COOPERATION:
A FEMINIST AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE ARGUMENTATION COURSE

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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By

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ABSTRACT

COOPERATION:

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Feminists hold that patriarchal perspectives have become institutionalized and normalized as established knowledge because our schools of thought in the Western world have been developed from male and masculine perspectives. Feminist scholars are deconstructing the patriarchal bias that has structured education for centuries by developing new ways of knowing and transforming curriculum to provide an alternative to patriarchal values and practices that permeate education. The purpose of this study is to develop and teach a course on argumentation that is informed by feminist perspectives. This study demonstrates how a feminist paradigm of cooperation and interdependence can function as a framework to redefine argument and broaden its application and understanding beyond traditional adversarial and competitive perspectives.
This thesis project investigates literature from argumentation, feminist perspectives on argumentation, critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy and deliberative democracy to inform the design and facilitation of this “re-envisioned” course. Feminist perspectives on argument are positioned within contributions to contemporary argumentation theory, not critiques that place the feminist ideas outside the conversation. Deliberative democracy informed the design of various class assignments where deliberation and dialogue were practiced. Feminist and critical pedagogy were adopted as research methods to inform the design and facilitation of the collaborative and cooperative classroom and curriculum. Ethnographic observations of the classroom were also made over the term of the course in order to analyze the new argumentation curriculum and the students’ reaction to this transformed course.

The important themes that emerged in this project centered around the equitable and democratic environment and relationships of the classroom encouraged by a critical pedagogy praxis, concepts of the feminist argumentation curriculum such as empathy and difference, as well as the transformative nature of reframing a traditional course from a feminist perspective.
Chapter One

Introduction

Feminists have conceptualized the restructuring of education and classroom curricula for decades (Foss, K., 1992; Makau, 1992; Rakow, 1992). Feminists are concerned with institutionalized patriarchy that permeates the educational system and how patriarchal approaches use education and knowledge construction as tools to protect and further the interests of dominant groups of society rather than tools for growth. Because of the historical marginalization and traditional silencing, women and other minorities were prevented from participating in the activities of society that created and developed our concepts of knowledge and ideas about our world. Our systems of knowing and schools of thought in the Western world have therefore been developed primarily from male and masculine perspectives. Over time patriarchal perspectives have become institutionalized and normalized within society as established systems of knowledge. The goal of feminist restructuring of education is to deconstruct the patriarchal bias that has structured education for centuries.

One of the ways feminists in academia deconstruct patriarchy is through raising awareness of new ways of knowing that provide an alternative to patriarchal values, beliefs and practices that permeate education. The new ways of knowing advocated by feminists have been instrumental in developing fields of study, such as Women Studies, Queer Studies, and Ethnic Studies. Each has broadened our view of knowledge construction and our understanding of who can participate in the creation and exchange of knowledge.
Creating new fields of study has had tremendous and positive impact on the feminist agenda of giving voice to historically silenced groups with the intent to challenge and end patriarchy. Yet, established fields of study, such as rhetoric and argumentation, which trace their roots to antiquity, need to be examined and transformed from their limiting and constraining patriarchal perspectives. Women scholars in the fields of philosophy (Nye, 1990; 1995), logic (Lloyd, 1993a; 1993b), rhetoric (Foss, 1979; Foss & Griffin, 1995; Gearhart, 1978), and the related areas of reasoning and rational thinking (Rooney, 1991) have all contributed to the theoretical reconstructing of these fields. The contributions and standpoints of women and other marginalized groups, who were previously neglected, have revolutionized and broadened the scope of knowledge by questioning fundamental assumptions, and investigating alternative ways of knowing.

Conversations in communication studies have also addressed the concerns of feminist scholars by discussing ways the discipline itself has been affected by patriarchal tendencies in academia and society and developing ways to challenge and overcome this oppression. In a special Fall 1992 issue of *Women’s Studies in Communication*, several feminist authors discussed the importance of not only theorizing about fair and equitable perspectives in our academic fields, communication studies specifically, but the more important issue of actually implementing these ideas in the classroom and curricula (Rakow, 1992). Lana Rakow (1992) points out that scholars in communication studies have the responsibility to pass on the traditional studies of public address, discourse, and argumentation, which have become foundational to the discipline. Well established classes like these, however, prove to be the most resistant to feminist contributions and
change due to their historical practices and prescripts that have an explicit bias to masculine styles and ideologies. Their historical impact and relevance, however, makes courses like these extremely important to transform and “revision” in order to challenge and disrupt the patriarchal oppression reinscribed through them in society (Makau, 1992; Rakow, 1992). Rakow poses a critical question. We know the curricula needs reforming, but “what should the curriculum look like?” (1992, p. 92). This thesis project seeks to answer that question.

In this thesis project, I utilize a feminist perspective to re-image and reconstruct an undergraduate course in argumentation. A feminist paradigm of cooperation, collaboration and interdependence frames this feminist course to redefine argument and broaden its application and use beyond its patriarchal, adversarial and competitive perspectives. Many feminists have analyzed the traditional understanding and presentation of argumentation in academia. A critical look into argumentation theory broadly establishes an informed context within which the feminist conversation regarding this topic is situated, and provides a clearer understanding of feminists’ perspective on argumentation. To aid the implementation of a feminist perspective on the argumentation course, the theoretical and practical application of feminist and critical pedagogical theories in the course design and facilitation supports feminist ideals of equality and fairness, not only in the theoretical assumptions underlying this project, but also in the actual functions of the classroom and in my role as the facilitator of that educational space.
Theoretical Perspectives

Argumentation. Argumentation has a long history going back to the time of the ancient Greeks and Aristotle (Eemeren, Grootendorst, & Henkemans, 1996). It arose out of the fields of philosophy and rhetoric where rationale and reasoning were arts developed to construct and support ideas. Argumentation as a course today is taught through the integration of historical concepts of formal logic and argument structure from Aristotle (1924; 1928a; 1928b; 1928c) and Cicero (1954) combined with the contributions of contemporary argumentation scholars that emphasized the pragmatic and less formal use and understanding of argument (Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; Toulmin, 1988). Since its historical beginning with Aristotle and the Sophists, argument has always been understood through the adversarial paradigm, or what Lakoff and Johnson (1980) identify as the “argument as war” metaphor. The argument as war metaphor sees the different or opposite sides within an argument in opposition to one another. Argument is understood in war-like terminology where ideas and opinions are defended and tactics are used to refute and challenge these different opinions. Argumentation scholars believe that through this adversarial understanding of ideas and opinions we learn to effectively reason and articulate our positions (Baker, 1895). We become better thinkers if we can defend our ideas and preemptively address the critiques of those that challenge our positions.

Another important standard of argumentation curricula is the function and use of persuasion. Whether within an adversarial context or not, the art of gaining the ascent or acceptance of an audience is a primary goal of argument (Aristotle, 1924; Eemeren et al., 1996; Hollihan & Baaske, 2005). When an adversarial context is used, the competition
between ideas allows for the better idea to emerge, by which the listener or audience is convinced of the credibility or appropriateness of the idea. Even without a competitive paradigm, the pleas and appeals to an audience through the effective uses of ethos, pathos and logos are all appropriate and effective strategies of argument to get the approval of the audience or listener.

While argumentation curricula still adheres to this adversarial method of learning about argument with a focus on the persuasiveness of our ideas, more contemporary developments have emphasized the practical use of argument and its function in our lives to help develop effective critical thinkers and aid in our decision making processes. Mauk and Metz (2006) developed an argument textbook that invites students to discover how we, as communicators, use argument in our daily lives through the analysis of multiple media messages and communication with family, friends and co-workers. Not all arguments are heated debates around issues we are passionate about; rather argumentation is the process through which we analyze and make decisions or persuade ourselves and others on what we think is correct (Mauk & Metz, 2006). Hollihan and Baaske (2005) present argument from a narrative paradigm (Fisher, 1989) where arguments are posited and understood through stories and the persuasiveness of ideas depend on how well the stories or narrations are understood by another.

Many argumentation courses today are presented as classes that offer students critical thinking and effective decision making skill sets through the exposition of the fundamentals of argumentation (Eemeren, et al., 1996; Hollihan & Baaske, 2005; Makau & Marty, 2001; Mauk & Metz, 2006). Though its approaches can be broad and diverse (Eemeren, et al., 1996), the argument course is still fundamentally grounded in an
adversarial paradigm where reasoning is a process of competitive analysis of ideas with the intent to persuade another into acceptance and or approval of those presented ideas. Feminist scholars identify this competitive element of argument and thinking as essentially patriarchal and argue for new ways to think of argument without this competition.

**Feminist perspective on argumentation.** The primary concerns feminist scholars have with the argumentation course in the academy are centered on the patriarchal tendency to create hierarchies (Foss & Griffin, 1995; Gearhart, 1978; Lamb, 1991) and the exclusion of contributions from underrepresented and minority groups (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Makau, 1997). In answer to these patriarchal and oppressive characteristics, feminists have offered a new alternative, a cooperative paradigm to frame and understand arguments that broadens the application of argument and engenders contributions from previously ignored individuals and groups (Lamb, 1994; Makau, 2001).

The adversarial paradigm, the accepted and unchallenged paradigm that structures argumentation and its related fields (Lloyd, 1993; Nye, 1990), engenders a competitive environment and instills a combative orientation in those that participate in argumentative communication. The competition of ideas and perspectives that results from this style instills a view of people with different ideas as opponents, whose ideas must be refuted and discounted in order to win an argument and display the correctness or validity of one’s position. In this present system, hierarchies play an integral role through the comparison between people and the ideas they express and defend. Another patriarchal characteristic of present argumentation curricula is the meaning and function persuasion
has in this system. Persuasion has been traditionally understood as the function of rhetoric, where communicators use the skill and devices available to them to change another’s mind or position on an issue or opinion (Aristotle, 1924). Gearhart (1979) and Foss and Griffin (1995) find this traditional meaning and function of persuasion oppressive, where the intention of changing someone’s mind does violence towards another by placing oneself in a privileged position of power over another. Feminist scholars challenge the direct relationship persuasion has with this adversarial and competitive perspective, and offer a new definition of rhetoric and persuasion that challenges power relations and focuses more on allowing others to contribute their perspectives.

Feminist scholars have posited a cooperative paradigm by which to understand argument. In this paradigm, the relationship of arguers is not seen as adversaries, but rather as interdependent human beings that rely on each other for the contributions they each bring to a better understanding of issues and opinions (Makau, 1992; Makau & Marty, 2001). The dominance of the adversarial paradigm in argument is not based on some infallible system that proves itself most effective, but rather rooted in the male perspectives that had sole control of the creation and development of particular ways of knowing from antiquity (Belenky et al., 1986). Feminists believe that introducing new paradigms and establishing alternative ways of knowing that demonstrate contributions from women and other previously silenced groups breaks this patriarchal dominance of our fields of inquiry and continues the process of making our world and ways of understanding that world more equitable, fair and more closely representative of all those previously ignored (Code, 1994).
Though critical of the adversarial and competitive concepts of argument and persuasion, feminists are very concerned with not reinscribing patriarchal ideals. Feminist scholars have emphasized that this new cooperative paradigm is not to replace the old (reinscribing a hierarchy), but rather to act as an alternative (Fulkerson, 1996). Not every communicative or argumentative interaction can always be completely cooperative (Foss & Griffin, 1995), but it is very important that a cooperative option is available and encouraged in argument curricula (Makau, 1992; Makau & Marty, 2001).

**Critical and feminist pedagogy.** The critical and feminist pedagogies have very similar goals and share many of the same aspirations of feminist perspectives on argumentation. These pedagogies seek to change classroom relationships and the development and creation of knowledge from linear and oppressive hierarchical systems of domination into democratic processes where both students and teachers become integral players in the discovery of knowledge and the empowerment and validation of diverse human experiences (Freire, 1995; Giroux, 1981; hooks, 1994; Lather, 1984).

**Critical pedagogy.** Critical pedagogy challenges the traditional models and understanding of education and argues for curricula that engages students to help construct new ways of knowing that break down the oppressive control dominant forces in society have had over the creation and preservation of knowledge (Freire, 1995). Education and the historically established ways in which knowledge is created are seen as systems that merely maintain the ways of the dominant forces of society and normalize them for all. bell hooks describes this phenomenon from the perspective of an African American female whose personal life and cultural identity were never adequately represented in the education she experienced as a student (hooks, 1994). Lack of
representation of marginalized groups is a central aspect of the oppressive nature of traditional modes of education. Critical pedagogy establishes a new mode of education and curricula that empowers silenced individuals and groups to participate in education and be heard (Freire, 2000). The emphasis on democratic principles and the integration of equality and fairness that critical pedagogy instills in the classroom makes it a very appropriate teaching philosophy to inform the design and facilitation of this thesis project, which seeks to bring a feminist orientation based on cooperation and interdependence to the argumentation course curricula.

Feminist pedagogy. Feminist pedagogy is grounded in the same critical perspective as critical pedagogy and develops this view further by focusing on the role patriarchy plays in the educational system (Fisher, 1980). Feminist pedagogues work to erode the patriarchal control over the creation of knowledge that historically has been the role of men (Maher, 1987). Feminist pedagogy is a theory that reforms classroom curricula and relationships and creates teaching methods that engender equity and celebrate diversity (hooks, 2009). Equity and diversity are encouraged and balanced in the feminist classroom by valuing personal experiences as alternative ways of knowing and as contributing to the creation of knowledge in the educational process (Giroux, 1981; Maher, 1985). The relationship between student and teacher is also reconceptualized where the power of the teacher’s authority is reconciled by the responsibility both have for each other in the shared space of the classroom. The concern of feminist pedagogy to eradicate patriarchy contributes to the project’s methodological approach to developing a non-patriarchal argumentation course.
The application of these pedagogies in this thesis project not only complements the theoretical approach of argumentation I take in this thesis project, but also ensures alternative ways of knowing, equality, fairness, cooperation and interdependence are embodied both in the curriculum of the course and the method by which that course is taught.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to develop and teach a course on argumentation that is informed by feminist perspectives. This study demonstrates how a feminist paradigm of cooperation and interdependence can function as a framework to redefine argument and broaden its application and understanding beyond the traditional adversarial and competitive perspectives. The feminist and critical pedagogical perspectives are used as methodological tools to inform the design and facilitation of the curriculum where feminist ideals of equality and fairness are embodied in both theory and praxis. A major concern of this project is to demonstrate the important contribution feminists have made to argumentation theory. Throughout the literature, feminist concerns about argument have been framed mostly as critiques, and while it is important to demonstrate the critique of a patriarchal practice, more attention needs to be given to the contributions of feminist theorizing. The notion of critic sets feminist scholarly thought outside mainstream conversations among argumentation scholars. This project purposefully reframes the feminist position within argumentation as a central contributor.

