A Critical Writing Pedagogy toward Mental Health:
Novice Teachers and Collective Memory Work

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Dedication

For Erin, Kari, and Leyla

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Abstract

Trauma studies in education (Dutro & Bien, 2015) emphasize that while teachers and students may experience acute traumatic events, they are also subjected to the ongoing trauma of institutional spaces that attempt to bracket the emotional from the cognitive. This study engages novice teachers in critical writing pedagogy to examine what teaching is doing to teachers. To engage in critical writing pedagogy, novice teachers participated in collective memory work (Haug, 1999) to write and analyze memories from teaching.

Critical writing pedagogy is an urgent area of study. Defined as an approach to teaching writing that engages cognitive, sociocultural, and critical orientations (Kline & Kang, 2022), critical writing pedagogy is necessarily evolving and contextualized (Kamler, 2001; Anzaldúa, 1987). This interpretative study (Erickson, 1986) analyzes novice teachers' engagement with artifacts, collective analysis, and "rewrite questions" to theorize what is possible in a critical writing pedagogy toward mental health.

This study is significant because of the way critical writing pedagogy revealed the mental health of the novice teachers *to them*. Findings demonstrate how artifacts interrupted self-gaslighting, the tendency to minimize or suppress the trauma, pain, or uncertainty (Bendt, 2020). Collective analysis invited introspection, generated consensus, and called out the unreasonable. The outcome of "rewrite questions" is interpreted as a space for addressing discomfort (Kumashiro, 2002) and unsettling emotions such as resentment. Informed by a framework of critical writing pedagogy according to Kamler (2001) and Anzaldúa (1987), this study highlights how relocating the personal and sustaining contradictions with a collective can increase the visibility and accessibility of mental health.

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We can sit in our corners mute forever while our sisters and ourselves are wasted, while our children are distorted and destroyed, while our earth is poisoned; we can sit in our safe corners mute as bottles, and we will still be no less afraid.

(Lorde, 1984, p. 42)

for the mute

they will blow from your mouth one morning

like from a shook bottle

and you will try to keep them for

tomorrow's conversation but

your patience will be broken when the

bottle bursts

and you will spill all of your

extraordinary hearings for there are

too many languages for

one mortal tongue.

(Clifton, 1987, p. 207)

Chapter 1

Introduction and Imagination

I color coded some things. And I started with just one color for positives and negatives. And I realized that some of the negatives were very different from other negatives. Some of them were trauma at school. Other things were just like, I didn't like this unit. So, I have a trauma color and a negative color.
(Erin, 2020-21 Timeline Description)

Radical pedagogy needs a vision – one that celebrates not what is but what could be, that looks beyond the immediate to the future and links struggle to a new set of human possibilities.
(Giroux, 1983, p. 242)

In one way or another, I've always been a dreamer. (My password to my student login freshman year of college was dreamscometrue.) I hold my gaze with the issues but before long I tilt my head left and begin to scheme about what could be. We are skilled at identifying the problem or issues; we have mastered complaint and critique. We need to direct some of that powerful energy towards imagining. In the common presentation of the "problem" or "issue" in dissertations, the imagination is often reserved for the end. I begin by offering a story of radical imagination.

In 2006, I was a senior at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Although not yet carrying the diagnosis of bi-polar, I was heading into a manic state unlike no other. In mania, imagination is boundless. Imagined change is not fraught with barriers but rather steeped in dopamine and exploding with possibilities. In this particular onset of a manic episode, I was a student in the School of Education studying to become a secondary English teacher. I recently had watched the film *Elephant* directed by Gus Van Sant. The film centered on the fatal shootings at Columbine High School. It traced multiple perspectives of students on April 20, 1999, the day of the shooting. I was enamored by this approach to depict the mental health of a

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school – the tracing of individuals in a stitched sociocultural context. With mania blooming, I reserved a hall on campus to seat 250 people, developed a website with approaches to writing multiple perspectives, and then the kicker – I had 300 orange t-shirts made with an elephant printed on the front and a quote on the back: *Radical pedagogy needs a vision – one that celebrates not what is but what could be*. I imagined that if people saw the film, they may try to teach students to write multiple perspectives – and maybe mental health in schools might be more visible and therefore urgent. Radical.

I am often jealous of this state of mind – it is literally peak brain potential. The brain's operating speed triples. Imagination in mania should not be disregarded; it is an uninhibited access to possibilities. Mania becomes dangerous for me when I am unable to maintain rational relationships with others and work. But the imagination – the imagination is beautiful. The reserved auditorium and desire to teach multiple perspectives in writing is still a dream of mine. And an urgent one given the mental health of schools coupled with the devastating increase in gun violence. The film never played for an audience in Madison. I was hospitalized before the date of the event. The orange elephant radical pedagogy t-shirts were ordered through a friend's company who graciously let me pay for them over the course of a year. My family and close friends wear these very t-shirts every year for an annual walk and fundraiser for NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). Imagine that.

I regularly contemplate the audacity of imagination. It is rare for me to act as I did when I was manic – making decisions with immediate trust and belief in my imagination. In the time that has transpired since my experience as a student in teacher education, I have become a teacher, an advisor, a teacher educator, and a researcher. This research study invites novice teachers to engage with critical writing pedagogy. In this introductory chapter, I describe the

realities of teaching for novice teachers and imagine the possibilities of critical writing pedagogy.

Novice Teachers

I am sure most of us will never forget – even though we may try – the beginning of COVID-19 in the United States in March of 2020. I had just finished teaching an eight-week course titled *Composition in the Secondary School.* My teacher candidates were excited to "get out in the field" and make relationships and teach over planned units. But rather than entering spring-hyped middle or high schools, their student teaching experience was moved fully online. In defiance of the world's desperate attempt to "do things the same even though they were obviously very different," we applied for a variance for our teaching candidates to be excused from the EdTPA. We received the variance on the condition that the university provide a mentor for our teacher candidates during their first semester in their own classrooms.

During the fall of 2020, as part of a stipulation to grant licensure to the English Education teacher candidates, I served as a mentor for about 20 novice teachers during their first months of teaching. Fall 2020 started for me like no other academic year. I, like most K-12 teachers, taught daily to a grid of black Zoom boxes and would rely on the chat for some source of humanity. I was teaching courses in teacher education, taking PhD classes, and sitting in meetings upstairs in a deep blue corner room. These were the early days of Zoom everything.

It was across these one-on-one Zoom mentoring sessions with novice teachers that I saw the residue from the layered crises. I was always amazed by what could be narrated by a novice teacher in a 30-minute session. For example, one first year teacher shared an elaborate "failed" attempt to change a canonical White course text towards "something less oppressive." One teacher, having never met any of her students in person, took me through the entire class roster

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commenting over and over, "I don't know if this student exists." Another novice teacher joined the Zoom meeting and opened by asking me about how to counsel a student whose parent recently died from COVID-19. Then, the next novice teacher signed in and held up her cell phone up to the screen to show me the texting thread with the cohort about how to "teach about the election but not center Trump." I remember one novice teacher narrated an attempt at hybrid learning. The second week her students were back in the building, they walked out. And she did too. They headed for the capital only blocks from their school in a protest against police brutality. As the students shouted, "Fuck the police!", a teacher leaned over to the novice teacher and said, "We should make them stop." This novice teacher looked back and responded, "But this isn't school." Amid these challenges, there was the heavy and prolonged everyday crisis of teaching in ways – online, hybrid, or masked – they had never imagined.

I met with each novice teacher about every two weeks, which meant that each week I was talking to five to ten novice teachers online. They were meeting me during their preps or their lunches. They had been "teachers" for a whole two to three months and most had never set foot in their new schools or classrooms. The common desires for belonging and competency were there. Layered on top was navigating a new school space through attachments sent from a team lead by email and daily decisions to teach a prescribed curriculum or address uncertainties surrounding COVID-19, racial injustice, or the Trump-Biden election. These compounding crises hung low, like clouds heavy with rain. These encounters with novice teachers I cared deeply about for was the fuel to the fire to design this study centered on critical writing pedagogy. Teacher education programs rarely engage teachers post-graduation – and here I was witness to all the ways they were not prepared, the ways they were overwhelmed, and the ways teaching preyed on their mental health.

Witnesses and Responders

The state of political and social upheaval was of extreme importance to these specific novice teachers. George Floyd was murdered on May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis, only miles from campus, their school sites, and many of their homes. Their *GroupMe* chat fully transformed into activism as they met up for the next Black Lives Matter protest, initiated fundraising for Minneapolis students, started anti-racist lesson plans for the online world, and clung to each other for tangible means of hope and resistance. There were multiple pandemics at large; COVID-19 exacerbated and overshadowed the pandemic of racial injustice. Amid the hybrid, distance learning, and in person models of teaching because of COVID-19, these novice teachers navigated the need to build relationships with students and respond to their trauma.

Trauma studies in education (Dutro & Bien, 2015) emphasize that while teachers and students may experience acute traumatic events, they are also subjected to the ongoing trauma of institutional spaces that attempt to bracket the emotional and personal from the cognitive. School for students, especially students of color, are sites for what trauma studies refer to as "accumulated marginalization" (Dutro & Bien, 2015, p. 13). In further examining the role of trauma in classrooms, Dutro and Bien (2015) consider "lived experience carried into classrooms and the consequences of heeding, interpreting, and representing such stories" (p. 8) Teachers are engaged in the roles of witness, listener, and responder. From my computer screen that fall semester, I witnessed these particular novice teachers with wonder, asking myself question after question: How have they witnessed, listened, and responded to their students? How does their trauma intersect with their students and their trauma? How are they carrying the weight of this year? What will they do with these memories?

What does Teaching do to Teachers?

Britzman in *Practice Makes Practice* (2003) draws on Willard Waller's question: "What does teaching do to teachers?" (p. 25). I find this to be an old and unresolved question. Britzman (2003) notes, "this question opens the underside of teaching, the private struggles we engage as we construct not only our teaching practices and all the relationships this entails, but our teaching voices and identities" (p. 25). This study aims to engage novice teachers in critical writing pedagogy to examine what teaching is doing to teachers. "Rarely disclosed by teachers themselves . . . are the more private aspects of pedagogy: coping with competing definitions of success and failure, and one's own sense of vulnerability and credibility" (Britzman, 2003, p. 28). While most professions are in desperate need of an analysis of the impact on workers' mental health, it is novice teachers who are in my field of vision, occupying my head and heart, and propelling me to engage.

Novice teachers have held my interest and care for quite some time. I pay close attention to novice teachers for several reasons. I, like so many veteran teachers, can still return to this period of induction and transition and feel the embodied struggles as I learned to navigate my positionality. As a teacher educator, I have often wondered about how the preservice teachers who had been in our focused care are functioning in their respective new school spaces. I also have sustained personal and professional interests in mental health. While pursuing an M.Ed. in the School of Social Work, I worked as an advisor in the student counseling center. I am also an adult functioning with a mental disability. At the time of the study, the well-being of novice teachers especially held my interest and care because in the mentoring sessions the angst, resentment, and the tendency to look inward and blame the self could not be ignored; it was repeated from one Zoom meeting to the next.

Despite alarming attrition rates and teacher burnout, new teachers still do not receive adequate amounts of support, such as new-teacher induction programs or one-on-one mentorship, to help them better cope with the challenges of learning to teach (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Marlow, Inman, & Betancourt-Smith, 1997; Oliveria, et al., 2021). Induction programs vary greatly by school sites. Across research on induction processes, it is found that processes that are formal, structured, and planned, integrating mentorship, professional development, and affinity spaces, are the most successful in novice teacher retention and mental health (Bickmore & Curry, 2013; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Personal needs for novice teachers are cited as positive interpersonal relationships with colleagues; progressive collaborations with administrators, teachers, and parents; perceptions of open-door access to leadership; work–life balance; and positive school environment (Boyd et al., 2011; Curry & Bickmore, 2012; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012). While induction programs and mentoring are increasing, beginning teachers, as in the case of all the teachers invited for the study, are still routinely expected to take a regular teaching load and often additional positions such as coaching or teaching electives (Hurling-Austin, 1992). Many novice teachers search for footing on very unstable ground. And many leave when they don't – 41% of novice teachers leave the profession within five years of entry (Perda, 2013). Two of the three novice teachers in this study left the classroom after three years or less of teaching.

Multiple reviews correlate burnout, depression, anxiety, and stress to the teaching profession (Agyapong et al., 2022). Britzman (2003) attributes much of teachers' burnout and stress to "three cultural myths: everything depends on the teacher, teachers are self-made, and teachers are experts" (Britzman, 2003, p. 7). "[Cultural myths] situate the teacher's individuality as the problem and proffer a static solution of authority, control, mastery, and certainty as the

proper position. They seem to explain competency as the absence of conflict" (Britzman, 2003, p. 7). This constant retreat to blame individual teachers negates the evidence that there are widespread issues of mental health. Falecki and Mann (2021), in discussing practical application of teacher well-being, notes that "mental health and well-being should not be addressed as an individual concern but rather an organizational one, in part because of the ways teachers' social roles impact youth at large" (p. 179). At the time of the study design, I was inundated with portraits of novice teachers seeking support, collectivity, and relief. While there is ample research about teacher burnout, especially in the wake of COVID-19, a wide knowledge gap still exists about how socioemotional strategies, self-care, and other approaches may affect teacher well-being (Flores, 2022). This study offers an insight into the ways critical writing pedagogy may offer a structured yet personal approach to addressing the mental health of novice teachers.

Research Trajectory

I offer my research trajectory here as an introduction to the ways I have imagined critical writing pedagogy. I trace my teaching engagements, specifically around writing, to demonstrate how I have engaged critical writing pedagogy towards wholeness and well-being. My first teaching position was 7th grade English at Community of Peace Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota. After the community building and ulcers of the first year, I entered the second school year with 8th graders. After having already spent one year with my students, I was eager about the possibilities of our collective. I applied and received a grant through the local literacy center. Some students selected artifacts representative of home and engaged with them in fictional yet honest conversation. Students worked with heirlooms, songs, or recipes from their grandparents. This was one of the first times as a teacher that I invited artifacts into the participant structure (Rogoff, 2003; Rowsell & Pahl, 2001). I would not have called it critical writing pedagogy at the

time, but I was playing with who and what was allowed in. The invitation for relationality

elicited multiple perspectives in the collective story of *home.*

Shortly after teaching middle school, I followed new love to Switzerland and taught in IB

school for five years. The students, colleagues, languages, and cultures huddled learning together

is still unparalleled to any experience I have had. Yet, at the end of the five years it became

glaringly obvious to me that I was teaching a prescriptive writing pedagogy to 11th and 12th

graders desperate to pass IB exams and qualify for the schools of their parents' choice. I

employed acronyms and graphic organizers and provided the detailed and harsh feedback they

asked for. Bewildered and disheartened, I knew I could not teach writing like this. The feeling of

ineffectiveness propelled me to apply to the graduate program in Youth Development

Leadership. Here, in the company of youth workers from correctional facilities, homeless

shelters, youth programming, and policy reform, I found myself amid people who saw work with

youth as an opportunity for relationship, action, and intervention.

As a part of a seminal project for an M.Ed. in Youth Development Leadership, I engaged

in a writers' workshop with Audrey Lensmire and a small collective of first year teachers. From

our work together, we wrote about our experience with artifacts and each other in a book titled,

(Re)Narrating Teacher Identity: Telling Truths and Becoming Teachers. In the book, I tell the

story about writing pedagogy like this:

My greatest frustration looking back over my shoulder was that I could see the usefulness

and purpose of writing falling short and flat—especially in schools. In its utilization to

reproduce knowledge, writing often became inaccessible and unappealing as a tool to

affect well-being. When I requested writing in my language-arts or world-literature

classroom to move past representation of a grade or course content—to

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be reflective, narrative, perhaps raw and exposing—it became dangerously, wholly representative of the student or student's experience. (Lensmire & Schick, 2017, p. 19)

Testing out and revising writing pedagogy has been central to my work across many years and educational settings. In *(Re)Narrating Teacher Identity: Telling Truths and Becoming Teachers,* we wanted the writing about ourselves to be a resource for each other. Using artifacts, we cracked open narratives about how teaching preyed upon our insecurities and hurt our mental health. The stories we wrote were not individual confessions but rather stories that excavated truths about teaching.

As a PhD student in Curriculum and Instruction, I continued to find ways to engage and explore critical writing pedagogy. This was the first time I engaged in collective memory work (Haug, 1999). Collective memory work is an approach to writing that engages writers in writing and collectively analyzing memories on a specific topic or issue. We were a small group of three instructors in the English Education licensure program; our daily lives had begun to intertwine from the onset of my experience in the PhD program. Abby, one of the members, suggested collective memory work as she had participated in a former group. At the time, my son was five months old. I was at the beginning of the returning-to-work process where my head and heart were breathing his soft skin while my body was teaching future teachers. Once we agreed to enter collective memory work together, I began to learn about the process from my two colleagues and our experience together.

During the collective memory work process, experiences like our lengthy check-ins, laughter, sharing of hand-me-down clothes, and asking difficult questions made us aware and curious about the emergence of a new community of mother scholars. Lave and Wegner (1991) define a community of practice as "a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over

time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice" (p. 98). In our collective, we found analyzing *only* our written memories (Haug, 1999) limiting and unrepresentative of our participation. We wondered about the immediate and long-term effects of our collective power. As commonly ignored in critical writing pedagogy research, peer to peer interaction, reflected here in collectivity, is a powerful force in shaping writing and the writer's subjectivity (Lensmire, 2000).

Engaging in collective memory work in a mother-scholar collective, and later in a queer and feminist collective, provided experience as a participant and the permission to shift the process as needed to meet the curiosities and needs of a particular group. Beyond collective memory work, my experience working in Secondary English Education, specifically as an instructor for the course *Teaching Composition in the Secondary School,* provided room to teach critical writing pedagogy. In this course, I explored multimodality and supported preservice teachers in the development of units centered on critical writing. Further, I often took up new writing practices in seminar spaces. During the 2020-21 academic year, a co-instructor and I led a writers' workshop on race. In this workshop, preservice teachers engaged in artifactual literacy and poetic inquiry to write about white inheritance. Critical writing pedagogy in this workshop facilitated an investigation of whiteness in sociocultural contexts from education to family.

This research trajectory demonstrates the ways in writing is central to my teaching pedagogy. As a middle school and high school teacher, I have consistently struggled with the accessibility to writing as a means towards well-being. As a post-secondary teacher educator, I sought ways to integrate critical writing to encourage writers to locate themselves in sociocultural contexts (Kamler, 2001; Anzaldúa, 1987). As I navigate new spaces and

relationships, I will continue to imagine ways critical writing pedagogy can be integrated in my teaching pedagogy and centered in my research.

Critical Writing Pedagogy

In this study, I interpret and analyze a critical writing pedagogy. To introduce critical writing pedagogy, I turn to Sonia Kline and Grace Kang. As teacher educators, Kline and Kang are invested in engaging preservice and in-service teachers on an "ongoing inquiry toward transformative and humanizing critical writing pedagogy" (Kline & Kang, 2022, p. 309).

Critical writing pedagogy is an approach to teaching writing that engages cognitive, sociocultural, and critical orientations (Kline & Kang, 2022). Teaching writing from a cognitive orientation emphasizes that writing is recognized as "a complex problem-solving activity" (p. 301). Sociocultural orientations inquire, critique, and attend to writer's social and cultural world. Critical orientations disrupt status quo and commonplace assumptions by engaging multiple perspectives. Further, a critical orientation entails "investigating sociopolitical issues and taking actions to promote justice" (Kline & Kang, 2022, p. 302). Kline and Kang (2022) emphasize, "There is no set blueprint for enacting critical writing pedagogy. This is part of the challenge and the joy" (p. 306). Enacting critical writing pedagogy will look different based on context, writers' histories and identities, and practices. The cognitive, sociocultural, and critical orientations are useful in imagining a critical writing pedagogy.

As I approached critical writing pedagogy with novice teachers, I drew on Kamler's (2001) assertion that critical writing pedagogy is not a set approach but rather an evolving and necessarily contextualized approach to writing. In chapter 2, I theorize particular aspects of critical writing pedagogy important to me; I stitch a theoretical framework committed to conceptions of relocation and contradiction (Kamler, 2001; Anzaldúa, 1987). In chapters 4, 5,

and 6, I analyze how critical writing pedagogy, enacted through collective memory work, worked towards engaging the mental health of novice teachers.

Urgency

I rely on and move forward with researchers and educators who have acted with urgency to develop and put multi-textual, multi-sensual, and critical writing pedagogies into action (Anzaldúa, 1987; Kirkwood, 2004; Kamler, 2001; Park, 2005). While reading the November 2020 issue of Council Chronicle from the National Council of English, I found myself breathing deeply as I tried to comprehend what David Kirkland (2020) imagines for the future,

> We must collectively act, with an acknowledgement that something has happened and, indeed, has always been happening to our most vulnerable students. . . . From an antiracist education perspective, the action required right now has little to do with content knowledge or skills, but must be about healing ourselves, our systems, and our students from the global pandemic that afflicts our world with biases, infecting countless institutions—English education not exempted—with a disease of sight that make these institutions incapable of seeing certain bodies as valued or valuable or even human.
>
> (p. 33)

Kirkland, like many educators, made a loud call in the wake of George Floyd's killing to reexamine the action and efforts we choose to take up in schools. This call is urgent and directed to his target audience – English Education. From the perspective of antiracist education, he urges a decentering of content in pursuit of actively imagining "healing ourselves, our systems, and our students from the global pandemic that afflicts our world with biases."

Kirkland (2004) made an earlier call linking writing to hope in "Rewriting Schools: Critical Pedagogy in the Writing Classroom." Here he wrote, "Currently, many K-12 pedagogies

of writing simply impose hegemonic and formulaic procedures upon students and do not readily reflect the kinds of text that many students compose in their daily lives" (p. 84). Kirkland articulated the cost for students, especially students of color as undesirable options: "acculturate into the dominant textual world by forsaking their linguistic and textual backgrounds or fail in school" (p. 84). My experience in teaching middle and high school English is filled with "logocentric pedagogies that endorse standardized and monocultural writing expressions" (p. 85). I do not argue to extinguish all *logos* thinking; on the contrary, similar to Kirkland, I advocate for critical writing pedagogies aimed to address the crisis and well-being of our immediate worlds.

If collectivity and healing are integral to our futures as educators and students, writing must actively work in this direction. Writing solely from logocentric pedagogy, or in efforts to reproduce knowledge, resulting in a disguising process – one that ignores alternative ways to compose. There is a particular reification of language that occurs when only particular writing practices are legitimized. School spaces hold the opportunity to expand the narrative on the capacities of writing.

Novice Teachers

Holding Kirkland's call to collectivity and healing, I think about my unique and political relationships and contexts – and my care (Bozalek, Zembylas & Tronto, 2020). As evidenced by Kirkland, critical writing pedagogy is an urgent area of study that has lacked attention and fervor. The opportunity to analyze and make visible the effects of collective and critical writing practices is a valuable contribution to the evolving field of critical writing pedagogy. The invitation to engage in collective and critical writing practices is an important intervention and counter strategy for the well-being of novice teachers. As shared earlier, Kirkland (2020) in

response to the COVID-19 and systematic racism pandemics stated: "We must act, with an acknowledgement that something has happened and, indeed, has always been happening" (p. 33). While the traumas experienced during the 2020-21 year are significant and deserve reckoning, we must consider how approaches to writing can provide new and collective strategies for understanding our past and ongoing traumas as teachers.

Teachers will continue to experience, witness, and respond to trauma (Dutro & Bien, 2015). I designed this study imagining that participating in collective memory work may provide an understanding of resilience in terms of shared humanity and provide space to develop collective coping strategies or resistance. Further, collective writing and analysis may provide an opportunity to engage with contradictions and resist repeating identities. Collective and honest spaces are necessary to facilitate the reimagining of teaching and approach the future with acknowledgement and engagement of our past.

The Collective

In this section, I describe my intersectionality and include a short biography of each of the novice teachers. I hope these introductory descriptions are helpful in holding a sense of each of us individually and as a collective as you move through the dissertation. Further, drawing on the earlier section detailing research around the impact of teaching on teachers, I invite you to view the novice teachers presented here as a part of the larger sociocultural context. Their stories and positionalities are not to be imagined in a vacuum. Garcia (2020) in describing methodological dignity reminds us: "Positionality is not something to disclose and get out of the way. Rather, it is ongoing and fluid" (p.407). I spend time here to describe who I am and the way it intersects with the novice teachers in this study. Afterwards, I share a description of Erin, Kari,

and Leyla from my perspective and interactions with them over multiple years. The stories and identities presented here are partial, ongoing, and fluid.

Anna

It was three days before my first day as a first-year teacher. I unlocked my new classroom and took a deep breath in. It still smelled like fresh paint. Today I planned to set up my library. I dropped my bag on the empty teacher's desk and walked out the room. Bao Vang, the 6th grade teacher, was walking down the ramp. "Why are you so dressed up, school hasn't even started yet?" she asked with a warm smile. I glanced down at my black dress shirt, new yellow consignment slacks, and black wedges. I tried to think of something creative to say, but instead I just smiled back and shrugged. I was already playing the part; I took this profession seriously.

Years later when I was teaching high school in Switzerland, a colleague twice my age would always tease and say, "I hope I'm as smart as you when I grow up." When it came to teaching, I constantly strove to fill the ambiguous form of *teacher*. As a teacher educator, I routinely teach Erica Meiners' (2002) "Disengaging from the Legacy of Lady Bountiful in Teacher Education Classrooms" to future teachers. Meiners evokes the historical colonial context that produced the archetype of the white Lady Bountiful. The persistence of the archetype of white, feminine, maternal, overworked, and underpaid teacher in teacher education, K-12 school systems, and popular culture contributes to the climate of white supremacy, heteronormative, and social class in education. Further, this archetype presents an elusive comparative for teachers; many will spend a career unconsciously chasing it at the cost of their mental health. The endurance of a white Lady Bountiful will also undoubtedly discourage or discredit other bodies from joining the teaching profession. Meiners' (2002) Lady Bountiful, along with Madeleine Grumet's (1988) historical depiction of the teacher as a woman who could control and be

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controlled, are evoked in my classes to invite preservice teachers into an ongoing investigation of the ways we are complicit in adhering to this dominant and [self] damaging figure of *teacher*.

I share the depiction of Lady Bountiful here to highlight that my identity as a white, middle class, cis-gendered female teacher aligns with and has often mirrored qualities of Lady Bountiful. I believe adhering to this identity, even unintentionally, is a contributing factor to the status of my mental health as a teacher. My calm and control in a classroom have never met my internalized expectations. Further, the novice teachers in this study portray many of the maternal and feminine expectations etched in the teacher profession. As social justice oriented, anti-racist, and humane teachers, they care about and call out injustices, with or without support. Their work is urgent and needed for youth development yet undervalued and personally taxing. In designing this study, my background in social work and understanding of the contributing factors to youth development further prioritized the need to grapple with teachers' mental health. I believe there are multiple ways to address and strengthen systematic and personal conditions for novice teachers; writing is the way I work.

