

## The Experience of a White Professor Teaching Diversity Courses in the Midwest

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### Abstract

Facilitators of diversity courses in higher education institutions face multiple challenges because these courses are emotionally charged for students and facilitators alike. To date, there is a limited number of recent papers that focus on the reflections of professors from the dominant culture who teach diversity online and face-to-face graduate courses. The present paper fills this gap by describing the experiences of a White, French assistant professor in the midwest of the United States. This paper also provides recommendations for practitioners.

*Keywords:* white privilege, diversity courses, educational administration, higher education, autoethnography

Corinne Brion is an assistant professor at the University of Dayton. She earned her PhD in educational leadership at the University of San Diego. The overall framework for her research is equity. Her research interests include investigating the process of learning transfer among adult learners to understand what enhances and hinders the transfer of knowledge in different contexts. She is also interested in women's and girls' empowerment in African countries.

When enrolled in a higher education program, taking a diversity course has become either a requirement or an elective, depending on the institution, and its values and priorities. The literature on teaching a diversity course is consistent around the fact that teaching such a course is challenging for both students and facilitators because of the emotions, beliefs, and biases that conversations on equity, gender, and race trigger (Gayles et al., 2015; Kendall, 2012; Marbley et al., 2009). At the undergraduate levels, the literature has focused on the areas of business (Phillips & Wood, 2017), teacher education (Cardona-Moltó, Tich, & Abery, 2018; Jett & Behm Cross, 2016), psychology (Allen & Porter, 2002), sociology (Steinkopf Rice & Horn, 2014) and medicine (Dogra et al., 2016). At the graduate level, there have been empirical and conceptual studies written in the domains of student affairs and counseling (Gayles et al., 2015; Locke & Kiselica, 1999). In the field of educational leadership, Andrews and Ridenour (2006) have written on gender equity. However, fewer authors have written on their perceptions and reflections as professors of diversity courses. Scholars posit that universities are micro-ecosystems of our larger society, and as a result, diversity courses should not be taught by Black professors based on the fact that they are people of Color and represent a minority (Jett & Behm Cross, 2016; Laubscher & Powell, 2003; Marbley et al., 2009). Rather, these authors suggest that non-African American people facilitate these courses because studying diversity also means studying Whiteness and White privilege to foster authentic relationships based on compassion and acceptance (Sue, 2016). To date, there is a need for additional studies that focus on the experiences of diverse faculty who teach diversity (Jett & Behm Cross, 2016). This paper aims to fill a portion of this knowledge gap by examining

the experience of a White French assistant professor who teaches diversity graduate courses in educational administration at a predominantly White Catholic American institution. The present paper also provides recommendations for higher education institutions and practitioners. These recommendations aim to support diversity courses, facilitators, and higher education institutions whose mission is to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion.

### Literature Review

Projections estimate that by 2023, racial and ethnic minorities will make up the majority of students in the United States (U.S. Census, 2008). However, the vast majority of the educational workforce remains approximately 83% White (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

In response to changing student demographics and to prepare future school leaders to become advocates for cultural differences, most educational leadership graduate programs now offer diversity courses.

Several scholars have written about the challenges that diversity courses present to both students and facilitators of learning. These authors claimed that these difficulties resulted from the emotions conversations on gender, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or ableism generated (Gayles et al., 2015; Kendall, 2012; Marbley et al., 2009; Sue, 2016). The tension associated with discussing diversity is not surprising, considering that students often enter graduate school with limited experience and interaction with diverse populations (Quaye, 2014). Students taking diversity courses typically learn about biases, microaggressions, White privilege, cultural proficiency, and Whiteness

(Lindsey et al., 2018). Talking about Whiteness is also important for educators to assist White students to understand that racism is structural and institutionalized (DiAngelo, 2018; Irving, 2014; McIntosh, 1988).

Educators also struggle when teaching diversity courses (Gayles et al., 2015; Jett & Behm Cross, 2016; Marbley et al., 2009; Sue, 2016). In particular, scholars affirmed that White educators generally perceived racial topics as taboo, discussed them only superficially, and evidenced high levels of anxiety when teaching diversity courses, which in turn affected their communications (Young, 2004; Young & Davis-Russell, 2002). Sue (2016) attributed the reasons for avoiding conversations about race to three factors: (a) race as a topic is often considered taboo because it is rooted in a painful part of America's past and present, (b) race-related dialogues often result in intense levels of student resistance, and (c) faculty themselves also struggle with related personal tensions, to include fear, fatigue, and stress (Sue et al., 2009). A second significant challenge that White educators experience is related to their inability to notice and reflect on their White privileges because, by nature, people tend to place a greater focus on troublesome circumstances than favorable opportunities (Kendall, 2012). According to Kendall, White educators who struggle with their identity often fail to recognize that their White status affords them certain benefits and privileges. Additionally, Gayles et al. (2015) uncovered that White faculty members who had marginalized identities did not know how much to reveal about their marginalized identity because speaking about their identity triggered strong emotions.

