



Development of a Community Psychology Undergraduate Course from a Feminist

Pedagogical Framework: Faculty and Student Experiences

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Development of a Community Psychology Undergraduate Course from a Feminist Pedagogical Framework: Faculty and Student Experiences

Abstract

Community psychology is typically not a part of most undergraduate curricula. Yet, undergraduate coursework in community psychology affords many advantages to students. It encourages ecological thinking and exposes students to content such as community empowerment, intervention and prevention programming design, program evaluation, and other aspects of community psychology practice. This paper describes the development of a community psychology course taught from a feminist pedagogical framework within an undergraduate-only psychology program at a mid-size comprehensive public university in the United States. As the majority of undergraduate majors in our program enter entry-level human services positions upon graduation, the course was primarily designed to expose students to alternative ways of conceptualizing the role of psychological science, mental health, and of psychologists in addressing social and community problems. A secondary goal was to provide undergraduate psychology majors with basic skills in community psychology practice. In keeping with a feminist framework, the selected activities incorporated community-based, collaborative experiential learning as much as possible. Both benefits and challenges, including the difficulties in prompting students to think ecologically; teaching sensitive topics in the classroom; the difficulties of implementing a feminist pedagogical teaching and learning framework at the undergraduate level; and helping students take ownership over their learning; are explored.

"I entered the classroom with the conviction that it was crucial for me and every other student to be an active participant, not a passive consumer...education as the practice of freedom.... education that connects the will to know with the will to become. Learning is a place where paradise can be created." - bell hooks (American educator and feminist, 1952).

Most undergraduate psychology students are not exposed to the field of community psychology, and the course is typically not part of undergraduate curricula (Carmony et al., 2000; Jimenez, Sanchez, McMahan, & Viola, 2016; McMahan, Jimenez, Bond, Wolfe, & Ratcliffe, 2015). As of the writing of this publication, only six undergraduate programs with a specific community psychology (CP) focus are listed on the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) website (SCRA,

2018). While some introductory psychology textbooks include content on CP, it is unknown whether CP content is covered thoroughly, if at all, in the typical undergraduate introductory psychology course. There is a surprising dearth of literature on CP education (Jimenez et al., 2016). In recent years, the SCRA Council on Education has emphasized the importance of undergraduate CP education, and community psychologists have called for the development of strong undergraduate CP pedagogy (e.g., Jimenez, et al., 2016; Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017).

The interest in better-developing undergraduate pedagogy in CP is for good reason, as it affords many advantages to students. Aside from helping to recruit and prepare students for graduate programs in the field, undergraduate CP courses

encourage ecological thinking and expose students to content not typically taught in undergraduate level psychology coursework. This includes content such as community empowerment, intervention and prevention programming design, program evaluation, participatory community research, and other aspects of CP practice competencies. Teaching CP practice competencies at the undergraduate level is important, as practice competencies are highly relevant skills for undergraduate students who seek employment in the human services and allied fields upon graduation (Jimenez, et al., 2016; McMahon, et al., 2015). Further, undergraduate education on practice competencies can serve as a catalyst for social change, advancing the efficacy and reach of the field (Jimenez, et al., 2016).

Our institution, Salisbury University, is a mid-size comprehensive public institution located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States of America, on Maryland's rural Eastern Shore. Part of the state university system, SU is historically a predominately White institution, but campus initiatives have increased racial and ethnic diversity in recent years. Of the roughly 7,700 student population, 27% of the students are students of color, with the modal race being African American or Black (14%); 1.4% are from other countries outside of the United States (Salisbury University, 2018). The Psychology Department offers the Bachelor of Arts degree and a minor in Psychology. Psychology is a robust program; it is the 6th largest major on campus, with approximately 400 student majors. Psychology majors are more racially and ethnically diverse than the broader student body; 35% of psychology degrees awarded in the 2017 – 2018 academic year were awarded to students of color (Salisbury University, 2018). Most courses within our program are taught from a traditional post-positivist framework. This framework recognizes researcher subjectivity, but capitulates subjectivity as "bias" and requires researchers to use tight

experimental and statistical controls in an attempt to work towards objectivity. Our program situates experimentation (and particularly lab experimentation) as central to the discipline of psychology, and is structured around four major areas: brain sciences, developmental processes, social processes, and clinical psychology. Most students do not go into graduate programs, but many enter entry-level human service positions upon graduation.