The study is significant because it moves feminist contributions on argumentation from theory to practice and from critique to implementation. Feminist scholars have written extensively on the importance of developing feminist curricula for argumentation.
Though much has been written on developing feminist argumentation courses, not much work has been done in the actual feminist transformation of these traditional courses (Makau, 2007; Rakow, 1992). This shortage of the implementation of feminist work of argumentation made Rakow question, “What should the feminist curriculum look like?” (1992, p. 92). This question guides the direction of this project along with other concerns posed in the literature. How will students respond and react to this reformed curriculum? How ingrained in our culture’s understanding of argumentation is the argument as war metaphor and competitive paradigm? What impact will the democratic classroom environment and equitable classroom relationships of critical and feminist pedagogies have on the learning process, specifically towards cooperation advocated in this course? I will address these questions through this thesis project.

In the following chapter, literature of the pertinent theories and perspectives specific to this thesis project is reviewed. To better understand feminist contributions to argument, a broad historic overview of argumentation theory is presented with consideration of contemporary developments that position feminist perspectives within changes and new perspectives that began in the twentieth century. Feminist contributions follow, with emphasis on the exposure of patriarchal control on the development of argumentation and the specific focus and reforms advocated by feminist scholars in order to eradicate patriarchy. Next a brief introduction to deliberative democracy is given and how this new form of democracy embodies many aspects advocated by feminists for the practice and development of argument. Deliberative democracy demonstrates many of the feminist argumentation reforms in action and it informs some of the creation of my feminist argumentation curriculum. Lastly, critical and feminist pedagogies are presented
and their main tenets of classroom democracy, the roles of student and teacher as co-
creators of knowledge, and giving voice to oppressed and under represented individuals
and groups, are identified to provide a foundation of the teaching philosophies that
inform the methodological praxis of this thesis project.

Chapter Three discusses the methodological approaches I use in this study of the
practice of feminist argumentation. I take a qualitative approach in the research where I
observed two sections of the argumentation course I taught in the Fall of 2011. I utilize
different qualitative methods such as ethnography, classroom observations, pedagogy
praxis, as well as student feedback from the various classroom exercises and assignments.
Feminist and critical pedagogies directly inform my methodological approach where the
praxis of these pedagogies as the teacher of these classes informs not only my teaching
style, but how I analyze it as well.

The data analysis begins in chapter four, where the notes and observations of my
ethnography are explicated and themes that arose out of the classroom experience are
connected to the literature and broad theoretical perspectives. The progress of the
students is charted as well as how the students came to look at argument differently over
the course of the semester. The classroom climate as understood through critical and
feminist pedagogies is also analyzed.

This thesis project concludes with the fifth chapter that discusses the implications
of the findings and summarizes the project. The guiding questions of this thesis are
revisited along with a discussion of how the data collected in the classroom answered
those questions.
Chapter Two

Literature Review: A Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

To better understand feminist contributions to argumentation, feminist scholarship on argumentation is positioned here within the broader historical and theoretical context of argumentation theory. Feminist scholars on argumentation challenge many of the accepted definitions of argument concepts, i.e., logic and reasoning (Lloyd, 1993; Nye, 1990), and the structure historically established for argument processes (Foss & Griffin, 1995; Moulton, 1984). Feminist positions on these concepts and processes are more clearly understood by explicating the intellectual history of commonly held definitions and practices used by argumentation scholars. This background also serves to position the feminist arguments not only as critiques of patriarchal characteristics of argumentation, but in line with new developments and progress within the argumentation discipline since the mid twentieth century (Eemeren et al., 1996). This review of literature positions feminists’ voices as contributors within the conversation of diverse perspectives that constitute contemporary argumentation rather than outside the argumentation conversation.

Deliberative democracy is presented here as an example of integrating cooperative and relational themes (Foss & Griffin, 1995; Makau & Marty, 2001) to decision making processes and political involvement (Elster, 1998). Though cooperation and relationships are a central focus of feminist argumentation (Makau, 1992; Makau & Marty, 2001), so also is the notion of difference and the importance it plays in our interactions and ideas of identity and diversity (Makau, 1997). Other forms of
Deliberative democracy focuses on difference as something to be celebrated and not ignored or eradicated (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Mouffe, 2000). Deliberative democracy illustrates how theories of argument, especially the feminist approaches highlighted in this thesis, are integrated into the world and our society. Deliberative democracy will also inform some of the curriculum developed for my thesis project, most importantly the ideas of appreciating difference and active participation in political decision making.

Theories of critical and feminist pedagogies inform the process by which a feminist perspective of argumentation is developed and facilitated in the argumentation course classroom for my thesis project. Critical pedagogy has many characteristics and main themes that overlap with the feminist concerns about argumentation. Critical pedagogy is concerned with challenging the established ways of knowing perpetuated in academic institutions arguing that these ways of knowing are constructs of society that maintain the power positions of those who are dominant in society (Freire, 1995; 2000; hooks, 1994). Critical pedagogy seeks to eradicate oppression that exists in society. Education is a site that maintains oppression; yet, the classroom, as well as educational institutions, have the potential to be sites of transformation towards equity and justice.

Feminist pedagogy has similar concerns, but emphasizes the oppression and domination of patriarchal and hierarchical forces. Feminist pedagogy seeks to establish ways to challenge and eradicate oppression by empowering women and other marginalized groups to stand up and affect change in their world (hooks, 1989; Lather, 1984; Maher, 1985). These pedagogical approaches complement feminist notions of argument, which emphasize collaboration, relationships and respect of difference; thus critical and feminist pedagogies are appropriate approaches to use to integrate feminism
into the classroom. Critical and feminist pedagogies inform the process of the classroom environment while the feminist contributions to argument shape the curricula for the current project.

Argumentation

Though argumentation has a long history with notable contributors from Aristotle and the Sophists to more recent theorists such as Chaim Perelman and Stephen Toulmin, the study of argumentation does not have a unifying or universally defined theory accepted by all argument theorists (Eemeren et al., 1996). Thus, I offer a brief overview of the historical development of argumentation as a field of study in the Western canon.

The Sophists. In the 5th and 6th centuries B.C., the disciplines of logic, rhetoric and dialectic emerged from the Greek world in order to explain natural phenomena beyond the religious and mythological stories of the Greek gods and their roles in creating and maintaining the earth (Eemeren et al., 1996). These disciplines were developed with the intention to give people the ability to utilize their own mental faculties in understanding the mechanics and reasons behind the workings of nature. This freedom of thought brought about several ideas and opinions about the nature of the world so people now had to decipher which idea or explanation was better. Here the art of argument became essential in crafting, supporting, and “defending” certain opinions. The Greek Sophists were one of the first groups to develop strategies of argument to discover what argument or opinion was better (Eemeren et al, 1996). The Sophists were great orators who emphasized the spectacle of speaking and being accepted more than attempts at objective correctness (Guthrie, 1971). The Sophists became known for their eloquence and ability to argue any arbitrary position. As people were allowed and
encouraged to participate in public discussion of the law at the time, the Sophists’
authority on speaking and public argument made them highly sought after teachers of
public address (Eemeren et al., 1996).

**Aristotle.** The Sophists brought awareness to argument and the uses of rhetoric
and logic, but Aristotle defined and shaped classical logic, dialectic, and rhetoric
providing the Western world’s understanding of argumentation (Eemeren et al., 1996).
Aristotle had three types of arguments that were differentiated through their purposes;
demonstrative, dialectical, and rhetorical. Aristotle developed his theory of logic and
demonstrative arguments in *Prior Analytics* (Aristotle, 1928a) and *Posterior Analytics*
(1928b), where his concepts of syllogisms and the formal construction of arguments
became codified. Aristotle defines the syllogism as an argument where a conclusion
necessarily (must) follow from two or more premises (Aristotle, 1928a). The premise is a
sentence that affirms or denies something. The syllogism works for demonstrative
arguments where the logical construction of the argument through the premises
demonstrates the certainty of the conclusion. For example;

All humans are mortal.

Socrates is a human.

Socrates is a mortal.

For Aristotle, this structured type of logic gives the arguer certainty of the truthfulness of
the argument. Syllogistic logic follows strict rules as to where logical conclusions can
only be drawn when certain forms of syllogisms are followed.

In *Topics* (1928c), Aristotle discusses his dialectical arguments. Dialectic is the
art of reasoning where the premises used are not evidently true (demonstrated) but rather
generally accepted as true, i.e., based on commonly accepted principles and or opinions (Aristotle, 1928c). In *Topics*, Aristotle articulates argumentation skills for speakers in debates and similar public addresses by describing the artful techniques that allow a speaker to win over another. Deductive and inductive reasoning are examples of these techniques where a speaker makes the ideas argued relate and connect with already held principles and opinions of the audience. Another such strategy is the demolition of the definition. Aristotle states that things should be defined by what is most intelligible by individuals (audience). If a speaker has framed his definition inappropriately, i.e., defining the term with the term itself, or defining an opposite through its opposite, a speaker can destroy the other speaker’s definition if it has violated the rules and therefore win the argument (Aristotle, 1928c). Dialectic is structured not so much to create certainty about arguments, but to show arguments as acceptable to an audience. Aristotle also identified the dialectic as a beneficial tool for the self in training the mind to articulate ideas (self practice).

Aristotle held that rhetoric was the counterpart to dialectic. “Accordingly all men make use, more or less, of both; for to a certain extent all men attempt to discuss statements and to maintain them, to defend themselves and to attack others” (Aristotle, 1924, p.1). He defined rhetoric as the faculty of observing in any given case the means of persuasion. To effect persuasion, speakers must possess the qualities of ethos, the personal character of the speaker; pathos, the ability to put the audience in a certain frame of mind, and logos, the proof provided in the words themselves. These requirements ensure the audience or receiver of the communication will be persuaded by the message of the speaker (Aristotle, 1924). Along with these three qualities, persuasion is best
achieved through the use of enthymemes, rhetorical syllogisms that defend and articulate positions on certain opinions. Enthymemes are probabilities and or signs that are inherent in or the result of an argument that demonstrate the validity of that argument. Therefore, in rhetoric, just as in logic and dialectic, Aristotle establishes rules and procedures in order to construct and defend arguments. The three divisions of rhetoric that are differentiated by their audiences are judicial, forensic, and ceremonial. For Aristotle, the audience or the receiver of rhetorical communication was the most important component of rhetoric.

Cicero. The theory and technique of argumentation was continued after Aristotle by Cicero in the last century in the B.C. era. *Rhetorica ad Herrenium* (Cicero, 1954) takes the concepts of Aristotle and organizes them further, establishing clear and concise rubrics for the invention and substantiation of arguments in public speaking settings (Eemeren et al., 1996). Cicero delineates how a speaker should emphasize the importance of both ideas as well as physical appearance and concentrates on three specific communication realms: the judicial, the deliberative, and the epideictic.

Cicero gives six steps to the process of establishing and defending arguments in a judicial setting and has directives for each step. This system is a great example of the rigid structure of arguments advocated in the classical period (Eemeren et al., 1996). The *introduction* encourages the audience to be attentive and well-disposed to the topic being discussed. Statement of facts or *narration* sets forth facts and statements that when used, put the speaker’s argument in an advantageous position for winning the argument as well as persuading the audience. The *division* makes clear the points of agreement and disagreement so as to identify the points that need greater clarification. The *proof* and
refutation allow the speaker to articulate “his” arguments with evidence that proves his position along with proving the opposing arguments as incorrect. The conclusion ends the process by summing up the points of the argument and a plea for pity to the audience (Cicero, 1954).

Though these works of Cicero and Aristotle are over two thousand years old, their contribution to argumentation theory is substantial (Eemeren et al., 1996). The foundation set up by these authors has sustained throughout history to today. The emphasis on structure and adherence to formal logic developed by Aristotle and Cicero was the established norm in argumentation theory until the twentieth century (Eemeren et al., 1996), when new contributions would reshape argument as a theory and redirect the academic conversations.

The new rhetoric. In the mid-twentieth century, Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyeca introduced their research on a non-normative approach to argument that positions argument in everyday language (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyeca, 1969). This new concept of argument sought to release the dominant hold formal logic held on reasoning (Frank, 2004). They published their research as The New Rhetoric and established a non-formal understanding of argument where the rationale or reasoning behind ideas was more important than the structure of the argument itself. In the new rhetoric, the authors sought to establish a framework that would encompass forms of non-analytic thinking (Perelman, 1970).

This work de-emphasizes the use of formal logic in argument and replaces it with a quasi-logical approach. Formal logic was a component of classical era argument where the mathematical equation of the syllogism, for example, demonstrated the soundness of
the argument. Quasi-logical reasoning in argument happens when parts of the argument are posited to relate in such a way that a logical connection can be assumed (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyca, 1969). A logical connection is still utilized, but the rigid proof of that connection is not required. For Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyca, this works in the same way everyday language works, where our use of words are hints at connections and meanings but any formal demonstration of the connection being impossible in an everyday spoken interaction.

Like previous argumentation perspectives, *The New Rhetoric* emphasized the importance of the audience. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyca define the new rhetoric as “the study of the discursive techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind’s adherence to the thesis presented for its assent” (1969, p. 4). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyca’s emphasis on audience brought a new consideration to the values of the audience and the importance of a speaker to address those values in an argument.

Perelman’s and Olbrechts-Tyca’s contribution to argumentation theory did not revolutionize the established concepts of the ancient authors but rather, broadened the scope and application of the study of argument beyond formal realms of public address and introduced theories of argument into everyday interactions (Eemeren et al., 1996).

**The Toulmin model of argumentation.** Another highly influential contributor and contemporary of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyca is Stephen Toulmin and the model he designed for creating and substantiating arguments (Toulmin, 1958; 1988; 1992). Like Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyca, Toulmin saw formal logic as useful at times, but not reflected in the ways people reasoned when making decisions (Hollihan & Baaske, 2005). One of Toulmin’s central ideas is that any argument can claim rationality, and the
strength or correctness of the argument depends on the situation (Toulmin, 1988). He rejected the idea of formal logic, that there must be a concise and universal way to analyze arguments that can be generalized about with correctness and strength across the board. Toulmin (1958) introduced the idea of context specific logic where the guidelines for the logic behind the reasoning should be suited for the fields or disciplines where the arguments are being made.

Toulmin (1958) created a model of argumentation that complements the field specific logic he advocates while at the same time establishing a consistent procedure for argument that could be practiced broadly throughout disciplines. Correctness or validity of an argument, he held, was partly due to form, and partly due to the rationale of the field. Very much like the quasi-logic of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyeca, Toulmin’s field specific logic blends the structure of prior established argumentation with less rigid concepts of reasoning (Toulmin, 1988). This hybrid creation of Toulmin’s is a practical approach to argument that places emphasis not on structure but rather on how claims or positions on arguments are justified (Toulmin, 1958). Toulmin’s model consists of six components that help guide the analysis of arguments; claim: the position of the one arguing; grounds: evidence that supports the claim; warrant: the principle that connects the grounds with the claim being argued; backing: justification, reasons to back up the warrant; rebuttal: challenges to the claim; and qualifier: the level of certainty of the arguer (Toulmin, 1958). Though Toulmin advocated for a release from the structural confines of formal logic and its place in arguments, the model of Toulmin still maintains a need for some type of organization and structure, sustaining a link to the traditional concepts of rhetoric and argument (Eemeren et al., 1996). This model along with the
theoretical concepts of Toulmin have broadened our understanding and application of argumentation and inspired others to develop new perspectives on this old and respected art.