Erin

Erin identifies as a white, cis-gendered female novice teacher and was a member of my admittedly favorite cohort of pre-service teachers. Erin and her classmates were by far the most active, engaged, and responsive group of graduate students I had ever worked with. What I admired most about them was their visible collectivity. There was a willingness to work with everyone. Every year-long cohort usually develops factions, yet this cohort maintained a sense of inclusivity I had not witnessed in the years prior. In this cohort, Erin had a quiet, genuine presence.

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During the *Composition in Secondary Schools* course, Erin developed a unit on climate change where students drew on inanimate objects or animals as speakers about environmental justice. As a PhD student in Literacy Education, I had taken up a particular interest in the use of artifacts in writing; Erin's unit interested me. Before Erin could teach her unit, the spring semester was abruptly moved online due to COVID-19. As mentioned earlier, due to student teaching online, I served as a mentor to this particular group during the fall of 2020. I talked to Erin regularly. During her first year of teaching, she was often in the overwhelmed spot of "creative freedom" – she was responsible for designing the full (online) curriculum for the 7th and 8th grade Language Arts at her urban Charter School.

After the fall mentor sessions, Erin and I kept Zooming. I think I saw myself in Erin more than I did in most novice teachers. As an artist, she had an innate drive to connect students to multimodal and creative work and to ensure that her presentations were as engaging as possible. Erin told me stories through the spring of her first year of teaching – stories about her decisions, her students, and her uncertainties. In our collective memory work, Erin showed up just like she had in our cohort. She was quiet and genuine. She offered up the truth and questions. She started her third year of teaching at new middle school where she is one of only three teachers in her building who volunteered for the Diversity and Equity team (Erin: "Don't others think this is important?"). She grapples with how to teach the prescribed *Lucy Calkins* curriculum to class sizes averaging 36 students when she is still trying to build relationships. She is persisting.

Kari

Kari identifies as a white, cis-gendered female novice teacher and was a member of the 2018-2019 cohort, the cohort before Erin. She was also in the small group of five preservice teachers in my student teaching seminar. Kari was paired with a new cooperating teacher the

program had not partnered with before. I knew right away that I liked Kari when she was willing to discuss challenges with me about her cooperating teacher. She shared about lesson plans she attempted to teach and the push back she received. In our triad meetings, meetings with Kari, her cooperating teacher, and I, we navigated our roles in relation to Kari's learning to teach. Kari's willingness to continue to push the edges of her role of student teacher that spring and keep trying new critical approaches encapsulates Kari in a nutshell.

As a part of her student teaching, Kari also attended a weekly seminar meeting with four other student teachers where we discussed lesson plans and specific moments from the past week. On one particular late spring seminar meeting, Kari had arrived early to talk. We were in the middle of catching up on the week when she received a phone call. She had recently interviewed for 1st year teaching positions. I sat silently on the couch watching her face as she listened to the person on the other side of the phone. She said thank you twice and hung up. "I got the job!" she exclaimed. She had just received a job offer at Urban Magnet Middle School. We decided to walk to a local coffee shop to celebrate prior to the seminar meeting. Four years later, Kari and I met up at the same coffee shop and celebrated her plans to leave the profession. She has received multiple kickbacks from parents, students, and administration in her attempts to design and teach anti-racist curriculum in a relatively red corner of Virginia. She is working her way back into acting, script writing, and wholeness.

Leyla

Leyla identifies as a Somali cis-gendered female novice teacher and was in the same cohort and seminar space with Kari. I have rarely encountered a graduate student, novice teacher, and now Ph.D. colleague who I can talk with at such length and stay so fully engaged. We have had so many conversations in which we drafted our own world and then began to operate within

it. Leyla's relationality and energy is contagious. When Leyla was a graduate student completing her practicum teaching in a middle school, she co-taught Romeo and Juliet and introduced a summative podcasting project about love. In a single summative, she facilitated interview skills and encouraged students to develop genuine questions about love for family members, community members, or peers. Students connected to her quickly and through her assignments they connected to each other as well.

I worked with Leyla through student teaching and later visited her when she became a first-year teacher in a 9th grade English classroom. When I stopped by after school to visit, Leyla was hosting a Muslim student meeting, she introduced me and I listened in on their meeting. As I listened, I sat back and looked around the room. It was so "Leyla." She had the overhead fluorescent lights turned off and standing lamps glowed in the corners of the classroom. The room was a windowless cement block, but she had strung lights from the ceiling breaking up the static square of a classroom. After her meeting ended, she started to tour me around her room. She had set up a "self-care" station for students supplied with lotion, hand sanitizer, Kleenex, and other care items. She talked about desk arrangements and assignment turn in folders. She was settling in but working in all corners of the day.

She lost her job that year as she was the last one hired. In her new school, she was excited about restorative justice. She completed a full year of online teaching during the onset of COVID-19 and then returned the following year for in-person learning. In her return to the classroom, she waited for the return of humanity; instead, she was met with classrooms full of masked students, hallways with fights and pepper spray, and amped up tardy policies. Leyla left the classroom after that third year and shifted her questions and relationality to pursue her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction.

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Investigated and Investigators

These three novice teachers and their histories, commitments, and vulnerabilities offered our collective ample material to investigate. They self-selected to engage in collective memory work; they arrived with a willingness to look back on their memories of teaching and a desire to work in a collective. Haug's (1999) collective memory work positions writers' memories as the subject of the research. She suggests that in a collective we are both the investigated and investigators. We engaged in the opportunity to collectively examine our memories of teaching. We found that, as Haug (1999) notes, "memory-work is a process, which is itself a way and a goal" (p. 29).

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Overview of Chapters

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In the following chapters I interpret how I worked with novice teachers in a collective to develop a critical writing pedagogy as a means of intervening and examining our memories of teaching. This interpretative study (Erickson, 1986) exposes the influence of teaching on novice teachers' subjectivities and analyzes aspects of teachers' mental health. In this introductory chapter, I argue that novice teachers are subjected to cultural myths (Britzman, 2003) and experience stress, burnout, depression, and anxiety in relation to teaching (Agyapong et al., 2022). In the following chapters, I describe and analyze what happened when we engaged in critical writing pedagogy to explore our experiences as teachers.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 theorizes a critical writing pedagogy. A review of literature is first conducted in relation to writing as a means for catharsis and healing. Further, trauma informed writing pedagogy and discussions and viewpoints about writing as therapy are presented to trace approaches to writing about trauma or pain. In the second part of the chapter, I explore theories

of critical writing pedagogy according to Barbara Kamler and Gloria Anzaldúa. I employ a theoretical framework committed to relocation (Kamler, 2001) and contradiction (Anzaldúa, 1987) to guide adaptations to collective memory work (Haug, 1999).

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 outlines the methods and data analysis I used in this interpretative study (Erickson, 1986). The first section discusses my engagement in co-performative witnessing (Conquergood, 1991). I describe two main roles embodied in the study – a facilitator of collective memory work and an interpretative researcher. Next, I explain collective memory work (Haug, 1999). I include adaptations and interweave narratives to bring the reader onsite to visualize collective memory work. Following, I introduce active interviewing (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Afterwards, I detail the data sources, including field notes, artifacts, audio recordings, and transcripts. In the final section of the chapter, I explain my use of in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) to develop interpretive themes and the thinking with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) to analyze specific writing practices.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 focuses on Leyla's narrative description of her glasses as an artifact of the 2020-21 academic year. Artifactual critical literacy (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010) and the concept of figured worlds (Holland, et al., 1998) are employed as theories to analyze the possibilities of artifacts in critical writing pedagogy. Artifacts are discussed as an interruption to self-gaslighting and a physical reminder of pain, uncertainty, or trauma. Further, figured worlds and sedimented identities are analyzed in relation to Leyla's glasses as artifact and a resource for the collective.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 closely analyzes the practice of collective analysis. I share Erin's written memory about teaching online to "circles." To engage a discussion about collective analysis in critical writing pedagogy, I share excerpts from our collective analysis of Erin's memory, specifically in relation to motivation. I theorize collectivity according to Haug (1999), Ahmed (2021), and Nagar (2014). Through these theories of collectivity, I analyze the ways in which collective analysis in our collective invited introspection. Further, I discuss the significant impact of consensus and "calling out the unreasonable" that is possible in collective analysis related to teacher identity and well-being.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 is an analysis of the "rewrite questions" our collective developed at the end of our collective memory work process. This chapter engages a text message, phone call, and email from Kari in relation to teaching after the racist shootings at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York. Kari's response to the rewrite questions is analyzed specifically in relation to resentment. Kumashiro's crisis of learning pedagogy (2002) is engaged to theorize the possibility of critical writing pedagogy as a space of discomfort and resistance to repeat identities.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 first reviews and discusses how novice teachers engaged in critical writing pedagogy. Specifically, the themes of self-gaslighting, introspection, and resentment are discussed in relation to the mental health of novice teachers and reviewed as sites for co-evolving. Next, I look future work with critical writing pedagogy, specifically focused on collectivity, artifacts, and advocacy. I also look at my future teaching position in teacher education foundations to consider the ways in which critical writing pedagogy could be

employed and researched. Lastly, I investigate critical writing pedagogy and youth development. I consider the opportunities for youth to engage with critical writing pedagogy in K-12 settings.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

> But it is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions,
> challenging patriarchal, white conventions.
> (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 100)

> Their engagement in a rigorous intellectual community, in critical processes of writing, talking,
> rewriting, positioned them as powerful agents of their own representation and fostered the
> production of counternarratives.
> (Kamler, 2001, p. 76)

In the design and analysis of this study, I employ a stitched theoretical framework of critical writing pedagogy. I introduce this chapter by returning to my practical and theoretical conceptions of (re)narration. Part one of this chapter is a review of literature concerning writing and its possibilities towards well-being. In this review, I discuss examples of approaches to writing with the intent for well-being in the form of catharsis, healing, or action. I also review literature concerning trauma-informed writing pedagogies and perspectives on writing as therapy. In part two of the chapter, I describe critical writing pedagogies by Barbara Kamler and Gloria Anzaldúa. To conclude, I tie together two theoretical concepts, relocation (Kamler, 2001) and contradiction (Anzaldúa, 1987).

(Re)narration

Critical writing pedagogy has been central to my work, well before I read texts about "critical writing pedagogy." I could start this section by describing myself as a young writer who wrote about what was unfair or as a writer in college testing new ways to tell stories. I could describe being a teacher of adolescent writers and my attempts to teach them that social constructs were visible in our personal writing. Yet, these stories all lead to versions of what I

call (re)narration; the concept of (re)narration holds my past moves. In the work of *(Re)narrating Teacher Identity: Telling Truths and Becoming Teachers* (2017), I refer to (re)narration as "repositioning your view on your story and telling it again" (p. 28). I have repeatedly turned toward (re)narration because it offers a view of dominant narratives and produces possible counter narratives. I believe what Tim Lensmire shared with Sam Tanner (2014): "Our practice is always years ahead of our ability to theorize it" (p. 2). In the chapter "(Re)narration" in *(Re)narrating Teacher Identity: Telling Truths and Becoming Teachers,* I sort through why I thought teachers needed to reposition and tell their stories again (and again).

> I heard their reflections and stories and knew in writing their subjectivity could be redefined. There was a disconnection between who they *thought* they should be as teachers and who they really *were*. It was difficult to write about this because it is not easy to tell stories outside of the dominant narrative of teaching. I believed that to interrupt the dominant narrative of a teacher as a stressed out, underpaid savior — or conversely, a sweet white woman with construction paper and rug for story time — we needed to start telling truths about teaching. These dominant narratives hurt us; and we need to rewrite teaching stories in ways that are more generous, critical, and honest. (Lensmire & Schick, 2017, p. 27)

This reasoning rang true again in this study with three novice teachers, Erin, Kari, and Leyla. They deserved an interruption to the dominant stories, better yet they deserved an intervention to (re)narrate their teaching identities in more true and humane ways.

Literature Review: Writing towards Well-Being

This literature review examines the possibilities of writing towards well-being. Writing can be more than reproducing knowledge, synthesizing, or summarizing. Applebee's (2000)

study of US secondary-school writing found that only three percent of classwork involved the writing of original text. The majority of classwork and homework involves students supplying the information learned from a text or the teacher; writing is then judged as right or wrong. Writing is for telling stories, navigating, making future plans, digesting past events, and (re)narrating subjectivities. In this section, I address reviewing and analyzing research and literature which discusses writing as a means towards well-being.

Speak

There is a litany of works by writers calling us to *speak*. Audre Lorde, a prolific and widely respected Black feminist poet, uses language to call on the will to speak. I begin here because while I intend to review literature on writing toward well-being, it is important to stress that the ability to speak on emotion like angst and resentment is not a given and often silence is the alternative. Lorde makes clear that our fear will exist whether we speak or not; she explains how we have been socialized to respect fear. Audre Lorde calls for an engagement with that which silences us.

> We can learn to work and speak when we are afraid in the same way we have learned to work and speak when we are tired. For we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition, and while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us.
>
> (Lorde, 1984, p. 44)

Lorde, a Black woman, lesbian, feminist, mother, educator, and activist, is described by Bereano in the introduction to *Sister Outsider* (1984) as an "impulse toward wholeness" (p. 9). As Bereano further explains "Audre Lorde asks no more of us than she does of herself: that we pay attention to those voices we have been taught to distrust, that we articulate what they teach

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us, that we act upon what we know" (1985, p. 12). Speaking while in fear, when we've been socialized towards silence, is learning that we too "can integrate the material of our lives" (Lorde, 1894, p. 12). To begin to integrate our past, we need to reckon with the idea that silence does not lessen or absolve our fear. Lorde (1984) reminds us, "We can sit in our corners mute forever while our sisters and ourselves are wasted, while our children are distorted and destroyed, while our earth is poisoned; we can sit in our safe corners mute as bottles, and we will still be no less afraid (p. 44).

Opening Up

I transition from *speaking* to *opening up*. What happens if we do speak? What happens if it is about traumatic experiences? Across the next sections in the literature review, I draw on Louise DeSalvo's (1999) *Writing as a way of Healing: How Telling our Stories Transforms our Lives.* In her text, she draws upon the work of and interviews with several writers and researchers through who have "consciously used writing to heal . . . especially from dislocation, violence, racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, rape, political persecution, incest, loss, and illness" (1999, p. 4). In her text she draws on authors and their metaphors for writing. DeSalvo (1999) cites Alice Walker's description of writing as "a very sturdy ladder out of the pit" (p. 8). DeSalvo (1999) explains that across her research on writing as a way of healing she has not found that writers claim that writing erases the pain but rather that they have a different relationship with it. I smiled when DeSalvo (1999) quoted Audre Lorde, "You'll always *have* pain, so you may as well *use* it" (p. 12). This review of literature on writing as healing does not reveal ways to eliminate pain or trauma but rather ways to integrate it and live differently with it.

Expressing versus Repressing

DeSalvo (1999) discusses at length the work of studying the relationship between writing and wellness by James Pennebaker and Sandra Beall. In an experiment with college students they asked students to write for four days in a row about a traumatic experience. They encouraged students to "let yourself go and touch those deepest emotions and thoughts . . . Write about what happened and how you felt about it then, and how you feel about it now" (DeSalvo, 1999, p. 20). Students reported negative associated feelings when writing about these events ranging from interpersonal and family conflicts to public humiliations to parents' divorce to violation or abuse. The researchers Pennebaker and Beall were initially discouraged that the students had reported such negative emotions; yet, when they returned to discuss the writing with students four months later the students shared relief in writing about the events.

After several more similar studies, Pennebaker and Beall reached a significant conclusion: "To improve health, we must write detailed narratives, linking feelings with events." (DeSalvo, 1999, p. 22). Writing simply about trivial topics or venting one's feelings did not foster significant improvement to one's health. Summarizing students' feedback, the researchers reported: "Through writing about the events *and* feelings, student integrated the two; they understood what had happened and what they felt about it, and they assimilated the meaning of this event into their lives, thereby diffusing its power over them" (DeSalvo, 1999, 22).

Later studies by Pennebaker examined brain wave activity by people confronting trauma. The study found that when people wrote about traumatic events there was an integration of brain wave activity between right and left hemispheres, an indication of emotional and linguistic information being processed. The result is achieving a level of "integration" in terms of brain function. Pennebaker is clear that writing is not a substitution for action; rather, writing is cathartic and functions to initiate integration of thought and feeling. DeSalvo (1999) summarizes

Pennebaker's research, "Only writing that describes traumatic events and our deepest thoughts and feelings about them, past and present, is linked with improved immune function, improved emotional and physical health, and behavioral changes indicating that we are able to act on our own behalf" (p. 25). These correlations are significant to consider especially when repressing thoughts and feelings of traumatic incidents is commonplace.

Freeing

Isabel Allende, author of *The House of Spirits,* describes writing as freeing even when the theme is heavy. Allende sat by her daughter's bedside while she was in a coma and wrote page after page on a legal notepad. DeSalvo (1999) captures Allende's experience by describing the challenging loss of control Allende grappled with as she watched her daughter day after day in a coma. Allende explains that once she began writing to her daughter "the world became more tolerable, living with myself was more tolerable too" (DeSalvo, 1999, p. 37). Allende compares the inertia created from writing about grief to "unwinding a ball of yarn" (DeSalvo, 1999, p. 38). DeSalvo acknowledges that what began as writing to express Allende's grief became the beginning of a career.

The "freeing" Allende experienced in writing about heavy topics is reminiscent of comments from preservice teacher candidates who wrote about white inheritance. White teacher candidates expressed resistance to approaching writing about a topic they felt was heavy – white inheritance. My colleague, Elise Toedt, and I interviewed multiple teachers after the writing workshop. They commented on the freeing aspect of using creative and specific language in poetry to describe their experiences as white women (Toedt & Schick, 2023). There was an expressed relief of finding words to describe the areas of white inheritance which they wanted to rebel against.

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A Wound

In this section, I engage two examples of how a metaphorical "wound" is used to describe witnessing and writing toward understanding and healing.

Speaking Wound

In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History,* Cathy Caruth (1996) writes about the idea of the "speaking wound." The speaking wound is "a trauma borne by an Other that speaks to the wounds of hearer" (Dutro & Bien, 2013, p. 12). Caruth draws this metaphor from Freud's interpretation of Tasso's tale of *Gerusalemme Liberata*. In this tale, a hero accidentally stabs the woman he loves when she is disguised as a soldier. While dying from her wound, she speaks and reveals her identity. "Caruth builds an argument about the crucial connections forged by the voice of the Other that speaks at one and the same time to its own and its listener's pain" (Dutro & Bien, 2013, p. 13). The emphasis here is that the act of witnessing someone's pain involves a sharing and a taking in of the pain that is heard. Caruth writes:

> We can also read the address of the voice here, not as the story of the individual in relation to the events of his own past, but as the story of the way in which one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another's wound. (p. 8)

I include Caruth's interpretation of the speaking wound here, in a review of literature on writing about well-being, to consider how sharing a wound can affect others. As Caruth highlights, much of our trauma is "tied up with the trauma of another." By writing a wound, the witnesses or readers may experience or develop a wound or recognize their existing, connected wounds.

Cleaning a Wound

Caruth's interpretation is helpful in understanding the witnessing of wounds and the interconnected natures of our wounds. Henry Miller provides a metaphor of "cleaning the wound" as a means towards healing. DeSalvo (1999) narrates Miller's loss of his wife to another woman. She further details Miller's suicide note and desperate turn to writing. She explains, "For Henry Miller, writing was like sewing up a wound" and therefore providing himself a "catharsis" (p. 45). Others have described Miller and his writing as "cut[ting] open the abscesses… The pus and blood gushes out . . . if any wound remains, it is clean, and can heal" (DeSalvo, 1999, p. 45). For me, this is a powerful visual image for the healing capacity of writing. It evokes pain in the act of cleaning a wound and a commitment to airing so it can heal. Interestingly, DeSalvo (1999) relates closely to Miller's metaphor and explains how she envisioned a similar process when writing about sexual assault:

> I believed that I used my writing as a kind of scalpel to cut out the growth festering inside me — my story — which was making me sick. It was an instrument that I had to wield with great care and skill for the excision to be successful, for the wound to heal. (p. 46).

The "wound," whether speaking or being cleaned, offers a way to imagine how pain, grief, or trauma may fester in us. Writing, as an approach to work with the wound, is cited as offering a transformation. Caruth's reminds us of the ways our wounds, when exposed, are connected to the wounds of others. This is an encouragement to care for those with wounds *and* those who witness wounds, as they both experience pain.

This review of literature demonstrates the range of approaches and frameworks writers use to experience catharsis, relief, or healing from the experience of writing. According to the

World Health Organization, "Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices" (2022). The literature review discussed approaches to and frameworks of writing that contributes to the ability to tend to emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

In the next two sections, trauma-informed writing pedagogy and writing as therapy, I review ways facilitators can work towards an increased consciousness in supporting writers. Trauma-Informed Writing Pedagogy offers two specific considerations, a buffering role and a psychologically safer environment. In the section on writing as therapy, I share dominant viewpoints from authors about how writing is not therapy but there are ways therapy can support writing and vice versa.

Trauma-Informed Writing Pedagogy

In this section, I discuss Melissa Tayles' (2021) article "Trauma-Informed Writing Pedagogy: Ways to Support Student Writers Affected by Trauma and Traumatic Stress." The context of the article is a community college composition class. Tayles (2021) opens the article by acknowledging the widespread shift to address trauma more openly:

> Certainly, not all community college students are affected by . . . stressors and adversities, but the COVID-19 pandemic and recent efforts to address the systemic racism in our society have affected a majority of our students. As a result, trauma, which was once a topic discussed only in isolated pockets of our culture and viewed as consisting only of individual and extraordinary experiences, is now addressed more openly in terms of collective experiences as the world attempts to cope with the

challenges of living through the economic, physical, and emotional ramifications of the pandemic and persistent racial inequities. (p. 295)

Tayles offers anecdotal evidence shared by colleagues and herself about stressors their students have shared over the years. Importantly, she provides a working definition of trauma from Patricia Jennings, a professor in Curriculum and Instruction at Virginia University who specializes in research on teacher occupational stress and its impact on the social and emotional context of a classroom. Tayles (2021) shares the way Jennings defines trauma, "I use the terms trauma, chronic stress, traumatic stress, and adversity interchangeably to refer to ongoing overwhelming stressors that erode our health and well-being" (p. 9).

I think it is important to note that we regularly struggle with locating words to describe how we feel. We often not only have to select a word but then also explain what we mean by our particular word choice. This inclusive definition of trauma was discussed in our collective memory work; novice teachers throughout the study referred to multiple stressors as "trauma" and also frequently used terms such as stress, pain, and mental health.

The description of a trauma-informed writing pedagogy begins with a critique of "writing as healing." Tayles (2021) comments that "scholarly voices in the writing as healing (WAH) line of inquiry generally favor a theoretical approach for responding to trauma in the writing classroom that is inadequate when compared with a clinical awareness of trauma" (p. 297). I am interested in the inadequacy because I have also experienced how teachers, including myself, have asked for narrative writing without the awareness and/or support of trauma. Tayles argues, "WAH may unintentionally pressure students to confess their psychological pain or produce painful autobiographical work in the context of the classroom" (p. 297). This is problematic on

many levels; instructors attempt to judge or objectively evaluate this writing and students' sense of safety may be threatened or they may experience retraumatization (Tayles, 2021).

This article names two foundational principles for instructors who are implementing trauma-informed writing pedagogy in higher education spaces. The first is considering "the role of a buffering adult who promotes and displays resilience and regulation throughout course instruction, classroom spaces, and interactions with students" (p. 303). A buffering adult might narrate confusion or discuss personal examples of resilience when approaching a difficult task. The second principle is a psychologically safer classroom space. Tayles (2021) indicates one way to work towards environmental safety is to consider "triggers such as lighting, access to exits, seating arrangement, and visual or auditory stimuli" (p. 306). Further, Tayles gives examples of creating a trauma-informed lens in late work policies or giving feedback. In this case, an instructor might develop practices that increase students' participation in policies. For example, a late work policy might allow students to select a turn in date within 1-4 days. These two suggestions, a buffering role model and psychological safer classroom, are not designed to eliminate uncertainties or trauma. Rather, they are alterations to teaching pedagogy that "offer students the opportunity to observe and practice regulation" and move toward a "more robust and comprehensive trauma-informed writing pedagogy that supports students without supplanting commitments to high-quality instruction" (Tayles, 2021, p. 311).

Writing as Therapy

In this final section, I explore the contentious topic about whether writing is therapy. DeSalvo (1999) draws on multiple authors to approach this topic. First, David Aberbach, author of *Surviving Trauma: Loss, Literature, and Psychology,* draws what I find to be important distinctions: "Writing, though it may be therapeutic, isn't therapy. But keep in mind as well that

therapy isn't writing" (DeSalvo, 1999, p. 41). I have been in situations where writers would express, "this is therapy." Yet, Aberbach's assertion and accurate reminder that "therapy isn't writing" rightfully designates these as separate endeavors. Likewise, DeSalvo (1999) draws out an important distinction: "Through writing, suffering can be transmuted into art. And writing permits us to use our writing as a form of public testimony in a way that the private act of therapy doesn't" (p. 41). Writing can be an aspect of therapy but writing itself has artful and public capacities in ways therapy does not. Further, DeSalvo (1999) reminds us, "Writing permits the construction of a cohesive, elaborate, and thoughtful, personal narrative in the way that simply speaking about our experiences doesn't" (p. 41). Writing offers a construction process and creates visible material to work with or return to.

Yet, therapy serves important roles and can accompany the work of writing. DeSalvo (1999) suggests the usefulness of therapy: "I personally believe it is essential for people wanting to write about extreme situations to have skilled professional support while writing or to attend a reputable support group" (p. 40). Therapy may progress the work of writing or writing may progress therapy. In many instances, especially when working through trauma, pain, or stressors, writing and therapy may work together to create openings or pathways to well-being.

Finally, I turn to Frigga Haug (1999) to engage her opinion on therapy and collective memory work. Haug (1999) asserts:

Memory-work is not intended to provide therapy for suffering persons. This is not cynically meant, but the formulation is derived from the opinion that therapy uses expert knowledge to help people who cannot help themselves. If increases in self-recognition, knowledge about socialization processes, competence about language and meaning, and critique of theory are fundamental and prerequisites for

the growing ability to act, memory-work aims at such an outcome. (p. 25)

Haug's (1999) collective memory work has been adapted in various ways. In writing workshops with Kamler (2001) using collective memory work, participants expressed that they felt work was therapy. Yet, Kamler, like Haug, names outcomes as "prerequisites for the growing ability to act."

From the perspective of a facilitator of writing, a trauma-informed writing pedagogy discusses ways to model narrating experience in a writing space. A facilitator might consider recommending the support of therapy or networks if writing takes up traumatic events. Exploring trauma-informed writing pedagogy and delineations between therapy and writing supported my understanding of ways facilitators or teachers can be attentive to modeling resilience, adjusting the environment, and providing supportive measures when designing and facilitating writing towards well-being.

