastity).

Instructors were flexible and incorporated real-world examples into their pedagogy. "I feel that the videos and the real-life examples help students to apply the theories and make sense of the more abstract terms," stated Diane. Current events in politics and pop culture provided salient backdrops for readings and class discussions. Fernando used International Women's Day to evidence intersectional approaches to media: "The day serves as a form of cultural incorporation to silence women overall and to support racialized notions of acceptable femininity." Additionally, Patricia used the Women's March to highlight the Suffrage Movement and speak about waves of feminism, particularly the third wave: "Is it intersectional or divided—with respect to Black feminist and white feminist, is it a movement that is inclusive of the LGBT population?" Isela used both events to compare and contrast with the Ohio Women's Convention:

> A vote means a voice that you count. This is why women and Blacks fought so hard for the right to vote: It means you, in essence, can't be silenced, because you have made your position heard. Here, I discussed what happened to Sen. Elizabeth Warren, where Mitch McConnell enacted Rule 19 to shut her up. I explained that this political maneuver was nothing new; it has been happening for years and years.

Instructors overwhelmingly stated having to respond to student questions about actions committed by former President Trump. Patricia highlighted Trump's rescinded protections for transgender students and bathroom access: "We talked about that and the impending Gavin Grimm case, how it relates to Title IX and whether Title IX protections will be extended to gender identity." Laura also highlighted the federal repeal of bathroom protections and discussed its effect on trans kids of color, as well as the White House Correspondents' Dinner.

Sylvia stated her class was extremely interested in "Trump's Muslim ban and how this worked to create particular cultural constructions and attitudes about the legislation/culture." Carlos stated the ban provided a prompt to "discuss how Fox News, CNN, and other news agencies spoke about particular bodies and cultures." Some instructors used the travel ban to revisit issues related to the Dakota Access Pipeline. Diane stated, "We gathered ideas of how the concepts we had just discussed (emphatic and dialogic listening) could be applied to the protests of the Dakota Access Pipeline and how helpful either concept may be to improve the communication between different stakeholders and to what end." Lori used the moment to highlight similarities in the U.S.'s past: "Instead of discussing Native Americans, I decided to teach about the Indigenous Hawaiians and what they experienced in Hawaii."

Integrating real-world intersectional examples in real time allowed for the instructors to help students identify avenues for praxis. The examples that highlighted social justice and protests provided examples of responses that students can practice and implement in their own experiences (Allen, 2011; Kahl, 2013). This intersectional CPP strategy directly exemplified hegemony and power imbalances that individuals encounter in their daily lives.

Intersectional Media Examples

I showed students Pose to highlight intersectionality that is often symbolically annihilated in prime-time media. Students saw intersections of socio-economic status, race, gender, sexuality, even age. Many hadn't been exposed to it, while others were excited to discuss a representation of their intersections (Carlos).

Intersectional content from advertisements, film, broadcast, and streaming media was incorporated into the courses. YouTube was a popular platform because it was free, familiar, and accessible. Many of the instructors showed TED Talks to their students. Kyle showed his class Peggy McIntosh's *How Studying Privilege Systems Can Strengthen Compassion,* and Carlos showed his class Justin Baldoni's *Why I'm Done Trying to Be Man Enough*. Both instructors also asked students to find and showcase their favorite TED Talks that focused on intersectional issues.

Laura had her class analyze a user-generated website called the *Casual Sex Project* and discussed the utility of online self-representations for sexuality scholars and "how important 'bitching' online is for Black women, who experience sexual racism offline and on." Barbara showed clips from *Community* and a spoof video on "*Resting Bitch/Asshole Face*," then tied it all to nonverbal communication in women and minorities. One instructor showed clips of *Wonder Women* from various eras. "My students discovered that although she's back and bad-ass as ever, Wonder Woman also conforms in many ways to very traditional representations of womanhood and femininity." Intersectional mediated content surrounding gender also was found in music videos like Eminem & Rihanna's *Love the Way You Lie* video, Ariana Grande's *God is a Woman*, Beyonce's *Formation*, Gloria Trevi's *Pelo Suelto*, and Janelle Monáe's *Pynk*.