Pragma-dialectics in argumentation. Continuing the emphasis on practical everyday use and analysis of argument, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) founded a pragma-dialectic theory of argumentation where they see arguments as discursive interactions between interlocutors who have a disagreement and seek a need for resolve. Arguments, from this perspective should not be analyzed from a structure of logical equations, but rather identified as speech acts that serve some discursive purpose (Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2008). Instead of inventing structured rules that would invalidate an argument or its support, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) identified guidelines that if broken, did not invalidate any argument, but rather compromised the critical discussion needed for the discursive exchange of the argument. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984; 1992) proposed and developed important rules of argument that act as codes of conduct for critical discussion. For example the second rule of critical discussion states “A party that advances a standpoint is obliged to defend it if asked by the other party to do so” (Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992, pp. 208-209). This form of argument greatly emphasizes the interactive and discursive context. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2003) emphasized greatly the combination of both practice and theory and focused on the need to have complimentary theoretical grounding and practical application of argument as a discipline and a skill.

Definition of argumentation today. The plethora of scholarship on argumentation has broadened our perspectives on arguments, but lacks a conclusive and
inclusive definition that represents all the various nuances of argumentation theory’s contributors (Aguayo & Steffensmeier, 2008; Eemeren et al, 1996; Hollihan & Baaske, 2005). Brockriede (1975) responded to this lack of definition by identifying characteristics he feels encapsulate the process called argument. These characteristics embody Brockriede’s humanist approach where elements of human behavior overlap with the argument practices. He sees argument as a human process and therefore argument is wherever humans are. It is in the nature of argument to be a human interaction and not so much an arbitrary system used to organize the exchange of abstract ideas (Brockriede, 1975). O’Keefe (1977) takes note of Brockriede’s humanist emphasis and the practical use of argument, and though he sees some flaws in this concept, he nonetheless recognizes that this new attention to the pragmatic is a growing focus for the field of argumentation.

The difference among argumentation scholars is a primary factor in the lack of a definition. The result of this diverse understanding and broad use of the term argument by different authors, is that all communication can somehow be defined as argument (Rowland, 2008). Rowland (2008) thinks a useful definitional move for argumentation would be to focus on argument as the symbolic form where we solve our problems rationally (Rowland, 2008). Johnson (2000) takes argument as the practice where in text or discourse one persuades another, both through logical reasoning and a dialectical process. This idea combines aspects of formal logic, dialectic and discursive properties of arguing. Tindale (2002) questions the ability to adequately combine these, holding that the structure of logical form is so static where the discursive realm of argument is a dynamic process of interlocutors. He does, however, admit Johnson’s contributions
broaden argumentation theory. Managing classic concepts with new ideas is a continual theme among argument scholars. Tindale’s concern encapsulates the question for all argument scholars today and in the future, “But as the new moves forward, questions remain as to how much of the old goes with the new and how well they really fit together.” (Tindale, 2002, p. 309). The critique and contribution feminist scholars have developed concerning argumentation theory could possibly answer Tindale’s question concerning the future of argument. Before looking ahead however, feminists reflect and look back to the roots of argument, to better understand where it needs to go.

**Feminist Contributions to Argumentation**

Feminist contributions to the academic discourse on argumentation theory are grounded in the feminist concerns of gender construction, inequalities and hierarchies of power within systems and among individuals. Feminists call into question the unchallenged authority the adversarial model has had in argument for thousands of years along with the hierarchies this model creates. The competitive and adversarial ways in which argument is presented, according to feminists, is based not in perfected modes of thinking and communicating, but rather in the gendered (masculine) styles that the creators of Western thought found culturally superior. Feminism offers an alternative “cooperative” paradigm by which to study and practice argument that breaks down the power dynamics of the adversarial with an emphasis on the equity and fairness among the arguers.

**Reason and communication as gendered construct.** Robin Lakoff (1975) brought to light the ways in which the linguistic behaviors of society construct the social positioning of women. Females are subjugated to males through the ways society dictates women are spoken to. Her position is also informed by how society values or devalues
the ways in which she communicates. Lakoff (1975) posits that the feminine styles of communicating are disrespected by both males and females, thus positioning women below men. On the one hand, feminine communication styles, the only style available to women, are arbitrarily valued less than the masculine styles, while men are taught to avoid any communication style that may resemble a “weak,” feminine way of communicating. It is not the gender of the female that determines her position, but rather society’s constructed meaning about her gender.

Belenky et al. (1986) hold that women are raised in a world whose laws and perceptions are defined from a male perspective. Women are given specific rules for their femininity and womanhood, all decided by the male dominated society. The realms of the emotional, intuitive, and personal are all de-valued because of their feminine qualities. Because of this, women’s ways of knowing were barred from contributing to the works of antiquity that have shaped and defined our understanding of reasoning, logic, thinking and communicating (Belenky et al., 1986). Nye (1990) continues this concept of the masculine defined ways of knowing. The schools of thought that created our disciplines of logic, reasoning and rhetoric all lacked any representation from women’s perspectives or experience. Logic and philosophy were identified and defined as whatever was not seen as feminine or “womanlike.” Logic, reasoning and philosophy were male created concepts defined by the absence or lack of concepts associated with women and femininity such as emotional, sensitive, and nurturing, etc. (Nye, 1990; 1995). Nye herself admits being alienated from colleagues within the field of logic, the very discipline in which she herself was educated.
Phyllis Rooney (1991; 2010) investigated the use of metaphor in the disciplines of logic, rhetoric, and reason, which demonstrate gender bias within the practice and teaching of logic and argumentation. The metaphors of sex and gender used in these disciplines of logic and argumentation embodied an alienation and rejection of the feminine as illogical and outside of sound reason. The metaphors display the growth of reason and “true” knowledge as the extraction and exclusion of aspects that are female or feminine. Any lapse of reason is identified with the intrusion of the female element, the “shady feminine charms” (Rooney, 1991). Lloyd (1993a; 1993b) looked at metaphors as well and discovered the power they have in gendering reason and logic and how women were prevented from any contribution to the development of these concepts.

Though feminists found it very important to identify the gender bias within the fields of logic, rhetoric and philosophy, many feminists made it very clear that identifying these biases was not an attempt to claim that men and women think and communicate differently, but rather to highlight the cultural and societal importance placed on gender differences as well as the relationships of power constructed through these differences (Belenky et al., 1986; Bruner, 1996; Condit, 1997; Nye, 1990; Rooney, 2003).

Verbiest (1995) holds that reason is a gendered habit; however, the important question is not whether men and women think differently. What is important to ask is why the question is even asked. Perhaps what we know to be logic and reasoning are gendered concepts, but what is of particular importance is the power that is ascribed to those who use a specific form of thinking over another. The ways in which these styles of thinking and knowing are valued differently is worthy of note (Verbiest, 1995). Foss,
Griffin, and Foss (1997) deny any essentialist ideology behind their research on the masculine bias of rhetoric. Their work to uncover gendered bias is aimed at highlighting the power dynamic that results because of difference. Classical fields, such as rhetoric are basically written and taught from a white, heterosexual male’s perspective. It is not the gendered difference that matters so much as the patriarchy that is behind the marked difference of gendered styles (Foss et al., 1997). Identifying gender differences and biases are the steps needed to eradicate patriarchy so rhetoric and similar fields can be understood and practiced with attention to equality (Foss & Griffin, 1995).

**Adversarial model as masculine communication.** The metaphor that presents argument as a war is one of the oldest metaphors in history (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Argument is understood in terms of defending one’s opinion as a position, strategizing how to win the argument by attacking and undermining ideas that challenge one’s own. Someone who is of a different mindset is an adversary; logic and reasoning are best performed to artfully win over the other. This metaphor is used frequently in the classic literature that codified argument as a practice and art form in the Western world (Aristotle, 1924; 1928a; 1928b; Cicero, 1954). Janice Moulton (1984) recognizes the impact of this metaphor and challenges its benefit. She sees this adversary method of thinking as limiting the scope and methods of knowing in philosophy. Aggression is equated with erudite and critical thinking and held as the ultimate model as opposed to a model inclusive of different paradigms one can choose from in order to construct ideas (Moulton, 1984). The aggressive “argument as war” model is often the only option offered by scholars in order to construct and test ideas. Moulton (1984) advocates breaking away from the linear thinking created by the singular use of the adversary model.
Lamb (1994) builds upon this research where she asks for the alternatives proposed by Moulton (1984). Lamb sees the adversary ways of logic as a remaining relic of the master’s house metaphor of Audre Lorde (1978). Before argument and logic can be used to empower women and end female oppression within society, it must be reforged from its patriarchal and oppressive tradition of creating hierarchies among ideas and communicators (Easley, 1997; Lamb 1994).

Deborrah Tannen (1990; 1999) focused on the presence of the adversary method in everyday life of Western culture and concurs with Lakoff and Johnson (1980) about the pervasiveness of this ruling war metaphor for argument. The most interesting aspect of Tannen’s work is that she finds that the adversarial model of thinking and communicating is encouraged for men where a more relational mode is valued for women. This alliance between the masculine traits and the adversarial model coincides with the masculine ownership of logical thinking. The dichotomy of male versus female thinking, perpetuated in Western culture is aligned with the adversarial model encouraged for men. The adversarial model of communicating therefore becomes an issue of gender and more broadly a display and example of patriarchal values of Western thought (Tannen, 1990; 1999). The adversarial method is the valued and respected mode of thinking and communicating in Western reasoning and philosophy and at the same time encouraged in males and discouraged in females (Lozano-Reich & Cloud, 2009). This dichotomy creates a hierarchy of modes and places female ways of thinking at a disadvantage (Tannen, 1999). Tannen says alternate ways of thinking and rationalizing need to be adopted if patriarchy is to be undone.
**Feminist alternatives to adversarial paradigm.** Sally Miller Gearhart took a critical look at the history and practice of rhetoric and found its relationship to adversarial or aggressive persuasion as violence and asks for an alternative to this patriarchal and hierarchical understanding of rhetoric (1979). She advocates for a “womanization” of rhetoric to transform rhetoric from a competitive approach of fighting over difference to a dialogue between people to discuss those differences. Rhetoric should work to build an environment that encourages change in both parties. Gearhart states that feminism is the refusal of the conquest conversion model (adversarial) and the development of new types of relationships among communicators (Gearhart, 1979).

Foss (1978), Foss and Griffin (1995) and Bone, Griffin and Scholz (2008) present a feminist rhetoric devoted to discovering new directives for rhetoric that focus on promoting mutual understanding and communication across barriers. Foss continues the re-definition of persuasion from a plea to change perspectives to an invitation to come together and attempt to understand each other. Foss and Gearhart seek not so much a replacement of old definitions of rhetoric, but a broadening of the discipline that can encompass new feminist additions and eradicate patriarchy and inequality that rhetoric often employs (Foss, 1978). Shumake (2002) sees Gearhart’s and Foss’s concepts as fruitful considerations for rhetoric, where respect and understanding between rhetors present a viable alternative to the competitive model (Bone et al., 2008).

**Feminist cooperative paradigm.** Catherine Lamb (1991a; 1991b) and Alexis Easley (1997) discuss the importance of integrating argument theory into feminist thought and scholarship. Grounded in standpoint theory, Lamb envisions argument presented from a cooperative perspective that focuses on collaboration and shared
leadership. She admits more cooperative scholarship about argument exists; yet, recognizes the lack of inclusion in the classroom (1991b). Lamb (1994) stresses the importance of difference and how it can actually lead to building a community in the classroom as well as allow the community to grow in understanding of different perspectives. Rooted in feminist ideals, differences should not be ignored or erased, but rather honored and celebrated (Palczewski, 1996). Difference should be engaged in order to encourage the sharing of different perspectives from the various and different members of the community. “Being able to conceptualize difference makes it more likely that one can then see how it might be used, as in, for example, establishing and maintaining community” (Lamb, 1994, p.8).

Makau (1992) “revisioned” the collegiate argumentation course from this cooperative perspective. The cooperative paradigm promotes sensitivity to issues of race, class, and gender within an argument setting (Makau, 1992; 1997; Makau & Marty, 2001). This facilitates building a community and bridging awareness of others. The awareness welcomes diversity, which is essential in developing alternatives to a competitive environment. This new approach to teaching argument focuses more on the content of the ideas and the relationship between individuals rather than a specific argument model or process (Makau 1992). The cooperative paradigm takes competition out of the curriculum for argument and replaces it with a focus on collaborative efforts to gain understanding of the sources of difference and how and why they are important (Makau, 1997; Makau & Marty, 2001).

**Cooperative argument in academic debate.** Millsap (1993) analyzed the use of the Toulmin Model (Toulmin, 1958) in academic debates and argued for a new model of
argument that emphasizes sensitivity and awareness to things that influence people’s perspectives as well as those things that make their perceptions different. The values, norms and perceptions of the speaker all have an impact on the argument and should therefore be considered as such (Millsap, 1993). This proposed model focuses more on a subjective view of decision making processes of argument. Bartanen (1995) argues for giving students more voice in academic debates by incorporating new ways of knowing into the preparation and performance of arguments. Feminist and underrepresented ways of knowing that incorporate building relationships among communicators, honoring difference and recognizing the ability differences have in expanding understanding, need to be introduced into academic endeavors (Wilkins & Hobbs, 1997). Both Bartenen (1995) and Millsap (1993) hold that narrative and personal experience should be included into debate formats to broaden the experience and incorporate more of the feminist tenets of equality and self determination.

**Feminist alternatives for communication studies classrooms broadly.** The feminist concern for alternatives to patriarchal practices encompasses aspects beyond the adversarial model found in argument and the related fields of logic, rhetoric and philosophy. Rakow (1992) discusses the importance of integrating feminist research and perspectives in communication studies courses broadly. Integrating feminist ideals into classrooms makes the acceptance of new concepts like cooperative argumentation more plausible (Rakow 1992). Karen Foss (1992) purposes a new public address course that integrates speakers and representatives from marginalized groups and focuses on the awareness that public discourse has historically privileged white heterosexual males. Sonja Foss (1992) introduces a feminist approach to public speaking courses that focuses
on the communication practices of oppressed groups. This class works to bring new alternatives to communication styles in the classroom. Karen Foss and Sonja Foss identified society’s ideas of proper and effective public speaking as mere social constructs, “built on assumptions that favored a formal mode of communication produced by historically significant men in public settings and assessed from male perspectives” (Foss & Foss, 1991, p.2).

