What to Do While Waiting for the Revolution: Political Pragmatism and Performance Pedagogy

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Introduction

> In addressing and defending women's rights, [a woman] is implicitly acknowledging that women's rights are debatable….Significantly, however, she cannot broach or even formulate a question about men's rights or men's competence without appearing radical beyond question….Thus,…she is solidifying status quo values which make women's but not men's rights debatable in a democracy….I want a moral revolution.[1] — *Sarah Lucia Hoagland*

The frustration that many progressive educators feel at playing into prevailing power dynamics is often reflected in the urgency of our written work. There, we are careful to distinguish revolutionary approaches from compensatory or ameliorative approaches to education. Compensatory approaches seek to alleviate the worst abuses of the system or to eliminate at least some of the obstacles preventing various groups' access to power; revolutionary approaches challenge the very standards by which we recognize legitimacy. Given this distinction, Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary* and Lisa Delpit's *Other People's Children*, for example, are far from revolutionary, since insofar as Rose and Delpit are concerned with helping particular students make it through the system, they accept the terms of the system.[2] Yet the student to whom Mike Rose or Lisa Delpit makes a difference cannot be asked to wait for a revolution.

Short of a revolution (and they do seem to be in short supply), the question for progressive educators is how we can take up issues of power and equity in the classroom without, as Hoagland says, further "solidifying status quo values." How do we raise the issues connected with racism, sexism, heterosexism, class bias, and other forms of inequality, without reinstating the very terms we mean to abolish?

Mainstream Models for Progressive Education

For the most part, progressive pedagogies and curricula have borrowed from the two dominant models of mainstream democratic education, liberal education and student-centered education.[3] Insofar as progressive education is modelled on liberal education, it concentrates on acquainting students with important arguments that take up power relations as part of the overall analysis offered in a course. Typically, although not invariably, such an approach adheres to a disciplinary model. For example, a progressive teacher of literature or history may reference interpretive reading skills, analytical or critical skills, major theories, and the syllabus to recognized (albeit radical) standards in the practice of their disciplines. The emphasis in such an approach is on mastery of particular canons, concepts, and tools of analysis, "liberation" being (more or less) a product of the student's increased competency at wielding competing arguments and making informed choices between them.

A student-centered approach to progressive pedagogy, by contrast, begins from students' interests. Depending on how privileged the students in question are,

emphasis may be given to students' developing appreciation for others' perspectives or uncovering contradictions and liberatory potentialities in their own experience. Here, greater attention is given to motivating students and responding to their anxieties, interests, and frustrations. Thus, the canon may be set aside in favor of readings that have proved effective in engaging students, and in favor of developing students' *interest* in perspectives that might otherwise strike them simply as "abstract theories" irrelevant to their own beliefs or experience.

Both of these approaches have important strengths, and many progressive teachers try to combine their strengths by alternating between the two or by cobbling together something in-between. Yet both approaches also risk the kind of concession to prevailing frameworks of power that concerns Hoagland. Progressive education modelled on liberal education may risk accommodation to privilege by accepting the terms of *access* to power (as with Delpit); by presenting counterarguments to mainstream arguments deemed worthy of refutation (as in the example Hoagland offers); or even by invoking disciplinary standards such as objectivity, balance, or acquaintance with the canon.[4] In the name of fairness or balance, for example, we may ask students to study and choose between Lawrence Kohlberg's and Sarah Hoagland's ethical theories, but in doing so we implicitly may be asking students either to choose Kohlberg or to make a case against him.[5] Choosing him, of course, is easier.

Even drawing upon the principles of liberal education to argue for greater inclusion of women and/or a multicultural curriculum is problematic. While it is possible to argue that liberal education encompasses all important human contributions to civilization, and that these include the contributions of non-Westerners, men and women of color, and white women, such an argument runs up against several standard objections. "How can we teach the whole liberal arts curriculum and teach a multicultural curriculum too? There's only so much room — who do you want us to leave out? Plato? Mozart? Shakespeare?" "If we're going to have to include second-rate women novelists just to represent women in literature, doesn't that do a disservice both to women and to the teaching of literature?" "How are we going to include great women in American history when women weren't doing great things? Betsy Ross was no Thomas Jefferson."