Instructors also used music videos for racial and ethnic examples. Laura's students "analyzed stereotypes in Avril Lavigne's *Hello Kitty*, Psy's *Gangnam Style*, Gwen Stefani's *Harajuku Girls*, and a Korean hip-hop video produced by Yoonmirae and Tiger JK." Jessica showed Beyonce's *Formation*. "That gave way to us discussing issues of cultural appropriation with current celebrities as well as code-switching and linguistic profiling." Kyle showed a PBS documentary on the Central Park Five. "Many of them [students] said it reminded them of modern coverage of Black Lives Matter and similar protests, and many said it has them rethinking the news they consume." Adam showed his class a clip from the *Daily Show* called *Catching Racism* and had his students deconstruct other news examples of their choosing.

Instructors also highlighted sexual orientation as a salient identity and discussed how other identities of race, ethnicity, disability, and religion are depicted in media. Carlos showed Key & Peele's *Gay Wedding Advice* skit and a Latinx character's coming out scene from *One Day at a Time*. Fernando used *Moonlight* to instigate discussion on subversion and collective memory: "The connection to popular culture was a great opportunity to challenge perceptions of space and of institutions, such as Hollywood and related industries." To speak about masculinity and sexuality, Olivia used scenes from the *It Gets Better* campaign and Adam used scenes from *Empire* and *Devious Maids*. Adam showed episodes from *Queer Eye*: "There are great interactions between the queer men, specifically Karamo, who is Black, and straight white men from the South that evidence to students issues of homophobia, effeminiphobia, and racism."

Incorporating intersectional mediated examples allowed the instructors to highlight how intersectional experiences are represented, misrepresented, or altogether ignored in the media. Pop culture examples are attention-grabbing and allow students to form fascinating bridges between theory and media, providing students another means of identifying praxis to critically think about media production and consumption (Rodriguez, 2020). Utilizing examples from new media also provided an opportunity for students to learn how new media is utilized for social change and representation and evidenced steps students can take toward praxis and respond to issues of hegemony and power (Allen, 2011; Kahl, 2013).

Success and Challenges

Talking about identity and privilege in the classrooms isn't easy. In fact, when a majority of your students are white, it's sometimes intimidating … but then you make a breakthrough and you think, yes! Even if it's just one student, that student can change the world (Carlos).

Instructors who employed intersectional CPP strategies noticed a significant change in how students received and interacted with course material. Chastity commented it is a "more current approach, rooting our analysis of race and ethnicity in notions of intersectionality and colorblindness." Laura stated the approach made the "discussions feel timely and

crucial—student engagement is high." Thus, an intersectional approach achieves the goals of both CPP and CP of placing the context of educating within the framework of relevance, providing motivation and significance to communication pedagogy (Kahl, 2013).

Employing intersectional CPP strategies also provided students with opportunities to identify avenues for praxis. David noted, "Students are beginning to think critically about interpersonal communication theories and their everyday practices and implications that may oppress others." Students were empowered to respond to instances of hegemony and power imbalances. Lori's students "realized that knowledge is power, and every small measure helps in huge ways." Similarly, Carlos noted, "My students are now more aware of how their messages in advertising, press releases, and media content can influence the way power is presented by which voices we highlight and which we exclude." Language and meaning are central to all social interaction. Intersectional approaches of CCP allow students to examine the role language and meaning play in the maintenance and dissemination of power and hegemony in society (Fassett & Warren, 2007), particularly in a mediated context.