Cooperative argumentation beyond feminist contribution. Some argumentation scholars not identified as feminist have also joined the campaign to integrate a cooperative paradigm to the study of argument. Michael Gilbert (1995) developed a coalescent argumentation where empathy brings the interlocutors to a better understanding of each other’s perspectives and positions. Even if agreement is not achieved, the deepening of understanding between the interlocutors is of equal importance. Williams and McGee (2000) advocate for negotiation skills to be encouraged within argumentation education and coursework. Negotiation skills prepare students better for public sphere discourse and in this perspective, consensus and or compromise is the primary goal of the argumentation process (Williams & McGee, 2000).

The ideas of collaboration, having voice, difference, and self determination are not isolated to the feminist concepts of communication and argumentation. These ideas directly relate and connect to the relational and cooperative themes found in the political theory of deliberative democracy, where even difference can add much to people’s decision making processes in the political sphere.

Deliberative Democracy

Deliberative democracy is an alternative theory and method of democracy that reconceptualizes the representative form of democracy we see today. This form of
democracy argues for more civic engagement and establishes practices and theories that
effect civic engagement in the decision making processes of societies (Gastil & Levine, 
2005). Deliberative democracy arose out of the dissatisfaction with democratic 
institutions of the last thirty years (Mouffe, 2000). To answer this “crisis of democracy”,
theorists developed ideas that were centered around consensus building techniques and 
impartial political proceedings (Leib, 2004) and how these ideas could be actualized in 
society in the political sphere. There are multiple and diverse definitions of deliberative 
democracy (Elster, 1998), but the main components of 1.) collective action, 2.) decision 
making and 3.) consensus building are shared by all (Benhabib, 1996; Cohen & Sabel, 
1997; Elster, 1998; Fearson, 1998; Gastil & Levine, 2005; Leib, 2004). The cooperation 
and collaboration of voters and decision makers should encourage more collective action 
and increase the interest and participation of previously disinterested and isolated citizens. 
Though ideal and well intentioned, there are critiques of this form of democracy’s 
disregard of the inherent differences that exist in individuals and their ideas that a theory 
of consensus cannot justify (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Mouffe, 2000).

**Deliberative democracy defined.** Cohen and Sabel (1997) see deliberative 
democracy as a process of collective decision making by citizens who give ideas and 
opinions and defend those opinions through reasoning to others. Elster (1998) defines 
deliberative means as publically exchanged arguments. Deliberative democracy is 
collective and dialogic reasoning that is a type of interactive argumentation, which aims 
for a reasoned consensus among its practitioners (Elster, 1998). Elster believes all those 
who will be affected through the decisions made in a deliberation must participate in 
order achieve the desired level of consensus and fairness. The arguments and reasoning
used in deliberations must be devoted to rationality and impartiality and the deliberation is only justified through these types of arguments (Elster, 1998). Fearson understands deliberative democracy to be a type of brainstorming, where members of a group state their opinions and all choose a solution that is generated from all the alternatives developed by the group members (Fearson, 1998). Elster (1998) admits that consensus cannot be realized every time, but at the very least considerations of other alternatives cannot but improve understanding.

**Theoretical background.** Jurgen Habermas (1984) and John Rawls (1971) were the primary theorists that gave shape to the tenets of deliberative forms of democracy. Habermas (1984; 1996) believed that transformation of ideas was the core of democracy, not an aggregate of ideas. He identified the ideal speech situation where the ends and means of the communicative interaction would be grounded in fairness through a deliberative setting (Habermas, 1984). The constraints of the ideal speech situation would eliminate positions and possibility of disagreement. The more equal and impartial the process, the more accepting communicators will be of the compelling arguments (Habermas, 1984). Rawls holds that this type of democracy would reconcile liberty and equality by maintaining individual rights as an ideal through a procedure that preserves the popular sovereignty and democratic legitimacy (Rawls, 1971). Benhabib (1996) agrees to this balance and finds deliberative democracy able to bridge the seeming contradiction between individual rights and a collective demographic through the use of a practical rationality.

**Agonistic critique of deliberative democracy.** Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau (1985) critique deliberative democracy advocates for their attempt at eradicating
difference through communication processes that emphasize consensus and agreement. Ideas of consensus and impartiality deny the nature and role passions play in our decision making (Mouffe, 2000). Mouffe (2000) finds the concept of impartial communication contexts and rationality to be an ideal not really existing in society. The need of deliberative democracy for agreement ignores the inherent tensions that exist in democratic politics (Mouffe, 1996). Mouffe (2000) holds that power cannot be removed from communication relationships and contexts through impartiality because power is constitutive of those social relations and the two cannot be separated through a mere ideal notion of impartial and fair interaction.

The denial of the tensions in reasoning and politics negates the pluralism of values that exists in society (Mouffe, 2000). Not only is it impractical, but it actually strips the essential elements of difference that Mouffe (1996; 2000) sees as democratic ideals. Mouffe proposes an agonistic model of democracy that is one founded on tolerance, not agreement. She posits a communicative interaction of adversaries, not enemies, where argument is had with someone we disagree with, but whose right to uphold and to express those opinions that challenge our own are not denied (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985).

To better establish a classroom and curriculum that is grounded in these feminist and deliberative democracy ideals, the method and presentation of these ideals should compliment the message expressed. The democratic ideals that inform critical and feminist pedagogies are directly aligned with the feminist argumentation and deliberative democracy concepts that encourage equal and fair representation and voice. This
alignment of concepts makes critical and feminist pedagogies an appropriate method to present and instruct my feminist argumentation course.

**Critical Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy is a philosophy of education that is grounded in radical principles, beliefs, and practices that embody an emancipatory ideal for the educational environment (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres 2009). Scholars who ascribe to this philosophy are dedicated to making the classroom and other educational spaces areas where equality can be achieved, oppression eradicated, and diverse and alternative ways of knowing developed and encouraged. Kincheloe (2008) defines critical pedagogy as a practice grounded in a social and educational vision of justice and equality, recognizes education inherently understood as political, and critical pedagogy is dedicated to the alleviation of human suffering. He also identifies the importance critical pedagogy places on generative themes in facilitating the learning environment. The four main characteristics provided by Kincheloe (2008) succinctly convey the multiple aspects of critical pedagogy and are elaborated here to provide sufficient understanding of its main tenets.

**Social and educational vision of justice and equality.** The focus on equality and justice in critical pedagogy has implications on micro and macro levels where results are sought both inside and outside the classroom. Paulo Freire (1995) challenges the conventional test back (banking) model of education, where the teacher bestows knowledge upon the students and retrieves the knowledge back from the students through testing. This model reinforces a concept of knowledge as objective and positivist, which is viewed as oppressive as it dissuades students from inquiring into alternative ways of
knowing (Freire, 1995). Freire (1995; 2001) redefines the teacher-student relationship to reflect a more egalitarian and just educational environment where knowledge is not given but rather co-created by both student and teacher bringing their roles and interests more in alignment with each other. A democratic classroom setting helped actualize Giroux’s (1983) passion for a critical democracy where active involvement could be instilled in society through classroom reinforcement and empowerment. Dewey (1916) was one of the pioneer advocates for this integration of democratic ideals into education, where students are allowed to freely interact within the educational environment.

The cocreation of knowledge engendered through critical pedagogy not only empowers students in the classroom, but can call out and erode the relationship between systems of power and education in society. Freire (1995) demands education integrate ways of knowing and knowledge of marginalized groups who are doubly oppressed through the forced consumption of knowledge as defined by the dominant norms of society. So not only are minority groups marginalized in society, but they are marginalized in education as well through the absence and silencing of their voices and experiences within the curricula. bell hooks (1994; 2009) and Maxine Greene (1988) address the white, heterosexual male dominance of curricula in schools. hooks (2009) discusses how the behaviors encouraged in schools reify dominant culture norms and those characteristics identified as belonging to “others” are discouraged and punished. The reform of educational practices advocated by Freire (1995; 2001), bell hooks (1994; 2009) and McLaren (1989; 2000) all address these inequalities found in education. Giroux (2001) continues the conversation on social reforms, holding that teachers must be trained as transformative intellectuals who engage in the struggle for meaning and
instill in their students the desire to get involved with the struggle over power relations and effect social change.

The justice and equality of critical pedagogy have broader implications that reach beyond the education space. W.E.B. DuBois (1902) discussed the implication of education on people in society. His work sought to transform the social injustices African Americans suffered by developing educational opportunities that would empower African Americans to resist the injustices imposed by the White majority (DuBois, 1902). DuBois’s work brought the concept of transforming education to light as well as the connection between education and social power. McLaren (1989; 2000) draws this same connection, recognizing a direct relationship between knowledge and social power. Knowledge has traditionally served a social function where education has historically and predominantly served the interests of those that hold significant positions of power in society, i.e., through the normalization of a White Western heterosexual male experience (McLaren, 1989). McLaren calls this interest the hidden curriculum where the implicit function of learning and practice of schools is to perpetuate societal norms as defined and controlled through the White, male heterosexual culture.

**Education as inherently political.** All the attention critical pedagogues pay towards social justice and equality brings awareness to the much contested concept of the political nature of education (Apple, 1979). Michael Apple exposes how the entire infrastructure of education from curriculum, teachers and administrators, funding and even school cafeteria menus are all interconnected to the goals and objectives of a political agenda. The school curriculum is written and developed predominantly from the perspective of dominant cultural groups that ignore the history and issues of marginalized
minority groups (1996). The dominant forces of society use knowledge and education as a tool to reinforce their standards upon members of society. Apple says that the problems of education are deeply rooted in this reproduction of the social system of relations and exploitation (Apple, 1982). Ira Shor (1992) also highlights the political dimension of education and the pervasiveness of the agenda of the majority. The school structure and environment all teach children what kind of people to be through the knowledge and behavior that is deemed acceptable in the classroom (Schor, 1992). Schor (1992) holds that the non-participatory behavior that is cloaked in the guise of respectful behavior is what excludes ordinary students from the policy making aspects of society when they are adults. In other words, the emphasis on order and obedience that contribute to the definition of a good student, take away from the student any notion of agency, agency that necessarily translates into participation in political and communal processes of decision making.

Critical pedagogy encourages educators to counter the political agenda of the dominant culture in society by creating opportunities where students can make democratic decisions about their education and their lives (Giroux, 2009). Educating from a critical pedagogical perspective means educators take and share positions with students; however, the purpose is not to force feed a particular perspective but rather to create a critical environment for discussion and analysis of multiple perspectives. Education is not neutral; yet, when education is represented as objective and neutral, it masks the maintenance of the status quo and mainstream dominant perspective (Giroux, 1988). Greene (1988) reiterates the importance of making the political elements of education known. She emphasizes that active participation in the politics of the classroom
empowers students. She holds democracy as a way of life that needs to be practiced for social and political awareness, which can happen through educational experiences (Greene, 1988).

**The alleviation of human suffering.** These characteristics that summarize critical pedagogy are not isolated unto themselves, but rather overlap and complement each other to reinforce a critical ideology. Critical pedagogy’s concern with human suffering goes hand in hand with the vision of equality and justice. Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1995) and *Pedagogy of Freedom* (Freire, 2001) both address a universal human ethical praxis where society as well as the critical pedagogical classroom should be guided by an ethical concern for humanity. The empowerment that critical pedagogy instills in marginalized groups goes beyond an equal classroom. The empowerment engaged in the classroom is intended to infuse the lives of marginalized groups in society, giving them the power and strength to end oppression (Freire, 2001). Giroux’s (2009) idea of teachers as transformative intellectuals gives them the opportunity to not only transform the educational environment, but also encourage transformation for their students. Transformative intellectuals should instill in students the ability to affect change by challenging oppression, ending the suffering they witness in the world and transforming the world (Giroux, 2009).

To many critical pedagogy scholars, suffering is a human construct that does not have to exist. It can be eradicated if the people of the world had the collective will to eliminate it (Kinchelelo, 2008). Critical pedagogy generates awareness in people and encourages engagement and taking active roles. This awareness creates an empathy and understanding of others that creates a consciousness to affect change (McLaren, 2000).
Generative themes. The generative theme is a pedagogical strategy in critical pedagogy that generates the educational themes from the students’ experiences and prior knowledge. Paulo Freire defined generative themes as topics and issues that are of importance and interest to learners (1995). Including issues into the classroom that are of importance to students makes them more engaged in the educational process. bell hooks (1994) and Antonia Darder (1991) find this student engagement fundamental to any critical perspective on education. hooks presents engaged pedagogy, which emphasizes the engagement and participation of students as well as teacher in the creation of the classroom content and therefore learn together. Engagement allows both student and teacher to self-actualize through the learning process, encouraged by a concern for the well-being of all participants (hooks, 1994). Parker Palmer (1993) encourages this engagement in the students. Integrating the students into the learning experience through their expertise, knowledge and interests creates a dynamic educational space (Palmer, 1993).

Giroux believes teacher training should prepare and train new teachers in student generated content. The problems and needs of the students should be a starting point for classroom discussion, not only getting them engaged in the learning, but also getting them engaged in their lives (Giroux, 2009). The idea of generative themes is directly related to student engagement. Engagement is one of the most important tenets of critical pedagogy, from Dewey’s (1916) emphasis on students’ democratic participation and Freire’s focus on the students autonomy in the classroom (1995; 2001) to bell hook’s (2009), McLaren’s (1989; 2000) and Giroux’s (2009) work on getting students aware and active in their ability to effect change.
Feminist Pedagogy

Feminist pedagogy shares many of its fundamental principles about educational theory and practice with critical pedagogy (Maher, 1987). Both pedagogies are driven by the intention to eradicate oppression, give voice to silenced or underrepresented individuals and develop democratic classroom environments that create classroom relationships built on equality and fairness (Fisher, 1980; Weiler, 1991). Coffey and Delamont (2000) see feminist pedagogy concerned with educational discourses on gender and the performance of power and gender in education, both in theory and practice. The main themes of feminist pedagogy overlap with those tenets of critical pedagogy, but feminist pedagogues have a unique focus that is specific to a feminist pedagogy. Feminist theory informs feminist pedagogy in that the construction of gender and the power ascribed to gender is a salient theme throughout (Maher, 1987). Feminist pedagogues are concerned with integrating women’s needs and concerns within education, re-conceptualizing the authority of the teacher and redefining the teacher’s relationship with students, identifying personal experience as epistemology, and the negotiating of difference and identity within educational contexts.