Another important theme within the literature is the influence of the faculty

member's identity on their experiences within diversity education (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2010; Brookfield, 2014; Hernandez & Murray-Johnson, 2015; Jett & Behm Cross, 2016). Faculty members' social identities are associated with the extent to which diversity content is included in their courses (Fox, 2009) and their comfort level in teaching diversity content (Sue et al., 2009). Brookfield (2014) suggested that White faculty need to be acutely aware of their race and privileges because they need to use their identity to facilitate discourses on race positively. Brookfield affirmed that modeling the struggles educators generally faced was important for their students and could be done through authentic conversations, storytelling, or writing an autoethnography. This is particularly important for bicultural and immigrant educators because these educators often see themselves trapped in a middle space. This middle space often determines their responses to difficult conversations (Hernandez & Murray-Johnson, 2015).

Different pedagogical strategies have been used to engage students in discussions about race. These strategies include dialogues (Gayles et al., 2015; Nicolazzo & Marine, 2016), documentary discussion (Durham-Barnes, 2015), and self-reflection and autobiographies (Whiting & Cutri, 2015). Gayles et al. (2015) engaged students in direct discussions to initiate racial reflection in White pre-service teachers. These authors used the *privileged identity exploration* (PIE) model, which focuses on recognizing, reflecting, and addressing social privilege. An aspect of PIE includes allowing dissonance, fear, and anxiety as a way to introduce and encourage critical self and societal reflection related to race.

Dialogue is another crucial practice that can transform educational practice

(Nicolazzo & Marine, 2016; Gayles et al., 2015). Dialogue has become critical to our ongoing interrogation of privileges across educational contexts. Additionally, authors such as Eaton et al. (2019) affirmed there was a recognition that examining and unpacking privilege involved a complex process of negotiation across environmental contexts. These authors claimed that the ways educators negotiate Whiteness in the United States are vastly different from other countries, given divergent historical, political, and sociological conditions. This is particularly important to recognize when teaching international students or teaching abroad. Another strategy to consider is using multicultural teaching models that lead to group assignments, case studies, service-learning, projects, field trips, and multimedia (Sciame-Giesecke et al., 2009). Although teaching diversity courses is challenging and can be emotionally draining, the aforementioned strategies are helpful to involve students and faculty in courageous and healing conversations.

In the following section, I share some contextual information about one of my diversity courses. I also outline some of the activities in which my students partake in this course. It is worthy to note that my cultural identity influences these activities. I am a White French woman who has lived in various cultures, immigrated to the United States, and I have an accent to this day. When teaching diversity courses, I share the different aspects of my identity through my pedagogical approach.

### **Contextual Information about the Diversity Course**

I teach a course called "Leading in Diverse Communities" to graduate students in an educational administration program. These students aspire to be school leaders. I

also teach a similar course at the doctoral level. I am a tenure-line faculty member at a Catholic, predominantly White institution in the Midwest of the United States. The institution is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. I taught these courses face-to-face, in a traditional online format, and now in an online format that allows me to meet synchronously with my students for 90 minutes weekly. In this new online format, students also have 90 minutes of asynchronous content to finish before our live sessions.

### **Activities**

I share my autoethnography in this paper because I usually read it to my students on the first day of class. In this way, students understand my White privileges and see that I am constantly challenging myself to learn, tackle, understand, and mitigate my biases to become culturally proficient. I also ask students to write their autoethnography to become aware of their privileges and cultural identities. In addition, I ask students to write a weekly journal allowing them to reflect on current events, discussions, and assigned readings. In response to changing student demographics and to prepare future school leaders to become advocates for cultural differences, educators and students alike need to adopt a culturally proficient and growth mindset (Lindsey et al., 2018). As a result, I regularly ask my students to read blogs pertaining to social justice issues worldwide. This practice allows students to gain a global view of equity, diversity, and inclusion issues and practices.