Theoretical Framework: A Critical Writing Pedagogy

In education, critical writing pedagogy emerged as a response to a pervasive model of the writing workshop. Several scholars have critiqued the concept of students bringing a single identity to a neutral writing process (Lensmire, 2000; Kamler, 2001; Heffernan & Lewison, 2003). Critical writing pedagogy is an approach to teaching writing that encourages students to engage in critical thinking, analysis, and reflection. It emphasizes the importance of inquiry and critique, as well as the social and cultural contexts in which writing takes place. Kamler (2001) asserts critical writing pedagogy is not a set approach but rather an evolving and necessarily contextualized approach to writing. In shaping the theoretical framework for this study, I stitched a critical writing pedagogy drawing on the conceptions of relocation (Kamler, 2001) and contradiction (Anzaldúa, 1987). These commitments in critical writing pedagogy led me to select

collective memory work (Haug, 1999) and further supported my decisions to revise and adapt collective memory work. Lastly, a critical writing pedagogy grounded in relocation and contradiction deeply informed my analysis and provided a lens for thinking about the function, usefulness, and possibility of particular writing practices.

To approach the theoretical framework, I first describe Barbara Kamler and Gloria Anzaldúa's positionalities and work. I focus specifically on aspects of their critical writing pedagogies that take up relocation and contradiction respectively. Lastly, I discuss how these conceptions of relocation and contradiction work together to build a theoretical framework to inform our collective memory work.

Barbara Kamler

I "met" Barbara Kamler as a master's student in Tim Lensmire's class *Teaching Writing in Schools*. Kamler exemplifies relocation. A white Jewish girl was born in New Jersey and relocated to Australia where she raised her son after her divorce. In the preface to her text, *Relocating the Personal: A Critical Writing Pedagogy,* she brings us back to the Formica kitchen table where as a teenager she shared the performance of writing with her mother; she explains how she relocated this experience of shared writing performance with others at wood veneer tables to teak to white polyethylene (Kamler, 2001). Reading Kamler's text introduced me to a pedagogy explicitly calling to relocate writing as distinctly separate from the self – to set it down as an artifact, as representative of a writer, but not the same as the writer.

Relocating the Personal worked well for me because it laced experiences of writing in multiple sites, including in "school" spaces, collectives, and tutoring or one-on-one settings. When I read Kamler's text I was a year out of teaching in a traditional secondary classroom. Her reimaginings of critical writing pedagogy matched the desires I had as a middle and high school

teacher wishing to push the boundaries of teaching writing. I was frustrated with the inability to address the onslaught of anxiety, eating disorders, generational trauma, and insecurity coupled with the emotional rollercoaster of puberty. I often felt the 10th graders in my IB Language and Literature class spent immense amounts of time learning how to write analytical essays on the plays we studied but rarely were able to commit a similar level of attention to writing through or about their everyday experiences or their mental health. Where was the space to exchange experiences as resources for each other? Where was the chance to access multiple forms of writing?

Barbara Kamler argues for teaching writing as a political project in schools and communities. In the introduction to *Relocating the Personal* (2001)*,* Michelle Fine describes the efforts of Kamler: "Kamler details how she works with students to extract cultural texts from under the stubborn lamination of the personal story" (p. x). The "stubborn lamination of the personal story" is evident when Kamler calls to relocate voice and transformation. She desires to scratch away at the lamination of the personal and private story to expose the cultural and social discourses that are rampant across our shared lives. I interpret Fine's use of "stubborn" lamination as our insistence on writing as highly personal and "authentic." In the US, many of us have trekked through life under the cautious umbrella of being an individual, a unique self. Therefore, invitations to investigate the sociocultural contexts we are both embedded and complicit in may feel unfamiliar and like a threat to our autonomy or individualism. Kamler is amongst a body of feminist scholarship who rely on a distance pedagogy to relocate the personal, autobiographical, and theoretical to intentionally intertwine the private and the public.

Relocation

The relocations of voice and transformation contribute to the relocation of the personal. Kamler's move to relocate the personal has informed my use of artifacts, my desire to design writing pedagogy that creates distance between the self and the writing, and ultimately my engagement in and use of collectivity in writing to make visible the relocation of the personal as public. Kamler (2001) understands subjectivity in the framing from Weedon (1987):

Conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world. . . . Poststructuralism proposes a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory, and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (pp. 32-33).

The significant relocation here is the change it opens for the personal. In these efforts to relocate, Kamler stresses the de-emphasis on grand terms like "transformation" to allow for the rewriting of multiple and contradictory subject positions. "I argue for a notion of transformation that is more modest, more semiotic, more textual—and for a critical pedagogy that creates distance, a theorized space to analyze texts of personal experience as discursively produced and therefore changeable" (Kamler, 2001, p. 36).

To understand Kamler's critical writing pedagogy in practice, I turn to her chapter in *Relocating the Personal* (2001) titled "Stories of Aging." This chapter narrates the story of a writer's workshop with aging women. In the workshop, Kamler (2001) asks Bella to "treat this writing as text, as an object which we could ask questions of and interact with critically" (p. 60). Kamler notes that this move is intended to prompt Bella to separate herself from the narrative she had constructed. Kamler (2001) presents writing as "text", so it is more accessible to others in the writer's workshop, and hypothetically the writer herself. In the writer's workshop, intentional

questions are used to "focus on the textual practice not on the person, but on the writing as a representation" (p. 61). The questions are below:

- What is powerful in the writing? Identify an image, line, metaphor, or representation of person that is powerful.

- What is omitted? Who/what is absent and/or hinted at or overgeneralized?

- What clichés are used to gloss over experience, facts, feelings?

- What doesn't fit? What contradictions, if any, emerge?

- What aspects/issues of ageing are constructed/concealed?

- What common issues, experiences, storylines do the texts have in common?

  (Kamler, 2001, p. 62)

These questions suggest there are commonalities across texts and discourses at play, for example femininity or aging. Further, they suggest the narrative *could* be written differently. For example, responses or discussion from the questions could lead to a rewriting where omissions are included or clichés unraveled. The powerful move I see happening here is that the questions are not only for the writer's use in revision, but they are also for relocation of subjectivities for the collective to grapple with and take action upon.

Gloria Anzaldúa

I first read Gloria Anzaldúa in an undergraduate literature course, but Anzaldúa should be read repeatedly; her depictions of writing take up space differently inside of me each time. I was reintroduced to Anzaldúa when I met Kamler for the first time. Anzaldúa could be read as arguing the opposite of Kamler; Anzaldúa could be understood as saying writing and the self are one whereas Kamler argues for a distance pedagogy, space between the writing and the subjectivity. Anzaldúa (1987) writes "When I write it feels like I'm carving a bone. It feels like

I'm creating my own face, my own heart — a Nahuatl concept" (p. 95). In this section, I focus on the description of Anzaldúa's positionality and work on the conception of a borderland and the embrace and evolution of contradictory identities. I invite Kamler and Anzaldúa into a stitched theoretical framework because I believe these pedagogical moves, relocation and contradiction, feed each other in a collective.

Anzaldúa (1987) has always fascinated me in the deep ways she experiences writing in her body, a "numinous experience" (p. 95). She claims, "Writing produces anxiety. Looking inside myself and my experience, looking at my conflicts, engenders anxiety in me" (p. 94). Anzaldúa's (1987) conception of why we write is because of the borderland inside of us: "Living in a state of psychic unrest, in a Borderland, is what makes poets write and artists create" (p. 95). She explains that "being a writer feels very much like being a Chicana, or being queer — a lot of squirming, coming up against all sorts of walls" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 94). Growing up near the Texas-U.S. Southwest/Mexican border, Anzaldúa's hybrid identity as a Chicana, queer, mixed heritage writer, teacher, and activist contributes to her ability to describe and confront living in the borderlands. "Anzaldúa describes how living in the borderlands and in the margins pushes women of color to develop a *mestiza* consciousness based on *la facultad*, the ability to see from two or more perspectives simultaneously" (Nasser, 2021, p. 28). She is able to see from multiple perspectives because as a woman of color she has practiced shifting in different cultures, settings, and with others. Rather than discard these multiplicities, Anzaldúa (1987) comments on having a "pluralistic personality … nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned" (p. 101).

Contradiction

In her preface to *Light in the Dark*, Anzaldúa (2015) explains critical writing; she says it

is "through narrative you formulate your identities by unconsciously locating yourself in social

narratives not of your own making" (p. 3). She names the discomfort of living in social

narratives not of her making in the introduction to *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987):

> I have been straddling that *tejas*-Mexican border, and others, all my life. It's not a
>
> comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions. Hatred, anger, and
>
> exploitation are prominent features of this landscape. (p. 19)

The place of contradiction is often one of discomfort. At other times, I believe our

contradictions are unseen by ourselves and others make them visible. Anzaldúa, like many of the

authors in the earlier literature review, makes use of this site of contradiction and discomfort.

She notes, "Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity

and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an alien element" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 19).

It is here that Anzaldúa explains that a new *mestiza* is born. A *mestiza*, a woman of mixed

heritage, specifically indigenous and Spanish descent, "copes by developing a tolerance for

contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 101). In Anzaldúa's case she

learns "to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view"

(Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 101).

In sustaining contradictions, she breaks down paradigms. Embracing the borderland

propels her to write. Anzaldúa (1987) writes about "being lesbian and raised Catholic,

indoctrinated as straight" (p. 43) and "being white, Mexican, and Indian" (p. 44). Anzaldúa does

not choose a side of the border, rather she learns to live with contradictions and ambiguities. I

envision her crossing the borderlands and taking a long look to the other side, or perhaps she sits

at the side, mitigating duality. Borderlands can permit multiple perspectives. "At some point, on

our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 78). Our identities are inherently contradictory; yet my experience, as a writer and a teacher, leads me to believe we veer away from exposing our contradictions because they may present us as flawed, incomplete, or unsure. Further, writing, especially in academia, is often presented as a site of finality. "Anzaldúa defines this space of the borderlands as nepantla, a Nahuatl word meaning *tierra entre medio* — a constant state of transition" (Nassar, 2021, p. 27). If the borderlands is a site of non-belonging and difference, in what ways can critical writing pedagogy be a site for experiencing contradiction towards transition rather than definition?

Relocation and Contradiction

What does a commitment to relocation and contradiction afford a critical writing pedagogy? When I think about a critical writing pedagogy centered on relocation and contradiction, I imagine how relocating the personal *in collectivity* invites contradictions. I selected collective memory work (Haug, 1999) because it engages conceptions of relocation and contradiction throughout and invites adaptations from the collective. When members of the collective write memories in collective memory work, there is an intent to relocate the self. The writing of the personal in this context is highly specific (rather than private or individual) and in sharing with others it is contextualized and relocated as public. Kamler makes the option of relocation visible in her collective memory work with aging women by asking, "Do you want to treat this writing as text, as an object which we could ask questions of and interact with critically?" (Kamler, 2001, p. 60).

In the collective analysis process of collective memory work, the members of the collective analyze one memory at a time. There is an analysis with a direct ask to identify contradictions. Further, the analysis of contradictions should remain flexible, rather than arrive at particular points or make decisions. This move is reflective of Anzaldúa's discussion of how the new *mestiza* develops a tolerance for contradictions.

> *La mestiza* constantly has to shift out habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movement away from set patterns and goals to a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes.
>
> (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 101)

In a collective, the novice teachers in this study sought ways to engage and reckon with the multiple contradictory identities, "How can I be an anti-racist teacher and teach a prescribed racist reading curriculum?" or "How do I extend an enthusiastic and caring teacher image while I am depressed and anxious?" or "How do I offer care and support to students when I want to escape too?" There is an invitation in collective memory work to make our contradictions visible. Anzaldúa (1987) reminds us that the visibility of contradictions is not a prompt to choose a border but perhaps "cross the border into a wholly new and separate territory" (p. 101).

For me, the integration of relocation and contradiction in a critical writing pedagogy is most powerful in a collective. When we relocate the self from private to public we offer our writing as a resource for each other; we are then able to collectively excavate the contradictions in our shared social identities. Kamler reminds us that when "critical pedagogy relocates [student] voice in a social self that is shaped within an oppressive society that privileges certain meaning, it advocates a critical interrogation of voice— where [student] writing is not only

affirmed, but questioned" (p. 39). Self-selected relocation permits writing to be questioned in a

collective; contradictions can then be navigated and negotiated with each other.

I employ a theoretical framework committed to relocation (Kamler, 2001) and

contradiction (Anzaldúa, 1987) to guide our engagement and adaptation of collective memory

work (Haug, 1999). In Chapter 3, I explain the study, including how our collective worked

together in collective memory work.

Chapter 3

The Study

> I mean, honestly, we need to have more places where we can do what we did this
> summer, like actually write the brutal truth about our experiences and then get cared for
> and supported through and then humbled.
> (Leyla, Closing Interview, 2021)

> The simplest vehicle of truth, the story, is also said to be "a phrase of communication," "the
> natural form of revealing life." Its fascination may be explained by its power both to give a
> vividly felt insight into the life of other people and to revive or keep alive the forgotten, dead-
> ended, turned-into-stone parts of ourselves.
> (Trịnh T. Minh-ha, 1989)

This qualitative study was driven by the desire to engage in critical writing pedagogy

with and for novice teachers to address the compounding effects of COVID-19, isolation,

teaching online, a raised response to racial injustice, and an unstable political atmosphere.

Informed by interpretive research (Erickson, 1986), I engaged in the study as a facilitator and

interpretive researcher to participate in *and* analyze our collective memory work. Erickson

(1986) uses the term "interpretive" to refer to "the whole family of approaches to participant

observation research" (p. 119). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) explain, "Qualitative researchers

stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher

and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (p. 8). In this chapter, I

emphasize the open and ongoing invitation for the participants, the novice teachers, to shape our

collective memory work. This invitation highlights the intimate relationship between me, the

interpretative researcher, and what is studied – the engagement of novice teachers with critical

writing pedagogy.

In this chapter, I first describe how I engaged in co-performative witnessing as a

facilitator and interpretive researcher (Conquergood, 1991; Madison, 2006; Erickson, 1986).

Next, I introduce the setting and participants. Then, collective memory work is outlined according to Frigga Haug's *Memory-work as a Method of Social Science Research: A Detailed Rendering of Memory-Work Method* (1999). Threaded throughout the description of collective memory work, I narrate and explain how our collective adapted Haug's process and deviated in ways to meet the interests and needs of our particular collective. Then, I discuss the use of active interviewing (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) as a research method for opening and closing interviews, as well as the follow up sessions. Following, I describe key data sources derived from our engagement in collective memory work. Lastly, I share my approach to analysis, specifically the use of in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) to identify themes most relevant and meaningful to participants and thinking with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) to extrapolate possibilities of particular writing practices.

<div align="center">**Positionality**</div>

Co-performative Witnessing

I approached this study as a "co-performer," working alongside novice teachers. Conquergood (1991) describes the purpose of a co-performer is to access and understand embodied meanings. Madison (2007), in continuing the work of the late Dwight Conquergood, defines and describes co-performative witnessing: "Co-performative witnessing is to live in and spend time in the borderlands of contested identities where you speak 'with' not 'to' others and where your (and their) interlocutors are as co-temporal … on stage as they were in the field" (p. 828). Madison (2006) moves to displace the notion of participation-observation "with the more precise, body invested, and riskier term of co-performance" (p. 348). I felt this move, especially in the performance of collective memory work. Rarely was the sense of mere observation felt; even in the remembering and recording of field notes, my identities and felt experiences as a

facilitator and participant emerged in my observation and interpretation of the collective memory work sessions. My "interpretative researcher" positionality was co-temporally present and active in co-performance (Erickson, 1986).

Further, as I moved forward into analysis as an interpretative researcher and writer, I was frequently in dialogue with the novice teachers. "Dialogical performance as co-performative witnessing is *being there and with* as a political act in the excavation of subjugated knowledges and belongings for the creation of alternative futures" (Madison, 2007, p. 829). The imagination of alternative futures or shifted approaches to writing was not a singular or temporal endeavor; it was shared work with the collective.

Facilitator and Interpretative Researcher

As co-performative witness, I engaged in two primary roles in the study – a facilitator of collective memory work and an interpretative researcher. When we were in the collective memory work sessions, I saw myself as the facilitator of our collective. In this role, I explained the next steps in the collective memory work to the group and invited contributions, shifts, or adaptations. Also, as facilitator I was a participant of collective memory work. Therefore, I wrote a memory, shared it with the group, and participated in the collective analysis of other participants' written memories. As the facilitator, I coordinated meeting times, sent emails with updates, and hosted the sessions by providing the meeting place and food. As an interpretative researcher, I recorded field notes after each active interview and collective memory work session. I also recorded and transcribed each interview and session. Further, I analyzed artifacts, written memories, and transcripts of audio recordings.

Presence and perspective were a difference between the two roles. As an interpretative researcher, I often looked across data sources, made connections between ideas or themes raised

across sessions, and developed new inquiries. As a facilitator, I spent my energy focused on the session contributing to the work or discussion at hand. While I planned for sessions or drew out connections for participants in sessions, I was primarily focused on the active work of engaging in the present with the collective. I was in dialogue directly with participants whereas as an interpretative researcher, I was often in dialogue with field notes, transcripts, and artifacts.

In describing these roles, I want to emphasize that from my perspective, there is no strict delineation of these roles. It was not an exchange of roles but rather a prioritization. For example, as a facilitator I often noticed comments or shifts in collective memory work sessions that I knew would be interesting to later examine and interpret as a researcher.

The Study

In the introduction to the study, I want to emphasize my interest to make a difference for the novice teachers in this study and address the complexity of representation. Erickson (1986) shares, "interpretive research and its guiding theory developed out of interest in the lives and perspectives of people in society who had little or no voice" (p. 122). Madison (2005) further explains there is "a meeting of multiple sides in an encounter with and among the Other(s), one in which there is negotiation and dialogue toward substantial and viable meanings that make a difference in the Other's world" (p. 9). As I consider the research study, I hang onto Madison's (2005) question, "What are we going to do with the research and who ultimately will benefit?" (p. 8). In the analysis chapters, chapters 4, 5, and 6, I describe and analyze the ways in which our engagement in critical writing pedagogy may have benefitted or shifted the novice teachers in this study. In chapter 7, I consider how what I have learned about critical writing pedagogy may impact my teaching practices in teacher education in the future.

When working with novice teachers, it was imperative that the process of data collection

and representation acknowledge the socially constructed nature of teaching and teacher identities. Britzman (2003) asserts, "Re-presenting the voices of others means more than recording their words" (p. 35). Where possible, I work to include the descriptions of context provided by the novice teachers; further, I include outside voices that may contribute to constructing teacher identities. For example, in chapter 6, I include voices of the administration in Kari's school to represent the constructed nature of teaching in her school — particularly how it contributes to the restriction of an anti-racist teacher identity. Including contextual descriptions and outside voices acknowledges the complex endeavor to represent the [partial] voices of the others.

Research Questions

My research interest in critical writing pedagogy led me to observe, analyze, and question how novice teachers engaged in collective memory work. The research questions guiding this study are: 1) *How do novice teachers engage with pain, uncertainty, and trauma in teaching?* 2) *What happens when contradiction and relocation are centered in critical writing pedagogy?* 3) *In what ways does collective memory work as a critical writing pedagogy impact teacher well-being and practice?*

Setting

The novice teachers participating in this study met individually with me for interviews and collectively to participate in collective memory work. The physical site for most of this study was in a living room during the heat of the summer. Although, through discussion and sharing artifacts and memory writing, the novice teachers evoked multiple settings. For examples, where we each taught during the COVID-19 pandemic – the end of dining room table, a desk with coffee mugs and half eaten bagels pushed to the edge out of camera view, and a fold out table

and director's chair parked in the middle of a bedroom. They also evoked the setting of Minneapolis-St. Paul as a place of upheaval and uncertainty. I therefore approached the description of the study setting as an intersectional site. When we sat together, participating in collective memory work, we were literally in a living room; yet we were also nested in sociocultural contexts of the unprecedented academic year, the literal and figurative heat of St. Paul-Minneapolis, and the contradictory relief and anxiety that summer presents for novice teachers.

Living Room

The physical site of the collective memory work was a small home in St. Paul, Minnesota, a central location for the teachers. We usually sat in a haphazard circle in the living room. Erin and Kari nestled in the bookends of the couch and Leyla and I sat in mismatched chairs facing them. We often shared meals while meeting and took turns selecting records to play. My phone sat upside down on the TV stand recording our three-hour sessions. We met in-person mask free based on our early belief that our recent COVID vaccines served as protection. We held one online session when Leyla was on an East Coast trip visiting family otherwise, we gathered in person. Our meetings were held on Tuesday evenings, spanning across six weeks in the heat of the summer.

2020-21 Academic Year

The setting for this research in space and time is primarily the summer following the 2020-21 academic year. The 2020-21 academic year was the focus of our artifacts, timelines, and source of themes for our written memories. For all of us, that year began fully online. Each of the novice teachers experienced some version of an attempt at hybrid learning. Teachers during the academic year were often asked to both teach to students in-person and teach to students joining

online. It was also the year of a tense political election between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, followed by a recount, and the insurrection. Mental health concerns amongst students, teachers, and parents intersected, calling for care. The novice teachers in this study recounted suicide attempts by students, deaths to COVID-19 in immediate families of students, hunger, disrupted access to internet, reports of student self-harm, depression, and anxiety. Many of these concerns are represented in every school year, yet due isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2020-21 academic year, mental health concerns were less visible and resources less accessible.

Minneapolis-St. Paul

Throughout 2020-21 and beyond, Minneapolis-St. Paul was frequently in national and international news as a site of injustice. The novice teachers were all secondary English teachers in Minneapolis or St. Paul. Furthermore, they all lived in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020. The protests that followed were the largest protests in the United States since the Civil Rights era (Martínez, 2021). The novice teachers in the study attended protests themselves, and with students. During the spring of 2021, the police officer Derek Chauvin was on trial for the murder of George Floyd. During the final week of the proceedings, Daunte Wright, another black man, was fatally shot by police. Teachers and students experienced, witnessed, and responded to trauma. Minneapolis-St. Paul was a site evoked in our collective as tense, uncertain, angry, and in pain.

Summer

Summer presents itself as an opportunity for teachers to let down and relax, learn for the next year, look back on the last, take up a side hustle for extra cash, or somehow become more emotionally centered or professionally developed. Emotionally, for me, as a former middle and

high school teacher and current teacher educator, summer is a game of both escaping teaching and imagining ways to *do it better*. From my personal and witnessing perspective, the setting of summer between academic years for any teacher, and especially new teachers, brings its own foreboding and expecting atmosphere.

Participants

The novice teachers who participated in this study are drawn from the 2018-19 and 2019-20 English Education M.Ed. and initial licensure program at a large Midwestern university. The novice teachers in this study are therefore from a common graduate teacher education program. Teachers were invited to participate based on their expressed and shared interests in critical writing and anti-oppressive teaching. The invitation was communicated as "an opportunity to engage in collective memory work with other novice teachers." I did not give a specific topic to the group prior to our first meeting. It is important to note that this writing process is self-selected. Two additional participants who had originally agreed to participate and decided they were unable to continue for the full collective memory work based on other summer commitments. Our collective consisted of three novice teachers, one first-year teacher and two second-year teachers. All three participants identified as cis-gendered women in their mid to late 20s; one novice teacher identified as Somali and two identified as white. They all taught middle or high school English Language Arts in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area during the 2020-21 academic year.

<div align="center">

Collective Memory Work

</div>

Collective memory work is how our group actively engaged with critical writing pedagogy. As group, we followed the steps of the collective memory work process; we developed a research prompt, wrote memories, and collectively analyzed the memories. I

collected and analyzed data from collective memory work. The engagement of the novice teachers and I in collective memory work generated data such as audio recordings of sessions, artifacts, and written memories.

I sought out collective memory work to explore possibilities of critical writing pedagogy and disrupt the potentially dangerous romanticized vision of a writer and the teacher as commonly understood in writing-workshop practice (Park, 2005; Lensmire, 2000). In this romanticized perspective, each writer is nurtured through a teacher-led process. Writing is then shared with mutual peer admiration and often followed by teacher assessment. By contrast, collective memory work centers writers, memories, and a collective analysis process towards deconstruction and construction.

Frigga Haug (1999), a German poststructuralist-feminist, viewed collective memory work as an act of resistance, one which might challenge "power, dominance, hegemony [and] inequality" (p. 1). Central to the process is the belief that we know more about ourselves than we assume, and that there is value in examining constructions of self through written memories. In 1999, Haug published "Memory-Work as a method of social science research: A detailed rendering of memory-work method" as a guide to facilitating collective memory work. Multiple guides and adaptations have since followed (e.g., Johnson, 2018). In this section, I describe collective memory work according to Haug and adaptations from our group. Haug notes across her writing on collective memory work that the process should be kept simple and open to examination so that it is supported by the group: "The process should enable individuals to be active and avoid creating situations where omniscient experts give orders to an uninformed audience" (Haug et al., 1987, p. 3). She has reiterated across literature and in talks that collective memory work is a *guide.*

Collective memory work was initially designed for women writers for the journal "Das Argument" in Berlin, Germany and later for women's liberation groups. The key questions which drove Haug to create the process were: How do women construct themselves into existing social relations? and If women actively participate as the subject and object of research, is liberation the result? To what extent? These questions arose from the impacts of Marxism-Feminism. The fundamental tenets and concepts of Marxism were challenged through feminist perspectives in the 1970s and 1980s. As a result, decades of thinking about gender relations as relations of production followed. Haug, an active member in resolving the patriarchal-capitalist nexus of domination, has traced Marxism-Feminism into the second decade of the 21st century.

In the following section, I describe the process of collective memory work by Haug (1999). The collective memory work process is detailed here to provide an understanding of how we engaged in critical writing pedagogy. At this point, I also want to acknowledge a deep appreciation for Haug's collective memory work process. Critique becomes very easy with decontextualization. It is understood that particular moves were liberating and necessary for the existence of collective memory work at its inception. The adaptations and additions discussed are a result of engaging critical writing pedagogy in study with and for novice teachers.

The Research Question

The first step in the collective memory process is development of the research question. This question should be of interest to the group, "a burning issue." Haug names the research question as a prerequisite for teamwork and a driving force of motivation and commonality. Further, the use of the "research question" in this context highlights Haug's motivation for the collective to the subjects of the investigation *and* the investigators. It is recommended to provide

time between the research question and the writing to give participants space to brainstorm individually and collectively.