Women’s needs addressed in education. Knowledge and the education that has traditionally imparted that knowledge has historically alienated and subjugated women and other groups marginalized from the White heterosexual male norm (Belenky et al., 1986; hooks, 1989). To eradicate this patriarchal ownership of knowledge and education, Maher (1987) advocates a development of new ways of knowing that consider the oppression of women and celebrates the knowledge that can be gained from a female and feminine perspective. Critical pedagogy offers much to the creating of a democratic
education, but it falls short of addressing the positions, experiences and diversity that a
democratic education would make possible (Weiler, 1991). Weiler posits that a feminist
informed pedagogy, however, takes special interest in these aspects to help empower
women and others who have been disenfranchised from the culture of knowledge (1991).
The feminist reconceptualization of what constitutes knowledge and the sources of that
knowledge challenges the preexisting concepts of objective truth and the systems
developed to discover and maintain that truth. Audre Lorde (1984) recognizes these
established truths as constructs of male power and domination, of which a feminist
dismantling of through reformed pedagogy integrating women, would eliminate this
historic domination of women.

**Rethinking teacher authority.** Very much like critical pedagogy, feminist
pedagogy demands a reevaluation of the teacher-student relationship and redefines the
authority of the teacher. Though both pedagogical perspectives are grounded in making
the teacher-student relationship one based in equality, some feminist scholars find the
equalizing emphasis detrimental to the notion of difference, a valuable component to
feminist pedagogy (hooks, 1989; 1994). The strength feminist thought has found in
difference is reflected in the multiple understandings feminists have of teacher authority
(Holland & Blair, 1995). hooks (1994) emphasizes more on what a teacher should require
of themselves, always being willing to take on the challenges and vulnerabilities that are
required of the students.

Friedman challenges the authority teachers have over students but recognizes the
authority teachers have by virtue of their position in the institution, even if they wish to
deny themselves that authority (1985). Fisher sees the teacher authority, traditionally
understood, as a reflection of patriarchal hierarchy, but also the need for some structure in a field where evaluation and guidance is necessary (1980). To justify these seemingly polar ideas, the feminist teacher should become a facilitator or guide of the educational interaction that encourages students to develop ideas and theories and understand their own power as students and creators of knowledge (Fisher, 1980). This concept is a challenge and struggle where the balance between egalitarian encouragement and ordered leadership must be carefully sensitive to the patriarchal tendencies we are historically prone as human beings in our constructed society (Lorde, 1984). Carolyn Shrewbury (1993) nicely encapsulates this balance in her understanding of classroom relationships as a community of learners who share a responsibility and respect for one another within the education process.

**Personal experience as epistemic.** Henry Giroux (1981; 1984) understood radical pedagogy must allow students to share their histories and experiences and use them as educational tools. Though this is very similar to critical pedagogy’s concept of generative themes (Freire, 1995), feminist pedagogy developed the epistemic value of personal experience from the consciousness raising used by the women’s movement in the 1960’s and 1970’s which allowed women to understand their importance as human beings and recognize their oppression as well as their ability to overcome oppression and effect change (Holland & Blair, 1995). This consciousness raising technique allows women to enlighten themselves on their own feelings and personal needs and direct these towards the pursuit of knowledge and social action (Fisher, 1980). Frances Maher and Mary Kay Thompson Tetreault (1994) hold that feminist pedagogy needs to encourage oppressed and marginalized groups to obtain an education that is pertinent to their lives.
and experiences. If patriarchy and oppression are to be understood and eradicated, then the narratives and experiences of those that have suffered under these social devices must be utilized and integrated into education curriculum (Maher, 1985). Fuss (1989) posits that lived experiences need to be seen as sources of knowledge. Discussion of personal experiences in our classrooms supports a better understanding of the social and historical contexts that have shaped the varied experiences. Feminist pedagogy empowers students to recognize the systems of power and oppression established in society and to transform them (Mayberry & Rose, 1999).

**Difference.** The importance of difference emerged out of the ways in which representation and advocacy within the feminist movement were established by a White middle class, female majority. This majority failed to adequately represent and unfortunately, even marginalized categories of women, such as African American and lesbian females through misguided assumptions and generalizations that all women’s experiences and needs were the same (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 1994). This speaking about individual women in collective terms reinstates patriarchy. Difference challenges the assumptions of the universal identity and experience by resisting the patriarchy that was reinstated by those universal assumptions that ignored the reality of other women (Holland & Blair, 1995). bell hooks (2009) considers difference frequently throughout her work, especially how it relates to race and identity in the classroom. Maralee Mayberry (1997) recognizes the difference between collaborative and critical pedagogies and feminist pedagogy is the emphasis on difference. Sensitivity to difference is necessary to ensure that power struggles of gender, race and sexuality are recognized and transformed (Mayberry 1997).
The focus on difference emphasizes the social construction of identity and resists an essentialist proclivity to the notion of universal identities (MacDonald & Sanchez-Casal, 2002). Sanchez-Casal and MacDonald (2002) advocate for a theory of feminist pedagogy that conceptualizes difference as creating communities of meaning where the learning opportunity arises from the different experiences and contributions of all members of the classroom, both student and teacher. These challenges to stable notions of identity that difference instills make difference important and not something to be so swiftly eliminated (Sanchez-Casal & MacDonald, 2002).

Difference, identity and positionality all need to be considered in the classroom and though a great source of gaining knowledge, all have serious implications for the classroom environment and the teacher-student relationship (Holland & Blair, 1995). Weiler admits that discussions on difference and integrating it into curriculum can cause terrific conflict, especially if students come from diverse backgrounds of oppression and privilege (1991). The tension that difference creates, however, should not be discouraged but rather sought out and utilized as an effective pedagogical tool that raises consciousness, exposes oppression and patriarchy, and leads students and teachers to social action (Holland & Blair, 1995; hooks, 2009; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 1994).

In this literature review, the feminist critiques and contributions to argumentation theory were discussed and positioned within the broader context of classical argumentation theory and its contemporary developments. The similarities between feminist argumentation and deliberative democracy were also highlighted and these feminist and deliberative democracy ideas both inform and guide the design of the feminist argumentation curriculum of my thesis project. Critical and feminist pedagogies
were included here since they inform the implementation of this feminist curriculum as well as my research method. In the following chapter, I discuss my methodological assumptions as well as methods and describe specifically the creation and design of my thesis project on feminist argumentation.
Chapter Three

Methodological Perspectives and Assumptions

The theoretical approaches guiding my thesis project are ones of transformation and liberation. The broad methodological approach and particular methods utilized in the project should also embody the goal of developing and encouraging new ways of knowing as well as new ways of analyzing data to generate knowledge. In this project, I utilize qualitative methods to gather and analyze the data from the feminist classrooms I facilitated. Since I am the teacher, I am also a member of the observed group and therefore a qualitative analysis is most appropriate considering my participation, interest and explicit interpretation of the occurrences and interactions within the classroom environment.

The qualitative perspective I take is grounded in a critical approach that emphasizes the social and political implications and importance of this research. The underlying methodological assumptions of feminist research situated within the broader critical approach inform my project. Feminist and critical pedagogies are used as a reflexive and emancipatory method to embody and develop new ways of generating knowledge. Using critical and feminist pedagogies as methods allow the classroom environment, material and assignments to all serve as sources of data and information. The use of these pedagogies, combined with ethnographic observations through my role as teacher and learner, researcher and participant, is an emancipatory praxis of research that ensures new and rich ways to generate and analyze this data on the feminist classroom and curriculum.
Methodology

Qualitative research. Qualitative research is an open-ended perspective on investigation. Qualitative methods engage interpretive, naturalistic approaches to the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative researchers focus on interpretation of the world as it is represented, along with a unique recognition of the researcher’s role and relationship with the subjects being researched.

Qualitative research assumes there is no objective, knowable reality rather, it is only through representations of reality that the world can be understood (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Since the world as objective existence and truth cannot be known, the process of interpreting the represented world is where meaning can be made. Qualitative research is the process by which this interpretation of the observed world increases our knowledge and understanding of the world and the meanings we ascribe to this world as humans. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) say qualitative methodology puts emphasis on the importance of interpretation because of the socially constructed nature of the world.

Along with this interpretive aspect of investigation, qualitative methodologies also have a specific interest in understanding the relationship the researcher has with the research process and subjects. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) posit qualitative research as a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (p. 3) and recognize the relationship and interest the researcher has with the subjects. The researcher is conscious of her/his connection with those being researched. The researcher is a tool within the process and is not an external observer of the things being researched. The researcher is an active participant and can be a recognized member of the community or world that is being investigated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). An important aspect of this
researcher/subject relationship is the need to observe the phenomena within the environment it usually occurs, its natural environment. This natural observation allows the qualitative researcher to interpret and make sense of the phenomena through the meanings that people ascribe to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

**Critical qualitative research.** A critical approach to qualitative research combines critical theory and qualitative assumptions (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). A critical qualitative perspective frames its investigation in a critical context that emphasizes a humanistic purpose for the research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) identify four main concerns that critical research focuses on: the nature of reality, difficulties of shared meaning, the assumed neutral aspect of research, and the consequences of research on society as a whole (p. 21). Very much like the qualitative assumptions, the first two concerns of critical research echo qualitative research’s questioning the measurability and understanding of the objective nature of the world. Critical research also questions any real neutrality on the part of the researcher in regard to the topics or subjects being researched. There are always motives and influences that inspire researchers in their work and critical and qualitative research encourages those motives and influences to be recognized, reconciled and integrated explicitly in the research process (Frankel & Wallen, 2000; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000).

What is particularly unique to critical research is the concern for the implications and consequences research and researchers can have on people and society. Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) note that critical research is concerned with how research interacts with issues of power and justice, especially in matters of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and similar aspects of social categorizations (p. 281). Along with these concerns, critical
research is also guided by the need to discover work in a “transformative praxis” whose research and findings are focused on the alleviation and eradication of suffering and oppression that is caused by society’s hierarchical treatment and understanding of sex, race, class, gender, etc. (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 303). Many researchers adopt a critical perspective to research and use transformative praxis to more fully accomplish their work to eradicate oppression, not just in society, but even oppression that can be observed in the actual research process (Finn, 1992).

**Feminist research.** Feminist research is a methodology that is grounded in a critical perspective. Feminist theoretical perspectives on research reflect a critical awareness of the patriarchal aspects of society. Much of feminist research focuses on how the construction of gender is reflected in many of the power struggles and power disparities that exist in the world (Lather, 1992; Naples, 2003). Feminist researchers seek to create social change, address power disparities within research practices, and create new research methods that embody reflexive and emancipatory practices freeing academic research from the limits of the traditionally defined patriarchal methods (Lather, 1992; 1995).

Feminist research is an approach that takes an active stance on the issues it investigates. Scheurich (1997) says feminist perspectives on research aim to create social change by representing human diversity. The integration of marginalized and previously ignored groups of people within the topics and practices of research makes the power differentiation of groups within society more visible and better situated for attention and change. Naples (2003) implores feminist researchers to explore the personal, professional, and structural positions of power within society, investigate how our habits and
conditions reproduce concepts of unequal gender roles and discover ways to eradicate these unfair power relations. Though feminist researchers were initially interested in women, giving voice to women’s ways of knowing and improving women’s conditions in society, feminist researchers’ concern with gender oppression has grown to focus on any disparity of power and ending oppression experienced by any marginalized group in society (Lichtman, 2006). It is a politically motivated and reflexive approach that sees research as a consciousness-raising tool of transformation striving to address and eliminate social inequality (Lather, 1995).

A second tenet of feminist research is concerned with the power imbalance that can be found in research practices. Ellis and Bochner (1996) identify the traditional role of the researcher as an outside observer as a position of privilege and patriarchal power. In traditional research, the researcher and those researched have distinct, separate roles where the researcher generates assumptions about the investigated group. Feminist research addresses this power difference by altering the roles of those in the research process. Reinharz (1992) notes that feminist research develops special relations between the researcher and those studied. This special relationship works to mitigate the imbalance of power (Finn, 1992) where the researcher and those being studied participate equally and the research participants become co-researchers in a reflexive process (Lichtman, 2006). The researcher in turn is not a detached observer in feminist research, but rather an active participant in the group being studied (Finn, 1992). This equal relationship between researcher and those studied overlaps with the qualitative researcher’s awareness of his/her connection with those researched (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).
Another focus of feminist methodology is to develop new ways of constructing research, which broaden academic discovery by adopting a research praxis of empowerment that breaks down the boundaries of previous research methods (Lather, 1992). Patty Lather (1995) argues for feminist researchers to create new research designs that challenge the authority of previous scientific inquiry and demonstrate new insights afforded in this post-modern era. Stronach and Maclure (1997) advocate experimenting with creativity and risk taking when developing research methods. These methods that are centered on liberating the researcher in order to create new methods go beyond discovery. These methods should lead the researchers/participants to greater awareness of important issues of power and domination and develop ways to eradicate these inequalities. Lather (1995) also advocates for reflexive methods that encourage understanding both of the self and society and encourage researchers to critically examine their own frameworks of understanding. This self-reflexivity keeps the researcher critical and conscious not only of possibly reifying patriarchal tendencies, but also maintains focus that guides the research to social action (Lather, 1995).

These foci of feminist research complement one another, where change and advocacy is upheld not only in the theoretical assumptions, but also embodied in the specific practices of research. Change and advocacy are understood here as the most important purposes and desired results of this research. The current research project adopts a feminist critical qualitative approach to best implement the change feminist scholars advocate in re-defining our understanding of argumentation theory and curriculum. These methodological assumptions inform the method embodied in this thesis project, where a feminist critical pedagogy is utilized to answer the call of feminist
researchers to create new and revolutionary methods into our investigation of liberation and emancipation (Stronach & Maclure, 1997).

Method

Qualitative research is inherently a multi-method research practice (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). My thesis project adopts a multi-method mixture of ethnography and feminist critical pedagogy as an emancipatory praxis that embodies change and new approaches to knowledge construction, both discovered and investigated. Feminist critical pedagogy significantly influenced the creation and presentation of the classroom curriculum and environment for this project. Ethnographic notes were also taken during my time in the classroom and immediately following each class period.

Ethnography. Education research from a qualitative approach is carried out through many methods, of which ethnography is frequently used (Lichtman, 2006). Though mostly adopted from a critical perspective (Alexander, 2003; 2005), many non-critical qualitative research endeavors advocate for the use of ethnography when conducting research in education curriculum and classroom phenomena (Freebody, 2003; Rajan, 2011). Denzin (1997) defines ethnography as a form of inquiry that produces descriptive accounts through observations and field research of the ways of life of a community or group. The groups or communities being researched are observed in their natural settings, these settings being the location or site of the research. Ethnographies make the writer a part of the research process, acknowledging the researcher’s inclusion and participation in the culture, group, or community of the research (Denzin, 1997). The researcher takes extensive written field notes of observations of the community or group at the research site and discovers themes and trends that emerge from the written and
recorded data (Warren & Karner, 2010). Since the researcher is recognized as a participant in the researched group and culture, the writing process becomes a self-reflexive experience for the researcher, where her/his physical participation both informs the research itself and makes the researcher always aware of the purpose and impact the research has (Davies, 1999; Denzin, 1997).