Additionally, students complete implicit bias tests from the Harvard Implicit Project and two short essays on cultural proficiency and social justice. Students also engage in group work and discuss teaching case studies or vignettes that I write based on my

readings, personal experiences as a teacher and former principal, and my personal struggles. Students also read numerous empirical and practitioner articles: two primary texts are *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders* (Lindsey et al., 2018) and *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools* (Singleton, 2015). Lastly, I ask students to take a pre- and post-survey, called the intercultural effectiveness scale (IES), to measure their growth at the end of the course. The IES (Kozaigroup, 2021) was developed specifically to evaluate the skills critical to interacting effectively with people from cultures other than our own. This instrument is used primarily by non-profit organizations, including government agencies and educational institutions. The purpose of taking the test twice is to assess whether students have become more comfortable interacting with people from other cultures. At the end of the semester, students were asked to write a two-page paper reflecting on their two sets of scores.

To expose students to equity advocates practitioners, I invite guest speakers to the class to share their expertise and experience. Finally, I set up online forums and a *WhatsApp* group so that students share resources with each other and with me between class sessions. I also use the *WhatsApp* group to send reminders when an assignment is due, a schedule change, or information about the class. The *WhatsApp* group allows for immediate feedback and builds a community of practice that facilitates the implementation of the new diversity knowledge (Brion, 2018). Students in one of these courses shared that the class opened their eyes and motivated them to become "social justice warriors." Below is a summary of findings from a qualitative ethnographic study I conducted during the 2018 fall semester with six graduate students

who attended a fifteen-week face-to-face diversity course (Brion, 2020).

### Key Findings Pertaining to Pedagogy

All students stated that what helped them implement diversity knowledge was the facilitator's dispositions, knowledge of the subject matter, and pedagogy. As such, students seemed to appreciate that the class was student-centered and dialogue-based. I asked students to formulate two questions from their assigned readings. I asked them to submit their questions to me the day before class, allowing me to prepare the conversation prompts that were later discussed in class. I used this strategy to individualize the learning and discuss what preoccupied the students most. I also used videos, music, and online resources in order to engage students differently. Mary illustrated the participants' perspectives in this regard by stating:

The professor really cared about us as students and individuals. She asked us to be involved in the development of class by asking us to write questions from which she would differentiate our learning, and she used different teaching modalities.

In addition to the pedagogy used, the students related that the materials used during the class and stated that these materials impacted their ability to use new diversity of knowledge in their work and personal lives. For example, all six students referred to the autoethnography as "a powerful, somewhat painful exercise but necessary to reflect and grow and face our cultural identities." Students appreciated that I shared my own autoethnography on the first day of class. One of them stated:

The autoethnography showed that she was humble, vulnerable and that she had had a tough time navigating her identity in this country. It also showed me that being a second language speaker in this country is not easy, and we take that for granted.

An international student in the class added: "I felt comfortable to share with the professor because I knew she understood my struggles because I heard her challenges when she read her autoethnography. It inspired me to write mine too."

In addition, students reportedly enjoyed the readings, including the two books used during the class. Students also indicated that they appreciated having the opportunity to Skype with the authors of the first book. Student Laurie, for instance, spoke on behalf of the group when she shared: "It helped me understand where the authors came from when they wrote the book, and it made it more concrete and personable for me." Students also mentioned some additional readings to be beneficial, such as the *Invisible Knapsack* (McIntosh, 1988), *White Fragility* (DiAngelo, 2018), and various resources taken from websites such as *Teaching Tolerance* or *The Equity Literacy Institute*.

All six students spoke highly of the weekly guest speakers who joined us for part of the class. These guest speakers came from different walks of life, backgrounds, and various positions in education. While some guest speakers were principals, others were consultants, change-agents in their communities, district office workers, or, as mentioned before, authors of books or other materials the class read. Aside from the readings and guest speakers, students valued the exposure to international blogs that exposed them to diverse social justice issues

around the world. Students also insisted that the various videos and modalities were helpful.

Lastly, students shared that *WhatsApp* was effective because it allowed them to share news, vent, ask questions, and periodically hear from the facilitator. Tom shared the sentiment of the group regarding *WhatsApp* when he claimed:

For me, it is normal to be on *WhatsApp*, so using it is great, easier than a phone, email, or regular text. I think it is a good choice because we are all on *WhatsApp* these days. It is free, and all of us around the world use it. I like that we are a family, a group once in class and now on *WhatsApp*, and we keep in touch and chat about diversity.