In our collective memory work group, we included the use of artifacts to support the brainstorming and development of the research question. Teachers, including myself, first shared an artifact representative of the 2020-21 school year. Then we created visual timelines of the academic year and shared them with each other. Below are Kari and Erin's timelines. After completing them individually, they met with each other and narrated several points on their graph. They made notes of common events, themes, insecurities, or pain.
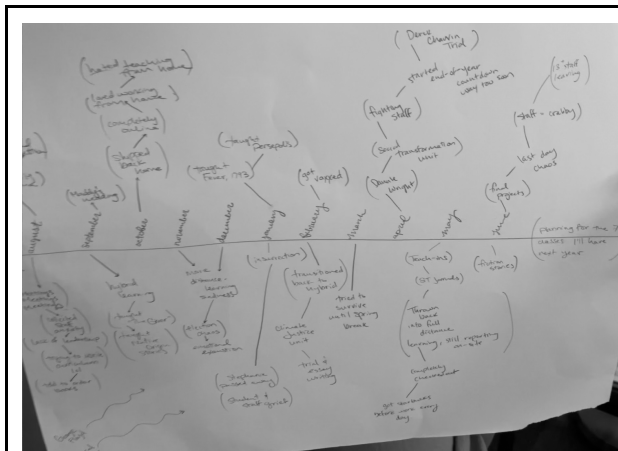
| Figure 1: Erin's 2020-21 Timeline | Figure 2: Kari's 2020-21 Timeline |
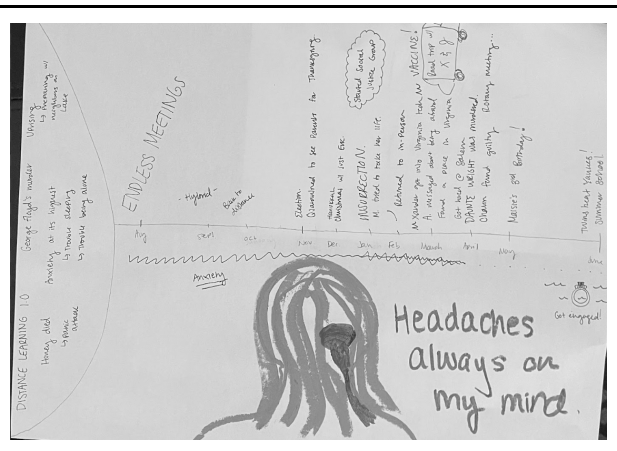
Following the sharing of all timelines, the group created a collective list with contributions from all the timelines. Below is the summary of the themes identified through the creation and sharing of the artifacts and timelines. After the full list was generated, they each selected their top areas of interest. As a collective, we landed on the research prompt: *Write a memory of lack of humanity.*
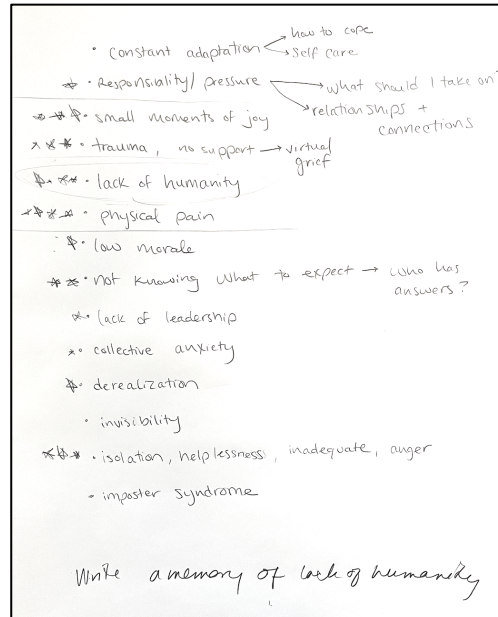
Figure 3: List of Themes for Research Question

The Remembered Scene or Memory

In response to the research question, participants write a memory. Haug (1999) emphasizes that the concept of memory should understood as contested. The focus of memory is not on whether it is true or imagined but rather on how language is used (as it uses us) to construct us and in writing, constitute us into existence. Memories in Haug's collective memory work are written in third person. As Haug (1999) explains, third person narration "forces the participants to explain themselves as not self-evident and, therefore, unknown persons" (p. 4). Third person narration is further explained as an opportunity to distance or historicize the narrator. As modifications are welcomed, writers may choose the first-person voice.

In addition to third person, recommendations are provided in terms of length (one page) and writing time (under two hours). This guidance is both practical and purposeful; the aim is not

to "find the whole truth nor create construction" (Haug, 1999, p. 5). The memory of an experience should be documented as an event or a scene. Extended descriptions or sequences should be avoided. In the reading of the guide, I understood that the writing should capture a specific moment rather than a telling across many events or time (despite the obvious conflation of time in every moment).

We adhered to much of the guidance provided by Haug for the writing of the memory. Our memories were one page or less. They each focused on a specific scene; they did not include extended descriptions or sequences. We did however shift away from writing in the third person. We each wrote our narratives in the first person; for us, this move increased the attention to and description of the internal experience.

The Collective Editing

The group selects one memory to start the collective editing process. The selection is made on the terms of interest and cultural and social relevance. It is recommended all members participate in the selection process. The author of the memory selected then reads the memory out loud. During collective analysis, the author is not prompted for clarification, but rather the analysis is focused on the written memory. To analyze the written memory, participants engage in the process of discussing and completing the *Collective Editing Process.* Haug provided a format to record the Collective Editing Process (Table 1). Examples of aspects of language which Haug directs attention to are verbs, named emotions, motivation, linguistic peculiarities, vacuums, and contradictions. Further, the collective is asked to use these linguistic pieces to ascertain the author's construction of "I", their construction of others, and their overall thesis statement. This collective editing process is used as a guide and based on in my experience in former collective memory work groups it is frequently adapted.

Initial Thesis Statement of the Author's Meaning:						
Common Sense Theory:						
Analysis of the Elements of Language:						
List of verbs as Activity	Linguistic Peculiarities	Emotion	Motivation	Others Presented in Narrative	Vacuums	Contradictions
Construction of "I"						
Construction of Others:						
Thesis Statement Based on Deconstruction and Reconstruction:						

Table 1: Collective Editing Process

In our collective, we shifted the term "collective editing" to "collective analysis." We discussed that we did not feel as though we were "editing" but rather engaging in analysis and discussion about the written memories. We also added steps to the collective analysis process. First, we added a choral reading of the memories. After each teacher read her memory out loud, we individually highlighted lines that resonated with us. Then, on a reread of the memory each member of the collective joined in by reading the highlighted lines. Lastly, we adapted the

process of entering information. Instead of creating an individual grid for each writer, we created one large grid and separated analysis by color (Appendix E). This increased the accessibility to compare our experiences and build consensus.

Second Version

It is recommended the author is present and participates in the collective editing processing as the analysis is informative for the second version. Haug expresses multiple opportunities for a rewrite, including filling in the vacuums discussed or drawing attention to the contradictions recorded. In most cases, Haug (1999) comments, "the discrepancies between the first and the second versions lead to the suspicion that the scene was not becoming "truer" but that we were getting closer to the author's manner of construction" (p. 26).

In our collective memory work, we did not write second versions. We approached this section with the desire to development of counterstrategies. Instead of rewriting our memories, we wrote a series of questions that would enable us to continue to grapple and work with our humanity, anxiety, resentment, and professionalism.

Collective Memory Work as Process

The use of collective memory work is conceptualized as a process, both the way and the goal. Ultimately, Haug's final lines of "Memory-Work as a method of social science research: A detailed rendering of memory-work method" share a hoped outcome for the process, "It is a departure and impulse for change, which has to include the condition of our actions and beings" (1999, p. 29). Collective memory work provides an approach for a departure from and an impulse for change. Table 2 articulates collective memory work according to Haug (1999) alongside adaptations and engagements of our collective.

Date	Collective Memory Work (Haug, 1999)	Our Collective Memory Work (Anna, Erin, Kari, and Leyla)
June 15, 2021 Session 1	The Research Question	- Shared artifacts from the 2020-21 academic year - Created and shared timelines of 2020-21 academic year - Generated a list of common themes/issues - Selected "write a memory of lack of humanity" as a prompt
June 22, 2021 Session 2	The Remembered Scene or Memory	- Depicted a specific memory or scene from the 2020-21 academic year in response to the prompt - Approximately one page in length - Wrote in first person "I" - Shared all via google docs - Highlighted resonance in each other's memories - Engaged in choral reading of all memories
June 29, 2021 Session 3	Collective Editing Process	- Renamed this part Collective Analysis - Reviewed Haug's Collective Editing Process (1999) and Kamler's critical set of questions (2001, p. 62) - Selected Haug's Collective Editing Process for our collective analysis - Decided to insert all analysis for all memories into one Collective Editing Process Grid - Analyzed Kari's memory - Kari recorded our analysis
July 13, 2021 Session 4	Collective Editing Process	- Analyzed Erin's memory - Erin recorded our analysis - Analyzed Leyla's memory - Leyla recorded our analysis

July 23, 2021 Session 5	Collective Editing Process	• Analyzed Anna's memory • Anna recorded our analysis • Read across all sections of the Collective Analysis grid and selected areas for deconstruction • Collectively wrote "rewrite questions" in response to areas we wanted to deconstruct and reconstruct
August - December 2021	The Second Version	• One-on-one follow-up sessions with Anna responding to the collective rewrite questions

Table 2: Our Collective Memory Work

Active Interviews

Active interviewing (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) was a research method I used to collect data on the experience entering and exiting collective memory work. I used the active interview method for an opening interview and a closing interview with each novice teacher. In developing a framework for interviews, I drew on feminist researchers who critique objectivity and detachment and argue an "objective" interviewer has the potential to dehumanize the people being interviewed (Lather, 1991; Richardson, 1997). As an active interviewer, I saw my responsibility "to activate narrative production" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 40). I had worked with these teachers as their instructor and mentor. The active interview method closely resembled our engagement in previous meetings. I shared my own experience in response to their stories, drew on comments and experiences we shared in other settings, and asked follow-up questions (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

Opening Interview

The purpose of the opening and closing interviews was to invite teachers to narrate how they arrived to our collective memory work and how they left the work. The opening interview included an introduction to the study and the informed consent form. I discussed the consent form with the novice teachers. Each had already verbally expressed interest in participating in the study. Following the introduction of the study and consent form, the interview focused on four areas of discussion: participation in collective memory work, the 2020-21 academic year, writing, and collective (group) work. The aim of this first interview was for teachers to have the opportunity to narrate how they arrived to our collective memory work, including how they are carrying or thinking about the 2020-21 academic year. Further, as this study is centered on critical writing pedagogy, I asked each teacher about their relationship with writing. Lastly, I provided an opportunity for them to talk about feelings and experiences around collective work prior to our first group meeting. I asked if there was anything that would support their participation in group settings.

Closing Interview

The closing interview took place at the end of our collective memory sessions. Questions focused on individual experiences in our collective memory work, conscious mental shifts, strategies developed, and the return to specific writing, collective analysis, or events from the collective memory work. The closing interview provided powerful data to understand the immediate understandings and impact of engaging in collective memory work. The closing interviews produced useful patterns such as noting practices in critical writing pedagogy that the novice teachers found meaningful like collective analysis or themes they continued to think about like resentment.

Follow-up Sessions

After our summer engagement in collective memory work, I met each teacher three or four times for follow-up sessions across the fall of 2021. They had spent the duration of the 2020-21 academic year teaching students online. Fall of 2021 opened with a promise of return to in-person learning with mask mandates. Yet, many teachers found themselves in positions of teaching in-person and while simultaneously teaching to a host of virtual learners. New challenges emerged.

The questions that shaped these follow up sessions were:

- What is a humanizing moment?
- Where is your resentment coming from? What are you doing with it?
- What are you holding? Anxieties?
- What professionalism do I value and why do I value it?
- What am I defining as success? How am I measuring myself? What am I going on? (August 2021)

I approached these sessions using the active interview method. Like the interviews at the beginning and end of collective memory work, I entered the follow up sessions with the goal of narrative production. I did not function as an unbiased questioner or hide my opinions and reactions. I routinely shared my experiences and emotions, often my empathy or anger. I noted places where our stories or concerns intersected. For these fall sessions, I met Leyla in her classroom, usually during a mid-day prep. Kari moved across the country after our summer collective memory work, so we shared space on Zoom. Erin and I were the coffee shop type. We met at different locations in St. Paul. I narrate one session with Erin to bring you inside the experience.

Onsite at a Follow up Session. I remember one crisp late fall day when Erin and I should have moved inside to talk but we were savoring the days of lingering light. We sat on the back patio of a corner neighborhood coffee shop. When my order was ready, I was delighted to

see a small metal tea kettle on a tray next to my cup. I carried it outside to our spot; we took a few minutes to comment on the calm that pouring tea from a teapot can bring.

In an earlier session, Erin shared a memory that celebrated the humanity of teaching in person again, students interrupting each other in an eager conversation, tapping pencils, shuffling papers was a welcomed juxtaposition to the silent online student circles. But in this follow up session, the newness and excitement of the academic year had faded. Her school was experiencing the challenges of being back in person and the accompanying gaps in social and academic knowledge. For example, Erin's administration tried to figure out what to do with the students who wanted out there their classroom, used to days free from monitoring teachers. Administration had reinstituted hall passes and added time limits on bathroom breaks, trying to grasp the control of the literal student body again.

Erin had taken diligent notes in response to the rewrite questions we developed. In the setting sun, we kept our hands warm on our cups. We leaned into the glow of our computers as Erin detailed her responses to the rewrite questions. She was caught up in the question our collective wrote, "How are you defining your professionalism?" She had created a table to attempt to chart and separate what she saw as "teaching duties" and what she described as "social/emotional/behavioral." In detailing professionalism, she named items from her last three days as a middle school teacher.

Teaching Duties	Social/Emotional/Behavioral
● Attendance tracking ● Emailing absent students with make-up work ● Writing up directions/assignments for	● Writing trigger- Hug crying student in the hallway ● Getting on the bus- Student bathroom accident ● Student fight- calmed student experiencing

Schoology	panic attack
● Making slides, copies, and plans for tomorrow	● Lunch- student crying and overwhelmed. Didn't get to eat.
● Books that need to be reshelved	● Student whose contacts are irritated- frustrated and crying. Take a break and give hug.
● Collecting next round of permission slips	● Student goes missing. Find her self-harmed. Provide first aid and crisis intervention. This drained my cup.
● Entering intervention data	
● Entering grades and syncing with IC	● Student can't find medication. Panic attack and runs away. Chase after student, coach through breathing, call mom.
● Submitting PBIS forms	● Student having emotional breakdown and panic attack. Hold and coach through breathing. Speak affirmations and rub back. I have nothing left.
● Teaching…	
	● Student sent to psychiatric hospital. Friend of student cries. Provide comfort and get support staff.
	● Student caught with pocketknife. Email home.
	● Student asks me why I look so stressed.
	● Student triggered by bus incident. Panic attack, punching walls and self. Call for support. No one available. No one supervising my class. Find an adult to support.
	● Listen to coworker vent about another coworker.
	● Student caught making graffiti on the wall. Email home. Supervised restitution during lunch.

Table 3: Erin's Professionalism

Erin shared that she was in a recovery week – a week she defined as still trying to process

the previous week of teaching. Last Friday she had supervised a field trip to an outdoor camp

near a local river. It was understaffed and about mid-morning an eighth-grade student was missing. In the search, Erin located the student almost a mile away. The student had self-harmed, and Erin responded with first aid measures, calling paramedics, updating her colleagues, and comforting a distressed student. And now here she sat on the back patio with her coffee and laptop shivering in her jean jacket wondering how to take care of herself. She told me, "I don't want to recover anymore." She expressed her frustration with feeling like every week she was recovering from something — was this her job? Is this what professionalism looked like? Her support at school was an ask from administration to detail the situation in writing for a Minnesota Department of Education incident report that needed to be submitted and a "How are you doing?" from the single overwhelmed social worker who was paid to support the students.

The follow up sessions were the sites where the teachers grappled with their current teaching and teacher identity utilizing the questions and knowledge that emerged from collective memory work.

Data Sources

I collected a range of data from this study such as timelines, written memories, and communication. I also considered the importance of data that I could revisit, such as audio recordings and transcriptions. Erickson (1986) notes that recording and replaying data allows it to "be observed from a variety of attentional foci and analytic perspectives" (p. 145). Below I describe the key data sources and link data to the upcoming analysis chapters.

Artifacts

Objects

As an additional component to brainstorming for the collective "burning issue," each we each brought in an object to represent the 2020-21 academic year. These objects served as a

praxis for narrative sharing. Further, the artifacts created a specific shared and visible context. Leyla started our artifact sharing session by describing her glasses. Her description of her glasses is the focus data of Chapter 4.

Timelines

Following the sharing of an object as an artifact of our recent experiences, we each created life graphs of the 2020-21 academic year (Reif, 1992). The life graphs included personal, social, historical, and cultural events. Our timelines included individual challenges. For example we all marked some stretch of time as despairing, hopeless, or depressing. My time graph included a thick dark blue crayon line from the insurrection in January through the rest of winter labeled "dark evenings playing legos with Lennard." Kari drew an orange and purple octopus-like figure stretching across her timeline and labeled it "Headaches always on my mind." Erin's timeline was tidy, with events listed for every month of the year. For example, Erin's month of April read: "Daunte Wright; Social Transformation Unit; Fighting Staff; Started end-of-year countdown way too soon; Derek Chauvin Trial." Leyla used all illustrations, including an image of herself at her foldout table with a laptop on a stack of books and then a cave-like semi-circle looming above her.

Written Memories

Each of us responded to the prompt "Write a memory of lack of humanity." These written memories served as resources for each other and were the center of our collective analysis. Erin's memory and the transcribed conversation about motivation in her memory are the focus data of Chapter 5.

Collective Analysis Grid

The collective analysis was recorded in the grid outlined by Haug (1999). Instead of recording each memory as a separate analysis in its own grid we kept a running grid so that analysis of our separate memories would be in conversation with each other.

Text and Email Exchanges

Throughout the study, I kept related texts and email exchanges between myself and the teachers. The email from Kari answering the rewrite questions is the focus data of Chapter 6.

Audio Recordings

I audio recorded all interviews and each of our collective memory sessions. These recordings allowed me to return to particular moments during interviews or the collective memory work sessions. The transcription of the audio recording is used throughout the analysis chapters to share our engagement with critical writing pedagogy and each other.

Field Notes

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) call attention to the range of field texts that are available for qualitative narrative researchers. In this study, I used two kinds of field notes following each collective memory work session. The first type of field notes recorded the happenings of the collective memory work sessions. The notes detailed the chronology of the events in the sessions, specific interactions during the session, and shifts or particular movements by individuals or the group. The second type of field notes explored my reflections as the facilitator of collective memory work. These field notes will reflect pedagogical choices and engage in reflexivity of my facilitator moves in each session. I wrote field notes following each session, normally using the full day after a collective memory work session. In writing the field notes, I first relied on memory, then engaged audio recordings, jottings from the session, and/or session artifacts (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). These notes were not clean or complete separate areas

of thoughts; rather, writing both observations of the collective memory work sessions *and* reflection of and inquiry into my facilitation of the sessions created opportunities for descriptive and reflective data to inform, contradict, and complement each other (Erickson, 1986).

Field notes provided a rich, thick description of participants' experiences in collective memory work (Patton, 2002). Field notes provided an important space for me to get beneath my observations, assumptions, and engagements. Madison (2005) describes the power a researcher holds to "get beneath surface appearances, disrupts the status quo, and unsettles both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control" (p. 5).

Analysis

In analysis, I entered reading and analyzing data by returning to the study in sequential order, starting with opening interviews, moving into collective memory work sessions, then to closing interviews, and finally our follow up sessions. I often listened to the interviews and collective memory work sessions in my car on the way to campus. Once I arrived, I listened again to the audio while reading the transcription. During initial coding, I highlighted words or phrases from the novice teachers that stood out to me as an interpretative researcher and then added a comment. "In qualitative data analysis, a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 4). In my data analysis process, I intentionally pair together in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) with thinking with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) to invite what Jackson and Mazzei name "a *constitution and emergence* of the data" (p. ix).

Data Coding

In vivo coding guided my approach to initial coding. In vivo codes are derived directly from what participants say or write (Saldaña, 2013). The root meaning of "in vivo" is "in that which is alive," and as a code, it refers to actual language found in the qualitative data, "terms used by [participants] themselves" (Strauss, 1987, p. 33). I drew specifically on in vivo coding in order to pay closest attention to areas where the novice teachers themselves, either in writing or dialogue, identified and named themes or issues. In vivo codes capture "behaviors or processes which will explain to the analyst how the basic problem of the actors is resolved or processed" (Strauss, 1987, p. 33) and aim to preserve "participants' meanings of their views and actions in the coding itself" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 55). After marking several in vivo codes, I looked for patterns or repetitions. From the codes *gaslighting, ignoring,* and *suppressing,* I developed the interpretative theme of self-gaslighting. From the codes *inferences, my experience,* and *in my head,* I developed the interpretative theme of introspection. Lastly, from the codes *resentment, weight, defensive,* and *disappointment*, I developed the interpretative theme of resentment. Once establishing these interpretative themes, I assigned each theme a working definition. Finally, I looked back to our critical writing pedagogy to identify what practices invited and gave space for teachers to explore these themes.

Data	In-Vivo Code	Interpretative Theme	Definition of Interpretative Theme	Practice in Critical Writing Pedagogy
Leyla's description of her glasses as artifact	I've already started to **gaslight** myself where I'm like, oh, like it's done. Now you don't have to worry anymore.	Self-gaslighting	The dismissal of a past reality especially when the associated emotions are unfavorable, shameful, embarrassing,	Artifactual Literacy

			painful, or difficult to process or integrate (Bendt, 2020)	
Collective analysis of Erin's memory	It's so hard to just not make *inferences* that are based on my own experience.	Introspection	The examination or observation of one's own mental and emotional processes (Schwitzgebel, 2019)	Collective Analysis
Kari's response to rewrite questions	Where is your *resentment* coming from? I am working in a school district that is actively suppressing culturally relevant and anti-racist teaching.	Resentment	An emotion that we experience when expectations let us down because they were based on things we can't control (Brown, 2021)	Rewrite Questions

Table 4: Data Coding

Data Analysis

In *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research*, Alecia Jackson and Lisa Mazzei (2012) provide an approach to analysis that assumes data are "partial, incomplete, and always being retold and re-remembered" (p. 3). Haug (1999) asserts a similar focus on destabilization rather than stabilization in collective memory work. In the thinking with theory approach, qualitative researchers put "data and theory to work in the threshold to create new analytical questions" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 6). The next three analytical chapters, I analyze particular practices in critical writing pedagogy, namely artifacts, collective analysis, and rewrite questions by engaging theory. I aim to understand how and why *these* practices opened up possibilities for the

well-being of the novice teachers in the study. In each chapter, I introduce data and theory to prompt an emergence of new questions and understandings. The findings are personal and specific to our collective and not intended to be generalized for all teachers and their experiences. The analysis of novice teachers engaging in critical writing pedagogy in the following analytical chapters reflects individual and collective mental health.

As I move into analysis in the following three chapters, I also move into the role of an interpretative researcher. By using in vivo coding, I was able to highlight themes identified by the novice teachers themselves. This approach provided means to respond to my research questions which center on novice teachers in critical writing pedagogy, 1) How do novice teachers engage with pain, uncertainty, and trauma in teaching? 2) What happens when relocation and contradiction are centered in a critical writing pedagogy? and 3) What are the outcomes of collective memory work on teacher well-being and practice? As I drew out codes and created corresponding themes, I choose areas to analyze that were most prevalent to the novice teachers and were of most interest to me. As you read the following chapters, keep in mind that my interpretations as a researcher are informed by my positionality as former K-12 teacher, a teacher educator, my relationships with Erin, Kari, and Leyla as a mentor, and my deep commitments to critical writing pedagogies and mental health. These chapters shift the focus from my approach and design of the study to the analysis to what happened when novice teachers engaged in critical writing pedagogy.

Chapter 4

Artifacts: An Interruption of Self-gaslighting

[Holding eyeglasses] I've already started to gaslight myself where I'm like, oh, it's done. Now you don't have to worry anymore. Like you don't have to be stressed. You don't have to think about it anymore. But this [holds up eyeglasses] is like a constant reminder that it did have an impact on me. (Leyla)

Artifactual critical literacy rests on the idea that objects relate to stories that have leverage in different settings. The process of valuing cultural artifacts—objects, symbols, narratives, or images inscribed by the collective attribution of meaning (Bartlett, 2005)— can help redress power imbalances. (Pahl & Rowsell, 2011, p.136)

It was our first collective memory session. Leyla pulled out her brown rimmed, smart reading glasses from a red embroidered carpet bag. She turned the glasses over in her hand as she talked. When she got excited, as she often does midway through a story, she held them up and twisted them slightly about. After she finished discussing the glasses, she let out a sigh and a shrug and set them gently back onto the red threads to rest.

Artifacts

I had an affair with artifacts. The integration of objects into the writing process had become exciting and unpredictable, resulting in distinctively different responses from myself and fellow writers. The integration of artifacts felt like a deviation; as a teacher, I had been loyal to the academic game of writing for quite some time. Then, I was introduced to the concept of artifacts in the context of reading *Relocating the Personal* by Barbara Kamler. To be fair I was already distancing myself from teaching academic writing. When I left the English Language Arts classroom, I was disenchanted, disgusted perhaps, by my attempts to teach writing in schools. While creativity and criticality existed, it suffered from the demands of form, correctness, and polished production. When artifacts came into view, I was intrigued. In

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Kamler's *Relocating the Personal,* a text describing multiple approaches to critical writing

pedagogy, I read the following excerpt on turning writing into a textual artifact:

> [N]otions of design and transformation are productive for a critical writing pedagogy
>
> committed to relocating the person. . .Writing, in short, is never simply a skill but deeply
>
> constitutive of subjectivity. Writing a self, turning it into a textual artifact, makes it
>
> productively usable in ways in which it was not prior to being written down.
>
> (Kamler, 2001, p. 54)

I became curious about the potential of viewing writing as a textual artifact – something that

could be critiqued and explored as connected yet separate from the self. I imagined the ways in

which text, writing about the self, could be more useful and accessible for the self and group

when viewed as an artifact. This usefulness felt different from academic writing where, in my

experience, the writing was used for completion of a task, knowledge reproduction, or a grade.

Kamler further articulated this shift, "I argue for a notion of transformation that is more modest,

more semiotic, more textual–and for a critical pedagogy that creates distance, a theorized space

to analyze texts of personal experience as discursively produced and therefore changeable"

(Kamler, 2001, p. 36). This distance was of particular interest to me. I had often valued personal

writing in my secondary classroom, yet it was difficult to critique or revise. Kamler (2001)

explains, as a teacher, how she felt "loathe to touch" a text if she, the teacher, treated the text as

truth (p. 64). The idea of viewing writing as an artifact provided the opportunity to see the self

again. If writers are supported in understanding that the text is a representation of the truth and

not the same as the self, then a different conference, conversation, or engagement can be

aroused.

I deeply appreciate and continue to theorize the move toward viewing the text – writing written by an individual – as an artifact. This perspective drew me to consider other objects in a similar fashion, something connected to an individual but not the same as the self. Objects provide meaning, a starting point, and specificity about an aspect of an experience, event, or relationship. Objects, like texts, can be placed at distance to provide a view that invites sociocultural context. The use of artifacts for me has become an integral aspect of writing in many formal and informal teaching settings. In each setting, I interpret the possibilities of their inclusion in particular spaces and time. I am continually drawn back and into artifacts because of the ways they invite context, narratives, and cracking. I have a sustained curiosity for a critical writing pedagogy that is committed to (re)narrating – a pedagogy that gives opportunities to shift, to look again, integrate and retell. The idea of telling stories about the self through the invitation of an object presents an opportunity to shift our entrance into and connection to writing. The affair bloomed.

Artifacts in Collective Memory Work

In this chapter, I specifically return to my research question: *How do novice teachers engage with pain, uncertainty, and trauma in teaching?* In response, several themes were analyzed from the collective's selection and sharing of the artifacts in collective memory work, including self-gaslighting, avoidance, and denial. In focusing specifically on self-gaslighting, I engage in a specific analysis of Leyla's presentation of her glasses as an artifact representative of the 2020-21 academic year. To do so, I introduce the setting of our first collective memory session, including the collective context of the 2020-21 academic year. Then, I move to share Leyla's direct quote where she describes her eyeglasses. Afterwards, I analyze excerpts from

Leyla's description of her eyeglasses using artifactual critical literacy (Roswell & Pahl, 2001) and the concept of figured worlds (Holland, et al., 1998).