Most ethnographic educational research justifies this method by recognizing the classroom and the class curriculum as sites of culture and ethnographic investigation. Bryant Alexander (2003) holds that “education and the classroom become a practical space where culture is created and revisited—established and perpetuated” (p. 419). Alexander’s (2003) utilization of the classroom as an ethnographic site supports the appropriateness of the classroom as a space to conduct research on the practice of educational communities and curricula. Freebody (2003) sees education as a social and cultural practice; as such, a qualitative ethnographic analysis of this cultural space is a very effective method for educational research.

Rajan (2011) argues that pedagogy and the many elements of the classroom curriculum and environment provide a multi-sited ethnography. Here, the pedagogical practices of the instructor, the syllabus and the phenomena of the classroom are all sites and therefore all generate data through this new awareness and practice of ethnographic modes. This research emphasizes the ability and importance of pedagogy as a method and how a combination of pedagogy and ethnography develops an effective tool to investigate education (Rajan, 2011).

**Feminist/critical pedagogy as method.** Feminist researchers ask practitioners to recognize and build relationships with those that are being researched, challenge previous
assumptions of scientific research, and develop methods that emphasize equality and fairness and lead to social change (Finn, 1992; Lather, 1995; Lichtman, 2006). Feminist critical pedagogy emphasizes the same relationship between teacher and student along with creating new pedagogical approaches that challenge previous ideas of educational practices, as well as emphasize the need to create social change and end oppression and social injustice (hooks, 1989; Lather, 1984; Maher, 1994; Weiler, 1991). My thesis’s research method designed after a feminist critical pedagogical perspective will ensure a research praxis that is aligned with its proper feminist critical methodological assumptions.

Denzin (2007) sees pedagogy as a moral and political practice. Critical pedagogy scrutinizes power structures of society and demands their evaluation (Giroux & Giroux, 2005). Feminist research echoes similar political and social concerns. The overlap of pedagogy and research advances and supports the appropriateness of developing a feminist critical pedagogical method of research. Alexander (2003; 2005) combines critical/ feminist pedagogy with his ethnographic analysis of the classroom to not only shed light on new ways of research, but also to reinforce the political and social focus on empowerment and giving voice to underrepresented and marginalized groups. Researching the classroom based on these critical assumptions challenges current approaches to research that represent the classroom through scientific, neutral and solely rational discourses, while at the same time analyzes and challenges the regime of truth that dominates the classroom curriculum (Alexander, 2005, p. xvii).
Feminist critical pedagogy is a praxis that embodies the concerns of feminist critical qualitative research, and is the model that informs the design of the classroom and curriculum of my thesis project on a feminist perspective on the argumentation course.

**Argumentation Course Design**

The data for this project was collected during the Fall semester of my second year as a graduate student and Teaching Associate at a four year university located in the greater metropolitan area of Los Angeles, California. The classes that were designed and taught by me for this project were two sections of Argumentation, a lower division General Education course. One section met twice a week for one hour and fifteen minutes each class meeting. The other section met once a week for two hours and forty-five minutes each class meeting. The classroom environment was organized around the assumption that the teacher and students were both instructors and learners. The desks for each of the class section meetings were arranged in a large circle where all members of the class could make eye contact with most of the others sitting at their desks in the circle. Class agendas were organized around minimal lecture and mostly group discussion. A democratic and open discussion policy shaped the classroom rules and dynamic.

The textbook that was used in both Argumentation sections was *Cooperative Argumentation: A Model for Deliberative Community* by Josina M. Makau and Debian L. Marty (2001). The theoretical assumptions of this text succinctly articulate the feminist contributions to argumentation theory including a removal of the war like metaphor of argument, an emphasis on a cooperative paradigm that encourages respect and consideration of others’ perspectives, a celebration of diversity of people and opinions, and the development of argumentation skills as a decision making process for a just and
deliberative community. The syllabi for the sections (Appendix A and B) and the various assignments of the class were informed by recommendations of the instructor’s resources provided by the authors of the argumentation textbook. The main speech assignment, the roundtable forum, was designed and informed by the ideals of deliberative democracy (Cohen, 1997; Elster, 1998), including community participation, fair dialogue and exchange of community members’ ideas and concerns, and creating environments that encourage open and fair communication.

The main assignments that were required for the class were weekly quizzes, the perspective paper, the roundtable forum, and the deliberation log. The weekly quizzes were short “pop” quizzes that were based on material that was covered in the assigned readings from the class textbook.

The perspective paper (Appendix C) was a 5-page assignment where each student was instructed to discuss the values and beliefs that influence their perspective on a controversial issue. They were also instructed to discuss the values and beliefs that inform an alternative perspective that is in disagreement with their own. This assignment focused on understanding one’s own as well as another’s perspective in order to emphasize a cooperative application of ideas and deemphasize the competitive nature of positing a position on an issue.

The roundtable forum (Appendix D) is a cooperative alternative to a competitive debate speech assignment. The forum consists of six speakers that are each given the task to articulate a unique and different perspective on one broad issue. Each class had four groups that each presented a different topic for their roundtable. The roundtable forums were evaluated not as a competition based on which group presented better arguments,
but rather the groups were evaluated on how much information they presented and how well the different perspectives articulated the complexity of the broader issue being discussed.

The Deliberation Log (Appendix E) is the written component of the Roundtable Forum where the groups were instructed to compile and discuss the various claims and evidence discussed, and summarize the broader context of the issue the group presented.

Ethnographic observations and field notes were compiled during class section meetings and the time immediately following class meetings. The notes were compiled during the entire Fall semester and were evaluated and analyzed after the conclusion of the classes and the end of the fall semester.

In this chapter, I discussed the methodological assumptions that inform my research project. This critical qualitative methodology influence pedagogy along with ethnography as the research method I use here. In the next chapter, I discuss the analysis of data gathered from the multi-method thesis project, where feminist critical pedagogy is combined with ethnographic observations of the classroom environment. The analysis section also addresses how the students responded to this new approach to argumentation specifically and how they responded to a feminist critical classroom philosophy and praxis.
Chapter Four

Analysis

The critical feminist pedagogical strategies practiced in my thesis project generated a classroom environment that complemented this thesis’s feminist perspective on argumentation. As the course progressed, I noticed critical feminist pedagogy was having just as much influence and impact on the students’ experience as the feminist argumentation curriculum. Salient themes of the pedagogy praxis emerged and integrated with specific concepts of the feminist argumentation curriculum, which created a classroom experience of transformation. One of my main goals of this thesis was to transform the argumentation course through the use of feminist perspectives. The transformation went beyond the course material itself and extended to the students, transforming their understanding of how argument is practiced.

Salient aspects of critical feminist pedagogical praxis emerged as central themes and contributors to the students’ dynamic and transformative classroom experience. Important concepts of the argumentation course greatly impacted the students’ understanding of the new cooperative paradigm of the class. The students deemed these concepts the most important to the re-envisioned argumentation course. Lastly, the feminist and critical pedagogy perspective of the course made the class a transformative experience where ideas and assumptions about argument and classroom dynamics were changed. This transformation emerged as an important and central theme of our feminist course.
Critical and Feminist Pedagogies Embodied

Feminist and critical pedagogies directly informed the environment of the classroom as well as specific pedagogical techniques and strategies utilized in the course of my thesis project. The primary concepts of democratic education, students having a voice, and student-generated themes established a classroom environment and community that empowered students and prepared them for the feminist and cooperative argumentation curriculum. More specifically, the use of the feminist pedagogical concept of difference enabled the students to express and integrate their multiple and unique standpoints, perspectives, and experiences into the classroom discussions and activities.

Transformed student/teacher relationship. On the very first day of class, we, students and myself, immediately began to create the space we needed in order to discuss cooperative themes of argumentation as well as to embody cooperation and interdependence in our physical environment. I introduced my teaching philosophy to the class, explicitly telling the students “we are all students and teachers in this classroom space, where we work together in the creation of knowledge.” The standard physical arrangement of a typical classroom contradicts this idea of equal and democratic roles of students and teachers, where rows and columns of desks orient the primary focus of the class towards the larger “teacher’s” desk and board at the front of the room. Upon asking the students how we can organize the physical space of the class to reflect our democratic and egalitarian approach to learning, the students proposed placing the desks in a circle, where the focus of each class member is on the group. This first classroom activity was extremely important because the students’ first experience in the class was defined by their inclusion in the creation of the space and an introduction to their role as a
student/teacher in a critical pedagogy classroom. For every class meeting for the rest of the semester, we arranged the desks in a circle.

The circular organization of the classroom was beneficial in encouraging the students to participate in classroom discussion. To better practice critical and feminist pedagogy, the classes focused more on group discussion that lecture. Sitting in a circle made the students feel more accountable to each other and created a space where they felt safe to contribute to classroom discussions. One student commented, “My favorite aspect of this class was sitting in a circle which allowed me to be open with everyone and having so much communication every class period. It really created a good, comfortable atmosphere” (Student written communication in class, December 5, 2011).

Along with the circular organization of the classroom, most every class meeting incorporated small group discussions and exercises where the students broke off into groups of three or four and worked together on various activities. The groups would then share their ideas and findings with the rest of the class. This group work allowed students an alternative way to contribute to class discussion and interact with other classmates. It also gave them the opportunity to discover and create knowledge along with their classmates, embodying the collaborative and democratic learning of the class.

The student participation encouraged by critical and feminist pedagogies empowered the students in the classes to actively take part in the creation of knowledge. Everyone in the class learned from each other, where specific insights or concerns of one student helped broaden the understanding of the topics being discussed. Another student remarked, “It was really great to learn from everyone in the class. The students were always involved in the lectures. It wasn’t always the teacher talking” (Student written
communication in class, December 5, 2011). Students responded positively to the many opportunities they had in letting their voices be heard in this critical pedagogy classroom. The student/teacher relationship was transformed in these classes. Here, we all looked to each other as sources of information and expertise we could all learn from.

The student participation encouraged by the physical change of the educational space and considerable small group work not only allowed the students greater opportunity to empower their voices, but also allowed generative themes to emerge and further integrate the students into the learning process.

**Generative themes.** Allowing students their voice goes beyond merely creating a space that encourages participation and expression. It is essential to allow students participation and input in the course content in order to further transform the teacher/student relationship and integrate students into the learning process (Freire, 1995; Palmer, 1993). Generative themes were encouraged and utilized in these classes to both encourage student participation and develop curriculum and lessons that were relevant and important to the students. Students’ experience and prior knowledge of topics and events helped shape classroom discussion and activities.

One case specifically that reflected the impact and importance of generative themes occurred the day of the library gunman incident on the university campus during the Fall semester 2011. A young man was seen acting suspiciously outside the school library and rumors were spread that he had a gun. The school was in a panic; classes were cancelled and university officials launched a major campaign to keep the entire student body, faculty and staff well informed with hourly communication through automated phone calls, texts, and e-mails. The students really wanted to discuss this incident during
class time. I had already planned and organized specific lesson plans for our class periods, but the students concern and interest in this incident demanded attention.

That day in class we were slated to discuss the use of different claims (factual, value, policy) in arguments and how different perspectives can shape one’s acceptance or understanding of those claims. We developed our new lesson plan according to the different information and opinions everyone in the class had about the gunman incident. The class conversation was lively and it seemed almost everyone had something to contribute. As a group we discussed the various claims we heard from fellow students on campus, communication from school officials, and news broadcasts. The material we used to help us understand the topic at hand was “generated” from the group. Students were encouraged to discuss what they already knew about the incident and after we generated enough examples from the group, we began connecting this information to the course content. Students remarked on how much they learned by making the examples personal and relevant to them as students. The gunman incident is only one example of many where themes generated from the class informed and shaped course discussion and activities. One student expressed the benefit of incorporating student experiences in the classroom:

I like how we were able to take our daily issues and relate them to the text. It was very helpful how class wasn’t purely lecture and we were able to group discuss important issues in our life or in society while relating it to the text so it was more memorable and relatable (Student written communication in class, December 7, 2011).
As a critical pedagogue, it was very important for me to allow the students to generate themes and be actively involved in the learning process. It is as important to facilitate the space effectively, so course curriculum is addressed while at the same time ensure the students are given ample opportunity to participate and shape the curriculum and learning. This was challenging at times. It was very difficult to not have complete control of the conversation and curriculum, especially when these student themes emerged. There was always some uncertainty as to where the classroom conversation would go and whether I would have enough knowledge and information to address what the students wanted to discuss. This is where I became transformed in terms of the concepts related to student/teacher relationship. As a critical pedagogue, I facilitated the space to ensure students were empowered and collaborated in the creation of knowledge. The loss of control was important for me to experience because if I wanted to embody critical pedagogy praxis, which entails becoming a student in the classroom just as much as the students become teachers. I, as the teacher, do not have complete control; rather, we shared a democratic and egalitarian relationship by acknowledging we learn from each other (Holland & Blair, 1995; hooks, 1994).

**Pedagogy of difference.** We developed a specific focus on difference within our classes informed by one of the main tenets of feminist pedagogy (bell hooks, 2009; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 1994). We made efforts to acknowledge those aspects of ourselves that make us different from each other. Race, class, gender, sexuality, and other identity markers of those in class were considered and the ways in which they intersect with our values, opinions and perspectives were addressed (Maralee Mayberry, 1997). This gave us the opportunity to see and understand how our personal identities and
experiences shape our perspectives. This attention to difference also gave us a deeper understanding of the possible different perspectives on issues and concerns that we generally only see through our own eyes and experience. On the last day of class, when asked what was the most important thing you have learned this semester, one student wrote, “I have learned that understanding and recognizing different perspectives are just as important as knowing the ‘facts,’ whether you agree with those perspectives or not” (Student written communication in class, December 7, 2011). The emphasis on difference encouraged in feminist pedagogy directly connected to the collaboration and cooperation of different opinions and ideas desired in feminist argumentation.

This attention to difference was both empowering for the students in the class, as well as challenging (Holland & Blair, 1995). The students felt empowered through their ability to talk about their experiences and who they are as individuals. They also recognized how much one can learn from considering the different standpoints and perspectives of those we communicate with. Many students commented on how they had a better understanding of issues and ideas when multiple and various perspectives were discussed. According to many students, discussions on difference lead to “understanding different perspectives” and encouraged “open mindedness” when it was people and their experiences that were being discussed and not mere abstract ideas. While the open mindedness and sharing of different perspectives empowered the students, aspects of difference challenged them at the same time. Many students were uncomfortable when ideas and perspectives were discussed that were different from what they experienced or believed.
One class period, a discussion on gay marriage arose and most students expressed opinions that they believed gay individuals should have the right to marry. One student, however, disagreed because gay marriage goes against her beliefs and values as a Christian. The class discussion that ensued was tense because many students took this issue personally and were offended. It challenged the class to discuss this issue that was close and personal to them, but through that challenge, a learning opportunity arose (MacDonald & Sanchez-Casal, 2002) where the different perspectives and personal experiences of those in the class helped shape everyone’s broad understanding of this controversial topic. This class conversation was brought up throughout the rest of the semester to demonstrate the power and challenge that our differences can have in communication contexts and how our differences can arise and affect our interactions and decision making processes (Mouffe, 2000).