Given the juxtaposition between our program's emphasis on traditional post-positivist, laboratory-based psychology and where our students end up post-graduation, one goal of the undergraduate *community and applied social psychology* course is to expose students to different philosophies of science (specifically, critical and social constructionist paradigms), as well as how community psychologists operating from different philosophies conceptualize the role of psychological science, mental health, and of psychologists in addressing social and community problems. The ecological model is emphasized throughout the duration of the course, and students are heavily encouraged to move beyond individual-level explanations for social and community problems. A secondary goal, as suggested above, is to provide undergraduate psychology majors with basic skills in CP practice. This upper-division undergraduate course is for many students their first and sometimes only exposure to the ecological model, critical and social constructionist philosophies of science, and concepts of CP practice. In order to both encourage students' professional and personal growth and to deepen their understanding of the different perspective and approach to science which CP affords, and in line with the instructor's self-identification as a feminist, the course is taught from a feminist lens. The course met twice a week (3 hours total a week) over a 15-week semester and had a total enrollment of 24 students.

An Overview of Feminist Community Psychology

Several community psychologists have noted that the field considerably overlaps with feminist perspectives (e.g., Angelique & Culley, 2000, 2003; Bond & Mulvey, 2000; Hill, Bond, Mulvey, & Terenzio, 2000; Mulvey, 1988; Riger, 2017; Swift, Bond, & Serrano-Garcia, 2000; Tebes, 2017). Feminism is an action-oriented philosophy of science that focuses on how “one’s position in the world shapes knowledge and experience (and) dissatisfaction with existing approaches to scientific inquiry” (Tebes, 2017, p. 25). Feminism’s focus is on analysis of gender inequality. In her seminal article, Mulvey (1988) argued for the development of a feminist community psychology approach, identifying several commonalities, including: a common history, criticisms with predominant paradigms and perspectives, and an emphasis on the social construction of lived experiences and subjectivity of experience (see also Hill et al., 2000; Riger, 2017). Both fields value empowerment and social change via adoption of alternative models and methodologies, including social constructionist or critical qualitative research which deconstructs oppression and power differentials (Mulvey, 1988; Tebes, 2017). And, CP provides tools to translate feminist theory into action (Gridley & Breen, 2007).

Riger (2017) argued that formation of a uniquely feminist CP perspective can add breadth and depth to several guiding principles of CP, including an appreciation of diversity, incorporation of context in understanding one’s lived experience, sharing power in the research process, and emphasizing the importance of social change. However, despite their shared mission, the field of CP, like that of psychology in general (Eagly & Riger, 2014, Yoder & Kahn, 1993),

has androcentric roots (Angelique & Culley, 2007); CP has largely been developed using patriarchal-driven and rooted practices of research and scholarship, practices which may limit CP’s full integration with feminism. Although community psychologists are perhaps more likely to apply social constructionist or critical philosophies to their work, most community psychologists were trained in and embrace the traditional post-positive orientation of the general field of psychology. Further, many community psychology practices are not explicitly labeled as “feminist” (Tebes, 2017), and those engaging in feminist work may not personally self-identify as feminists². A distinct feminist community psychology approach remains underdeveloped.

Development of Feminist Community Psychology Pedagogy

Due to their shared overlap (Bond & Mulvey, 2000; Mulvey, 1988), and the first author’s self-identification as a feminist, the course was taught using a feminist community psychology pedagogical (FCPP) approach. However, if feminist community psychology as a whole remains underdeveloped, the development of FCPP is even less so (Whelan & Lawthom, 2009). Feminist pedagogy generally tends to be underutilized at the undergraduate level (Kite et al., 2001; McCormick, 1997; Worell & Johnson, 1997), posing additional challenges in its adoption as a pedagogical method. Yet, there are advantages to FCPP worth exploring.

A FCPP approach to education benefits students in multiple ways. With its emphasis on socially constructed knowledge (Tisdell, 1998), inclusion of marginalized voices, and critical analysis of social power and privilege, feminist educational practices can foster critical thinking skills, raise consciousness,

² Some people may choose to identify with a term, such as humanitarianist or egalitarianist, rather than adopt an explicit feminist identity. However, while these and related concepts share similarities with feminism, they are distinct from feminism in ways that are meaningful at both an ideological

and practical level. Zucker (2004), for instance, found that women identifying as egalitarian scored lower on measures of feminist identity and activism than women who explicitly self-identified as feminists.

and train the next generation of feminist thinkers (McCormick, 1997). These practices provide opportunity for progressive social change and political action to occur in the classroom (Donahue-Keegan, 2014). Teaching from a FCPP stance could further students' understanding of community psychology by immersing them in community psychology principles in the classroom. In this way, the classroom itself becomes a site of community psychology practice, in line with suggestions by Lichty and Palamaro-Munsell (2017).