Collective memory work relies on the collective identifying a "burning issue" (Haug, 1999). This initial step in collective memory work is crucial as it helps identify collective interest. I included artifacts into this step as a move towards cracking open individual and collective burning issues from the academic year and as means to establish a collective context specific to members and experiences in our group.

Prior to gathering for our first collective memory session, I emailed out the information about when and where to meet for our first session and invitation for an artifact:

What to bring: Please bring something to write with (laptop, notebook, etc.), any food or drink you'd like (I'll have some snacks for us too), and one artifact that represents a struggle from the last year (bring an actual object or an image/photo). Don't overthink, can be light, heavy, serious or not – we need all the context.

We entered our collective memory work in June 2021, at the end of the 2020-21 academic year. The year for all of us had started with uncertainty; many schools had started in person and quickly shifted to fully online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The teachers and I had spent the majority of the school year in our living rooms or at kitchen tables or at fold out tables in a bedroom teaching to circles or grids of names on a screen. The academic year had opened with a resurgent reckoning of the racial injustice. George Floyd had been murdered in May 2020 by a Minneapolis police officer only miles from many schools and homes of students and teachers. The teachers in this study, and many of their students, were actively involved in protests, demonstrations, and activism during the summer leading up to the 2020-21 school year. The Biden-Trump presidential election was held in November 2020 with the week-long vote

count, followed by the insurrection in January 2021. Holidays, birthdays, and most dinners were spent alone as isolation was taken up against the COVID-19 virus. Spring 2021 brought vaccines and many students and teachers back together in person with masks and an attempt to restart a school year. In April 2021, the fatal police shooting of Daunte Wright occured amid the trial of former police officer Derek Chauvin for murder of George Floyd.

Every academic year is littered with social, historical, and cultural events, shifts, and movement. The 2020-21 year was no exception, in fact it was an amplification. Prior to our summer collective memory sessions, I interviewed each teacher (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). As a part of this initial active interview, I asked each teacher to describe the academic year. I share their responses here with the aim of illustrating the challenge of expressing the experiences of the academic year.

In the opening interview with Erin, I asked her how she would describe the past academic year. She located the words, "chaotic and unpredictable and traumatic."

When I asked Kari, the task seemed impossible:

Anna: When you think about this last year, the last academic year, how would you describe your experience to somebody who doesn't know it?

Kari: Um … [eyes widen, eyebrows rise, and breath releases]

Anna: I think that just did it.

When I asked Leyla, she circled discomfort:

Leyla: The first word that comes to mind is uncomfortable. And sometimes it was a productive kind of uncomfortable, like a kind of uncomfortable that serves … served me. And then sometimes it was the kind of uncomfortable that made me want to really run away and never look back.

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I knew entering the discussion of this academic year would not be an easy feat. As it was evident in my interviews, the teachers either had no words for the year or they expressed engulfing emotions – chaotic, unpredictable, traumatic, and uncomfortable. My hope was that by inviting artifacts to represent an aspect of the academic year we would add some visual, tangible reminders. The artifacts might draw us to particular memories or help us to be specific in ways our words, stories, or long exhales could not.

Collective Memory Work Session 1

Leyla, Erin, and Kari had all arrived. They engaged in nervous chatter about their last days of school. Kari and colleagues had gathered at Como Park, continuing the outdoor celebration trend of COVID-19. I was cutting fruit and Kari was putting a frozen pizza she brought into the freezer. We settled in the living room, Leyla and I in chairs and Kari and Erin on the couch. I shared a condensed version of collective memory work and explained the adaptations to the process I had been considering and why.

> Anna: The first adaptation to collective memory work is bringing in actual objects to support context, and then I also want us to also think about the writing we do as an artifact. For example, the writing is not *Kari*, rather, both the actual objects and the writing are resources that we can all analyze together.

Following an overview of collective memory work and adaptations to include artifacts, we all shared our artifact. Afterwards, we created life graphs of the 2020-21 academic year (Reif, 1992). In the life graphs, we illustrated or described events (social, historical, political, personal) from the academic year. After sharing objects as artifacts with the collective, we each created timeline as an artifact and then identified common themes and shared narratives evoked by the timelines. This combined process of sharing artifacts and creating artifacts led us to identify

shared pain, uncertainty, or questions to develop our writing prompt for our memory writing. I

share our process to emphasize the multiple ways artifacts were used in the group.

Artifact Sharing

I return now to the point at the beginning of the meeting when I invited the group to share

their artifacts. Figure 4 depicts the artifacts shared in our group. Leyla offered to go first and

shared her glasses. Erin shared a stubborn stapled quote left from a previous teacher in her

classroom. Kari then shared about her hand sanitizer and [lack of] control. And I shared my

headphones that brought the world in and blocked it out at the same time.

Figure 4: 2020-21 Artifacts

The invitation to share the artifacts was to 1) share what you brought, and 2) tell us a story or a couple of stories evoked by your artifact. I also shared, "I think the aim would be for us to have some sort of collective context for how our year was together." Leyla began by pulling out a small embroidered "carpet bag" from her backpack:

> *I can start. So, I brought my glasses. About a month into teaching, I started getting really severe migraines. And my eyes just felt like they were burning. And I had a hard time. Like when I stopped working and actually closed my laptop, my eyes wouldn't focus on things correctly or quickly. So, I started freaking out naturally, so I went to the eye doctor. And I found out that all of these problems that I had a few years ago, have just gotten more severe, with the constant close, focusing on a screen.*
>
> *And now I use them whenever I'm reading or working. And I'm happy because they're cute. But also, it's really concerning, because it feels like a very physical manifestation of some of the challenges from this year. Where, now that it's over, and I've had a full 24 hours of freedom from this school year, I've already started to gaslight myself where I'm like, oh, it's done. Now you don't have to worry anymore. Like you don't have to be stressed. You don't have to think about it anymore. But this is like a constant reminder that it did have an impact on me. And like this year was really hard. And I can't just – just because it's done now technically doesn't mean that it's done in my body and done in my brain and done in my soul.*
>
> *And so, this is a really good reminder . . . Have any of you seen The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society on Netflix? It's one of the coolest movies ever. And at one point, so it happens right after World War Two, she is at this party, and everybody's super happy and dancing and excited and colorful. And she just feels removed from it all, because she's still processing the trauma of the actual with the literal war. And she says something like, "Do you ever feel like you've just exited a long dark tunnel into a carnival?" That's how COVID is feeling for me right now. Because everybody's going out and commuting again. And every time I have to leave my house, I'm like, this isn't right. And that's also what this reminds me of.*
>
> *The last thing I want to share in relation to my glasses, is that it's kind of one of the happiest moments from this school year. I had a sixth hour that just got really close to each other and really close to me. And one of my students just randomly texted chat, "Ms. S, I did a fanart of you" and almost I started crying immediately. She emails me this picture that she drew of me. And it's me just smiling with my glasses on. And as someone who really doesn't normally wear glasses, I just felt anytime I look at that picture, I'm going to remember that was specifically during COVID because when I'm teaching in the classroom, I won't be wearing them.*

I share her description in its entirety for you to have access to her free-flowing narration and associations evoked by her glasses. In the following analysis, I will select specific sections to analyze for the impact of Leyla's glasses and her narratives.

Artifactual Critical Literacy

I begin with listing and discussing the qualities of an artifact or object as defined by Pahl and Rowsell (2010). The term artifact and object are used interchangeably across literature on artifactual critical literacy. In the text *Artifactual Literacies,* Pahl and Rowsell use the following list to qualities to define the notion of an artifact:

- Has physical features that makes it distinct, such as color or texture

- Is created, found, carried, put on display, hidden, evoked in language, or worn

- Embodies people, stories, thoughts, communities, identities, and experiences

- Is valued or made by a meaning maker in a particular context

    (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010, p. 2)

The definition of artifacts includes vast qualifications and capacities. I'd like to focus on the first point: physical features. The presence of a physical object can evoke many possibilities; for our collective the impact of drawing an object out of a bag was attention. By including artifacts as a part of the collective memory work step of "identifying a burning issue," it invited a particular type of listening. Pahl noted how artifacts become a tool for listening in her *My Family, My Story* project (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). In her analysis of listening to stories in homes, she notes that even when the object in discussion was lost or no longer present in the family home due to migration or other situations – it still created a sustained space and provided praxis for analysis.

Leyla's eyeglasses created a held space, a focal point, for the members of the collective. In what follows, I work through excerpts from Leyla's description of the physical object of her eyeglasses to analyze the interruption of self-gaslighting and the ways in which her eyeglasses evoked a figured world and called attention to a sedimented identity.

Interruption of Self-gaslighting

> *And I'm happy because they're cute. But also, it's really concerning, because it feels like a very physical manifestation of some of the challenges from this year. Where like, now that it's over, and I've had a full 24 hours of freedom from this school year, I've already started to gaslight myself where I'm like, oh, it's done. Now you don't have to worry anymore. Like you don't have to be stressed. You don't have to think about it anymore. Like but this is like a constant reminder that it did have an impact on me. And like this year was really hard. And I can't just – just because it's done now technically doesn't mean that it's done in my body and done in my brain and done in my soul. (Leyla)*

The desire to self-gaslight can initially be a form of protection, yet it is undeniably an attempt to dismiss and therefore invalidate experience. The past reality and its associated emotions are unfavorable, shameful, embarrassing, painful, or difficult to process or integrate (Bendt, 2020). The physical nature of objects can serve to interrupt self-gaslighting. Difficult experiences can often be submerged when sharing a narrative or story out loud; yet an object is actual concrete proof of experience, of pain, of uncertainty. Leyla notes how her eyeglasses are "a constant reminder that it did have an impact on me . . . this year was really hard". She calls herself out in her attempt to self-gaslight, "I've had a full 24 hours of freedom from this school year, and I've already started to gaslight myself where I'm like, oh, it's done. Now you don't have to worry anymore. Like you don't have to be stressed." As a listener in the collective, I could relate to the desire to self-gaslight and forgo the reality of the past academic year. My mind was tracking possible ways to self-gaslight: The school year is over. There are vaccines. We are back in person. Biden was elected. Derek Chauvin is convicted. You are alive, you didn't die from

Covid. You got to teach in your pajama pants for a whole year! The weather is warm. It's over – it wasn't so bad. You. Are. Fine.

Leyla, like all of us in the collective, was relieved the academic year had come to a close. There was a desire for it to be just that – finished. Leyla's assertion that her eyeglasses were a constant reminder that it [the year] did have an impact on her highlights her attempt to disregard or forget the past academic year. Early in Leyla's narration she calls out exactly what her glasses are – a tangible, physical object. She names her glasses "a very physical manifestation of some of the challenges from this year." In our collective, this cracking – calling her glasses a physical manifestation of challenges from this year – opened up a discussion of all the literal physical pain created by the past year. Erin discussed the gamer chair she invested in because of the lower back pain and Kari described her desire to pull her headache out as though it were an object coiled in her neck and place it on the table to massage. I shared about the ongoing ear pain my headphones created when they blared audio only from the left side. The physical effects of an academic year spent online and isolated were caught up and represented to us in objects. And ironically, while we might want to forget the objects or the pain, our bodies did not. This discussion of physical pain led to a related discussion of emotional pain – specifically shame. Across all the memories that were later written, we collectively depicted situations where we desired belonging and connection with our students or colleagues but often fatigue, pain, or the desire to escape overtook our capacity for genuine connection. Leyla's eyeglasses invited us to remember and validate our physical and emotional pain rather than gaslight ourselves.

Sara Ahmed (2019) writes if things move between domains we might assume to be distinct, *they carry use with them*. She highlights the capacity of objects, like Leyla's glasses, to have a particular use in one domain and yet can carry their use and further uses into another. The

use of Leyla's glasses supported her vision during the 2020-21 academic year. Yet, in the setting

of our collective memory work, they provided a different use. Pahl and Rowsell's (2010)

definition of an artifact as "valued or made by a meaning maker in a particular context" reminds

us of the usefulness of artifacts when understood in an alternative context (p. 2). In this case the

eyeglasses were valued beyond supporting Leyla's vision while working at her computer, they

were an interruption to Leyla's self-gaslighting and an invitation to us to consider how we had

done the same. They were a physical object that reminded Leyla of her experiences, and further,

validated it. Her eyeglasses, and the resulting vulnerable discussion, gave the collective

permission to acknowledge the experience of the year in specific ways – such as acute physical

pain or disclosure of specific sources of emotional pain – instead of the freshly rehearsed

narration of "It's over, I'm fine."

A Figured World

> *And she is at this party, and everybody's super happy and dancing and excited and colorful. And she just feels removed from it all, because she's still processing the trauma of the actual literal war. And she says something like, "Do you ever feel like you've just exited a long dark tunnel into a carnival?" (Leyla)*

In the midst of Leyla's presentation of her eyeglasses, she asks us if we've ever seen the

film *Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*. She gives a short overview about how it is a

film set after WWII. (I tell Leyla she is my Netflix consultant as she always has the best

recommendations). So, after a tally of who has seen it and a general consensus that it is worth the

watch, Leyla explains how her glasses remind her of the experience of the main character, Juliet,

in the *Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*. Leyla explains to us how, like Juliet, she is

thinking about the trauma of the school year as she is entering the celebration of summer with no

school and COVID vaccines. Is she supposed to just forget all of it? We resonated with Leyla

and discussed weight we felt from the past academic year by dropping references to COVID, racial reckoning, a tense election, social disconnection, and isolation. In this particular collective discussion, and in future instances, we referred to the academic year as the tunnel. In the following analysis, I will look at Leyla's presentation of her eyeglasses and analyze our engagement with the figured world (Holland, et al., 1998) of "a tunnel into a carnival."

We rehearse the stories we tell about our experience. If not out loud, then in our heads and our bodies. The rehearsal of stories evokes safety, stability, and asserts our role in the story. I argue in this section that artifacts lead to ways of being more specific and situated in our stories and provide access to (re)see the self in the world. Pahl and Rowsell (2010) argue that artifacts "open up figured worlds" and resurrect identities (p. 76). Leyla's glasses brought her back to a specific identity in time and place – peering into her laptop in her room on her foldout table hour after hour. The artifact led her to share the metaphorical world of a tunnel that led into a carnival. In this section, I introduce the concept of "figured worlds." Figured worlds are "what-if" sites where Holland and colleagues (1998) suggests identities are produced. The quote, "Do you ever feel like you've just exited a long dark tunnel into a carnival?" prompted our collective to imagine a "what if" world. As we wrestled with this metaphorical "what-if" world, we shared our desire to just *be* at the carnival and ignore the trauma of the tunnel. We named neglecting the experience in the tunnel was the "preferred" outcome by many characters in the figured world, including school administration, some of our family members, and at times ourselves. Holland and colleagues (1998) importantly define a figured world as "socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (p. 52).

The "what if" figured world we began to move around was the carnival. Other examples of figured worlds could include Alcohol Anonymous (AA), romance, the online game of Dungeons and Dragons, crime, children's play, and academia. In these worlds, as noted, particular outcomes are valued over others and there is significance assigned to acts. Further, "identities are formed in the process of participating in activities organized by figured worlds" (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 57). We began to think about how our identities were crafted in the context of the tunnel and carnival. In one of the follow up sessions after our summer collective memory work with Leyla, I asked her how she would describe the tunnel and the carnival.

> Anna: I'm just really wondering about our writing process and what happens if we are willing to go back in the tunnel. What does that afford us? How can that change how we are now? What do you think about the tunnel and carnival?
>
> Leyla: To me, it seems like the tunnel is a metaphor for general trauma. And, if everybody's excited about being in the carnival, then the carnival is bigger. It's not a supportive environment for you to deal with the tunnel.

There are many ways to react or deal with the tunnel. The carnival has a way of addressing the trauma – namely avoiding it or moving on. Leyla acknowledges that as the carnival grows it may not be a supportive environment if indeed a reckoning with the tunnel is desired. There is ample research on repressing and suppressing trauma, it may hide but it is not gone (Lewis & King, 2019). Working with trauma, in the case of writing, is an effort to integrate pain (DeSalvo, 1999). As I observed the return to in-person teaching and learning in the fall of 2021, there were several invitations to carnivals, to celebrate a false return to normal, to set up the same party tent as before. This question is at the core of memory work – do we *need* to deal

with our past, could we just *be* at the carnival and forget the tunnel? What are the consequences if we neglect the tunnel and carry on?

Leyla's eyeglasses and her interpretation of them helped us build a figured world. "Artifacts open up figured worlds. They are the means by which figured worlds are evoked, collectively developed, individually learned, and made socially and personally powerful" (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 61). The figured world of the tunnel into the carnival made our collective experience of the 2020-21 academic year relatable. We analyzed how this figured world asks us to leave behind the dark experiences in the tunnel and quickly enter the carnival to move on. The ability to name "carnivals" in our personal and professional lives enabled us to discuss the harm they evoke when stories from the tunnel are not welcome or rendered invisible.

Sedimented Identities

> *She emails me this picture that she drew of me. And it's me just smiling with my glasses on. And as someone who really doesn't normally wear glasses and just felt anytime I look at that picture, I'm going to remember that was specifically during COVID because when I'm teaching in the classroom, I won't be wearing them. (Leyla)*

There is much discussion in relation to identities and situatedness within an artifactual critical literacies framework. Artifactual critical literacies draw on identities that are often bound up in place and objects (Pahl & Rowsell, 2011). A majority of Pahl and Rowsell's research projects are community based. When studying migration, they developed the term "sedimented identities," which they explain as "a theory of identity that acknowledges the past—the sedimented identities people carry with them—and offers a potential for transformation" (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010, p. 60). The word "sedimented" here refers the "layered nature of identities and how these layered identities can be found sedimented within texts" (Rowsell & Pahl, 2007). When I think about "sediment," it takes me back to my science book in 7th grade with the

diagram showing how the water flows from a river out into the lake and deposits a layer of sediment – sandstone, limestone, and shale rocks. These rocks settle to the bottom of the lake and wash up to shore years later. This idea of sediment is a remnant of a past life. Artifacts, in this sense, are keepers and thus reminders of particular identities that are carried and often transformed in new places.

Pahl and Rowsell (2010) describe the potential of sedimented identities through the Ferham Families project. In one particular example, a Pakistani woman was interviewed about objects in her home. Her stories about her sewing machine, which traveled with her from Pakistan to the United Kingdom, situated the machine in her home in Pakistan and spoke of "sedimented identities" of motherhood and self-reliance (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). Artifacts in the framework of artifactual critical literacies evoke situatedness, one that can be both in a specific domain and transnational (Sánchez, 2007). The sewing machine evokes time-scales (Lemke, 2000), the specificity of the past place where the sewing machine existed, but also gives attention to the transformation of identities. In the project, she discusses identity shifts in her move and is able to use the sewing machine as a point of difference and transformation.

Leyla's glasses evoke a specific place and time. She suggests that this sedimented identity will draw her back to teaching during COVID. In Leyla's storytelling about her glasses, she ends with a specific memory. As she tells us about the fanart from her student, her broad smile is out. It is a happy memory. Leyla recalls that the fanart is a picture of her smiling in her glasses. She notes that this captures a very specific time because she will not wear her glasses when she is teaching in person. The fanart of Leyla and her reaction to it calls attention to the contradictory nature of our memories. The majority of Leyla's narration about her glasses drew her to share the challenges of the academic year and her desire to gaslight herself and forget it all

together. Yet, here, during what most educators would name one of the most challenging, emotional, and stressful years of teaching, is a memory she cherishes.

Inviting artifacts to a critical writing pedagogy provides the opportunity to capture the multiplicity in our identities. We often write away contradiction in an attempt to craft a straight clean narrative of trauma or triumph – but we all know it's never lived that way. Rather, if we develop "a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity," we might open ourselves up to "a new consciousness" (Anzaldúa, 187, p. 101). Anzaldúa (1987) expresses that in a plural personality "nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned" (p. 101). Leyla's willingness to explore a sedimented identity through her glasses is reflective of Anzaldúa's (1987) claim that "the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms" (p. 102). In critical writing pedagogy, and ultimately in ourselves, "uprooting dualistic thinking" will allow contradiction to exist and more honest narratives to be written (Anzaldúa, 187, p. 102). Leyla's meandering narration about her glasses exposed a sedimented identity that experienced trauma and hope during the academic year. I believe engaging with artifacts and sharing stories from them allowed us to return to (re)see and (re)narrate the year in multiple ways.

When Leyla drew attention to her connection of an artifact with a particular identity in time and place, she invited the collective to recall other artifacts as markers of sedimented identities. The obvious hand sanitizer and masks were discussed. Kari recalled how she was instructed to wipe down desks with hand sanitizer between each class period. She shared how angry she was that this was safety measure provided to control to an airborne disease. Acknowledge and remembering a particular time or place legitimizes past identities instead of

shaming or discarding them. By doing so, there is also a potential for offering self-compassion to a past self.

Artifacts as Critical Writing Pedagogy

This chapter illustrates the potential of sharing an artifact in a particular time and place. The analysis centers on Leyla's eyeglasses and her description of them, as shared with the collective. In this particular example, the use of artifacts within critical writing pedagogy instigated an interruption of self-gaslighting. Further, the narrations evoked by her eyeglasses crafted a figured world that supported the collective's understanding of our exit of the school year and transition into summer. Lastly, the attention to sedimented identities connected to artifacts fostered a conversation about validating and caring for past selves *and* using our past selves as markers for transformation.

Artifacts, as an integration into collective memory work, provided an entry into our individual and collective contexts. Our artifacts collectively built a shared context; we reconstructed our small worlds of the 2020-21 academic year and invited each other in. Further they provided a step towards vulnerability and sharing – it was a way in before sharing our writing out loud. When I asked Leyla in our closing interview about the impact of the artifacts on the writing process, she thought for a moment, then responded: "In our group sharing artifacts set a tone of the space, a gauge of the vulnerability that was possible."

I further associated the request that we share artifacts as a means to making our everyday settings and experiences meaningful. I found this concept to be visible in Kate Pahl's work as an outreach adult literacy worker. She grounded her research in New Literacy Studies, which regarded literacy as "an everyday local practice, tied to social practices, and identities" (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010, p. 142). Pahl began to move her observations of meaning-making into everyday

settings such as nursery schools and homes. In these settings, she drew on Dyson's (1993) work

of contextualized composition and Kress's (1997) expansion of meaning making to include a

range of modalities. It was in homes that Pahl became curious about the possibilities of

"ephemeral literacies," for example "drawings and writing pushed under mattresses, made of

tissue paper, destroyed, thrown or lost" (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010, p. 142). It was here that she

turned toward research about "how objects relate to and instantiate narratives in home settings"

(Pahl & Rowsell, 2010, p. 142). In our collective, the shift to the everyday was felt in our

discussions of the hand sanitizer or eyeglasses or headphones or messages on the classroom wall;

situated narratives were drawn from mundane yet meaningful objects.

In a critical writing pedagogy committed to relocation and contradiction, artifacts enabled

us to view our past selves in relation to our current identities. Most importantly, they widened the

writing terrain. Multiple identities were validated and invited to the page. We did not need to

hide in narratives that cast the entire year as a crisis, or similarly, we didn't need to gaslight

ourselves into believing it was all okay and it really wasn't *so* bad. We were able to write

memories from a place of belief in experience.

Chapter 5

Collective Analysis: An Invitation to Introspection

"Good morning!" I say to the circles with enthusiasm. I wait a few moments.
Silence.
"Umm… good morning?! How's everyone doing?" I wait anxiously.
It's first block on a Thursday and the circles are probably just tired. (Erin, Written Memory)

Strange the tricks our memories play. Events are etched on our memory as the triggers of change; we see our socialisation and the construction of our identity, in retrospect, marked by twists and turns, breaks and fractures . . . this kind of remembering of crisis-points veils the normality and the petty, everyday character of our socialisation – making it impossible to perceive it as a problem. (Haug, 1999, pp. 86-7)

[Collective Analysis Transcript on Motivation]

Kari: Yeah, I'm feeling like, Okay, if they're not responding, good morning, then I've failed like the goal. Like, then I have not created the classroom community, like I haven't...

Leyla: Exactly.

Anna: So, the motivation is that I could create …

Kari: I'm responsible for creating the classroom community.

Anna: And the lack thereof is reflective of me?

Leyla and Kari: mmm hmmm

In this chapter I describe and interpret what happened when our group collectively analyzed Erin's written memory. Collective memory work (Haug, 1999) engages writing and analysis of written memories as a means towards collectivity. In this study, I entered the work feeling curious about what would happen when collectivity is centered in practices in a critical writing pedagogy. In the first part of this chapter, I describe Haug's collective analysis process and our groups' adaptations and engagement. In this section, I also share Erin's full written memory. Afterwards, I explore approaches to and engagements in collectivity through Frigga

Haug (2000), Richa Nagar (2014), and Sara Ahmed (2021) providing multiple lenses for analyzing collectivity. Their work in collectives, lived experiences, and theories guide my interpretation and analysis. Lastly, I present an excerpt from collective analysis between Leyla, Kari, and I regarding motivation that was present in Erin's written memory. I look closely at how our collective analysis is an invitation for introspection, allowing for consensus and calling out the unreasonable.

Our Collective Analysis Process

The collective memory process (Haug, 1999) guided how we worked together as a group. While we followed the process, we did adapt various parts of the process and added components that felt important to us. As a facilitator, I responded to the identities, concerns, and sociocultural contexts of our collective. Adaptations and modifications were made to collective memory writing to support our shared identity as educators, our concern with dehumanization, and the specific local contexts in which we were immersed and implicated. I designed a diagram (figure 5) to illustrate the recursive process we engaged in for collective analysis. Following figure 5, I briefly explain these steps and their significance in the collective analysis process.
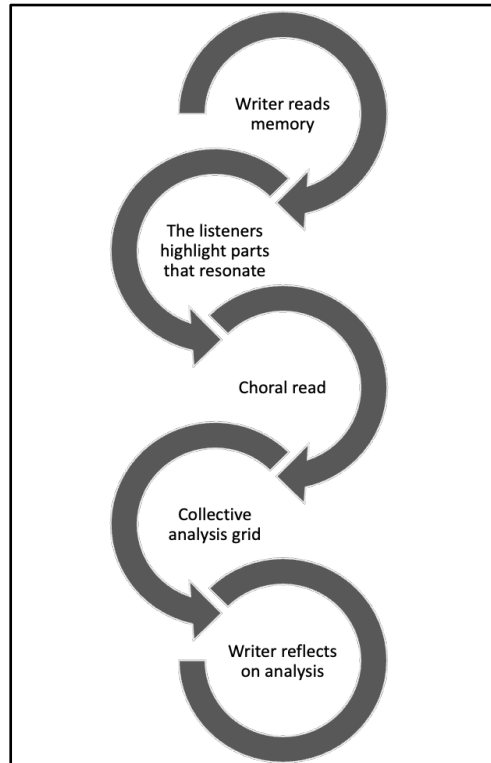
Figure 5: Collective Analysis Process

We began the collective analysis process by the writer reading her memory out loud. During and after the reading, the collective highlighted lines in the memory that resonated with them. Then the writer read the memory a second time. During this reading, we engaged in a choral read, joining the writer on lines that resonated with us. Following the choral reading, we moved to the collective analysis grid. During this event, the writer recorded our analysis and in general did not participate in the analysis. Following the completion of the analysis, the writer was invited to share her experience of the collective analysis and points she would like to discuss further.