Again, the problem is one of having to accommodate to standards that are themselves predicated on assumed dichotomies: that between subjectivity and objectivity, that between the public and the private spheres, or that between "general interest" and "particular interests," for example.[6] So long as the concept "historically significant contributions" *means* actions that take place in the public sphere (preferably in the form of individual leadership or authorship), it will be hard to make a case for the importance of contributions made by members of groups who largely have been excluded from the public sphere or who have pursued historical change as members of a collective rather than as individual leaders. At best, progressive updatings of the liberal arts curriculum can add farm women, union strikers, slaves, or teachers to the list of historically significant figures by showing how they did in fact contribute to the shaping of the public sphere. At worst, members of minority groups will be included merely as token figures. Either way, standing definitions of

the disciplines themselves remain largely intact, so that previous claimants to canonical status are not called into question (or at least are not reconsidered any more than they would have been without the challenges posed by feminism, multiculturalism, or Marxism). The newcomers, however, are there either on probation or by special invitation.

Student-centered progressive pedagogy, too, makes concessions to prevailing power relations insofar as it tries to "build upon" student experience that is already sexist, heterosexist, racist, or classist, referencing motivation and interest to that experience. Though progressive teachers are concerned to move students away from oppressive beliefs and commitments, the appeal to authenticity in student-centered education implicitly acknowledges a kind of parallelism in divergent forms of experience. Even if only provisionally and problematically, it must accord racist or homophobic beliefs the same standing as it does the values of those who have been objectified and oppressed by those beliefs. Thus, teachers cannot simply introduce students to alternative perspectives (as can teachers with a liberal education orientation) but must respect and respond to students' feelings of "reverse discrimination" or "white guilt," for example. As a result, such teachers are largely dependent on privileged students' willingness to set aside their own feelings of marginalization in favor of studying the marginalization of others.

In teaching minority students, the appeal to a student-centered paradigm is less problematic, for a teacher committed to progressive education then can "empower" students by helping them discover their own reasons for learning and by guiding them through the system (as does Rose). Here, grounding education in authenticity allows for a certain political independence from the canon or the institution. Almost unavoidably, though, the "helping" and "romancing" dimensions of such an approach mean that the educational system (with all its ties to class, race, and gender privilege) is assumed as a given. Helping students find their voice or wooing them with literature means, to some degree, bringing them to values already endorsed by the schools.[7] Thus, in teaching literacy, Rose cannot avoid teaching the associations literacy has with access to power or with expressive individualism — and indeed part of his concern is to empower students in exactly those ways.

Drawing upon mainstream pedagogies and curricula is problematic for progressive educators because liberal education and student-centered education often make assumptions about knowledge, learning, power, and social change that are at odds with the assumptions informing radical theory. Radical theory argues that systemic rather than incremental change is called for if we are to eradicate racism, heterosexism, or other forms of oppression and discrimination. Liberal and student-centered education operate on an entirely different premise. Implicitly, they assume that meaningful social change can take place incrementally, individually, and through an appeal to reason and/or the emotions. The gap between revolutionary theory and actual pedagogical practices suggests that, in the absence of a plausible revolution, we have resigned ourselves to offering revolutionary critiques to students instead of practicing a revolutionary pedagogy. Since it does not appear that revolution is just around the corner, we need a pedagogy for the interim — a pedagogy that not only prepares for but embodies meaningful change.[8]

POLITICAL PRAGMATISM AS A FRAMEWORK FOR PROGRESSIVE PEDAGOGY

Insofar as progressive pedagogy is intended to problematize prevailing assumptions regarding the good, appropriate, necessary, or realistic, grounding such a pedagogy in either liberal or revolutionary social theories involves progressive pedagogy in a contradiction. Since liberal theories reference desired social changes to some existing social ideal, while revolutionary theories posit an ideal that specifically repudiates prevailing notions of the fair, just, good, or appropriate, either type of theory is referenced to existing structures of value (albeit oppositionally, in the case of revolutionary theories). If progressive pedagogy is not to be caught in the dilemma of positing problematic assumptions in order to discredit them, it needs to proceed from a standpoint from which those assumptions are *already seen as* problematic.