*WhatsApp* appeared to be useful in terms of accountability, networking, storing resources, asking questions, serving as a reminder, and maintaining relationships among peers. Some students also used Twitter or other social media as a way to follow up with social justice issues. As an example, one student shared:

I received social justice materials from the author of the book because I tweeted him after our class interaction with him. And now, he sends me things, and I have a circle of people on Twitter with the same interest.

### **Reflections on My Experience Teaching the Course**

#### **The Pre-course Period**

I immigrated to the United States from France. The relationship people have with race in this country is fascinating to me. It is complex, tacit and explicit, and embedded in

the societal implicit norms and policies. In order to understand these racial dynamics, I read dozens and dozens of books, empirical studies, blogs, articles, and commentaries. I also attend conferences, workshops, and seminars, interview colleagues of all races and other cultural identities, and always seek to look at data sets relevant to school systems. I continually seek to deepen my understanding of issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion and gain additional knowledge by listening to the experiences of my students and colleagues. In addition, I constantly learn by observing my Ghanaian husband, who recently immigrated to the United States. I have witnessed him struggle with issues of race, such as questioning why Black people were advised by peers to memorize their driver's license numbers or to carry their identification cards at all times, especially at night. I could not have taught diversity courses without being passionate about social justice and doing my due diligence because how educators negotiate Whiteness in the United States is vastly different from other countries given divergent historical, political, and sociological conditions (Lindsey et al., 2018). Through my reflections, research, and learnings, I have become aware of my identity and privileges, and I am now able to use my identity to positively facilitate discourses on race and other aspects of identities (Brookfield, 2014).

I am multicultural and multilingual. I have lived in various countries, most of which were developing countries in Africa. These experiences have shaped who I am and explain why I am sensitive to culture and language. These experiences have also made me a more empathetic person and have developed my resilience for social justice dialogues, no matter how challenging they can be. My ability to adapt to cultures has served me well with international

students, partly because I understand them and partly because I also studied abroad and immigrated to this country. International students and I share common stories and similar struggles.

In order to teach diversity courses, I have had to adapt a few things in my communication style. Since I am French, I speak with an accent, and my communication style is direct. I have had to learn to be less direct to meet my institutions' cultures and values. For example, in France, it would be acceptable to give direct feedback to students, even if they are not good ones. However, in the two Catholic institutions I have taught, I have learned that the delivery had to be softer and coated with positive arguments, even if these were hard to find. This is particularly important when teaching diversity courses because these courses are by nature challenging for students. Adopting a more supportive communication style is necessary to keep them engaged and motivated to do the work rather than avoiding it.

### **Teaching the Course Itself**

Overall, my experience teaching diversity courses has been two-fold. On the one hand, I have truly enjoyed teaching these courses face-to-face and online because I am passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion. I believe there are a couple of strategies that consistently help me as a novice professor. First, I see my role as a facilitator of learning rather than a professor. In that sense, I do not pretend to own the knowledge. Rather I am a life-long learner willing to learn from students, colleagues, practitioners, and scholars. Second, Bryk and Schneider (2003) posit that in order to have inviting school cultures, it is crucial to first focus on relational trust among all stakeholders. In all courses, I

focus on relational trust the first few weeks of class by collaboratively crafting norms for the class, being clear regarding expectations, getting to know the students through conversations and assignments, and being vulnerable when I share my autoethnography (See Appendix). Without creating robust relationships based on trust, it would not be possible to talk about topics such as race, sexual orientation, gender, abilities, socio-economic status, age, and ethnicity.

In terms of the delivery of the course content, I use student-centered teaching pedagogy. Knowles (1980) stipulated that adults learn by doing and by participating in their learning. As a result, students journal and engage in deep reflection with their autoethnography (Mezirow, 2000), are exposed to various guest speakers, and discuss case studies. Since all knowledge is situated in social and cultural contexts, the learners engage with various stakeholders in the community, whether the class is face-to-face or online. Learning in context allows students to link theory to practice and learn from people who see the world differently from me because of their upbringing and other identifiers.

On the less positive side, teaching diversity courses is challenging because students may not be ready to engage in difficult conversations. They would rather avoid the work and hide behind sentences like "I do not see races; I only see people." These types of self-talks allow people to convince themselves that they are not racist, sexist, or homophobic. DiAngelo (2018) calls this the *good/bad binary* in which people persuade themselves that they are good people, and indeed they may be (p. 71). These close-minded attitudes, however, perpetuate inequities because they allow people to not engage in deep self-reflection.