All our memories were approximately one-page responses to the same collective prompt, "Write a memory of lack of humanity." Our memories written in response to this prompt were not extraordinary crisis events; rather, collectively we drew on mundane and repetitive moments

that evoked dehumanization in ourselves and/or our students. The 2020-21 academic year was clearly marked by notable events, as every year is; yet what we wrote about was the dehumanization we experienced amidst the heightened drudgery and simultaneous uncertainty. When we came together to share our memories, we were surprised that no one wrote about teaching the day following the insurrection, or the moment the verdict of the Derek Chauvin trial was announced, or receiving the COVID vaccine in a mass auditorium of teachers. Erin noted that perhaps these were times where we had already felt a sense of collectivity. Rather, the responses to the prompt about lack of humanity elicited memories of sitting alone in our living rooms, bedrooms, or at the end of the kitchen table trapped not only by our computers but also by our resentment and uncertainty.

Erin's memory detailed repeated attempts to say good morning to a screen of circles (Appendix A). Kari's memory depicted the building of a migraine in the minutes before a weekly online all staff meeting where the asks and needs of staff were regularly dismissed (Appendix B). Leyla's memory described her desire to escape when the computer ding signaled a student entering office hours (Appendix C). I wrote about the temptation to turn off my camera when teacher candidates gave me criticism on a project (Appendix D).

Collective Analysis of Erin's Memory

So, there we were, ready for another session. We had analyzed Kari's memory during our last session and now we were moving onto Erin's memory. Erin sat in the right corner of the couch with her laptop resting on her lap. She read her memory aloud.

Blue circle, green circle, pink circle, Hello Kitty circle, smiling-dog circle, brown circle, unfamiliar-anime-character circle, orange circle, Steph Curry circle. Twenty-four circles lay in a grid on the screen in front of me. Below each circle is the name of a student, paraprofessional, or special education teacher. The only movement on the screen comes from the top-left corner, where I see myself on camera. This square shows a neat bookcase and tidy desk behind me; only I can see the overflowing laundry basket, collection of dirty mugs, and half-eaten bagel pushed just out of view.

"Good morning!" I say to the circles with enthusiasm. I wait a few moments. Silence.

"Umm... good morning?! How's everyone doing?" I wait anxiously. It's first block on a Thursday and the circles are probably just tired. I scan my screen for the circles belonging to adults, expecting them to save me from this silence. I almost always receive a warm "Good morning!" from the brown circle that was Mr. G.

But nothing.

"Hello? Oh, is my mic not working?" I ask desperately. A moment passes as my mind rushes with all of the possible reasons for which my microphone might be malfunctioning.

it's working, types William into the chat. My heart sinks and I prepare a breath to scold this grid of circles for not greeting someone who is saying hello to them. But before I can let go of the breath, a string of messages pop up in the corner of the screen.

good morning, types Lilah into the chat.

hi! types Jordan into the chat.

sorry, i was talking to my mom, types Sean into the chat.

I exhale. "That's alright, just glad I'm not alone this morning!" I click to share my screen and we start the day's lesson.

On our own copies of Erin's memory, we individually highlighted lines that resonated with us. She then read her memory a second time with us joining in on the particular lines we had highlighted. This event, joining voices at different points with the writer, acknowledged that these seemingly mundane yet resentful and shameful experiences were shared and felt amongst us. This collective acknowledgement of shared lines gave us validation. These were not only private memories cataloged away and attempted to be dismissed; they were shared anxieties and uncertainties.

As a result of the choral reading, Erin entered the analysis process aware of our support and interest in her written memory. Further, Kari, Leyla, and I entered the analysis process aware

of each other's connections to the text and our shared areas of interest. We opened our collective analysis grid. Kari, Leyla, and I worked through the sections. We made our way to the column titled *Motivation*.

List of verbs as Activity	Linguistic Peculiarities	Emotion	Motivation	Others Presented in Narrative	Vacuums	Contradictions

Figure 6: Analyzing the Elements of Language

As we analyzed Erin's written memory, we shared out loud our analysis of her motivation. We directed each other to specific points in the texts and at other moments moved away from the text into our own lives to resonate with her motivations. Erin quietly recorded our collective analysis of her memory into the grid without interjection or correction. After our lengthy analysis meandering from the written memory into our collective lives and back again, Erin shared how it felt to have her memory heard; how it felt to listen to our analysis; and how it felt to see her text circulate as a resource.

Upon listening to the audio recording of this session, reviewing field notes, and the notes made in the collective analysis grid (Appendix E), there were multiple avenues for my further analysis as an interpretative researcher. Yet, I was drawn to where our discussion lit up, where themes from the participants were louder. Therefore, I focused on the column in the collective analysis grid titled *Motivation.* In Haug 's (1999) guide to collective memory work describes both the practical and theoretical grounding for including a column on motivation. She comments:

> We assume that people act on the basis of motivation and that most will mention their motives in an event. The search for those motives, which is mostly in vain, sheds an interesting light on the self-perception and self-presentation of the narrator (p. 17).

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A close analysis of the collective's discussion during the motivation section demonstrates the possibilities of *our* collectivity. In analysis, I interpret the ways in which collective analysis of Erin's memory invited introspection which led us to consensus and the ability to call out the unreasonable. I engage with theories of collectivity from Haug (2000), Nagar (2014), and Ahmed (2021) throughout in order to further interpret the potential of collectivity.

Collectivity

In collectivity, opportunities arise that are impossible alone. I interpret collectivity to refer to the state of being in a group such as a community, society, or alliance that is formed through its members' shared purpose. In this study, I was eager to both witness our collective as an interpretative researcher and actively participate as a member. Following our collective analysis sessions, I became interested in the opportunities collective analysis provided for the collective, particularly for those who engage in the analysis of others' memories. At large, I wondered, what happens when collectivity is an integral aspect to critical writing pedagogy? As I began to review and analyze the collective analysis grid and the audio recordings of our sessions, I asked myself several questions: "In which ways did collectivity invite introspection? What is the value of reaching a consensus in collectivity? What is made visible and called out in a collective? What makes this possible?"

To situate collectivity and provide examples of possibilities, I turn to Frigga Haug, Richa Nagar, and Sara Ahmed to understand key aspects of their conceptualization and enactment of collectivity. Haug (2000) articulates in an edited volume titled *Memory and Methodology* how her collective work is designed with the intent of drawing women into the process of investigation as subjects. Members are engaged in investigating the collective and their

collectivity. Initially designed as a method for women writers for the journal "Das Argument" in Berlin, Germany and later for women's liberation groups, Haug recognizes the method as having been developed with and for the feminist movement. The key questions which drove Haug to develop collectives were: How do women construct themselves into existing social relations? If women actively participate as the subject and object of research, is liberation the result? To what extent? Haug details how this approach differs from traditional empirical approaches that separate experiences from the subjects themselves. "It does not look at experiences and memory as separated from their subjects and as things that can be interrogated without them. Instead, it draws on the objects of the study, the 'experienced' women, into the process of investigation as subjects" (Haug, 2000, p. 156). Haug's centering of the collective as the investigators *and* the investigated highlights the power of collectivity; it names a collective as worthy of analysis *and* capable of conducting research.

Richa Nagar (2014), in *Muddying the Waters: Co-authoring Feminisms across Scholarship and Activism,* writes about two decades of feminist activism, including the collaborative authorship of *Sangtin Yatra*, a book in Hindi published in 2004 sharing nine personal narratives of grassroots women activists. In reflection of the collaboration she writes, "It is in and through collaborative moments of reflections and writing that the alliance gains new energy and insights to advance the struggle, to reassess the meaning of what has been gained or lost, and to determine the directions in which new steps might be taken" (p. 128). The identified new energy, ability to reassess, and make directional choices emerged from their collectivity. In the writing of *Sangtin Yatra*, the authors engaged in a process of "interweaving words, silences, and critiques" to "forge a collective identity as activists and thinkers who are committed to

reclaiming the sites of 'empowerment' – politically and intellectually" (p. 128). Importantly, *Sangtin Yarta* did not limit itself to a critique of development and NGO-driven empowerment.

Similarly, our collective was not limited to a critique of the educational system which housed teachers with deep feelings of dehumanization. *Sangtin Yatra*'s dialogic processes presented in collectivity resulted in the "task of combining careful research, reflexive activism, and critical pedagogy" (p. 132). For the women in a collective with Nagar this meant an examination of caste, class, religion, and gender and how it was replicated in their own communities and families. For our collective of teachers, this meant creating a space to examine our relationship with the "teacher vision," institutions, our students, and ourselves. We arrived at consensus points where it became clear that the set of expectations for a teacher were deeply intertwined with maternal, feminine ways of being, with authoritative visions of control, and with ideals of preparedness and care. Nagar's descriptions of collectivity provided a lens for understanding how introspection and consensus are where we learn and grow together to "determine the trajectories of our political journeys as individuals and members of an alliance" (p. 129).

Lastly, I turn to Sara Ahmed as she demonstrates the correlation of collectivity, introspection, and action. In *Complaint!*, Ahmed (2021) narrates how to complain is to transgress. In highlighting the possibility of complaint, she notes, "Complaint offers a fresh lens, which is also an old, weathered lens, on collectivity itself" (p. 277). She further details the potential for action with a "complaint collective." Compliant collectives in Ahmed's text were comprised of women in academia who have experienced sexual harassment. She notes how their consciousness raising began sharing a story in the presence of others. It then became more directed efforts such as gathering information and considerations about how information about

sexual harassment is reported. Ahmed (2021) suggests that collectivity is often "what is needed to name, withstand, and combat violence" (p. 281). The lens of complaint emphasizes the result when individuals are invited into introspection in a collective.

In our collective memory work group, our "consciousness raising" – the point where we began to experience practices of self-reflexivity – was initiated in collective analysis. We were able to experience what Ahmed (2021) understands as a part of #MeToo movement – to have permission to release and analyze "the 'too' parts of you" (p. 280). Ultimately, as a member of our collective and as an interpretative researcher, I came to understand the ways in which collectivity is both a means as well as an end. It was the means in which we acted together in the study, and also a result of the work we have done together.

Analysis [of Collective Analysis]

In returning to the audio recording of this session, I observed the *Motivation* section was lively. Kari and Leyla interrupted each other as they related to Erin's memory of teaching to circles online. There were sections of silence where we collectively retreated into our minds and our experiences. Then, we were pulled back into Erin's memory and drew lines from her experience to ours and then to each other. When we arrived at the column for *Motivation*, I asked Kari and Leyla, "What motivates her?" Kari said, "Being professional, not showing a laundry basket." Leyla furthered Kari's commentary on professionalism and the removal of hints of a personal life and noted, "self-protection." I then asked, "What is the motivation to keep trying to get a good morning?" We paused here for a while considering her motivations. Leyla shared why she would continue the good morning attempt and afterwards Kari connected good morning responses to a successful classroom community. Towards the end of the analysis Leyla called out the unreasonable notion of codependency tied up in receiving a good morning.

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An Invitation to Introspection

      In Erin's memory she repeats her "good morning" to her students. She checks if the mic is not working. She waits for a colleague to reply. During our collective analysis of Erin's memory, I genuinely ask the other members of the collective, Leyla and Kari, why they felt Erin was motivated to get a "good morning" back from her students.

      Anna: I keep thinking about what the motivation is to keep trying to get a good morning? What would be the difference of the narrative if she said, "Alright, I guess it's not a good morning" and started to teach. What is the motivation to keep asking?

      Leyla: It's so hard to not make or draw inferences that are based on my own life.

      Anna: This is the point of being collective though, right? So even for Erin to hear that, right. Have you been in that moment, and how did you decide?

      Leyla: In that case, at least for me, it was a desire to live into the teacher role that I always imagined. So I, this is how I pictured myself as a teacher. This is a level of enthusiasm and welcoming and connection that I wanted to provide. And so like, by golly, I'm going to. That's the kind of push. I'm going to force this unruly year into the mold that I wanted it to be.

      Leyla takes the opportunity and shares her desire to live into the teacher role, "This is a level of enthusiasm and welcoming and connection that I wanted to provide. And so like, by golly, I'm going to. That's the kind of push." The opportunity to engage in collective analysis operated as an invitation in our collective to further connect and draw out deeper and clearer reasons as to why we felt desires to live into idealistic roles as teachers. Erin's memory and Leyla's resonation gave way to the opportunity for our collective to discuss the calm, collected and ever warm, enthusiastic, and endearing image of a teacher. This collective understanding of

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teacher image gave way to a complaint collective (Ahmed, 2021). The complaint unraveled and gathered traction in our discussion. We complained about having to present as warm and welcoming even when we were drained and removed. We complained about how the teaching profession is steeped in white maternal, feminine ways of being (Grumet, 1988). Ahmed (2021) explains, "Complaints raise the blind; what goes down, comes up. We see what has been kept out of view, the institutional view" (Ahmed, 2021, p. 306). Ultimately, collective analysis was an invitation for Leyla's introspection, which led us to unearth broader sociocultural contexts of teaching, validate complaints in our collective, and shed light on the ways in which an idealistic image of a teacher contributes to feelings of dehumanization.

Consensus

We were held at the spot about what motivated Erin to try to get a hello from her students. Kari shared that if we don't get a hello, we've "failed the goal" of creating a classroom community. She can relate to what is happening in Erin's memory, proving to us this is not an individual experience but a shared phenomenon. Kari begins to articulate, "Like I haven't …" and Leyla interjects with a solid "exactly." The consensus that being unable to receive a hello in return is felt as a failure is immediate and keeps us discussing. When I prod further, I am met with a second consensus that the lack of classroom community is reflective of the teacher. This is problematic because while there is a clear consensus, there is a contradiction as well. They don't believe this should be true but nevertheless they believe it and agree upon it. Here is the building of consensus:

> Kari: Yeah, I'm feeling like, okay, if they're not responding good morning, then I've
> failed like the goal. Like, then I have not created the classroom community, like I
> haven't...

Leyla: Exactly.

Anna: So, the motivation is that I could create …

Kari: I'm responsible for creating the classroom community.

Anna: And the lack thereof is reflective of me?

Leyla and Kari: mmm hmmmm

Looking back to these moments of consensus as a researcher, I found myself searching for a way to describe the feeling in the room when Leyla and Kari joined together in their "mmmm hmmm" response. It was solidarity. It was these moments when two or more members of the collective joined in agreement that safety and assurance were felt by the group. Consensus felt like, "I do not need to go it alone." Further, it served as a starting point to investigate what is beneath the consensus.

 Why is consensus vital to collectivity? Nagar (2014) explains through the lens of co-authorship: "Co-authorship can only be imagined as an ongoing dialogue among continuously co-evolving multiple selves that might frequently contradict yet continue to grow without obliterating one another" (p. 163). She highlights the continual need to co-evolve and grow. Further, the presence of a collective makes it safer to sit with contradiction. For example, we actively engage in idealist forms of *teacher* and engage with our students in co-dependent ways, *but* we don't want to. In "Locating Globalization: Feminist (Re)readings of the Subjects and Spaces of Globalization" by Richa Nagar and colleagues (2002) they introduce the work of feminist historian Joan Scott. Scott points out that "the writing of women's history raised the question of who has the power to produce social consensus about the meanings of truth" (p. 258).

As teachers, we may have entered the profession without questioning the social consensus. Who had collectively agreed upon these truths and advanced them? Why, in the case

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of Erin's memory, did our collective believe that the teacher was fully and solely responsible for creating the classroom community? Why did a consensus between Kari and Leyla arise simultaneously when I questioned whether the lack of a positive classroom community is reflective of the teacher? We need to consider how novice teachers have the power to contribute to social consensus or shift it. Collective analysis made visible the "truths" we were abiding by and holding ourselves accountable to, despite our repeated attempts to reject them.

Calling out the Unreasonable

The practice of collective analysis invites introspection and inference. The writer of the memory is a listener and recorder of notes and we, as analyzers, enter a dedicated space to infer, question, and discuss the text at hand. When Frigga Haug detailed her approach to collective memory work, she offered in her rationale that we are limited in what we see alone, what we believe alone. Yet, in a collective, others are able to be both in and outside of written memories and inevitably we encounter moments when we "call out the unreasonable." The analyzers call out something unreasonable in the text that the writer may have perhaps found bearable, if not normal. I first witnessed this effect when reading Barbara Kamler's *Relocating the Personal*. In this text she works with a group of aging women; they write and share memories in a revised version of collective memory work. One woman named Helen shares a story about preparing lunch, bathing children, and then leaving for a drive with her husband and children. Helen feels satisfied with the morning's work and ready to enjoy the drive. The children begin fighting in the back seat and her husband reprimands them, then turns to her and says, "I'm driving, why don't you look after the kids" (Kamler, 2001, p. 71).

In the collective of aging women, the group resonated with the experience of being silenced by partners and adopting the silence as their own. The collective recognized through

introspection that they had felt this emotional tension *and* also found their compliance and silence unacceptable and unreasonable. In the case of the collective of aging women, the analysis of the written memory disrupts discourses of the "good wife." Further, as a collective their willingness to engage in introspection and then share their findings back with the group made "visible a set of contradictory and painful positionings that are not simply Helen's fault but relate to larger discursive practices of marriage and generation which shape her experience" (Kamler, 2001, p. 72).

I interpret the move to call out the unreasonable as an opportunity for the writer to resee her memory in a broader and deeper sociocultural context and perhaps alleviate and relocate some of the blame and weight of the situation. In Erin's memory, she goes through a series of moves to figure out why students are not responding. Leyla called out that this co-dependency we experience as teachers with our students is unreasonable. As a group of analyzers, we noted Erin's exhale after the students responded in the chat; this exhale was both felt by the group *and* we were able to see the unacceptable nature of this dependency. As Leyla notes, we feel dependent on their response to feel okay. She names this a moment of desperation:

> Leyla: I wonder if another motivation is survival as well. Like, how quickly at the end, she was able to be, okay, "thank goodness". It doesn't matter how deep that sentiment was felt, the fact that that's where she ended up I think says a lot. Like she needed them to say something. And I think that's why, like, is my mic not working? That there's a moment of desperation. Because it's like if I don't get them to respond, then I'm not going to be okay.

After the completion of the collective analysis, Erin returned to our discussion of codependency. She notes the unbalanced desire to live into the "teacher vision" even when it

wasn't practical. I find this moment in collectivity extremely powerful; Erin was given the opportunity to relocate to resee the situation through the collective analysis of others. Further, her experience is validated because others were able to relate *and* call it unreasonable. Expectations that she had been unconsciously holding onto, such as living up to an ideal teacher vision in the midst of a global pandemic teaching online to circles, were called out and made visible. She was then invited into a space of introspection.

> Erin: Teacher vision was a really interesting thing to reflect on. Because I totally did have a teacher vision. I think I was more invested in living up to the teacher vision than whatever the fuck we were learning that day. As a teacher, I wanted validation from students, codependency was a thing – that's for sure. . . And the screen of screens. Have you seen yourself so much? Because you're literally seeing the teacher vision. And constantly checking in like, Am I doing it? Am I doing it? … Just watching yourself. That took so much focus away from whatever was actually important to be doing.

Our collective went on to discuss that there were multiple points of codependency, specifically with our students and then further, we realized we also felt held hostage or codependent with an idealistic, unachievable representation of *teacher*. We returned to Erica Meiners and historical representations of teachers as feminine, controlled, and maternal beings. We went on to discuss how we felt like "emotional puppets." We asked how we could wipe our slates clean after engaging with the emotions from one class period to the next. It felt necessary but not realistic. We were able to pinpoint the unreasonable co-dependency we experienced with our students and disclosed with each other all the ways in which we felt intertwined.

This "calling out the unreasonable," in my interpretation, strengthens the collectivity. It pinpoints places from which we can "co-evolve" (Nagar, 2014). In our day-to-day interactions

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and in our memory writing, we have little distance from our lives. We are naturally close and deeply intertwined. Collective analysis is a practice that invites a writer to move with the collective away from the memory and (re)see it as situated in the sociocultural context that the collective provides. It is precisely this distance that enables the collective to call out the unreasonable. Joining the collective at this vantage point can be a powerful self-selected move to unbind from closely held, often unconscious, beliefs and values.

Collective Analysis as Critical Writing Pedagogy

Collective analysis is a powerful experience for the collective, the writer and the analyzers. Collective analysis is an invitation for introspection. The invitation presented in collective analysis draws us simultaneously into the writer's experiences as well as our own. This introspection builds a powerful sociocultural context which strengthens our ability to see points of consensus and further call out the unreasonable. In consensus, our complaints are legitimized, and the blinds are raised up, enabling us to begin to investigate the systems behind them. When we agree on something unreasonable such as "when children online do not say hello the teacher has failed to create a positive environment" or "I am failing at my teacher vision if I don't get a hello back," we identify points to co-evolve.

The integration of a collective analysis in a critical writing pedagogy can invite introspection. Individual meaning can then be relocated in broader cultural contexts (Kamler, 2001). Kamler (2001) notes, "For us, it was crucial to have a social, cultural and political reference outside of the self in order to contextualize what seemed to be idiosyncratic in larger patterns of power" (p.74). When Erin's move to try and get a hello back from students was felt and immediately understood by her fellow novice teachers, the experience was relocated outside of herself and contextualized in larger patterns of power and expectation. Kamler (2001)

suggests, "We need to explore the possibilities of counternarrative work. Without it none of us has any way of gaining enough distance to make dominant discourses visible and thereby to imagine alternatives" (p. 77).

I am interested in how individual teachers' narratives and experience can be relocated and contextualized. Further, I am curious how collective analysis can be taken up in various writing assignments to contribute to the process of introspection, consensus, and relocation. For example, in teacher education, I taught a seminar for student teachers. In this course, they brought in dilemmas that we workshopped on a weekly basis. I am imagining the ways in which we could collectively analyze these dilemmas for specific areas such as motivation or emotion. How would analysis of each other's dilemmas prompt introspection of individual teachers and provide the collective points to co-evolve from? How could these collectively identified points benefit teachers when they return to their classrooms?

We noted earlier that we, as teachers, were not interested in a process that simply made our complaints visible; rather, we wanted to co-create pathways forward. In chapter 6, I interpret rewrite questions we developed in response to our introspection, consensus, and especially, the unreasonable.

Chapter 6

Rewrite Questions: A Resource for Resentment

> Hey Anna– I just had someone I thought was an ally throw me
> under the bus after I shared materials I was going to use to talk about the shooting in Buffalo.
> Do you have any time to talk this evening?
> (Kari, Text Message, May 15, 2022)

> Unfortunately, what happens in classrooms often is not crisis and change but rather repetition
> and comfort for both student and teacher.
> (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 64)

Release Date: May 15, 2022

*WASHINGTON – Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas released the following
statement regarding the mass shooting in Buffalo, New York:*

*Our nation mourns the loss of life caused by the horrific shooting in Buffalo, New York. Our
hearts break for the families and friends of the victims, and we stand with them and the entire
Black community that was targeted by this hateful act of violence. The Department of Homeland
Security continues to work closely with our partners across the country to combat violent
extremism, including racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism, which continues to pose
one of the most significant terrorism-related threats to the homeland. We are devoting every
available resource to combat all forms of terrorism and targeted violence to keep our
communities safe and secure.*

*Make no mistake: when one community is targeted, we are all targeted. This country stands as
one, and we will combat violent extremism as one.*

This was the statement to the public from the Secretary of Homeland Security, Alejandro

N. Mayorkas, about the mass shooting in Buffalo, New York. The internet also gave access to

the livestream of the massacre by the white 18-year-old gunman and his published racist

manifesto. Students may have seen the video or the manifesto, read about the event from

multiple viewpoints, or viewed portraits of the victims, Black grocery shoppers. Kari, like many

teachers across the US, grappled with how to teach the day after a crisis. Her previous two years

of teaching had no shortage of such days. Kari had moved from Minnesota to Virginia; she had a

new teaching position in Virginia at a conservative public high school. I received Kari's text on

Sunday, May 15, the day after the shooting in a Buffalo supermarket. She had scrapped her Monday lesson plan; instead, she planned to use poetry that had been written following the shooting in the Pulse nightclub as means of opening up responses to the shootings from the weekend in Buffalo. After sharing her updated lesson with her instructional coach, someone she trusted, Kari received an email from her administrator. The instructional coach had shared her updated teaching plans directly with him and he wanted to meet.

Kari texted me on Sunday asking if I had time to talk. We connected and talked about the racially charged shooting in Buffalo. Kari was simultaneously discouraged and enraged. I was walking in a slow circle in my backyard with my phone on speaker, breathing in anger and out disbelief. We talked about what she planned to do the next day with her students and in response to her colleague and administrator. We agreed to be in touch. After hanging up, I went inside, opened my laptop, and sent a message and a resource Kari had shared, "Teaching in the Wake of Violence," to the 21 preservice teachers in our English Education cohort. The following day, I had an email waiting from Kari. She wrote that her colleague claimed it was part of her job to make sure Kari didn't "go rogue" and emphasized to Kari that it was Virginia law that parents must be informed if teachers planned to discuss an event "so charged." Later in the email, Kari reported on about the follow up meeting with her administrator. In a defensive response, she had argued that the staff had discussed the Ukraine-Russian War with students when it began. Her administrator didn't buy it. Kari detailed the exchange in her email to me:

> *He told me point blank that this is different than teaching about Ukraine because in the U.S. there aren't "different sides" on what is happening in Ukraine. When I pushed back saying a hate crime is not something with multiple sides, he said that people will jump to arguments about gun control. He also said that there are people who don't think hate crimes should have any different punishments than other crimes. Lastly, he said directly*

that parents would be offended because the pulse shooting (the subject of the poem I planned to use) took place in a gay club. Read: don't say gay.

Events like the shootings in Buffalo, gay nightclubs, and K-12 schools have despairingly become commonplace in the United States. Avoiding discussing racially driven hate crimes in the name of gun rights or needing parent permission is another means of defending white supremacy. Taking up sides in a tense political landscape, choosing to mask or not, and dismissal or recognition of climate change are decisions students and teachers alike engage in. Teaching the day after and in the midst of crises is a common experience for our nation's teachers. Teachers aiming to teach in relational and equitable ways are consequently faced with an enormous challenge.

Introduction

This chapter considers the impact of a resource we developed in collective memory work called rewrite questions. These questions were created after completing the collective analysis section of collective memory work. In analyzing the use of the rewrite questions, I return to my research question, "What are the outcomes of collective memory work on teacher well-being and practice?" which for me has always been the question "What happens after we write?" I long believed, like Anzaldúa (1987), that when we write we work with the "needles that fester." We dig at the needles that get under our skin and aggravate us. The writing helps expel it "until another needle pierces the skin" (p. 95).

I will describe and analyze what happened with the rewrite questions we developed. Kari voluntarily engaged with these questions in response to being unable to teach about the racially motivated fatal shooting in Buffalo. To enter this analysis, I begin with describing Kumashiro's

crisis of learning theory in the context of anti-oppressive pedagogy. Kumashiro's insistence that writing pedagogy can shift to invite discomfort and learning will be used to analyze our rewrite questions. I then share Kari's email where she engages the rewrite questions to process her colleague's and administrator's disapproval of her desire to discuss hate crimes and racism with her students. I end with discussion and implications of the development of collective resources in the context of critical writing pedagogy.