The physical classroom environment contributed to student participation and collaboration, which in turn created a communication space, demonstrating the student/teacher relationship of equality that our classroom embodied. The encouragement of generative themes also transformed the student/teacher relationship where everyone in the class participated in the role of educator and teacher in the development of class content. Lastly, the importance of addressing issues of difference in the classroom context and interactions brought out learning opportunities where our ability to grow in understanding happened through the sharing of our unique and different perspectives. The environment and community that critical and feminist pedagogy created prepared the class for the collaboration and cooperation needed for feminist argumentation. These highlighted critical and feminist pedagogical strategies that guided the classroom space
and community were important components of the feminist argumentation course. These strategies ensured the feminist ideals of relationships and collaboration would not only be taught and discussed in the curriculum, but just as importantly, reflected in the classroom environment and interactions.

**Important Concepts of the Feminist Argumentation Course**

Many ideas and concepts defined and shaped the feminist argumentation course of my thesis project. Of those concepts, three emerged as being central to the students’ experience in the class. These concepts were the most salient in as much as they intersected with the other concepts while articulating the specific feminist concerns of argument. Relationships of arguers, empathy towards others, and the importance of different perspectives were the concepts the students found the most challenging but at the same time, the most rewarding and interesting. These concepts were revisited throughout the semester and emerged as the ideas that guided the trajectory of the course.

**Relationships.** Feminist argumentation focuses attention on building relationships between arguers/communicators. To effectively and ethically communicate about difficult and important topics, safe communication environments must always be created and fostered (Makau & Marty, 2001). The most important aspect of a safe communication environment is the commitment arguers have to maintaining that safe space. The first few weeks of the course, the class discussions and course readings focused on how safe communication environments are created. The students responded positively to this. They expressed their desire to feel safe in expressing their opinions, especially if others in the class would disagree with them. We discussed that if everyone in the class were committed to keeping the space safe and open for students to express
their opinions and perspectives, we as a classroom community would keep ourselves accountable for the maintenance of that safe space. This accountability ensured fair and balanced discussions and a good sense of community began to define the classroom environment. One student commented, “The class really works together as a team. We learn things from each other” (Student communication in class, October 17, 2011). The students would build on this sense of community as we moved further into the course material.

The interdependence of different ideas and people was an important concept that informed much of what we discussed in class. Our class defined interdependence as the relationship among people with different perspectives. People we disagree with are seen as resources of information that give us a more complete awareness and understanding of issues (Makau & Marty, 2001). This attention and respect to perspectives we disagree with challenged students in the beginning. They could recognize the benefit of another’s perspective, but receiving that perspective fairly and without bias was the challenge.

Thinking of those we disagree with as allies built on the commitment to safe communication spaces. When these different perspectives challenge us, the most important thing is to treat those who disagree with us with civility and as much fairness as possible. When the students were asked how we can do this, many students said we need to be as fair and open with different perspectives as we want others to be fair and open with us. Students found it beneficial to see this interaction and need of another’s input as a relationship.

The focus on relationships was important for the students. As the class progressed, the class discussions became more challenging. We discussed topics that were more
personal and important to the students. This was expected, since the sense of community grew stronger as we got further into the semester. The focus on relationships became more important as they understood more about the importance of opposing perspectives. As understanding and awareness grew, so did the challenges associated with interacting with different perspectives. Many students commented on the tension between the desire to avoid those who challenge our ideas and the need to be open minded to the benefit of these different perspectives. The fact that some students recognized this tension and difficulty showed they were really trying to put these concepts into practice. The emphasis on relationships made these difficult interactions more fair and open for the students. The relational emphasis allowed students to consider the human element of the ideas and topics discussed in class. It was important for the students to consider the people being impacted by the issues they themselves had opinions on. The students were also encouraged to share personal experiences in class discussions. Building relationships involved understanding a human and personal aspect, understanding how the issues and topics we discuss and have opinions about actually affect people. In a reflection exercise on the last day of class, one student wrote:

In this class we have learned to listen and depend on one another’s perspectives. In the topics we have discussed, the drinking age, death penalty, legalization of drugs, etc., we were able to hear other students’ points of view. We learned the importance of using personal experience to explain the issues we are passionate about. We’ve learned what it meant to be open-minded which helped us be more informed (Student written communication in class, December 14, 2011).


Empathy. Empathy was another concept that allowed the students to discuss and conceptualize the collaboration and cooperation of different and even opposing opinions and perspectives. The discussion of empathy allowed us to consider the powerful and important role our emotions play in our critical thinking and decision making processes. The consideration of emotions in the course content was in direct response to society’s devaluing of emotions when it comes to logic and thinking. Devaluing emotion results from society’s tendency to feminize emotions and to separate emotions from the more respected (masculine) reasoning and thinking (Nye, 1990; Lloyd, 1993a; 1993b). This societal stigma around emotions was reflected in the class. At first, there was some confusion and tension in these discussions about the importance of a balanced connection between emotions and reasoning. As the course progressed, however, the use of empathy was a very important tool for students to understand the value of another’s perspective.

Empathy was defined in the class as the ability to see the world from another person’s perspective. The textbook explanation and class discussions on empathy and how it works were very straight forward. The students became frustrated because they felt the time spent on discussing empathy was “repetitive, obvious and unnecessary.” When class activities began integrating empathy exercises, the frustration remained; however, at that point, it was because being empathic towards those we disagree with can be very difficult. Students felt it was validating those we do not agree with. I informed the class that in a cooperative paradigm, we do not challenge those we disagree with, we try to understand the how and why of what they believe. The students were able to see the value in this cooperation, but found practicing empathy “a tough hurdle to clear.”
Empathy was continuously revisited and discussed throughout the course of the semester. This emphasis on empathy was important, because it helped demonstrate to the class how we were changing the meaning and purpose of argument. We were learning argumentation as a skill set that helps us better understand the different perspectives of issues (Lamb, 1991a). Since empathy is not about challenging different ideas but rather understanding them, frequently inserting a focus on empathy into the different concepts and activities of the class kept the focus on understanding and deemphasized the adversarial tendency to challenge another’s ideas. The students picked up on this important use of empathy, and seemed to adopt it as the guide to maintain their cooperative understanding towards argument. The value and importance empathy had in our class gave the students the opportunity to develop and practice new ways of thinking and reasoning. These new ways acknowledged a connection between emotions and reasoning advocated by feminist scholars (Lloyd, 1993a; 1993b; Nye, 1990).

During one of our public forum (roundtable) presentations, a student made a comment that seemed to challenge and criticize an opinion that another speaker on the panel expressed. A third speaker on the panel brought attention to this and asked the first speaker if that comment was a fair evaluation. She told the speaker before passing judgment on an idea, one should take the time to understand how the other might see the situation, or why they might believe that idea. When these public forums were presented, the students were the ones in charge of facilitating the space. It was interesting to see them keep the communication context of these roundtables safe and open. The students made a real commitment to be accountable for the safe communication.
During another roundtable forum, a different panel was presenting and, again, a negative comment was made about another’s perspective on the issue being presented. Another presenter on the panel warned this speaker that his comment was out of line. This speaker said in a low voice under his breath, “be aware of cynicism.” The students in class laughed because the phrase was familiar to them all. Cynicism was defined in our textbook as the tendency to focus on the negative aspects of opinions and ideas that are opposed to our own (Makau & Marty, 2001). Empathy was one of the strategies we used in the class to avoid cynicism and stay open minded. When the “cynical” speaker was made aware of his negative remark, he apologized and reframed his concerns as a question. After the roundtable, the “cynical” student commented on how easy it was to be negative, but how challenging it was to be empathic. In the debriefing of this specific roundtable, we discussed how being open-minded and empathic towards others might be difficult to practice. We concluded that what was really important was that we were becoming more aware of empathy and how we can practice it.

The students’ focus on and struggle with empathy demonstrated their willingness to embody cooperative argumentation strategies. Strategies like empathy not only encouraged open mindedness and maintained safe communication environments, but more importantly encouraged the students to more ethically and effectively interact with people who have different perspectives than their own.

The importance of different perspectives. The importance of different perspectives was another reoccurring theme throughout the course semester. One of the characteristics of adversarial and competitive argumentation is the tendency to focus on binaries as the only available perspectives to an issue, i.e., affirmative/negative; win/lose.
Feminists disrupt the notion of the binary with attention to multiple perspectives that can be had on an issue (Moulton, 1984). Issues and ideas do not necessarily have clear cut distinctions between agreement or disagreement. They are usually much more nuanced and complex. Difference is an important concept of feminism that acknowledges the uniqueness of people’s standpoints, experiences and perspectives (hooks, 1989; Lamb, 1994; Mayberry, 1997). Our feminist argumentation course encouraged students to be aware of and discover the multiple and diverse perspectives of our issues and ideas. The attention to different perspectives not only created a deeper understanding of the issues and topics we discussed, but also was a great strategy to avoid competitive and adversarial tendencies. The students responded positively to this concept and found the emphasis on multiple perspectives fascinating, since it brought out the complexities of issues and made for enlightening class discussions.

An early classroom activity was a perspective taking exercise where the students were asked to look at a situation they experienced from four different perspectives. Students were challenged by this exercise. Most responses reflected a binary or two-sided situation, where two people agreed and two people disagreed. The students’ confusion with multiple and different perspectives reflected feminists’ concern with how mainstream masculine and competitive reasoning neglects consideration of multiple perspectives. This neglect of multiple perspectives promotes pro/con or binary thinking (Moulton, 1984). The results of this activity were revisited throughout the rest of the semester as we progressed towards more discussion and understanding of the possibility of multiple and diverse perspectives.
Another activity we did in class involved identifying our standpoints and how they impact our perspectives. The students reflected on their individual standpoints alone and then gathered in groups of three or four to discuss their different standpoints. The students were prompted to consider and share with each other the influence their standpoints have on their perspectives. This activity allowed students to recognize those things that contribute to those different opinions and perspectives we have on various issues. This exercise gave students the opportunity to consider how our social positions and experiences shape how we see the world and understand how it is someone sees that same world differently.

The last spoken assignment of the course was the roundtable forum. This assignment required the students to research and present multiple perspectives to controversial issues. We had practice rounds, which gave the students an opportunity to present diverse perspectives of an issue and get feedback from their classmates. The feedback was to see how they could have either developed the ideas further or avoid cynical attitudes. The final roundtables proved to be very insightful and generated considerable participation and in depth class discussion. The feedback students gave about these roundtables was positive and most of the comments were specific to the advantage of listening to different perspectives:

The roundtables opened my eyes. I have a lot of respect for everyone who took part in the conversations. I feel like a lot of people will take a different approach to argument. Overall, I feel the different perspectives shared in the roundtables made me a better, more open-minded person (Student written communication in class, November 30, 2011).
Though the sharing of differences could be challenging, the students’ commitment to community building allowed the different perspectives to be received in a safe and ethical manner. The purpose of sharing multiple ideas highlighted for the students the complexity of situations and issues rather than being concerned with what ideas were better or who “won.” Another student wrote:

The most interesting part of the roundtable for me was when members of my group gave examples of their life experiences. This allowed me to learn and realize that each person is brought up differently, acts differently and sees the world differently. These differences make people act differently towards experiences in his or her life (Student communication in class, November 30, 2011).

The students came to require of each other respect and consideration of the different opinions and ideas that were shared during these roundtables.

The exchange of these different perspectives also allowed the students to understand and consider the various diverse perspectives that exist in society. The focus on difference made the students consider fairness and understanding more than resolution or consensus. This fair exchange of diverse and challenging ideas reflects the ideas of Chantal Mouffe and her agonistic approach to deliberative democracy (1996; 2000). The sharing of different perspectives and consideration of ideas that challenge our own mirrors the plurality of values and perspectives that actually exist in society (Mouffe, 2000). Though consensus in public decision making could be achieved through the practice of activities like these roundtables (Cohen & Sabel, 1997; Elster, 1998), having
to contemplate the diverse values that exist in the world is more practical and better prepares students for fair interactions in society (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985).

The students demonstrated the ability to articulate diverse and multiple perspectives of issues and recognize the importance these differences have. The power these differences had in enlightening the students and broadening their understanding directly relates to the other themes of relationships and empathy. All three worked together to extend our understanding and use of argument beyond competitive and adversarial ideals. The themes of relationships, empathy, and different perspectives guided the students through the cooperative argumentation course. The learning and growth the students experienced throughout this course marked a distinct transformation, where the students’ progress towards a better grasp of feminist argumentation reflected the feminist transformation of argumentation overall.

**Argumentation: A Feminist Transformation**

The feminist perspective on argumentation transformed not only the argumentation course, but also those who participated in the course. Students came into the class expecting a specific kind of curriculum, and found something completely different. Teaching an alternative style of argument entailed changing the students’ perceptions of what argument is. The concepts of cooperation, compassion and appreciation of others’ views and perspectives did not correspond with the assumptions many of the students brought to the first day of class. The apparent lack of intellectual rigor of these concepts along with the “weak” connotations of collaboration and compassion created resistance from some students expecting a more competition oriented class. The course’s emphasis on emotions and collaboration “lacked rigor” because
emotions and collaboration are socially and culturally understood as “feminine” and not attributed to the “masculine” processes of proper or erudite thinking and reasoning (Belenky et al., 1986; Nye, 1990; 1995). This resistance marked an important theme that emerged throughout the semester. The semester of teaching this argumentation course became a micro transformation of the students’ understanding of argument along with a macro feminist transformation of the argument discipline itself. Over the course of the semester the students discussed and considered argumentation from a cooperative perspective. After this class, cooperation became part of the students’ ideas about argument which was a change from their initial assumptions about argumentation. These specific classes not only changed the students’ vocabulary about argument, but also changed the argumentation discipline in as much as an argument course was presented from an alternative cooperative (feminist) perspective (Makau, 1992).

**Assumptions.** On the first day, students were asked to share what they thought they would learn in the class. What ideas did they already have about argumentation? When asked what is argument or why do we argue, some of the ideas students suggested are as follows: to debate, to win, prove a point, persuade another, challenge other’s ideas, win/lose, and explain our own viewpoint. Most of the students’ examples of argument reflected a competitive and adversarial understanding of what argument is. Most of the students said their understanding of argument came from politics, business and family conversations. The students’ preconceived ideas about argument demonstrates how the adversarial model permeates most of society’s understanding of argument (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).
For some time, the ideas of competition, winning, and arguing to prove a point came up frequently throughout the semester. Even after the cooperative paradigm had been introduced in the class discussions and textbook readings, some students continued to discuss the course ideas and concepts from a competitive and adversarial perspective. Two specific examples where adversarial and competitive notions arose in a cooperative setting were a class activity where students were asked to think of a conflict they had with another, and the perspective paper where students had to articulate a perspective of someone they disagree with.