Instructors also faced challenges in using intersectional approaches in the classroom. Topics such as police brutality, Black masculinity, reproductive rights, and immigration remained controversial to some students. "This is a tricky topic for students here generally, especially among the white men in my class—they often get very defensive of the police," stated Olivia. Like the others, she found ways to navigate those topics. "I plan to take my time in outlining how we can challenge and hold accountable racist policing at the structural level, without specifically insinuating that individual police officers are necessarily racist or generally evil." Regardless, the application of intersectional strategies allowed students of all identities to be introduced to more diverse content and social injustices.

Conclusion

The study employed an intersectional lens to critical communication pedagogy (CPP) to uncover pedagogical strategies that can be used in media and communication courses. The data revealed a four-step framework that is critical and dynamic, just as intersectionality is. Social inequalities are complicated and ebb and flow with time and space; therefore, intersectionality must also constantly change and develop in response to systems of oppression (Bešić, 2020). An intersectional approach to CPP in media and communication includes: (1) reflection and self-identification of intersectional identities; (2) critical discussions on students' lived experiences; (3) integration of real-world examples; and (4) incorporation of intersectional mediated examples. Each of these steps will heighten student's awareness of hegemony in society and media and aid them in identifying avenues for praxis (Kahl, 2013).

Most importantly, the steps help identify intersectional discrimination and exclusion in the students of a given course, contextual to time and space. Collins (2015) argues that "intersectionality's travels from social movements into the academy enable some dimensions of intersectionality to flourish, leaving others to languish, if not disappear" (p. 7). The first two steps of an intersectional approach to CPP provide a pedagogical model where oppressions, as well as opportunities, emerge from the intersectional identities of students themselves. Students reflect, identify, and then discuss. The last two steps of the approach allow the instructor to respond to these identified intersectional identities with examples and content. In these later steps it is also important for the instructor to recognize which identities are absent and incorporate content that allows students to engage with marginalized identities that they may not otherwise engage with. This process minimizes the risk of excluding or erasing intersectional identities in a particular educational space, while increasing critical awareness of oppression and power, underscoring CPP as a transformation-based approach.

Instructors employing an intersectional lens in CPP can also examine their own identities and privileges, providing them with a more contextual form of reflexivity to consider how they interact with students and curriculum. This is especially important for instructors who may not consider their positionality to belong to traditionally marginalized identities. Traditionally, in communication, those in power place the burden to transform oppressive conditions on traditionally marginalized faculty and staff (James, 2019). Intersectional CPP helps redistribute that labor. Intersectional-practicing instructors "should at all times be prepared not only to criticize the ways intersectionality is taken up and used, but also to question their own basis for authority as well as their own terminologies and methodologies" (Davis, 2020, p. 124).

Intersectional CPP works to disrupt the institutional cycle of reinforcing inequalities and erasing marginalized identities.

The "work in progress of understanding" an intersectional framework is far from complete (Carbado et al., 2013, p. 305). The current study does not provide an exhaustive list of intersectional pedagogical strategies, nor is it intended to be a list of best practices. Rather, the study evidences the lived experiences of media and communication instructors in the classroom and offers a model of intersectional critical communication pedagogy that can be adapted and implemented across a broad range of media and communication courses. Furthermore, the steps outlined in this study do not need to be relegated to highly motivated learners or those students who seek to engage with traditionally marginalized identities or social transformation. Intersectional CPP is an intentional intervention on the part of the instructor that can be implemented for all students to be more inclusive and critical. It is a pragmatic stride to make visible and relevant the intersectional lived experiences of students identifying with multiple traditionally marginalized identities—identities that are diverse and inseparable.

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Dr. Nathian Shae Rodriguez is in the School of Journalism & Media Studies at San Diego State University and core faculty in the Area of Excellence: Digital Humanities and Global Diversity. He specializes in critical-cultural and digital media studies, focusing on minority representation in media, specifically LGBTQ and Latinx portrayals and identity negotiation, as well as pop culture, identity, radio broadcasting, and issues of masculinity/mascing. Email: nsrodriguez@sdsu.edu Twitter: @DrNateRodriguez