Feminist pedagogy typically has four important features: participatory engagement in the learning process, incorporation of personal experience as a source of knowledge (a process known as reflexivity), development of critical thinking skills, and facilitative of political and social change (Stake & Hoffman, 2000). These features directly reflect the values and emphasis of the field of CP, and particularly feminist community psychology (Moane & Quilty, 2012). However, while Whelan and Lawthom (2009) argue for the development of a distinctly FCPP approach, they also note that adaptation of feminist pedagogy might not easily translate to the community settings in which community psychology operates.

There are many methods by which feminist pedagogy can be used to build an undergraduate community psychology course. In their chapter on feminist curriculum development, Chin and colleagues (1997) state that feminist pedagogy influences multiple aspects of the educational experience, including educational content, teaching processes, and classroom climate. There are several aspects of feminist approaches to classroom learning: attenuation to what perspectives are taught, connectedness, participatory and reflexive learning, and establishment of a non-hierarchical environment in which students draw on personal experiences to co-develop knowledge (MacDermid, Jurich, Myers-Walls, & Pelo, 1992).

Implementation of a FCPP Framework

These various feminist pedagogical strategies were incorporated into our undergraduate *community and applied social psychology* course in multiple ways. In line with feminist teaching practices (Chin et al., 1997), feminist pedagogy was incorporated into all aspects of the educational experience: educational content, teaching processes, and classroom climate. Drawing on best practices for feminist pedagogy (e.g., see MacDermid et al., 1992; Stake & Hoffman, 2000), a FCPP approach was developed that: (1) was attuned to what perspectives were being taught, intentionally including diverse perspectives, (2) was non-hierarchical, to the extent possible, (3) highlighted participatory, reflexive, and collaborative learning, and (4) focused on applying the ecological model and community psychology practice skills to fostering social change. Each aspect of these approaches is discussed below.

Attenuation to diverse perspectives. A FCPP approach is highly attenuated to what perspectives are being taught, and seeks to include diverse voices, particularly those marginalized or oppressed (McCormick, 1997). The course instructor identifies as a cisgender, heterosexual white woman. The field of psychology is highly dominated by work conducted from white cisgender people, and students—particularly at the undergraduate level—are not exposed to many psychological theorists and researchers from different social localities. However, an important contribution of feminism is to center the voices of people who are traditionally marginalized. This is particularly important as we have many students of color in our major. As such, the course instructor made substantial effort to center the perspectives of people who did not share one or more of the instructor's social localities. Diverse voices were incorporated into the course content in multiple ways. First, the primary textbook in the course (Kloos et al.'s *Community psychology: Linking individuals and communities*, 2012), was supplemented with a variety of required reading materials

(e.g., journal articles, websites), most of which were authored by women and/or people of color. It is important that work by people of different social localities be centered in the course; otherwise, the instructor runs the risk of tokenizing people's work and lived experiences. In addition, supplementary in-class content in which the experiences of marginalized, oppressed people and communities were presented as models for community strength and empowerment were also intentionally included. These included articles highlighting LGBTQ+ communities, communities of color, and communities outside the United States. Unfortunately, most research with marginalized or oppressed communities operates from a deficit model or focuses heavily on risk factors and negative outcomes. As exposure to this research can be psychologically harmful to students from those backgrounds (e.g., Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017) and reinforce stereotypes, attention was given to select readings which intentionally drew on a strength-based or empowerment perspective. For instance, students read about Hays, Rebchook, and Kegeles' (2003) strengths-based, empowerment approach to HIV prevention among young gay and bisexual men; Varas-Diaz and Serrano-Garcia's (2003) article on colonialization's impact on Puerto Ricans and liberation community psychology; and Foster-Fishman et al.'s (2006) work mobilizing economically distressed communities in Michigan.

Attenuation of diverse perspectives also encompasses recognition of our own perspectives, as educators and students. Rather than operate from a (false) standpoint of objectivity, and consistent with feminist community psychology principles of non-objectivity and social constructionism, the instructor's social localities and ideological orientation and standpoint was intentionally shared with students. The syllabus included a statement on course structure and pedagogy, something not typically included on undergraduate course syllabi in the

department. The statement described the nature of the course, explicitly identifying it as taught from a feminist pedagogical framework which will actively "challenge (students') existing knowledge base; encourage you to critically think about what you know and why you know it; and to present some alternative perspectives and methodologies." The statement mentioned the course used a reciprocal learning environment in which everyone is engaged as active participant-learners. On the first day, the course structure and pedagogical framework was introduced intentionally and deliberately, highlighting the importance of reciprocal learning, including the fact that the instructor was also engaged in the learning process. The instructor also identified herself as cisgender, heterosexual, and a first-generation college student (instructor race was apparent). This message was repeated throughout the semester.