One such standpoint is found in political pragmatism.[9] Like classical pragmatism, political pragmatism eschews theories that reify truth in terms of existing tools or assumptions, instead starting from experience as a ground of knowledge. But whereas classical pragmatism views experience primarily in cultural terms, political pragmatism understands experience to be organized by social and economic power relations: the experience that gives rise to knowledge is political experience. For those who enjoy a position of privilege, everyday experience may appear natural and self-evident, becoming "political" only when the normal course of events is interrupted or overturned. Those who bear a service relation to the dominant social order, however, or who find themselves excluded from the rights and privileges that others enjoy as a matter of course, may perceive everyday experience as political. Because what counts as ordinary, natural, or desirable for privileged groups may be characterized as deviant in the case of members of marginalized groups, those on the margins of power are most likely to be aware of the political character of experience.[10]

The political character of experience becomes visible in part through a doubling effect. Insofar as members of marginalized and/or stigmatized groups are in a position to see how something looks both from the perspective of privilege and from an alternative perspective, they enjoy an epistemic privilege. In itself, however, the doubling of experience does not provide political knowledge, for the mere multiplication of perspectives may lend itself only to political relativism of the kind often found in multicultural approaches. Distinctively political knowledge is the result of bringing critical understanding to bear on the question of how different perspectives are coordered.[11] If, for example, "feminine" values specifically service, support, or facilitate "masculine" values, neither set of values can be treated as freestanding.

For political pragmatists, the critical leverage that allows one to see how alternate perspectives may be related to one another comes as a result of doing the work necessary to maintain the social order — or at least social appearances — in keeping with the requirements set by those in power. Those who merely enjoy the results of that labor (which may be a supportive home environment, a smoothly running law office, or a profitable plantation) may take them for granted as the natural order of things. But the cost of dependency on others to make things happen *for* one is an inability to know things for oneself.[12] The recognition of that

dependency is reflected in the street wisdom of black culture: Jackson Jordan, Jr., an elderly African American interviewed by John Gwaltney, argues that blacks know more both about themselves *and* about whites than whites know, specifically because whites rely on others to take care of them. "You know that old street story about the white master who misplaced his member and asked his body servant where it was generally kept when not in use? Well, there's a lot in that."[13] For Jordan, it is easy to see what white people's outlook is, because he is held answerable to that view of the world, whereas whites, who do not need to anticipate or respond to blacks' expectations, typically know little about blacks' perspective. Not only are those who perform maintenance work able to see experience from two or more perspectives, but they also can see whether the suppressed perspective tells a story specifically denied within the legitimated perspective.[14]

For progressive pedagogy, an advantage of the perspective found in political pragmatism is that it avoids assuming the status quo as a point of departure. A second advantage is that such a perspective is positive as well as critical, for the experience of marginalized groups provides a framework of meaning and value distinct from that of the dominant order. Political experience, while troubled or problematic, is also experience in the rich sense Dewey gives to "*an* experience": it is a history with "its own particular rhythmic movement…and its own unrepeated quality pervading it throughout."[15]

PERFORMANCE PEDAGOGY

In political pragmatism the experience that gives rise to knowledge is found in a group's shared social and political situation; classroom teachers, however, cannot rely on students having such an experience in common, but must help to bring about the kinds of experience that yield knowledge. Performance pedagogy, like political pragmatism, works from experience in which assumptions about the good, fair, or appropriate are *already* problematized and politicized.[16] Rather than being grounded in a political experience providing a doubled perspective, though, the knowledge developed in the performative classroom will be the result of multiple and multipliable experiential perspectives that are *created pedagogically*. To generate political as opposed to parallel understanding, such educational experiences must be felt as troubled or problematic rather than as freestanding and authentic. At the same time, they must be experienced as distinctive sources of value.