Crisis of Learning Pedagogy

We are conditioned to understand a crisis as a disaster or a time of intense trouble or danger. Events such as the shooting in Buffalo, and hundreds of other hate crimes, shootings, and threats to humanity, are crises. I hold a vested interest in (re)narration – the ability to shift to retell your story again. In this context, (re)narration extends to the capacity and opportunity to retell a familiar concept differently. Kumashiro (2009) (re)narrates crisis as "learning things that reveal the partial and oppressive aspects of our knowledge of and actions in the world" (p. 30). In the theorizing of crisis, Kumashiro defines a pedagogy of crisis as a desirable "state of emotional discomfort and disorientation that calls on students to make change" (p. 30). Kumashiro regards crisis as necessary for anti-oppressive education; therefore, locating existing spaces and creating new opportunities for crisis is crucial. While this theorized space is often characterized as a "discomforting" place, it is also argued to be desirable. Kumashiro (2002) frames the ideal results of working through a crisis as the "change in the relationship students see between themselves and the binary of normalcy/Otherness" (p. 64). The pedagogy of crisis, grounded in poststructuralist concepts, draws attention to shifting identities and knowledge as partial. I engage the pedagogy of crisis here because I believe we often avoid spaces where we

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are uncomfortable or confused. Kumashiro suggests we should embrace them and further design them. I think naturally we are always in crisis, consciously or subconsciously. Yet, I don't think we, as educators, are often intentionally designing or hoping for confusion or crisis when we create an assignment or invite writing. Kumashiro breaks it down:

> Education is not something that involves comfortably repeating what we already learned or affirming what we already know. Rather, education involves learning something that disrupts our commonsense view of the world. The crisis that results from unlearning, then, is a necessary and desirable part of antioppressive education. (p. 63).

How to facilitate the experience of *crisis* clearly varies. In a study about critical writing pedagogy, Kumashiro's framing of crisis calls attention to the urgent need to shift approaches to writing. He highlights what I have witnessed for years: "What happens in classrooms is often not crisis and change, but rather repetition and comfort for both the student and teacher" (p. 64). Assignments that synthesize or critique reading often demonstrate a reliance on repetition. How we invite students into writing makes a difference in their ability to unlearn. Collective memory work, through writing memories and collective analysis, is a means to invite writers into discomfort to call attention to the internalization of binaries and provide space to resist repeating identities. We, as a collective, were looking for something to do with the realizations that emerged through writing. Kumashiro writes, "Desiring to learn involves desiring difference and overcoming our resistance to discomfort" (p. 63). We were keenly aware that as teachers we would re-enter spaces of discomfort in the future, similar to the experiences detailed in our memories. We desired to see these places in teaching as possible places to learn rather than retreat.

Rewrite Questions

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After we completed the collective analysis process for each of our memories, we were faced with what to do next. Haug (1999) suggests that participants each write a second version of their memories. The aim of the second version is to incorporate the perspectives raised during the collective analysis. For example, Haug's version would suggest that Erin rewrite her memory of teaching to the circles online and incorporate ideas shared during the collective analysis.

In our collective, we discussed writing second versions as an option but decided not to. Instead, we were looking for something more sustaining, something ongoing. We wanted tools to grapple with future challenging situations. We wanted an active process to rewrite our teacher identities amid and following daily challenges or significant crises. Further, we wanted to incorporate our collective consensus, frustrations, and realizations from our memory writing and collective analysis into an accessible tool to take with us. From this desire the "rewrite questions" were born. In this context, the term "rewrite" signaled to us the capacity to constantly revise and rewrite our identities. Our identities are not stagnant. The rewrite questions emerged from our writing and analysis and were importantly were different than writing. The questions were meant to function in multiple modalities – in writing, in conversation, and in our heads. They intended to capture our learning from the collective memory process and highlight key areas where we wanted to keep working.

Development of Questions

In order to write these questions, we spent our last meeting together reviewing our collective analysis and considering what themes we want to carry over into our rewrite questions. After reviewing, we each took short notes on what themes we were thinking about. Kari wrote, "How can I accumulate less pain and resentment (or process and release it gradually) while still challenging harmful and oppressive power structures?" Leyla wrote, "I have deep resentment

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toward the thing I chose to do and continue to do." Erin shared, "We're in pain, our spaces and our hair is disheveled, we fantasize about shutting the computer and running away or taking a nap." I wrote, "When and how should we deal with our past(s); how does it support our resilience to move forward? What happens if we do nothing?" And Kari's last statement summarized our aim: "I'm thinking about what it means to be a healthy teacher." Drawing on these responses, we began to address common themes to shape our "rewrite questions." We collectively agreed that these questions highlighted the places we wanted to return to regularly. They were sites of contradiction, conflict, and genuine interest.

Rewrite questions:

- *What is a humanizing moment?*
- *Where is your resentment coming from? What are you doing with it?*
- *What are you holding? Anxieties?*
- *What professionalism do I value and why do I value it?*
- *What am I defining as success? How am I measuring myself? What am I going on?*
  (Research collective, August 2021)

The first question, "What is a humanizing moment?" was a counter question to our research prompt, "Write a memory of lack of humanity." The next questions tackled the key themes that emerged from our collective analysis: resentment, anxiety, and professionalism. The questions functioned as a whole and were also easily accessed individually. When I analyzed the questions, it felt to me that the first three questions are "asked" by the collective to the individual by addressing "you." The switch to "I" in the last two questions felt like an invitation to introspection and action.

Practice with Questions

We addressed the rewrite questions in the follow up meetings I held with each of the teachers. The Fall 2021 season followed our summer of collective memory work. Schools were

back in-person after 1.5 years online or hybrid. Leyla commented upon returning to the classroom that, "Some days it almost felt normal and then I would look out at a sea of students in surgical masks." In these follow up conservations, I met with each of the teachers once or twice a month either in their classroom, at a coffee shop, or on Zoom. We consistently spent time cracking open areas of resentment, sources of anxiety, and harmful ideals of professionalism.

When we would meet up, each teacher used the questions differently. Erin wrote out responses, sometimes the form of full memories. Leyla and I wove the questions into our ever intense and deep conversations. Kari was readily able to reference examples where the questions supported her mindset and decisions. They became active in my headspace too. I was constantly answering and re-answering, "What I am defining as success? How am I measuring myself? What am I going on?"

Through these conservations, we slowly began to realize there are choices. At one point, I told Kari, "There are consequences either way. You respond to resentment or let it keep circulating and taking up space in you." Audrey Lorde (1978) reminds us to speak up:

A Litany for Survival

When we speak we are afraid

our words will not be heard

nor welcomed,

but when we are silent

we are still afraid, so it is better to speak.

Much of the emotion experienced by Kari and the other novice teachers will not magically dissipate. Rather, in what follows, Kari demonstrates how to be with the emotion and make choices that better serve her mental health.

How then do these rewrite questions model a pedagogy of crises? The questions and the follow up meetings created a deliberate space to engage with our discomfort. It gave time to our fear, frustration, and confusion. The questions were as much active as they were reflective; reflection is important yet often leaves us in the past. Aspects of questions such as, "Where is your resentment coming from? What are you doing with it?" prompted movement. We were dissatisfied with how long we sat in our resentment and how much space it occupied *in* us. We were still afraid, but we were practicing speaking.

Kari and the Rewrite Questions

As I engaged in an autumn full of conversation around the rewrite questions, I began to consider how holding onto anxieties and resentments, which were often prompted by imposed ideals of professionalism, would not protect us from the overwhelming feelings. After the period of individual meetings ended, I often wondered if we would continue to use the rewrite questions. Would the questions support ongoing revision of the self and provide fuel for action? My exchange with Kari several months after our individual follow up sessions provided an insight into the ways she continued to use the rewrite questions.

In the bloom of spring, Kari sent me the text message about being "thrown under the bus" after she had shared her plan to discuss the Buffalo shooting with students. In my experience, teachers and administrators nationwide evade conversations of racism and gun violence. Yet, there are pockets of radical teachers everywhere who attempt to find footing for discussing difficult and real topics with students. Kari is one of these teachers. Her text message and follow up email is an example of one of the places where our collectivity was alive and at work. After I finished multiple loops in the backyard and ended my phone conversation with Kari, she was left to enter school on Monday and make decisions about how to approach her teaching, her

colleague, her administrator, and herself. I had not expected to hear from Kari until maybe later in the week. On Monday afternoon, I opened my email to find a response that detailed the conversation with her colleague and her administrator and ended with her responses to the rewrite questions. I share the responses to the rewrite questions here. Afterwards, I analyze Kari's decision to respond to the questions and responses to the questions about resentment.

> ***Humanizing moment:*** *My friend Meghan brought me pineapple for lunch because she knows I love it.*
>
> ***Where is your resentment coming from?:*** *I am working in a school district that is actively suppressing culturally relevant and anti-racist teaching. Do I stay in this school district? Would it be any different somewhere else? I would have to start all over making friends only to leave again in 2 years.*
>
> ***What are you doing with it?:*** *I spoke honestly with the people involved, whether or not they heard me. I am going to seek support from my small network. I am going to move on from this day feeling proud of my choice to push back.*
>
> ***What are you holding? Anxieties?:*** *I am so nervous about next year. I don't know that I can keep dealing with the emotional strain of this.*
>
> ***What professionalism do I value and why do I value it?:*** *I value boundaries with students. I value boundaries between work and the rest of my life.*
>
> ***What am I defining as success?:*** *Success is speaking truth to power. Success is giving space for students to process real events and call out injustice.*
>
> ***How am I measuring myself?:*** *I am measuring myself against my values. I feel like in order to live them out, I need new strategies to preserve my mental health as I do the work. I need a bigger network in the school where I'm working.*

In analysis, I interpret Kari's ability to take up these questions as a willingness to enter discomfort *and* a willingness to change. One of the greatest realizations I had as I looked back on

our follow up conversations and the use of the rewrite questions is the way in which the teachers were able to mobilize their resentment. A pedagogy of crisis suggests identities and knowledge are partial (Kumashiro, 2002). The rewrite questions created a constant reminder that our identities are partial and invited to reposition to incorporate new ways of being. Kari, in returning to these questions, embraced the frustration and confusion of the situation. She didn't retreat; rather, she considered new ways to be.

Rewriting Resentment

In the collective analysis of our written memories, each time we arrived at the column of analyzing emotions present in our memories we listed resentment in various forms, using descriptions like "defensive, disappointment, frustration, shame, exhaustion, acceptance, and surrender." This collection of emotions that we found in our memories suggested an overarching theme of harboring – harboring our feelings without active forms of release. Our resentments towards the field of teaching, how we each played the role of teacher, and all the ways we felt as a result was laced through our memory writing, our analysis, and our follow up sessions.

Resentment is defined as "an emotion that we often experience when we fail to set boundaries or ask for what we need, or when expectations let us down because they were based on things we can't control, like what other people think, what they feel, or how they're going to react" (Brown, 2021, p. 33). We identified that resentment emerged when we felt *held back* from teaching in ways we believed in, when we felt *reliance* on student performance and behavior as a signifier of our ability and purpose as a teacher, and when we felt *anger* towards ourselves for choosing this profession. Our expectations of teaching were often based in areas we could not control, like our administration or our students.

Kari felt resentment towards her administration because they were actively preventing her from teaching in the just and relevant ways she expected of herself. This was not the first time she had experienced resentment. There was an accumulation of resentment. She was reprimanded for inviting student pronouns, she was cautioned on text selection, and she regularly fielded parent complaints. In the example shared in this chapter, she was challenged for bringing in the weekend news about the racist shooting in a grocery store in Buffalo, New York. Kari felt resentment when she was not respected and valued for being *her*. But what to do with all this piling resentment? Kari responded head on to the resentment rewrite question:

> ***Where is your resentment coming from?:*** *I am working in a school district that is actively suppressing culturally relevant and anti-racist teaching. Do I stay in this school district? Would it be any different somewhere else? I would have to start all over making friends only to leave again in 2 years.*

The question first points Kari to specifically identify the source of her resentment. Kari's response names where her resentment is stemming from, *a school district that is actively suppressing culturally relevant and anti-racist teaching*. Afterwards, her questions made possible decisions visible: *Do I stay in this school district? Would it be any different somewhere else?* The follow up rewrite question, "What are you doing with it?" invites an action.

> ***What are you doing with it?:*** *I spoke honestly with the people involved, whether or not they heard me. I am going to seek support from my small network. I am going to move on from this day feeling proud of my choice to push back.*

Kari's response affirms that resentment has moved *through* her, rather than taking up camp and festering. She directly identifies what she used her resentment for – *speaking honestly with people involved*. She names her move to "push back" as a source of pride. The attention to resentment here is significant. It is discomforting to experience unwanted or difficult emotions.

Shifting both how we see these spaces and what we do in them will not prevent us from feeling them again but rather establish a process in order to be with the emotion.

Rewrite Questions as Critical Writing Pedagogy

In what ways can "rewrite questions" or a similar approach interrupt our understanding of "writing well"? What if "writing well" meant getting to a place where we could see clearer and make moves? Kumashiro suggests that we "interrupt the privilege of certain ways of writing by troubling what we say it means to write well" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 65). Could we imagine writing that created a designated space to sit with discomfort? Rewrite questions is a practice that invites difficult emotions such as anxiety and resentment. Prioritizing such practices in a critical writing pedagogy emphasizes the possibility of unlearning. Kari, like all of us in the collective, needed to unlearn the practice of holding in resentment.

Erin asked me in a follow up session, "Why do we feel this? Why does this happen to us as teachers?" I told her there were probably many reasons – but one for sure is that we learned to feel this way. Harriet Lerner (2004) explains this learning: "It is not fear that stops you from doing the brave and true thing in your daily life. Rather, the problem is avoidance. You want to feel comfortable, so you avoid doing or saying things that will evoke fear and other difficult emotions" (p. 39). We learn that comfort works best for others and, in the short term, ourselves. Yet, as Kumashiro (2002) stresses, to avoid discomfort we engage in repetition. "Repetition can lead to feelings of comfort and security, an affirmation of identity and knowledge, and a stabilization of traditions, meanings, and institutional practices" (p. 70). Kari's principal recommended comfort for the students, parents, and himself. He sought stabilization; allowing Kari to proceed and discuss the racist shooting by sharing poetry from the Pulse shooting might have destabilized students' identities or knowledge.

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Engaging in discomfort, a pedagogy of crisis, can exist in multiple forms. This chapter illustrates the use of rewrite questions for novice teachers to turn to when they are in a place of discomfort. In these questions, we worked through unlearning rather than continuing to repeat an identity that did not serve us. "Can we imagine an assignment in which students are helping to resist repeating their own as well as their teachers' knowledges, identities, and practices, and to engage in the discomforting process of resignifying knowledges, identities, and practices?" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 66). Imagine similar writing assignments to our rewrite questions that allow students to work with discomforting emotions not for the purposes of eliminating them but for using them to (re)narrate identities.

Anzaldúa (1987) described *La Mestiza* as "a state of perpetual transition" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 100). Writing could be a site of perpetual transition; it could be a site to (re)narrate identities. "Writing can be about changing 'who we are' and 'how things are' but such a move cannot come about if we insist on repeating the same stories of what it means to *do* a writing assignment or *be* a student" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 66).

Chapter 7:

Conclusion and Opportunities

I think I have a better eye for the contradictions in the profession. Like those common sense
theories. I really see them kind of immediately rather than just sort of feeling it as
an amorphous sense.
(Kari, Closing Interview, 2021)

We were tied up at every single hair and woven into the social power connection.
The first easy task became the enormous task to break away from so many ties.
(Haug, 1999, p. 29)

Kari had a better eye for contradictions in teaching because she could see the common

sense theories more clearly. Collective memory work asks the writers to investigate memories

for what Haug (1999) names common sense theories. The common sense theories are the

dominant story lines; they are often adages and emphasize traditional patterns of thinking or

feeling. They are the common narrative we fall subject to over and over. The novice teachers in

the study referred to the common sense theories with air quotes and sometimes a roll of the eyes

or a sigh. Haug (1999) explains the decision to derive common sense theories from memories:

> Common sense theories are part of our everyday lives, and necessary for daily
>
> orientation. Whenever we do not explicitly formulate it and put it in front of us, it
>
> unexpectedly, without questions, weaves its way into all discussions. It's almost always a
>
> surprise to the women since most of them never knew they harbored such theories or
>
> feelings. These theories are often replicas of simplified psychoanalytic theories that have
>
> woven their way into the fabric of everyday consciousness. (p. 14)

In each written memory, the novice teachers identified which common sense theories

were present. These common sense theories often, to no surprise, repeated across memories.

Below is a list of the most frequent common sense theories found in our written memories:

- It could always be worse.

- Students come first.

- I do this because I care.

- The teacher is responsible for students' behavior.

- I teach because I love kids.

- Push through the pain.

- "You're the teacher."

It is important to call attention to the common sense theories in this final chapter because these theories were the stories we were attempting to (re)narrate. They were the sticking lies that drew out the self-gaslighting and resentment in us. They were the narratives we wanted to get under, unearth, and retell. We simultaneously believed these common sense theories and rejected them. The move in critical writing pedagogy to identify and grapple with these contradictions invited an exploration of ambiguity.

Kari's development of a "better eye" supported her mental health; she began to define professionalism for herself. Writing memories and identifying common sense theories embedded in texts gave us as a collective an opportunity to resee what is shaping the conditions of our experience. This chapter continues by first reengaging the research questions that guided this study. Then, I review what happened when novice teachers and I engaged in critical writing pedagogy. I focus on how specific writing practices drew out themes of self-gaslighting, introspection, and resentment. Next, I discuss opportunities for future work. In doing so, I also look specifically at my future teaching position in teacher education to consider the ways in which critical writing pedagogy could be employed and researched. Lastly, I conclude by

extending the implications of this study to imagine an increased access to critical writing pedagogy for K-12 students.

The Study

The research questions that guided this study focused on how novice teachers arrived at, experienced, and were impacted by critical writing pedagogy. The questions were: 1) How do novice teachers engage with pain, uncertainty, and trauma in teaching? 2) What happens when contradiction and relocation are centered in critical writing pedagogy? 3) In what ways do collective memory work as a critical writing pedagogy impact teacher well-being and practice?

In this study, I developed my research questions to gain insight into the experience of novice teachers with critical writing pedagogy. In analysis, I looked closely at three writing practices the novice teachers experienced: artifacts, collective analysis, and rewrite questions. Artifacts in a critical writing pedagogy exposed self-gaslighting in novice teachers, set up figured worlds, and highlighted sedimented identities. Collective analysis invited introspection, generated consensus, and enabled our collective to call out the unreasonable. Finally, rewrite questions created space for working with discomfort or unsettling emotions such as resentment.

Critical Writing Pedagogy toward Mental Health

This study is significant because of the way critical writing pedagogy was able to reveal the mental health of novice teachers *to them*. What is learned is not representative of every novice teacher's mental health. This dissertation does not argue that novice teachers self-gaslight, lack invitations to introspection, and harbor resentment – instead it argues is that critical writing pedagogy, negotiated in a collective, can reveal conditions of mental health located in the collective itself.

In this study there were multiple areas of mental health evoked through critical writing pedagogy and analyzed. According to the World Health Organization,

> Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. (2022)

In this section on critical writing pedagogy and mental health, I spend time reviewing and discussing the three prominent themes that emerged: 1) self-gaslighting, 2) introspection, and 3) resentment. These prominent and urgent themes for the novice teachers in this study created sites for co-evolving (Nagar, 2014). I will reconnect each of these themes to writing practices in critical writing pedagogy.

Self-gaslighting

The interpretive theme of self-gaslighting was derived from the in vivo codes, direct language from novice teachers, such as *gaslighting, ignoring,* and *suppressing.* Self-gaslighting is a damaging aspect of mental health because it is a conscious or unconscious refusal to acknowledge past trauma. Further, in self-gaslighting there is a desire to diminish the significance of experiences. Self-gaslighting, as with gaslighting from others, often is not a dismissal of a single event or experience but rather an erosion at the subjectivity; a person is left to feel insignificant, incompetent, or responsible for their pain and emotion (Bendt, 2020). Beyond the negative impact to the individual, the effect of self-gaslighting is a maintenance of social systems. For example, if a novice teacher is "fine" after an extremely challenging year, then the educational system is not challenged or held responsible.

Self-gaslighting is a theme that was heard across the study, especially in pinpointing common sense theories and opening interviews. The messages in common sense theories furthered self-gaslighting. Adages such as "it could always be worse" or "students come first" reinforce self-gaslighting by shifting focus away from personal stress or difficulty. In the opening interviews, there was a tendency to want to generalize the academic year and all the challenges. When the novice teachers were prompted to describe aspects of the academic year, they rarely noted specific experiences and rather used terms like "overwhelming, chaotic, and stressful" to describe the experience.

Critical Writing Pedagogy

In analyzing the experience of novice teachers engaging with critical writing pedagogy, I found that the use of artifacts prompted an interruption to self-gaslighting. When Leyla shared her glasses, they were "a physical manifestation of pain." Artifacts returned each of the novice teachers to specific memories and stories. From these narratives, it became clear that pain, stress, or uncertainty had been experienced. Utilizing artifacts as a praxis for listening in the collective, relocated the attention and analysis from the person to the artifact (Kamler, 2001; Pahl & Rowsell, 2011). The stories evoked in the artifacts were then able to be discussed, analyzed, and critiqued. Incorporating artifacts into a critical writing pedagogy situates stories in a shared sociocultural context. Leyla noted the ways in which artifacts established a gauge of vulnerability. The stories that were narrated from artifacts granted permission to others to be vulnerable and truthful. The sharing of artifacts provided an opportunity to witness vulnerability in the collective; this deepened the capacity to describe difficult memories from the academic year.

Invitation to Introspection

I find one of the most challenging aspects of working with mental health is a lack of visibility in comparison to other aspects of health. Imagine if a rash spread across my face every time stress overwhelmed me or my body stopped moving while processing a difficult emotion. Our mental health is largely an internal and private process, and we trap it there for as long as possible. Kari, in her opening interview, shared that she missed building relationships with students in person and as a result she expressed that, "my mental health was very low." Yet, she added, "and then when we got to come back, it was so nerve wracking to be back in the building without being vaccinated." It's important to note that mental health does not resolve itself or is ever "fixed," rather it is maintenance of an ongoing state of well-being. Our mental health, as mentioned in the earlier definition from the World Health Organization, "enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community" (2002).

The theme of introspection was derived from in vivo codes such as *inferences, my experience,* and *in my head.* Introspection is the examination or observation of one's own mental and emotional processes (Schwitzgebel, 2019). More often than not, introspection is a private process or a process taken up with a trusted friend or a therapist. The retelling of observations of a mental process might also be viewed as complaining or can lead to shame (Ahmed, 2021). In this study, I analyze how there was a willingness towards introspection because it was valuable for the collective.

Critical Writing Pedagogy

In analyzing the experience of novice teachers engaging with critical writing pedagogy, the practice of collective analysis invited introspection as a valuable resource for the collective. Purposeful invitations to introspection are valuable for mental health. It is an opportunity to

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examine mental and emotional processes. In collective memory work, introspection is valued as a resource because it offers the collective an opportunity to witness how others think and feel.

Collective analysis invited our collective to connect and draw out deeper and clearer reasons as to why we felt desires to live into idealistic roles as teachers. We discussed how the teaching profession is steeped in white maternal, feminine ways of being (Grumet, 1988). In Erin's memory, she repeats good morning multiple times to a screen of circles (students). Leyla's introspection describing why she would be motivated to repeat good morning led our collective to discuss the calm, collected and ever warm, enthusiastic, and endearing image of a teacher. We discussed the tension present when inviting students to participate while we felt drained and removed ourselves. Ultimately, the practice of collectively analyzing a written memory was an invitation for introspection for each of us, which led us to unearth broader sociocultural contexts of teaching, validate complaints in our collective, and shed light on the ways an idealistic image of teacher contributes to feelings of dehumanization.

Resentment

Resentment was all over this study. The in vivo codes that led to the theme of resentment were *resentment, weight, defensive,* and *disappointment.* Resentment was defined as "an emotion that we often experience when we fail to set boundaries or ask for what we need, or when expectations let us down because they were based on things we can't control, like what other people think, what they feel, or how they're going to react" (Brown, 2021, p. 33). Resentment was characterized as weight negatively impacting mental health. We realized that resentment emerged when we felt *held back* from teaching in ways we believed in, *reliance* on student performance and behavior as a signifier of our ability and purpose as a teacher, and *anger*

towards ourselves for choosing this profession. Our expectations of teaching were often based in areas we could not control, like our administration or our students.

All three novice teachers mentioned forms of resentment in their opening interviews – resentment towards themselves, students, or administration. We analyzed the ways we, as teachers, are socially conditioned to avoid disclosing our resentment – doing so might expose areas where we feel a lack of control.

Critical Writing Pedagogy

In analyzing the experience of novice teachers engaging with critical writing pedagogy, I found that rewrite questions invited novice teachers to engage with discomforting emotions such as resentment. The rewrite questions that emerged from our collective memory work were distinctly different from our original writing. The questions were meant to function in multiple modalities – in writing, in conversation, and in our heads. They captured our learning from the collective memory process and highlighted key areas where we wanted to keep working.

Writing, analyzing, or answering rewrite questions does not remove the emotion or prevent it from occurring; rather these spaces in critical writing pedagogy provided an approach to working with emotions. The rewrite questions in the follow up meetings created a deliberate space to engage with our discomfort (Kumashiro, 2002). They allocated time for our fear, frustration, and confusion. The questions were designed to be active. Part of our collective frustration with emotions like resentment was that they felt trapped within us with nowhere to go. It was important to our collective that the questions prompted movement such as, "Where is your resentment coming from? What are you doing with it?" We were dissatisfied with how long we sat in our resentment and how much space it occupied in us.

Critical writing pedagogy opened many specific memories for us, sparking deep and thoughtful discussions. We laughed often at our pain because we understood it. Critical writing pedagogy made clear to us the areas of our mental health that were suffering. We were regularly self-gaslighting and accumulating resentment. We often did not trust our introspection or share it with others. Analyzing specific writing practices in critical writing pedagogy increased my understanding of how certain practices, such as artifacts, collective analysis, and rewrite questions, could make our mental health more visible and accessible.

Future Work

In this section, I consider future work and research with critical writing pedagogy. It is important to note that the people I work most closely have driven my imagination and development of critical writing pedagogies. At one time, it was 7th and 8th grade students who were trying to figure out how to belong to Hmong culture, St. Paul, Minnesota, and middle school. When working in the student counseling center, it was undergraduate students on academic probation who were trying to shake the shame of being assigned to a weekly academic support session. And in this study, it was novice teachers who were trying to understand and attend to their mental health in a chaotic and overwhelming sociopolitical climate. I enter this section on future work holding preservice teachers in mind, as they are the group that I will work most closely with in the near future. I discuss collectivity, artifacts, and advocacy as specific areas that I want to continue to invest in and imagine critical writing pedagogy.