Further, during the second week of the class, the instructor exposed students to various philosophies of science. Significant time was spent discussing how the different philosophies of science affect both the epistemologies and methodologies of psychologists. In our experience, students are typically not taught about philosophies of science in the undergraduate psychology classroom. A purview of seven common undergraduate psychology research methods textbooks in the first author's collection found that philosophies of science, or even recognition that most psychological research operates from a post-positivist framework, was not mentioned in any of them. Indeed, it is highly likely that thousands of students graduate from undergraduate psychology programs in the United States each year with absolutely no knowledge of the fact that they are trained in post-positivist science, and that other approaches exist. Students worked through an activity where they read a short piece from *The Community Psychologist* and identified the philosophy of science and resultant epistemology and methodology.

Finally, several research articles students read for the course presented qualitative research findings. Qualitative research was integrated throughout the course for a few reasons. First, qualitative research is more frequently employed by researchers using critical or social constructionist approaches, highlighting how these philosophies of science contribute to the discipline. Second, qualitative research helps personalize and give voice to the lived experiences of diverse people in a way that quantitative research cannot. Students read about the process of qualitative research (Stein & Mankowski, 2004), as well as several examples of qualitative research in diverse populations; for instance, interviews with service providers on their perceptions of human trafficking (Gleason, 2014), and a photovoice project exploring health assets among lower-income communities (Wang & Pies, 2004). Videos describing community psychology research included several projects which included qualitative methodologies.

Student perspective. As a student, I had not been exposed to alternative frameworks in the classroom and was unsure of what to expect from a feminist teaching method. The supplemental course content, especially the supplemental readings, facilitated the development of critical thinking skills. We had to read and discuss articles from marginalized groups, something I had not experienced in my other courses, most of which utilize a textbook written from a mainstream psychological perspective. The supplemental material was dissimilar from the textbook, offering alternative viewpoints and distinct voices; this helped me focus on application of content over memorization of definitions, and provided a refreshing challenge. This course gave unique and different viewpoints on community psychology and worked to open my eyes to alternate perspectives, leading to a deeper understanding of these topics.

Instructor perspective. To encourage students to approach course content with an

open mind and to persevere through challenging thought processes, students were presented with a course contract (available on request) on the first day of class. The course contract included the bell hooks quote presented at the beginning of this article, explained what is meant by a “liberal arts” education, and emphasized the liberating nature of education. The hooks quote’s focus on the importance of active learning was highlighted. I also warned students that some of the content might be uncomfortable or disagreeable. The contract encouraged students to think of any discomfort with or difficulty in understanding course content as indicative of learning and growth. Students were asked to sign and return the contract; all students agreed to do so. When I noticed that students were visibly uncomfortable, I referred to the course contract they signed at the start of the semester. Students were reminded that feeling discomfort with the ideas or subject matter is an indication that they are engaged in the learning process; their current thinking was being actively challenged, a stated goal of the course.

Student perspective. Giving us the course contract right away helped facilitate a comfortable classroom environment; students felt more comfortable discussing sensitive topics in an informed and tactful manner. A large portion of our class discussions were focused on our own personal experience as they related to topics in community psychology. In a course of this nature, getting to know and understanding your fellow classmates on a personal level is a way of building our own community. Sensitive topics opened the door to deeper discussions, and the students talked more about their background and their lives. In an undergraduate psychology classroom, it is often expected that the professor will stand at the front of the class and lecture for their allotted time. We do not often have long discussions involving the personal lives of the students and their experiences. When talking about privilege and support and risk factors, I believe that many students’ eyes were

opened to new perspectives. These discussions were helpful in better understanding the concepts, but we could still not escape having some students feel awkward and uncomfortable at various topics.

Non-hierarchical learning environment. In line with an FCPP approach which seeks to reduce power structures and promote equality in learning (see MacDermid et al., 1992), students were provided with ample opportunities to exhibit ownership over the course content and engage with each other in a collective learning environment. As part of the course, students gave two short presentations, in conjunction with another student, on course content of their choice. Students were required to draw on one outside source in the creation of their presentation. The outside source could be any form of media (e.g., a news article, a video, etc.), and was not limited to scholarly materials. This requirement was given to encourage students to contribute to the knowledge base in their own classroom. Students were also required to provide two discussion questions.

Instructor perspective. As instructor, I relinquished as much power as possible in the course, giving ownership over the teaching and learning process to the students. Many students put a lot of forethought into their presentations, and as such, they were very creative and thought-provoking; several provided materials that would not have been included in the course otherwise. For instance, one student used the assignment as an opportunity to educate other students on the socio-political history of her country of origin and her experiences as a religious minority in the United States. I would not have been able to adequately teach this content on my own.