Performative experiences in the classroom are specifically experimental. In general, they may be said to involve either trying on positions or acting out positions. Students acting out positions might examine and enact the various ways in which femininity is performed, for example, in order to better understand how femininity is constructed. Students trying on positions inhabit and claim a position provisionally, as a lived possibility. Whether great or small, the investment in performance pedagogy is always bounded by the status of the experience as a performance: as material and embodied, yet framed by the conventions of acting-as-if rather than those of action-as-agency.

The key contribution that performance pedagogy makes to progressive education is that it addresses problematic power relations in ways that do not assume either

the status quo or a fixed ideal as the standard of reference. The critical dimension of performance pedagogy consists in revealing some of the assumptions, values, expectations, and interests that structure everyday practices, and in suggesting how those aspects of our culture that we deplore — crime or violence or poverty, for example — may be coordered with the values that we uphold or assume. The creative dimension of performance pedagogy lies its emergent character: in the experimental and embodied shifts that allow students to inhabit new possibilities of value and interest.

<div align="center">DEVELOPING A RADICAL CRITIQUE</div>

Performance pedagogy introduces students to radical perspectives through involvement in selected experiences that are problematic not in the sense of being departures from an assumed norm but in that of trouble or struggle. In some of my own classes, for example, I have asked students to refrain from violence for a week and then to write about what they learnt from that experience regarding their own participation in the culture of violence. Such an exercise asks students, first, to name and identify in their own practices that which they may be accustomed to associating with others. Second, it asks them to attend to how implicit violence organizes their habits and attitudes (as in the arrogance of assuming that one's own errands and appointments are more pressing than those of other drivers or pedestrians, an assumption that then "justifies" impatient or dangerous actions) — or, alternatively, how violence is organized by cultural pressures (as when competing duties as a parent and employee, for example, leave so little margin for error that "something's gotta give"). The struggle to keep coherence in a life from which violence is "artificially" precluded helps students both to *see* the violence in which they participate and to see how it is coordered with institutional arrangements, cultural values, and assumptions regarding what is appropriate or necessary.

In order for such an exercise to be effective, though, it cannot be entered into naïvely, but must be informed by study. To prepare for such an experiment, students might examine institutional arrangements that impinge on everyday experience, watch videos or read about violence, or deconstruct narrative structures to uncover implicit forms of violence, for example. Performance in educational contexts thus is not undertaken as if it were automatic or intuitive, but is prepared for and practiced in the classroom. Classroom practices informing student performances might include readings, lectures, and videos that prepare students to recognize and appreciate culturally unfamiliar practices; classroom discussions or projects bounded by explicit "genre" expectations that specify patterns of interaction; group deconstruction of movies, documentaries, and fairy tales; or written work that requires students to adopt one author's perspective in responding to the work of another. Just as student role-playing is valuable only if students know something about the roles they have been assigned, other forms of educational performance will be effective only insofar as students are informed as to what is at stake.

<div align="center">EXPLORING EMERGENT POSSIBILITIES</div>

Whereas exercises such as the above lend themselves to a critical understanding of how power relations are coordered, other performance exercises address creative alternatives. Out-of-classroom experiences, for example, may emphasize shifting

out of one's comfort zone — out of one's accustomed assumptions about the good and the appropriate — by engaging in new practices. Because these activities take place outside of the classroom, they can be more creative (and potentially far-reaching) than their in-class counterparts. Projects that require students to familiarize themselves with unaccustomed cultural practices or institutions would be an instance of performative assignments that allow students to develop new interests. In classes in which all of my students are white, for example, I have sometimes arranged an option for students to accompany me to historically black churches at which visitors and classes are welcome. While some students will have attended musical performances in which all-black choirs were featured, there is a considerable difference between attending such performances as an aesthetic spectator and *participating* in the service at an A.M.E. or a black Baptist church. As participants, students need to be informed about what is appropriate and expected in that setting and cultural context so that they are prepared to respond meaningfully and respectfully. What is involved is something rather like etiquette: students are asked not to "be" but to *act* appropriately. While such experiences often enable students to learn something about their own racialized bodies (since many find that they are uncomfortable or even afraid of being a white minority in a black church), they also involve students in *new relations* as embodied participants who are responsible for responding in ways that go beyond the bounds of spectatorship of the exotic.[17]