Collectivity

One aspect of critical writing pedagogy I will continue to explore is the benefit of collective writing. During the study, Leyla expressed that she would love to do collective memory work with Somali teachers. I believe that affinity collectives for writing about teacher

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experiences could lead to consensus and identification of places from which to co-evolve. Further, I think other hybrid identities such as mother-teachers could create space to invite introspection. Further, I have long been curious about how critical writing pedagogy could be of use in counseling or support groups. In teacher education, I believe engaging preservice teachers with certain aspects of collective memory work, such as collective analysis, could lead to greater understanding in areas of emotion, motivation, and contradiction. Collective analysis offers the opportunity to slow down and analyze specific memories within the sociocultural context of experience of peers.

Artifacts

Work with artifacts as critical writing pedagogy will undoubtedly continue to evolve in my teaching practice. Working with preservice teachers, I can imagine the ways in which artifacts from their past schooling experience could inform our conversations about social and historical representations of a teacher. Further, in classes paired with practicum or student teaching, artifacts from school sites could be employed as a listening praxis for specific experiences in schools. In learning to teach, there are times preservice teachers ignore what they are struggling with in order to present as a composed teacher. Artifacts may validate experience and provide a means to discuss difficulty. Conversely, in my experience, preservice teachers often also feel unsuccessful and unable to see what *is* working. In this case, artifacts could be important to interrupt self-doubt and validate progress.

I am also keen to explore artifacts as an aspect of critical writing pedagogy that constructs context. Critical writing pedagogy emphasizes locating the self in a sociocultural context (Kamler, 2001; Anzaldúa, 1987). While teachers may be able to name that a white patriarchal education system is damaging, they may not be able to point to examples or discuss

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ways they are implicated or impacted. Inviting artifacts are visible evidence of context. Artifacts such as textbooks, grading rubrics, or student compositions in special education programs may have the potential to make racist or sexist constructs more visible for preservice teachers.

Advocacy

In terms of critical writing pedagogies, I have usually taken up work on the ground with my students. During the past several years, my students have been preservice and novice teachers. As I shift into a new position in teacher education, I will continue engaging my students in various aspects of critical writing pedagogy. Yet, I think an important area of discomfort for me to explore is how to discuss possibilities of critical writing pedagogy with school principals or other programmatic leaders. Burnout is more likely for teachers when job demands outweigh resources (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019). In addressing administration, I could consider how critical writing pedagogy could be integrated as a legitimate resource for mental health and teacher resilience. I could ask, "How does the writing in teacher induction programs utilize orientations from critical writing pedagogy?"

In addition to findings on critical writing pedagogy, our time spent together exposed multiple effects of teaching on teachers' mental health. These shared realities prompt me to continue to consider ways I can continue to be a mental health advocate for teachers. Could there be deliberate and intentional coursework in teacher education regarding mental health? How can aspects of self-care, visible in social work training, be integrated into teacher education to "prevent compassion fatigue, burnout, and vicarious trauma?" (Lewis & King, 2019, p. 96). Similar to social workers, teachers experience intense emotional experiences from rewarding to highly stressful. How can I advocate for self-care as an integral part of training for the teaching profession?

Critical Writing Pedagogy and Youth Development

I turn here to K-12 students; I argue for a critical writing pedagogy that *benefits* youth development. I want to imagine how introducing critical writing pedagogy in schools could dramatically impact students' ability and interest to engage with writing toward well-being. Kamler (2001) suggests developing a metalanguage to reposition the writer as a co-creator of knowledge rather than a reporter of information. In so many instances in K-12 settings, students rely on language to demonstrate that they know the content they were supposed to acquire. What if what they were supposed to "know" was their own experiences? Kline and Kang (2022) suggest investigating "genre, grammar and language, agency and participation, and technology and digital media" as starting points to revise or develop cognitive, sociocultural, and critical orientations to approaches to writing (p. 303).

In our final collective memory work session, the novice teachers and I discussed adaptations we would consider if we were to do collective memory work with K-12 students. Below is an exchange between Erin and I discussing possibilities.

> Erin: I like the idea of taking some of this -- especially these columns. It would be cool to do narratives with students where they pick apart and see these different pieces.
>
> Anna: Yeah, I am thinking about how to talk to students about understanding writing as an artifact that is a separate thing from the self. That, by analyzing your writing, it is not an attack on you *or* your writing. This is literally analyzing what's going on – like what contradictions do we see here?

In our collective, we discussed how the collective analysis of a peer's writing was one of the first times we experienced an editing process where the point was not to improve the writing but to analyze social constructs and constructions of self.

Lastly, the novice teachers and I were once K-12 students too. We discussed how we learned to write, how we teach writing, and what we could imagine writing to be in schools. Currently, most K-12 students do not have the ability to self-select in or out of writing practices. *Choosing* to write about your mental health is much different from uncomfortably navigating your way through a poetry unit on identity. Offering choice in writing, normalizing discomfort, and considering schools as sites for increasing student mental health are initial steps I envision toward developing a critical writing pedagogy that benefits youth development.

Onward

It was a joy to engage with novice teachers in collective memory work. It was an honor to analyze our engagement in critical writing pedagogy as a researcher. Erin, Kari, and Leyla fully participated in writing practices and our collectivity. It is important to remember the work of our collective does not stop or end with this research study. Nagar (2014) reminds us, "We are inserted in new institutional spaces and continue to evolve processes for understanding, challenging, and transforming" (p. 129). In the year following the publication of this dissertation, I will teach preservice teachers in teacher education foundations, Kari is (re)entering the world of theater, Leyla will begin her second year in a Literacy PhD program in a department of Curriculum and Instruction, and Erin will teach Language Arts to 6th grade students. I find it hopeful to imagine the ways in which our experiences with critical writing pedagogy might continue to transform in us and in these new spaces.

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Appendix A: Erin's Memory

Blue circle, green circle, pink circle, Hello Kitty circle, smiling-dog circle, brown circle, unfamiliar-anime-character circle, orange circle, Steph Curry circle. Twenty-four circles lay in a grid on the screen in front of me. Below each circle is the name of a student, paraprofessional, or special education teacher. The only movement on the screen comes from the top-left corner, where I see myself on camera. This square shows a neat bookcase and tidy desk behind me; only I can see the overflowing laundry basket, collection of dirty mugs, and half-eaten bagel pushed just out of view.

"Good morning!" I say to the circles with enthusiasm. I wait a few moments.

Silence.

"Umm… good morning?! How's everyone doing?" I wait anxiously. It's first block on a Thursday and the circles are probably just tired. I scan my screen for the circles belonging to adults, expecting them to save me from this silence. I almost always receive a warm "Good morning!" from the brown circle that was Mr. G.

But nothing.

"Hello? Oh, is my mic not working?" I ask desperately. A moment passes as my mind rushes with all of the possible reasons for which my microphone might be malfunctioning.

it's working, types William into the chat. My heart sinks and I prepare a breath to scold this grid of circles for not greeting someone who is saying hello to them. But before I can let go of the breath, a string of messages pop up in the corner of the screen.

good morning, types Lilah into the chat.

hi! types Jordan into the chat.

sorry, i was talking to my mom, types Sean into the chat.

I exhale. "That's alright, just glad I'm not alone this morning!" I click to share my screen and start the day's lesson.

Appendix B: Kari's Memory

It's 2:26pm on a Wednesday-- I dread this time each week. The "team" meeting. I have had two point two five hours of meetings and two office hours already today. And now, the inevitable two thirty meeting is here. Like the CAB meeting I attended this morning, this one will last one point two five hours, as it was decreed by the district. I am certain we won't be leaving even a minute early today, as I saw in the agenda who will be leading it today. My teeth clench just thinking about his voice. *How's everybody doing?* He'll start. Silence. We've told you, Doug. We're burnt out. Our students are burnt out. We have ideas for how to use this time better. Why do we have these arbitrary requirements for the amount of time we spend on Google Meets? *I hear you. I'll get back to you on that*. He never does. It's been five months of pleading for this flat affect to listen. The resounding *I appreciate the feedback*, mocking my increasingly more frequent migraines-- the nights I'm up until three in the morning unable to sleep-- the day I spoke to a parent whose child tried to take their own life-- the day I had to reassure a mom who apologized profusely that she couldn't get her son to join his classes because she had just given birth to her premature baby and was in the hospital, unable to monitor Jose. You have nothing to apologize for, I tell her. You need to take care of yourself. You're doing all that you can and that is enough. It is always enough. I wonder if it sounds like *I hear you. I'll get back to yo*u.

It's 2:27pm. The agenda says we will be "brainstorming for a potential return to hybrid." None of us are vaccinated. The governor says we will be in the next round eligible for the vaccine, but the rollout is going far slower than they expected. The school board will vote this week on whether we will return, at least I think that was this week--it could have been three weeks from now, or a month before-- despite the fact that our numbers are still climbing. The district has never sent out a survey to teachers or hosted a town hall to hear our concerns about returning to in-person learning. My email to the school board landed me with a one-on-one phone call with the superintendent where I spent more time making sure I was on his good side than voicing the real reason for my appeal in the first place. Bea and Sarah have newborns at home and need to figure out childcare for them if they have to come back to the building. I tell myself that's why I'm worried. I'm more worried about myself. My mom. I miss her so much and this feels like one more reason not to see each other. We've asked the district how long we would have to prepare for hybrid. Two weeks? One? A weekend? We're met with a tired anecdote about building a plane while flying it. They can't answer us; they're busy saving our lives. It's funny, they really think they're the pilots. (I will write a Facebook post about this tonight. My life in hybrid: the pilot, the flight attendant, the air traffic controller).

It's 2:28 and my jaw clenches tighter. The knot at the base of my skull sends pain coursing down my neck. I imagine reaching back and pulling it out, stretching my spine out across the desk and cracking the vertebra, massaging the stony lump into smooth tissue. By the end of this meeting my headache will curl around to my temple, a migraine swelling into madness. Madness swelling into fury.

It's 2:29. I see the names pop up on my screen. Last year, these names were my lifeline. This year, our friendship is cut down to commiseration. Half laughs about real pain. Tireless attempts to show up for our students reflected in a grid of exhaustion.

It's 2:30. I click join.

Appendix C: Leyla's Memory

I had wrapped up all my classes for the day. Facing the fold out desk that takes up more than half of the walking space in my small room, slouched in the foldable director's chair. My scarf was still haphazardly wrapped from the two minutes I gave myself to get-ready before the start of the school day, with no underscarf or pins to hold it in place. I was looking out the window at the sunny early-May day but felt no interest in going out into the sunshine. I just stared at it to give my eyes a break from the five straight hours of pouring into my laptop screen.

Two minutes until I had to log into my office hours. There's a chance that no one will show up and that I can have an hour and a half of peace before after-school meetings. Maybe no students have questions today, maybe no one is in crisis, maybe no one feels like spending their afternoon hanging out with Ms. S. Maybe. And hopefully. Because the Ms. S they want to spend time with is barely holding on today.

Logging on.

I exhaled when I saw that no students were in the waiting room. My shoulders relaxed and I moved into a more comfortable position in my chair. Then I put on a random youtube video essay and tried to convince myself to use this time to do some grading. Deep down I knew though, that I would just sit there, feeling ashamed for wasting time but refusing to make a different choice.

Then, in the background of the video I was listening to, I heard the *ding* of someone entering the Google Meet waiting room. My shoulders tensed, I pushed up into a proper sitting position, quickly paused the video, and tried to manage the rush of anger I felt at the student. I don't know what they want, and I don't want to know. I don't want to smile and be curious about the student's life, I don't want to comfort their anxieties, I don't want to dig into the last reserves of giving a fuck that I have in my body and toss it into my computer screen at a little school ID photo.

I clicked on the Google Meet tab and just stared at the student's name for a moment. What would happen if I clicked "deny." Or just clicked the little x to close out of the tab. No one would know. The student would guess at why I disappeared but wouldn't be able to do anything about it. I would be free. I could just close my laptop and walk away and go outside. Get in my car and drive wherever I feel like going. I could close the tab and climb back into bed and pretend like nothing happened.

I admitted the student to the Google Meet, and barely put on my teacher face.

Appendix D: Anna's Memory

It happened every time. And it depleted me every time. I set up the breakout rooms and zoom they were gone. This time I got up and used the bathroom, refilled my water. And then I did what I always did. I sat and contemplated if I should join the rooms. No, there was an awkward silence when I entered. Like my face in the square squashed the laughter. Sometimes, one of the teacher candidates would wave when I joined or say Hey Anna. But this time I thought no, I'll just let them be. 15 minutes passed and I pushed the closed break out room button. And towards the end of the 60 second countdown they all flooded back to the main screen. It was my favorite moment of the entire class because they left their cameras on for a brief second. It felt like a room, a full room. And then one by one, not all of them, but most, they would click off their camera. Boom boom boom. Their faces had been shared for their small group but when it returned to me they quickly clicked the camera off. I said in the moment out loud, "I love this when I get to see all your faces." But I knew I couldn't make them. I always *took it personally.* I imagined all the reasons they might need or want their camera off and tried to suppress how I felt about it.

Class droned on in the same rushed manner and silent manner. I had saved the last 30 minutes of class for our writer's workshop. We were discussing *crisis*. The last 30 minutes always was about 17. I knew I hadn't provided enough context as I did for the first two modules of the writer's workshop but I also didn't want to avoid the layered crises we were all drowning alone in. I wanted to give space to write about it. As I was sharing the plan for submitting an image representing a crisis from last year, one of the blank screens became rimmed in red and spoke up. "I feel like we should have been led in this experience more." My internal rant was immediate. *Why do teachers always expect the same context and support as a middle schooler? Every experience in teacher education is not meta -- it is not intended to transfer directly to your teaching, rather it is for you.* The small blank square on my screen boomed on and the chat began to fill. Someone wrote "I think we should write about a joyful moment not a time of crisis." On and on it went. And I could feel and see my face reddening. I wanted nothing more than to turn off my camera.

Appendix E: Collective Analysis Grid

Kari [K]

Erin [E]

Leyla [L]

Anna [A]

Initial Thesis Statement of the Author's Meaning:
[K] An extension of the author's thoughts in a single moment before joining a virtual meeting.-- it was only four minutes, but it gives a sense of accumulation of dehumanization. The accumulation of pain. Giving herself a voice after the fact that she wishes she could have said to his face. [E]Aloneness of distance-teaching. Disconnection from students, bodies. Trying to build an experience and feeling disjointed when there's no response. Performance. [L]Overwhelming resentment toward distance teaching - loathing. Last reserves. Trapped; you have to show up in this way, at this time. Feeling ashamed, but honestly recognizing what you're actually feeling. [A]Seeking connection but instead separation became deeper and deeper; Sense of betrayal; Not feeling included; decision making, not being sure, a lot of uncertainty; Choice to be able to distance yourself -- you don't have the choice but students do

Common Sense Theory:
[K] Administration doesn't listen, they use phrases like "I'll get back to you on that." It could always be worse. Students come first. Students are our purpose. "I do this because I care"-- maternal, feminine. This is inevitable. Push through the pain. [E]Teachers have to be happy for the students' sake. The teacher is responsible for students' manners. Teachers want to be there. [L]Doesn't matter how you feel, you still have to show up. Teachers always love kids, always love teaching. Must be productive all the time (use your time wisely). [A] "You're the teacher." Fewer freedoms. Students feel less comfortable with teacher present; brutally honest virtual - easier to hide behind a screen. Everything you do in teacher prep should be about your teaching. Students should be excited and fully on board. Student voice should guide instruction. "Student-driven learning" Teacher doesn't have feelings. They are actually a person.

Analysis of the Elements of Language:

List of verbs as Activity	Linguistic Peculiarities	Emotion	Motivation	Others Presented in Narrative	Vacuums	Contradictions

[K]Dread Decreed Attended Clench/clenches Spend Pleading "Unable to sleep" Mocking Apologize Reassure Eligible Voicing Returning Prepare Building Flying Cracking Swelling Saving Click [E]Wait Scan Passes Sinks Prepare Malfunctioning Types Let go Pop up Exhale Click Share Start Save [L]Wrapped Slouched Pouring Show up Have/gave	[K]Headache will curl around to my temple -Inclusion of emotion/reflections in pink text. -Use of time. -Physical section (out of head and into body) [E]Circles - Lack of verbs - Personification of digital objects - Use of font - Use of "Good morning" [L]Repetition (maybe; don't want; I could) - Referring to self in third person (Ms. S) - Logging on as its own paragraph - Italicizing "ding" of Google Meet - Internal debate - Conditional tense - Time and place are not	[K]Frustration Powerlessness -Pain -Loss -Grief Exhaustion -Surrender - Questioning/self-doubt - Uncertainty - [E]Awkwardness - Self-doubt - Enthusiasm - Anxiously - Desperately - Shallow relief - Disappointment - Acceptance [L]Angry - Ashamed - Exhausted - Depletion (unraveling) - Desperate hope	[K]Facebook post as coping mechanism -Pushing through pain for some kind of recognition - Attempting to self-regulate. -Will herself to be okay in order to join the meeting. [E]Being professional - Self-protection - Motivation for "good mornings": living into vision of "teacher." I'm responsible for creating classroom environment - Survival; desperate	[K]Doug -Mothers (Bea and Sara) - Newborns -The agenda -The headache -Names on the screen - Computer -Concept of the plane - Governor - Superintendent -School board -Students [E]Various circles - Mr. G - William - Jordan - Lilah - Sean - Seeing self on camera; teacher persona - other unknown characters: parents, teachers, etc.	[K]Alone -At home -The headache is inevitable [E]Alone - Day's lesson - Relationship with other adults in the room - How is she feeling? - Time of year; what point in pandemic - Location, room - Smiling [L]Alone or not - The student; who are they, what do they want?	[K]You need to take care of yourself. You're doing all that you can and that is enough. It is always enough. -The vaccine rollout being slower than expected but the school board was voting to return to hybrid -The school board voted virtually about teachers returning to in-person -Massaging the stoney lump into smooth tissue -"We all just did a half laugh about real pain!" -Leyla -Doug saying he appreciates the feedback when he likely does not. -Outward carer but not caring for own body -Has all the right comebacks to say, just doesn't/can't

Logging on Exhaled Convince Wasting Refusing Knew Pushed Relaxed Tensed Manage Comfort Want Dig in Clicked Deny Climb Pretend Disappeared Admitted Put on [A] Depleted Zoom Happened (passive verbs) Contemplated Refilled Join Entered Squashed Followed "Let them be" Click Felt Shared Make Imagine Suppress Droned	set in stone; switching between tenses and imagined escaping [A] zoom as a verb - loss of cameras on, want to turn camera off - 30 minutes about 17 - *italics* for frustrated thoughts - boom, boom, boom (no sound but suggests felt) - boom on - sees and feels face reddening (sensing perception from students)	- Resentment - Defeat [A]Depleted - Loss - Torn; contemplated - - insecure - yearning (how teaching *used to feel)* - hurt - anger; frustration - rushed; insufficient; didn't do enough - embarrassed - defensive - feeling like giving up; surrender - wanting to escape	for response [L]Teacher vision ("barely put on my teacher face") - Moment of allowing self care and relief - Doing the job right - Accepting necessity of doing the hard thing [A]wants to connects - be a good teacher - teachers happy, satisfied and supported - motivated by perfection - wants to see people's face and have them willingly show their; authentic,	- Microphone - Grid - Empty chat - laundry basket - tidy desk - neat bookcase - half-eaten bagel [L]Potential student - Actual student - The waiting room - Ms. S - The folding chair - Student ID photo - The "x" (escape) - My car - My bed [A] breakout rooms - the squares - teacher candidates - the teacher candidates who	- YouTube video essay; actually listening to it? - The meeting with student [A] assumed alone at home - assumed mid way through the semester (expectation that they should feel connection) - person who spoke up was a women (make up teachers, our cohort?) - rebellin	say them at the meeting. [E] "Just glad I'm not alone" - Screen capture, environment - Chat is the only way to express connection (assumption of no chat = students don't want to connect) - students are so close to homelife, but interpersonally disconnected - The brown circle isn't actually Mr. G. - Expectations for other adults - Silence feels like a threat, but really just absence. - Typing students: Grateful and disappointed at the same time [L]Human being with needs, expected to stare at screen indefinitely - Wondering what students wanted/needed;

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Saved Discussing provided avoid drowning Give write expect transfer Boomed Feel wanted turn off			genuine connection - motivated by professionalism	wave or say hi - squares vs. faces - "the chat" - the red brimmed screen - the camera - the screen version of Anna - the someone who wrote about wanting to write about a joyful moment	g against the lesson or voicing thoughts were stressed - what is going in their (teacher candidates') lives - context of crisis - what is status of COVID - what do they want to be led into - speak at the end - were students talking about this before and saw this as opportunity	knowing what it probably was - "I would be free," but knowing that isn't true - I need rest, but can't rest because then I feel unproductive/shameful. Therefore, I can't enjoy rest. - No choice but to admit the student; still felt like a decision - Sunny day, but no desire to go out. Wanting to be free, but having no capacity to enjoy the freedom - "After school," not at school [A]30 minutes about 17 - camera on small group - turn off for large group - felt like a room, a full room - droned on in same rushed manner - students bursting

						thoughts and feeling and she's shutting down - typical power dynamic getting flipped - none of this supposed be this way (teacher ed; distance; meta) - discussing crisis while experiencing crisis - wants to be close to them and is annoyed/doesn't like them/angry

Construction of "I"

[K]towards parents, students. Angry. Carer of others but not of self. A doer. Action-oriented. Sarcastic bystander. Prompt.

[E]Optimistic teacher. Rushed, not having enough time for self. Constructing self with others; community. Someone who's responsible for and co-dependant on the behavior of the students.

[L]Resentful; burnt out. Someone who shows up anyway - resilience but to an unhealthy degree, out of necessity and obligation. Obedience/compliance to teacher persona. Defeated. Hard on self - still passing judgement in retrospect.

[A]Authority figure. A people person. Sensitive. Doubtful or unsure. Introspective. Fear of being inadequate. Mediator. Measured. Built up resentment.

Construction of Others:

[K]The Bad Guys:
-Doug inhumane, robotic, distant, cold. Dropping the ball, failing them.
-School board, governor, superintendent
The Helpless Characters:
-Mothers
The Allies:
-Affinity with the students
-Relates to colleagues
-Seeing their realities affirms/validates her reality.

The Agenda & The Headache:
-Takeover, no control.
-The headache seems self-imposed
Comparison:
She wonders if she is the Doug to the mother. She is scared she will fail her like she is being failed by Doug. Anxiety over having a position of power. Is she treating others how she is being treated?
[E]Rescuers: Mr. G, students
Circles: 2-dimensional, distant, lacking humanity
On-Camera Self: only movement, teacher-vision of self
Typing students: fed up, rude, enthusiastic, apologetic, possibly deceitful
[L]Potential student: Needy, taking my time, burdensome
Escape: "x," car, bed, YouTube video
Relief: Video, bed, folding chair
Waiting room: Anxiety, determines fate, in control
Actual student: Decisive factor - can't escape, forces Ms. S to show up
Ms. S: Kids want to hang out with her, process crises with her; teacher vision of self; her construction is up for debate (real vs. performance)
[A]The students: needy; inconsiderate, perceived as not liking her
Squares vs. Faces: bad vs. good guys, squares are bolder
Red brimmed screen: threat; anger, antagonist; unstoppable; interrupted
The chat: the squares cronies
The camera: the barrier; the escape route; off to speak freely?

Areas of interest from analysis to bring to the collective:
[K]attempting to self-regulate
sense of accumulation of dehumanization
The accumulation of pain.
Outward assurance
Questioning/self-doubt
Cracking, swelling
Will herself to join the meeting
Click
No control
half laugh about real pain
Anxiety over having a position of power
The Bad Guys
Appreciate the feedback
[E]Optimistic teacher.
Let go.
Silence feels like a threat.
Malfunctioning.
Self-doubt.
I'm responsible for creating a classroom environment.

Being professional
Rushed.
Desperate for response.
"Just glad I'm not alone"
Self-protection
students are so close to homelife, but interpersonally disconnected
Teachers want to be there.
Someone who's responsible for and co-dependent on the behavior of the students.
Performance
[L]Waiting room: Anxiety, determines fate, in control
Wanting to be free, but having no capacity to enjoy the freedom
I can't enjoy rest.
"I would be free," but knowing that isn't true
Resentment
Doing the job right
Someone who shows up anyway - out of necessity and obligation
Show up
Put on
slouched
Pretend
Potential student vs. actual student
Deny (what do we deny)
Obedience/compliance to teacher persona
[A]students bursting thoughts and feeling and she's shutting down
yearning (how teaching *used to feel)*
motivated by professionalism
Refilled
Imagine
drowning
Give
Suppress
Avoid
Zoom
expect
transfer
Choice to be able to distance yourself -- you don't have the choice but students do
discussing crisis while experiencing crisis
wants to be close to them [students] and is annoyed/doesn't like them/angry
wanting to escape
squares vs. faces
"the chat"
Fear of being inadequate
unwelcome; rejected
Built up resentment

not being sure, a lot of uncertainty
felt like a room, a full room

Thesis Statement Based on Deconstruction and Reconstruction:
What are you thinking about/deconstructing? What do you want to keep thinking about/working with/reconstructing?
[L] Still thinking about the contradictions* -
Having deep resentment toward the thing I chose to do and continue to do; anger at students but needing to connect with them and feel validated in my role as the good teacher.

How to live with these contradictions, accept them, and not continue to build up resentment over time. Maybe that's what burnout is? The breaking point where I can no longer mediate the contradictions.
Are teachers human?

[E]I'm thinking about control. Teachers rely on it for so much and distance teaching has flipped it all onto students, leaving teachers feeling uncertain, full of self-doubt and insecurity. Maybe that's a place for growth. I'm also thinking about the toll that distance teaching has taken on the body and mind. We're in pain, our spaces and our hair is disheveled, we fantasize about shutting the computer and running away or taking a nap*. We crave connection with students and colleagues so badly but simultaneously don't have the energy to give that same connection to others, leaving us all alone in the dark and silence.*

[A]I want to keep thinking about uncertainty and how this will always be there yet I am so resistance to it. "I get to discover that." It makes me curious what I think I get from certainty. And I also want to think about how I make decisions -- how often do I work from "the story I am telling myself" and how is this helping me/ bringing me down?

On a large level, I am curious about Leyla's first quote "we exited a tunnel into a carnival" -- when and how should we deal with our past(s); how does it support our resilience forward? what happens if we do nothing? Resilience as a collective counter strategy; reconstructing ways to be and sustain.

[K]I'm thinking about what it means to be a healthy teacher. How can I learn to unbind myself from student perception?***

Who do we make the bad guys? How can I accumulate less pain and resentment* (or process and release it gradually) while still challenging harmful and oppressive power structures?

How can I be authentic and honest with students while maintaining the kind of professionalism that I value?

How can I cultivate relationships and communities that don't revolve around collective resentment?

How do I hold students accountable for also creating the classroom environment? Not just me.*

If the anxiety about decisions we have to make/meetings we need to attend/classes we need to teach is what sticks with us, how can we avoid getting stuck too long in that anxiety*?

Rewrite Questions:
- What is a humanizing moment?
- Where is your resentment coming from? What are you doing with it?
- What are you holding? Anxieties?
- What professionalism do I value and why do I value it?
- What am I defining as success? How am I measuring myself? What am I going on?