With two presentations a class session, student presentations accounted for one third to two thirds of each class period; the remaining time was devoted to a mix of

presentations from myself, class activities and discussions, and group work on several collaborative assignments (mentioned below). Turning ownership of course content over to students in this way can be difficult (Chin et al., 1997). Students, particularly undergraduate students, are used to hierarchical classroom models which place teachers in the position of authority. In reality, despite the collaborative in-class environment, I was in a position of authority that can be shared, but never fully relinquished (Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017; Morgan, 1987; Schneidewend, 1983; Shrewsbury, 1987). The instructor's true authority in the classroom is perhaps best illustrated by the irony that I had to build non-hierarchical learning into the course by "required" assignments. Indeed, in addition to selecting course content and assignments, instructors establish the course structure, grade students, and serve as "gatekeepers" who provide access to later resources (e.g., write letters of recommendation, passing along opportunities to students, Kimmel et al., 1997). This "paradox of power and authority" poses a barrier to completely integrating FCPP in the classroom. It also can limit student experiences of empowerment (Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017) and generate resistance (Chin et al., 1997). There is some risk to me as instructor, too: students might not fully present course materials, might present them inaccurately, or might be unprepared to lead a class. To help students with this process, I required students to submit a draft of their presentation, with the selected outside source, to the instructor at least one week prior to the deadline. This allowed me the opportunity to provide feedback and assistance to students if needed.

Relinquishing ownership of the course to undergraduate students posed another problem for me as instructor: what do professors do when the student brings ideas into the classroom that contradict CP principles? For instance, in one class presentation on privilege and oppression, a student team showed a video in which a Black

male narrator actively discredited the concept of white privilege, instead arguing that failures of upward mobility in the Black community are the result of lack of effort, poor values, and low motivation. Students, particularly our more conservative students, generally tend to be resistant to the concept of white privilege, and teaching about white privilege can result in poor student evaluations (Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung, 2009). As an instructor, there was concern that students would be even further dismissive and resistant--hostile even--to the concept after viewing this video. Further, some students of color in the class were viscerally upset at the video, further complicating matters. As a White instructor, I was unsure of my ability to effectively teach about White privilege in a way that was not tokenizing to the students of color in my classroom, nor disparaging of my White students (common concerns White instructors have when teaching on race; e.g., see Smith, Kashubeck-West, Payton, & Adams, 2017).

The spirit of bringing equality into the FCPP classroom opens the door for expression and discussion of ideas that are bigoted, exclusionary, or that ideologically contrast with course subject matter (Kimmel et al., 1997). However, this does not mean that these ideas cannot be criticized. As such, I used the video as an opportunity to discuss intersectional privilege and oppression processes, and to highlight the benefits of an ecological viewpoint. I am unsure whether my social locality as a White woman facilitated teaching this content. One of the tenets of White privilege's "invisible knapsack" is that "if I declare that there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have" (McIntosh, 1989), which suggests that perhaps I, as a White woman, am more effective at teaching concepts of White privilege than faculty of color. However, recent work by West (2018) finds White people largely disregard arguments for

the presence of racism, regardless of whether those messages are coming from people of color or White people.

Student perspective. Preparing our presentations proved to be harder than initially thought. We had to decipher what information was useful to teach to the class and what would be tested on, as well as teaching it to the class in an effective and engaging manner. This process made me feel highly responsible for a large part of my learning. The instructor had to budget out the rest of the class time based off of what was taught well by students. If my presentations were not helpful or if they did not contribute to the lesson, then Michèle would have to cover the topic in her planned lesson time. This meant that if our presentations were unhelpful, Michèle could spend less time elaborating on other concepts, and we would have to teach course content to ourselves later on. If students wanted the majority of core course content to be covered in class, it was to our benefit to cover our topic well and keep the class engaged. In this way, Michèle had structured a course that made me as a student responsible for our classes' education.

Participatory, reflexive, and collaborative learning. Consistent with spirit of the type of cooperative, collaborative learning which FCPP and feminist pedagogy in general is dependent on (Chin et al., 1997), the course was structured to facilitate community-building, reflexivity, and collaborative, participatory learning. This was inherently promoted by use of a non-hierarchical classroom environment. Reflexivity was promoted and encouraged during the learning process in a few key ways. In addition to ongoing discussions regarding discomfort with course content as a sign of growth, in-class discussions centered reflexive learning.

Student perspective. As students, we were able to incorporate our own personal experience as a knowledge base when

discussing community psychology concepts. We wrote about the ecological levels that we face and our different types of communities and support. Having these discussions helped change how I felt about my standing in different communities and my life as a whole.