What makes pedagogical shifts in experience *performative* rather than simply behavioral is the nature of students' (and the instructor's) engagement in the experience: a kind of commitment to the experience as a shift that may require the development of new positionings of self. It might be described as a matter of attitude. Take, for example, the matter of "artificially" imposed expectations for engaging in classroom discussions. The overly talkative student who commits to not talking in class will learn something from that experience only if she makes that commitment *in the expectation* that she will learn something both from the other students and from her own change in conduct. If the act is simply a form of martyrdom, there is nothing to be learnt, for the same assumptions that undergird her willingness to dominate the discussion then provide the lens through which she attends to her exclusion from the discussion; all that she is likely to see is her own silencing and the absence from the discussion of all that she could have brought to it. Similarly, a student who "pretends" to adopt Carter G. Woodson's position, but does not undertake to appreciate the position in question, comes away with nothing new apart from additional fortifications for arguments to which she was already committed. Yet none of this is to say that students must have a particular *motivation* when they enter into performative experiences. On the contrary, political pragmatism is specifically agnostic about "motivation." Students might have any number of motives for why they undertake a particular activity; the question is not why they do it but *how* they do it.[18]

Performance pedagogy referenced to political pragmatism is experience-based education grounded not in "authentic" experience but in performative experience — in acting "as if." Instead of starting from the experiences we already have, performance pedagogy engages us in new and shared experiences that shift us away

from our working assumptions and habits. One result of such shifts is that both our previous experience and the performative experience of the classroom can be framed as political and problematic. Insofar as the performative experience is perceived as not-natural and yet significant, it may serve to denaturalize "ordinary" experience of the kind that so reliably provides us with anecdotal certainties and supposedly direct knowledge of ourselves and others.

<div align="center">CONCLUSION</div>

A space on the margins, bell hooks says, offers "the possibility of [a] radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds."[19] Few privileged students start from such a perspective or have such a perspective ready to hand. To the extent that performance pedagogy can engage students in alternative experiences, it may introduce them to other sites of political and cultural knowledge that call into question what seems obvious or realistic. While not revolutionary, such experiences are nevertheless more than day trips out of the ordinary. Excursions into possibility, they allow us both to trouble what we have counted as necessary or desirable and to develop interests not found in our ordinary experience.[20]

This paper has benefited from Ivan Van Laningham's careful readings of earlier drafts.

1. Sarah Lucia Hoagland, *Lesbian Ethics: Toward New Values* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Institute of Lesbian Studies, 1988), 26.

2. Mike Rose, *Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of America's Educational Underclass* (New York: Penguin, 1989) and Lisa Delpit, *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflicts in the Classroom* (New York: New Press, 1995).

3. Except when progressive teachers avoid pedagogy altogether. Perhaps in desperation, some progressive educators refrain from assigning work, leading discussion, or giving grades, in order to try to get around the problems of imposition associated with institutionalized approaches to pedagogy. Instead, students are asked to choose their own readings and to share amongst themselves responsibility for discussion. Sometimes students also assign their own grades; occasionally, all will be guaranteed A's at the outset. Insofar as these moves count as pedagogy at all, they seem to be an extreme instance of child-centered pedagogy, à la *Summerhill*. See A.S. Neill, *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child-Rearing* (New York: Hart Publishing, 1960).

4. In order to avoid the circularity of having to submit radical alternatives to the scrutiny of canonical standards, some radicals have opted to abandon the canon and its standards altogether. Among other feminists who teach literature, Susan Koppelman, for example, has said that she no longer reads or teaches work by men, so as to be able to concentrate her energies on learning how to appreciate the women's writings that for centuries have been neglected (*National Women's Studies Association* Conference in Urbana-Champaign, Ill., June 1986.) In *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers before Jane Austen* (London: Pandora, 1986), Dale Spender adopted this same approach, deciding to publish "good" writers rather than to make a case for one or more "great" writers before Jane Austen.