When addressing biases, I have had students deny the mere existence of societal or personal biases. I usually lead my student through a simulation to explain that the policies in this country benefit Whites in the United States. This is a powerful activity that yields a plethora of feelings. When talking about implicit bias and the IAT test, students often question its validity, feel divided about the experience but very often see the value and intent. After reflection, they are frequently motivated to speak more about the topic and write about it in their autoethnography. On the opposite side of the spectrum, some students do not see the value of the bias discussion and think that the test or any dialogues around bias are bogus.

Questioning values and beliefs are part of the diversity and equity work. However, students may experience denial for a period of time or even perhaps for the entire course. In this case, it is not unusual for students to feel attacked and respond with derogatory comments and low evaluations of teaching. This can be particularly problematic for tenure-line professors for whom the students' evaluations play a key role in obtaining tenure. Teaching these courses requires a thick skin, a passionate and compassionate heart, and a learner attitude.

Journaling helps me chart my feelings and keep the work going even if I experience high-stress levels. Journaling keeps me grounded. Teaching these courses also requires patience because everyone learns differently and at different paces. While some students may embrace and be ready for difficult conversations, others may need more chunking of the knowledge and more time. No matter who the students are and how ready they are for diversity knowledge and conversations, I believe these conversations are necessary to create socially just societies and educational

systems.

Even when I feel discouraged when students refuse to learn about diversity, I truly enjoy teaching these courses because they help me grow and create socially just educational systems. This is the reason why I chose this profession in the first place. Next, I offer some recommendations based on my experience and my marginalized identity.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions and Practitioners**

In this paper, I shared my experience as a White French professor teaching diversity courses in the Midwest and outlined some of the activities I used in my classes. I also shared key findings from a qualitative study I conducted to understand what helped students in diversity courses. The following recommendations aim to support diversity courses facilitators and higher education institutions whose mission is to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion.

First, university programs should include courses involving social justice, diversity, and equity as part of students' cognates in undergraduate, masters, and doctoral programs. Such courses should be mandatory for all aspiring students. As demographics are changing globally, our institutions', schools', and communities' demographics are changing too. As a result, universities should prepare all students to become culturally competent, understand and recognize biases, and advocate for diversity.

Second, universities are micro-ecosystems of our larger society. Hence, some researchers argue that African American professors should teach diversity

courses because they are people of Color and represent a minority (Gayles et al., 2015). In addition, these courses should be facilitated by non-African American people and other faculty from marginalized groups because studying diversity also means studying Whiteness and White privilege to foster authentic relationships based on compassion and acceptance (Laubscher & Powell, 2003; Gayles et al., 2015). Professors from various races and backgrounds could also co-teach these courses.

Third, when facilitators from foreign countries facilitate diversity courses, they should attend trainings, workshops, and seminars to help them understand the severity and the history of racial issues in the United States. Similarly, all facilitators should receive cultural proficiency training to be able to adapt, respect, and advocate for cultural differences and identities.

Fourth, adult learning theory suggests that in order to learn and transfer new knowledge, adults need to experience things. As a result, diversity courses should be engaging and student-centered. Content should include experiential learning in schools and local organizations. Guest speakers should be invited to engage in dialogues with the students, and students should be exposed to international news. Additionally, the content needs to be culturally relevant to meet the needs of local and international students. Finally, faculty and students need ample time to reflect on their identities; and writing autoethnography can facilitate this process.

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## Appendix My Autoethnography

I was born in France on October 21, 1972, in a White middle-class family. My mom and dad were high school sweethearts and met in Lyon, the gastronomic capital of my native France. My father was a doctor of osteopathy and an acupuncturist. My mother was also an osteopathic doctor. My mother never worked after my older sister was born because she wanted to focus on raising us. Fortunately, my dad's income was sufficient for my mom to stay at home with us. I remember living outside of Paris in a suburb for ten years before moving to Normandy. Our first house had a large yard, a bicycle trail, many fruit trees, and a large garage where my dad had his four cars parked. I recall being engaged in many activities: piano, tennis, and horseback riding. I remember getting a *Bounty* or *Mars* chocolate bar every time my dad picked me up from tennis practice. I recollect feeling light and happy, running from my catholic school where I had great friends to tennis practices and horseback riding lessons. Happiness was a daily feeling for me; I was safe, loved, fed, got an education, and had many social and sports activities. We had sheep, horses, chickens, dogs, and cats. I rode our horses in our fields; I bicycled to a local public school and the tennis club. I met new friends, all White and all middle-class.