To further encourage reflexivity, students wrote reflective pieces after completion of out-of-class activities. For instance, one out-of-class activity (all activities and assignments available on request) asked students to complete a diversity scavenger hunt, in which they perused big box stores for specific items representing different facets of diversity (e.g., a romantic greeting card written for a gay couple, a stock photo in a photo frame featuring a person with a visible disability, racially and ethnically diverse dolls in the toy section, etc.). After completing the scavenger hunt, students answered a series of guided questions on the extent to which the inclusion of diverse items for sale in “big box” stores was reflective of demand, vs. valuing of diversity; students also reflected on the impact seeing (or not seeing) diverse items for sale may have on members of specific communities. Similarly, after completing a cultural plunge assignment, students were asked to reflect on their experience, including how they felt, what they observed or witnessed, and what they believe they would need to become culturally competent to work with that community.

Student perspective. The out-of-class activities and reflective writing process were helpful learning tools. The cultural plunge activity was a favorite of mine because it made me more aware of diversity in the community that I would not have noticed on my own due to my various privileges.

Ecological social change and participatory action. In line with FCPP’s emphasis on social change and participatory action, the course included a multi-faceted, community-based component in which students completed a variety of activities centered around a real-world, localized community problem. Many of

these activities were experiential learning opportunities. Experiential activities were selected as they help students retain content and link theory and practice (Wehbi, 2011). Experiential activities also allow students the opportunity to try their hand at social change efforts. The majority of these assignments were done in collaboration with other students in the course.

A new topic is selected each time the course is taught. For this course, we examined homelessness and addressed specific issues homeless people faced with the knowledge and thought process of a community psychologist. For the development of this component, the class worked with the local city’s Housing and Community Development (HCD) Department (the department tasked with serving people experiencing homelessness) to ensure that the community-based activities were consistent with community needs. This resulted in several diverse, inter-related learning activities, many of which were community-based. In addition to a standard research paper, students participated in service learning, developed a logic model, and completed a research application assignment. Each of these activities is discussed briefly below.

Service learning. Service learning entails working in the community to address a particular community need (Jacoby, 1996) and is regularly incorporated into community psychology education (McMahon, et al., 2015). Service learning simultaneously meets the goals of providing experiential learning opportunities for students, while addressing a social problem via community participation and empowerment (Marullo & Edwards, 2000), and is consistent with a FCPP approach. For our course, students conducted 10 service-learning hours with a local agency (or agencies) of their choice that served the homeless. Students could work all 10 hours in the same agency or split their time among multiple agencies. This flexibility was intentional; it helped give students greater ownership in the course, and thus aligned

with the FCPP goals of relinquishing power to the students where possible via participatory, collaborative learning. As not all students were familiar with the local area, they were given a partial list of local agencies serving the homeless (e.g., area shelters, food banks, etc.) as a starting point.

Instructor perspective. Several students took ownership over the service learning component of the course. This was exciting for me to see as an instructor, as it signified FCPP goals were being met. One group of students, having limitations that made it difficult to complete their service learning at a local agency, completed the assignment by developing and running their own food distribution program. Beforehand, the students met with me to get feedback on their plan, such as where and when to distribute food, what types of food to distribute (the group decided on pre-packaged granola bars, water, and fruit), and what to expect. The student team distributed their food packages to homeless residents over the course of two weekends. Student reflective papers indicated this was a powerful learning experience for them.

Logic model. Towards the end of the semester, students worked alongside others in the class to create logic models of resources in the local community to address a problem of the students' choosing related to homelessness. Logic models have been used successfully in the undergraduate community psychology classroom, helping both convey course content and empowering students to make change in their communities (Zimmerman, Kamal, & Kim, 2013). Students were given an overview of logic models and presented with several examples. Then, working in collaboration with other students, students spent several class periods generating their own logic models. The use of a group project facilitated FCPP goals of collaborative learning. Students were encouraged to bring their own experiences (both inside and outside of the course) into

their final product, which aligns with FCPP's reflexive approach to learning.

Research application paper. Finally, students rounded out their experiential assignments by writing a paper in which they, based on their learned experiences with the other experiential assignments, designed practical solutions to real-world problems homeless people in the community experienced. This is the only assignment developed for the course which did not explicitly include feminist pedagogy. The city of Salisbury's HCD partnered with the class for this component of the course. The HCD approached the instructor and asked for assistance in addressing the needs of several people experiencing homelessness which their office was grappling with. All the situations were ones in which a unique, complex constellation of concerns made provision of services under the existing structure of community services delivery problematic or impossible. For instance, one scenario entailed a person who was recently released from prison and was on disability. However, due to the person's incarceration, their disability had been terminated, and the renewal period would take time. The person had no family in the area, and was therefore experiencing homelessness. The HCD provided eight of these types of problem-based scenarios; students selected one case to work with.