5. See Hoagland, *Lesbian Ethics* and Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981).

6. "General interest" in the Western canon has always been understood to mean "of interest to powerful European men or men of European descent." When women or other minorities are the primary focus either of a novel or of a historical or scientific investigation, by contrast, the interest is deemed particularistic. As Frank Gilbreth, the time-motion expert and the father of twelve children would say, whenever dinner topics were not to his liking, "Not of general interest!" Of course, his wife and children were not in a position to make the same judgment. See Frank B. Gilbreth, Jr. and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey, *Cheaper by the Dozen* (1948; reprint, New York: Bantam, 1988).

7. In some cases, progressive and mainstream forms of student-centered education are actually a kind of "motivated" liberal education: however willingly, the student is still being brought *to* the canon or

the argument or the curriculum.

8. Some years ago, Andrew Gitlin and I also explored this theme in an A.E.R.A. presentation. See Audrey Thompson and Andrew Gitlin, "The Reconstruction of Knowledge in Feminist Praxis and Action Research," Annual meeting of the *American Educational Research Association*, Atlanta, April 1993.

9. I discuss political pragmatism in greater detail in "Political Pragmatism and Educational Inquiry," *Philosophy of Education 1996*, ed. Frank Margonis (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 1997), 425–34. Among those theorists whom I would describe as political pragmatists (although not exclusively so; many would identify themselves primarily as, say, Afrocentrists, feminists, Marxists, or queer theorists), are Patricia Hill Collins, W.E.B. DuBois, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Dorothy E. Smith, Cornel West, and Carter G. Woodson.

10. Ironically, when the political character of experience is made overt, its exposition is dismissed as a form of political correctness. Had Paul Anka's sentimental hit song, "Having My Baby," been about gay parents, unwed Navajo teenagers, or a married couple on welfare, for example, it would have elicited widespread and outraged coverage as p-c propaganda.

11. On "coordering," see Dorothy E. Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), 123.

12. Thus it is ironic that Rousseau has Emile's tutor *produce* the "natural" environment needed for his pupil to flourish, while hiding from Emile any knowledge of the tutor's labor. From the standpoint of political pragmatism, this raises the question as to what Emile really can be said to know. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

13. John Langston Gwaltney, *Drylongso: A Self-Portrait of Black America* (New York: Vintage, 1980), 99–100. It is significant, too, that there *is* such a street story, and that it focuses on the body itself.

14. Knowledge that ignores the existence of other perspectives may be predicated on a will to ignorance. See Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933; reprint, Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1972) and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Privilege of Unknowing," *Genders* 1 (Spring 1988): 102–24.

15. John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, in *The Later Works, 1925–1953*, vol. 10, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 42–43.

16. A considerable literature has flourished on the topics of performance and performance pedagogy; for the most part, this work is referenced to postmodern theories. See, for example, Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), 13–31; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1996); Jane Gallop, ed., *Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); and Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, eds., *Performativity and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1995). While my own position has certain commonalities with this literature, it assumes a different view of materiality. See Audrey Thompson, "For: Anti-Racist Education," *Curriculum Inquiry* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 7–44.

17. Exoticism can take a number of forms, such as sentimentalizing or dramatizing the unfamiliar as a consumable property, or appropriating other cultures for purposes of self-dramatization. (Notorious instances of the latter include white "wannabes" who "identify" with oppressed or marginalized ethnic groups or who claim some distant connection, such as a "Cherokee princess" great-great grandmother.) Progressive pedagogy as performance cannot entirely avoid the threat of exoticism, but it can address that danger somewhat more effectively, I believe, than pedagogies that do not challenge anecdotal and essentialistic approaches to cultural and political identity.

18. The main reason that they will do it, of course, is that the instructor tells them to; but motivations are subject to change. One may begin doing something for obscure or expedient reasons, but continue the activity because the activity itself becomes important. It is possible in some cases to specify wrong motivations for doing something, but it is counterproductive to specify right motivations, since these tend to assume exactly the knowledge and commitments that the student does not already have and is expected to develop.

19. bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 150.