My good friend, Philippe, or *Fifi*, was a great new friend. He was Black, my only Black friend. I would talk to Fifi all the time, invite him to my house or go to his place. Fifi taught me everything that I did not see or know about living in *la zone*, how people referred to the "bad part of town." *La zone* was next to my high school. I knew drugs were happening in his area and I remember not feeling safe going there but continued going because I was curious. My

family welcomed Fifi but made it clear that his friends from his neighborhood were not welcomed. I remember inviting Fifi to parties and telling him not to bring his friends. I felt bad, but I was scared! I was afraid because my parents made me afraid, but I knew they meant well and were protecting me. The community also made me scared of *la zone* because of stories I heard, and stories published in the local paper. I started to question societal norms and biases. To this day, Fifi and I are still in touch.

Like many French children of my generation in France, I grew up in the Catholic faith, although we rarely attended church. I attended catechism classes on Wednesday mornings (a day off in French elementary schools). I recall bicycling to my classes and only looking forward to the pastries the volunteer had for us. I remember not paying much attention to what was taught because the volunteer was lecturing for two hours, and that was not how to engage eight-year-old children! Besides catechism in the morning, my Wednesdays were filled with activities and fun. All seemed well in my life until I fell progressively sick and in a coma at the age of 11. I spent six months in a hospital and missed a year of school. These were extremely challenging times for my family. Yet, I was lucky to have access to the best medical care possible. After a few months, I was well again and back on my feet.

All this time glued to my hospital bed allowed me to start reflecting on my privileges. I wondered if people in *la zone* would have had access to such great medical care. I remember asking Fifi, who simply responded with, *non*. Over the next few

years, I earned a degree to teach French as a second language and a bachelor's in international business from a reputable public business school in Paris and moved to the United States. There, I taught French as a Second Language and became the principal of a charter school. After the charter school, I became the Director of International Programs at a Catholic high school. There, I was working with predominantly wealthy students, and after two years, I decided to pursue my PhD.

My PhD experience was life-changing. The most transformative part of my doctoral studies was spending six years in five African countries. When I first touched the Ghanaian ground, I recall feeling my heart beating. I recall feeling called to be there. My time in Africa has taught me a lot about my White privilege. Fifi had taught me some things; and having him as a friend has been a blessing. In Africa, I met the most resilient, faithful, loving, and caring people. I also met and saw real poverty for the first time in my life. In Africa, I also fell madly in love with an amazing Ghanaian, who was younger, not formally educated, and financially poor. In short, Daniel and I grew up in vastly opposite manners. Daniel worked since he was six years old. I worked at 16 to earn pocket money to travel the world. He could not finish school because he had to help his mom, whereas I have a PhD. Despite all these external differences, we are and remain soulmates.

Daniel may not have a formal education, but he earned seven PhD in my eyes. I know nothing compared to what he knows. I learn so much from him on a daily basis. I am humbled by his knowledge, demeanor, outlook on life, and grace. Daniel may have grown up financially poor, but he has an enormous amount of wealth. Yosso (2005) states that wealth is comprised of various

capitals. Besides the social capital, there are the familial, navigational, resistant, linguistic, aspirational, and cultural capitals. Daniel cherishes his family, has navigated many challenging times, speaks three Ghanaian dialects, understands seven more, and speaks English fluently. He has more grit, grace, genius, and resistance than anyone I know. Despite how much some people discouraged me from marrying him, he is my angel, love, and rock. Daniel challenges me not to judge, constantly see the good in people, and examine my biases.

Speaking of biases, I have a story. Upon arriving in Ohio, I had to find an acupuncturist for my broken ankle. I found a doctor that came highly recommended. On the day of my appointment, Daniel was with me. The doctor said *hello* and asked me, "where are you from?" I told him I was French. He responded, "French fries." Surprised, I looked at Daniel, who was as uncomfortable as I was. The doctor pursued on saying: "It must be hard to get rid of your accent." I was dumbfounded, mad, and perplexed. I finally responded: "This accent is part of who I am, and I am not trying to change it." That night, I thought of my graduate students and could not wait to share this story on microaggressions. I know people mean well when they tell me that they love my accent, my English is good, or proudly tell me what they know in French. The fact of the matter is that without having a relationship with the person, these can be interpreted and received as microaggressions. And did I mention that because I am French, it does not mean that I smoke, am elegant, or eat meat!

I am White and have been blessed with many materials, educational, medical, and other privileges in my life. I also have survived difficult times. One of the best privileges I have had is to reflect with my

graduate students on matters of equity and diversity and to have a partner willing to call me on my biases and privileges.