In writing their paper, students were asked to write an analysis and recommendation of how to best address the person's situation. The students were to draw on empirical literature used for their research paper, and to incorporate best practices for working to address homelessness. Students were asked to explicitly identify the ecological level(s) their intervention would be implemented at. Student papers were shared with the HCD. The HCD was interested in implementing Juliet's ideas, and she met with the city to learn how to put her ideas into action.

Student perspective. The research application assignment proved to be harder than

expected due to the complexities involved. My proposed project, entitled “Card Carriers,” consisted of a plan that offered community members who met eligibility criteria a multitude of services (such as vouchers for food, laundry, and other vital services) at free or reduced rates, paired with a mentoring relationship with the Salisbury Police Department. The head of the HCD was interested in discussing my ideas with me, as they matched some of the ideas for potential programs that the office already had in mind. I therefore set up a meeting and went downtown. It was my first experience consulting and I went in expecting the town would implement my project exactly the way I presented it. This was not what happened. There were many constraints that the department had to work through, including limitations in funding, labor, and time to work on the project. A large portion of my program was centered around an unevaluated taskforce in Houston. I had no empirical evidence that the program would work in a considerably smaller city. The city HCD was interested in the idea, yet expressed caution in implementing an approach that had only been implemented in a metropolitan area. After funding other programs, the HCD had minimal funding available to devote to my idea. I was surprised to learn that the HCD, while interested in my ideas, was unable to carry them out without significant assistance from me, coupled with funding from a government grant, which I was asked to apply for. Unfortunately, the HCD, while liking my idea, decided it was not feasible to implement.

Learning of these constraints was somewhat surprising. I had spent much of my time thinking through the development of the program, and I did not anticipate that the resources to implement the program were not available. This experience was a wakeup call to the difficulties of applying community psychology principles in a real-life setting. In class, we learned about how program design should include consideration of available resources, including time, properly-trained

staff, and money; and how program implementation is often not ideal due to lack of various resources. This experience allowed me to witness that textbook knowledge of community psychology was not enough to design a successful program. A community psychologist could have a well-designed program with empirical evidence that it will benefit the people, but its implementation heavily depends on the resources of the community and the decisions of those in charge. Ideally, existing resources and stakeholder perspectives should be incorporated into the design of a program.

Development of FCP Pedagogy: Concluding Thoughts and Next Steps

This paper outlined an initial attempt at teaching undergraduate community psychology from a feminist community psychology pedagogical approach. As community psychologists, we are well-situated to integrate alternative pedagogies into the traditional educational framework. Pedagogies such as the approach presented here are relevant to our discipline and have been applied in other classroom contexts. Using an FCPP approach in the classroom, specifically, aligns with CP principles, values, and practices. It also afforded students with strong, hands-on learning experiences, and encouraged greater student responsibility for their own learning.

In our experience, an FCPP approach in the undergraduate classroom provides these benefits to students, and more. However, as we have noted throughout this paper, there are limitations to its full integration as an undergraduate teaching pedagogy, and challenges to its implementation. These include broad challenges in terms of decisions about the extent to which and how to implement FCPP, challenges pertaining to the impact FCPP might have on classroom direction and dialogue (including the possibility of “opening the door” for bigoted ideas in the classroom), as well as challenges specific to the delivery of course content, such

as encouraging students to think ecologically and facilitating dialogue about sensitive topics. In this last section, we conclude with some thoughts on where to go from here in the development of FCPP.

One key challenge entailed decisions over how much of a FCPP framework to incorporate into the course. Full implementation of FCPP may not be possible, as the instructor-student relationship is inherently unequal and limited in power-sharing ability (e.g., Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017). While the unequal power distribution between instructor and students is evident in all classrooms, we argue this is particularly true for undergraduate classrooms, when students are newer to the discipline of psychology and hierarchies between student and instructor are perhaps most pronounced and reinforced on an institutional level. The instructor is ultimately responsible for student learning. As such, decisions must be made both before the course started and on a class-by-class basis regarding the extent to which instructor control could be relinquished to students. There are also structural and institutional limitations in the extent to which FCPP could be implemented, which significantly impacted students' experiences in the course. For instance, the need for a defined, static syllabus with a set list of assignments and relative point value presented to students at the start of the semester meant that the class projects had to be selected in advance, violating the power sharing principle of feminist pedagogy.

Instructor perspective. The limits of my ability to fully integrate FCPP into my course is most apparent in the social change projects. Ideally, I would have preferred students work collectively to identify and execute a community change project. However, time limitations and IRB concerns hindered my ability to have students identify a community need, and design and implement a project in the course of one semester, particularly if they desired to work with vulnerable

populations and/or collect data. Thus, I instead selected a topic *for* students (violating FCPP principles of power-sharing), based on community need and an identified agency who was willing to work with us. As collaboration with the HCD required that their needs be met, I built the assignments (particularly, the applied research paper) around the HCD's request. This decision, while in line with best-practices for partnering with outside organizations, limited student participatory action, and as a result, this particular assignment was not reflective of the FCPP approach I was aiming for. For liability reasons, there were also limitations placed on students' ability to interact and work with people experiencing homelessness in a participatory action setting (as this work was completed outside of formal inter-agency agreements), which significantly impacted students' experiences. My experiences here demonstrate the tensions that can exist when implementing both a CP and a feminist approach in the classroom, and highlights the dilemma posited by Whelan and Lawthom (2009), who argue that feminist pedagogy doesn't always align with requirements for community practice settings. Unfortunately, as feminist pedagogy is not often implemented in the undergraduate classroom, there were few existing guidelines to follow.

Using an FCPP framework presented additional challenges in the classroom on a day-by-day basis. Shared instructor-student control of the course meant that the course of each class period was not fully developed in advance. This led to several interesting and unexpected discussions, and unique learning experiences that would not have otherwise occurred. However, this approach also increased the possibility of students expressing problematic or bigoted ideas that were not in line with a community psychology approach. Further, I had to often make last-minute decisions as to what course content to lecture on, based on what topics students presented and how thoroughly and accurately students covered course content. It

was often the case that lectures I had prepared were abandoned, because student presenters had done such a thorough job of teaching the course content. It was also the case that student presentations were sometimes *better*—both in terms of coverage of content and in terms of presentation style and formatting—than lectures that I had prepared. I realized instructors have a lot to learn from their students on how to construct a good lecture. And, although this approach meant that some discussions were problematic or outside the scope of CP, some of the best classroom discussions arose from increasing student control over the course.

Any undergraduate classroom is likely to face challenges in regards to encouraging students to think ecologically, exhibit ownership over learning, and fully engage with sensitive, uncomfortable, or challenging course content. FCPP is not unique in those regards. However, we theorize that these challenges might be further amplified in the FCPP undergraduate classroom, as students are additionally navigating a teaching style and classroom structure that is likely foreign. By the time students enter an upper-division course, they had been exposed to several semesters worth of coursework and research and have a strong set of expectations of what “should” comprise an undergraduate psychology course. These factors were anticipated to be a barrier to student growth and learning, and therefore were addressed early on in the class. However, implementation of an FCPP classroom might be easier if students are exposed to basic community psychology concepts earlier in their college career. For this reason, Jimenez and colleagues (2016) suggested that undergraduate students be exposed early to community psychology, including in introductory psychology courses. We agree that this approach could help smooth students’ transition into upper-division FCPP taught courses.

Teaching from an FCPP approach, and particularly relinquishing a good degree of

control to the student, resulted in challenges regarding presentation of course content that are absent from other classrooms. There is always the risk that students will present information in a confusing—or worse, inaccurate—way. Students who are already marginalized may experience further oppression from these discussions (Lichy & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017). In order to teach using a FCPP framework, instructors have to be particularly adept at responding to confusing or inaccurate information in a way that is corrective, protective of marginalized students, and fair, but in a way that does not undermine student authority in the classroom. It is difficult for instructors to not only manage student reactions to certain content, but also “correct” content provided by students, in a way which is not oppositional to FCPP’s idea of collaborative, non-hierarchical learning. Those interested in FCPP need to acquire additional skills on holding sensitive discussions at the undergraduate level in ways that both facilitate student learning while also minimizing this risk. Targeted training in how to teach using reflexive methods would be useful to instructors who want to teach from an FCPP framework at the undergraduate level.

In this paper, we tried to present a description of how FCPP could be applied in the undergraduate classroom. However, there are other teaching approaches, such as critical pedagogy, integrated learning, or inquiry approaches, which might also nicely align with the discipline of community psychology. More discussion and resources are needed for those interested in teaching from one of these pedagogical approaches at the undergraduate level.

In line with recommendations by Lichy and Palamaro-Munsell (2017), we believe that what is needed at this juncture is an increased and intentional focus on the development and application of best pedagogical practices for teaching community psychology, including FCPP. SCRA is well-

situated to provide support and designate formal resources towards the professional development of distinctly community psychology-informed pedagogies and teaching practices. The development of such pedagogies can advance the field and assist in resolving some of the dilemmas CPs face in the undergraduate classroom (Lichy & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017). This would have the additional benefit of further differentiating CP from other subdisciplines of psychology, and of sparking innovative growth in the field.

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