The first activity asked the students to recall a time when they had a disagreement with someone. They had to write down how they felt at the time and what their perspective was of the incident. The next thing they had to do was look at the disagreement from the other person’s perspective and then share these perspectives with the class. Many students found this activity very challenging. Most of the responses tended to be negative concerning the other person’s perspective. One student’s disagreement was with a new football coach he had his last year in high school. The new coach had a different coaching philosophy than the previous coach. This new style caused conflict between the new coach and the senior players on the team. When asked why the new coach had a different coaching philosophy than one the players were used to, this student’s understanding of the coach’s perspective was negative, “This coach didn’t want us to win. He just wanted to be a tough and strict leader. He just wanted to be right” (Student oral communication in class, September 14, 2011).

When the student shared his responses with the rest of the class, many of the students agreed with the perspective he attributed to the coach. Other students, however,
felt that it was not a good/fair perspective he wrote, considering that most likely the coach did want them to win. Some students suggested that perhaps the coach believes as much in his philosophy as the senior players believed in the philosophy of the previous coach. The class conversation demonstrated that some students understood not only the assignment instructions, but also how to see another’s perspective in a non-adversarial way. The class discussed why this activity was difficult. Many students thought it was because we tend to look at differences of opinion from an adversarial perspective, where we disregard ideas that disagree with and challenge us. The students’ ideas about the influence of the adversarial paradigm echo the concerns of feminist scholars in regards to argument (Moulton, 1984).

Later in the semester, students wrote the perspective paper, where they were instructed to articulate their perspective on an issue as well the perspective of someone that disagrees with them. This assignment came much later than the previously cited activity, but the same adversarial tendencies emerged in some of the student’s papers. One student wrote about her father’s disapproval of her desire to get a tattoo. She gave many good reasons why she could get a tattoo, but did not offer an open-minded perspective for her father. The reasons she ascribed for her father’s disapproval were negative. She argued that her father did not want her to be independent and that he just wanted to keep control over her. This student’s neglect of thoughtful perspective taking demonstrates how an adversarial understanding of argument prevents open-minded discussion when it comes to conflicts and differences of opinion (Gearhart, 1979). This student’s lack of serious perspective taking is rather surprising, considering how the
course material had been so focused on mutual understanding and open communication about difference (Foss & Griffin, 1995).

The students recognized that being open-minded is easier to do when it’s not personal. It is these personal experiences and times however, where cooperative argumentation skills can be most beneficial and lead to better understanding of issues that affect our lives (Makau & Marty, 2001). Students found group discussion around personal perspectives helpful because feedback from others allowed them to hear from another person’s perspective and then more easily practice empathy and articulate perspectives that are different from their own. One student’s comments reflected many students’ opinions about these class interactions, “It was challenging to give time to ideas that don’t agree with your own but ideas from other classmates were helpful to try and understand situations from two or more perspectives” (Student written communication in class, November 28, 2011).

These examples illustrate not only the pervasiveness of adversarial communication, but also the emphasis required in the course to balance out these competitive and adversarial tendencies. It was a semester-long attempt to encourage a cooperative paradigm of mutual understanding and respect for different perspectives. By the end of the semester, the students seem to grasp the fundamentals of cooperative argumentation. The challenges along the way ended up being beneficial for the learning process. The students were able to grasp the concepts of cooperation, open mindedness, and celebration of different perspectives by working through the challenges and difficulties. Not all the challenges in the class however, were due to the new and
revolutionary concepts being discussed. Some challenges arose out of opposition and resistance to this new feminist approach.

**Challenge and resistance.** There were some students who were resistant to the cooperative and compassionate concepts of the class. These students expressed their disappointment with the non-competitive paradigm and the emphasis on understanding perspectives that are different and challenge our own. The first day of class, when the themes of cooperation and understanding were introduced, some students rolled their eyes and became immediately disengaged from the classroom community. This first reaction defined their interaction with a large portion of the class periods throughout the semester. Their resistance to the class concepts occasionally had a negative impact on the classroom environment. These resistant students would occasionally make comments that belittled the class topics and were meant to degrade the cooperative theme: “This class is a bit fluffy; I don’t really care for this hippie, peace and love kind of class; This class is too flowery for me” (Student oral communication in class, September, 2011).

Their comments challenged the rigor and importance of the class concepts, but more importantly, these criticisms of the class reflected the disrespect and disregard of communication styles that are considered feminine (Tannen, 1990; 1999). Much of feminist scholarship on argumentation and communication discuss the adversarial model as the preferred style of argument, not because of effectiveness, but rather because it is masculine communication and therefore more acceptable (Moulton, 1984; Tannen, 1990; 1999). These students’ resistance to the course concepts demonstrated the hierarchy of gendered communication styles. The “fluffy” and “flowery” ideas of collaboration and understanding of the class were seen as unimportant and ineffective ways in which to
communicate. This resistance within the class reveals the broader implications of the resistance to alternative (feminine) communication styles in society.

As early as the second week of the semester, many of these resistant students expressed and displayed their disregard for the cooperative and collaborative ideals of the class. I recalled sensing the resistance from these students:

The resistant students definitely set a negative tone in the class. The students that shared their fluffy and hippie critiques seem to be the students that are more likely to roll their eyes during class discussions when ideas of empathy and emotions are shared… One of the resistant students continuously crosses his arms over his chest keeping his head down. His posture prevents many students from asking him questions or engaging him in class discussions (West, written classroom observation, September 21, 2011).

In response to the resistance to cooperative themes, I specifically did not inform the class of the feminist approach of the course. I felt the resistance to the concepts needed to be addressed before the concept of feminism would be introduced. Interestingly, even without the feminist and feminine label, these students’ resistance to the alternative concepts arose. Some students indirectly recognized and demonstrated society’s coding of “feminine” ways as irrelevant and without significance (Belenky, et al, 1986).

This resistance could be disruptive to the class. But as a critical feminist pedagogue, I could not ignore the concerns of these resistant students. If the time was appropriate, we integrated critiques into class discussion so we could get a better understanding why they were challenging the importance of the class work. After a few
class discussions on this subject, it seemed the resistance stemmed from the lack of rigor of these cooperative ideas. This directly related to the feminist concerns that “feminine” modes of thinking and communicating are often seen as less erudite and weak (Belenky et al., 1986; Lakoff, 1975).

Towards the end of the semester, the students’ participation increased and the resistance decreased. One day in class one of the students who showed resistance came to me and shared a conflict that was happening at his work. Many negative and cynical claims were being expressed concerning the manager of his work:

He shared with me the challenges his fellow employees were having over the issue and how this was related to the theme of the class. It was encouraging to see this student make connections with the class concepts. At the very least he was demonstrating his engagement with the course material. I feel his personal connection with the course ideas made him consider the importance of cooperation. Personal connections and experiences are continuously stressed in class as important tools to help understand and be engaged in discussions about important issues. This interaction demonstrated to me this student’s change towards the class concepts (West, written class observations, October 5, 2011).

Towards the end of the semester the roundtable forums of the class were scheduled. These forums gave students the opportunity to address multiple perspectives on controversial issues. During these roundtable discussions, the students had to deliberate ethically and fairly, where differing perspectives were welcomed and questions were asked in order to gather more information and not to challenge the values and ideas behind the statements of other communicators. The exchange of ideas and opinions could
get tense, especially when there was a disagreement among classmates over the issue discussed. Students commented on the challenge of keeping the communication fair, safe and open during these tense conversations. The challenge of these “fluffy” and “flowery” concepts proved to be quite rigorous for many of the students. The assumptions resistant students had about this “feminine” alternative to competitive communication were transformed over the course of the semester.

Many of the resistant students came to respect the cooperative ways of arguing. These students disregarded these cooperative ideals because ideas about empathy, compassion, and being open-minded seemed simplistic and obvious. It was actually practicing these ideals that was the challenge. The experience of the classroom exercises and especially the roundtable forum gave the students the opportunity to embody these concepts in order to listen, understand and appreciate the various perspectives different members of the group shared and discussed. The students that challenged the themes of the class began to demonstrate more engagement with the class when exercises gave them the space to express their opinions and perspectives and contribute to the exchange of different and diverse opinions. The challenge of staying open-minded and fair in these dialogues stimulated the students and encouraged their participation. The students appreciated the amount of information these discussions generated and found the diverse perspectives to be interesting because they demonstrated the complexity of issues that appear clear cut and simple.

**Argument transformed.** The last week of the semester, the students were asked to recall what we had learned throughout the semester. The majority of the course content was focused on changing argumentation into a skill set that allowed for open and safe
communication about issues and ideas, with respect and value for ideas that disagree and challenge our own. Discussing and applying the cooperative concepts of collaboration and value of different perspectives was challenging for the class. Competitive, win/lose, and aggressive tendencies emerged throughout the course of the class. The difficulties and challenges of avoiding these tendencies, however, allowed the students to grow in understanding and learn the importance and value of cooperative argumentation. The students were very much aware of the uniqueness of the class and how the class curriculum changed their understanding of argument. They recalled the challenges of the class and how they learned from those challenges.

During this last week of class, students were asked to define argument and explain how it works. Compared to how they defined argument at the beginning of the semester, the students came to see argument as the process that encourages the sharing and consideration of multiple and diverse perspectives for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the complexities of important issues. Many student responses reflected these ideas:

Argumentation requires that multiple perspectives come together and share with each other their different perspectives

Argumentation works by both sides depending on each other in order to gather information

Argumentation allows individuals to think critically about a topic and allow their perspectives and those of other perspectives to formulate a better understanding of that topic
Argumentation works by being open minded and understanding to other perspectives on an issue (Student written communication in class, December 7, 2011).

The students’ assumptions of a win/lose concept were also altered to reflect a non-adversarial approach to how we communicate in an argument context. Those we disagree with are not rivals in a cooperative setting; rather those we disagree with are resources, people with information that add to our greater understanding of ideas and issues. One student wrote, “Argumentation works through interdependence, where we see those of different perspectives as resources of important information” (Student written communication in class, December 7, 2011). This transformed concept of those we disagree with as resources demonstrates the invitational perspective of rhetoric and argument. Invitational rhetoric sees argument not as a skill of persuasion, but a skill that invites the collaboration and sharing of different perspectives (Foss, 1979; Foss & Griffin, 1995).

The students were consciously aware of how their assumptions and ideas of argument changed. One of the last activities we did in the classroom was to look at how we defined argument the last week of the semester and compare it to how we defined it the first week of the semester. The class discussed the transformation and why this transformation was important. The students saw a practical use for cooperative argumentation and how it could be used in everyday life. According to the students, the most important reason for adopting cooperative argumentation is that its use would be encouraged and spread to different places and spaces in society. Students recommended
cooperative argument’s use at home, with family and friends, at work, with roommates, in classrooms, etc. One student shared:

Cooperative argumentation can be practiced whether it be for political, religious, or personal agendas. The idea of cooperative argument is to consider multiple views of a subject that rejects closed-minded judgments and creates critical and informative conversation...we need to argue to understand these political, religious and personal issues (Student communication in class, December 14, 2011).

Cooperative argumentation made the class more open-minded, better listeners and better aware and informed of the complexities of different ideas and issues. Students made the following comments: “I have become a lot more open to what other people have to say; It has become easier for me to try to understand why people think and feel differently than me” (Student communication in class, December 14, 2011). The students felt these skills encouraged by cooperative argument would be important and useful throughout society.

Though argument’s everyday use in multiple aspects of society is not exclusive to feminist cooperative argument (Hollihan & Baaske, 2005; Mauk & Metz, 2006), it was the cooperative and collaborative ideals of feminist argument that the students felt needed to be incorporated more in society.

In this chapter, I summarized the important themes that emerged through an analysis of the data gathered throughout the semester in the feminist argumentation course. Aspects of the pedagogical strategies emerged as influential to the students’ learning experience. The transformation of the student/teacher relationship empowered students to recognize their own voice in the learning process and claim those roles as co-
creators of knowledge. The use of generative themes made the course materials relatable to the students and encouraged them to participate more fully in the classroom environment. The difference pedagogy of feminists allowed the class to recognize the different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives of those in class and how the sharing of differences contributed to our greater understanding of the world.

Select themes of the feminist argumentation curriculum became very important to the students as they approached argument from a new collaborative perspective. Relationships allowed the students to recognize their role in the argumentation process and understand how we need to consider those people we argue and communicate with. Empathy was important to the students because it was a guiding skill that allowed them to maintain an open-minded and understanding environment and process of cooperative argument. The last curricular theme was the importance of different perspectives and how these perspectives contributed to our broad understanding of important and complex issues.

The transformative nature of the course emerged as an important contributor to the students’ experience in the feminist argumentation classroom. The initial assumptions students had about the class being about winning arguments and proving points were changed to definitions of argument as a process to understand multiple and diverse perspectives. Some students were resistant to the “feminine” ways of empathy, cooperation, and emotions. This resistance transformed into appreciation when these alternative ways of thinking and communicating proved quite rigorous and challenging. Lastly, argument as a concept and practice was transformed where cooperation and empathy became part of the argumentation vocabulary.
The next chapter will summarize the previous sections of this thesis project as well as answer the research questions posed in the introduction. The implications will also be discussed as well as considerations for future conversations and research.
Chapter Five

Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of my thesis project was to develop and teach an argumentation course from a feminist perspective. The feminist perspective on argumentation I used integrated the concepts of cooperation, collaboration, and the importance of understanding different perspectives as central themes to “re-envision” the course. These themes introduced a new alternative to the adversarial and competitive model that has informed argumentation for centuries. Feminist scholars have critiqued the competitive nature of argumentation as patriarchal and oppressive as it tends to establish hierarchies among ideas through the use of aggressive and assertive tactics and communication styles. The reliance on aggressive and assertive tactics reflects and illustrates the dominant role masculine modes of thinking and communicating have had in society. By integrating the concepts of cooperation, understanding and building relationships with others, more “feminine” ways that have traditionally been devalued as weak and nonproductive within argumentation contexts are empowered and celebrated as essential elements in the argument process. Implementing a feminist perspective into an undergraduate classroom legitimizes feminist approaches and ideals. My thesis project took feminist ideas beyond the realm of critique and speculation by embodying and practicing them with students in a classroom environment.

Critical and feminist pedagogy were central to the design and implementation of the feminist curriculum I developed. The tenets of these revolutionary teaching philosophies focus on empowering students through democratic practices in the classroom. These democratic ideals create new student/teacher relationships where
everyone in the classroom is both student and teacher. Student voices and input are encouraged and used to guide the direction of the class material and lessons.

Concepts and practices from deliberative democracy also contributed to the argumentation course developed and facilitated in my thesis project. The textbook used in our classes was grounded in many of the principles of deliberative democracy and its main themes shaped many of the classroom activities. Deliberative democracy is founded on collaborative decision making processes, which had a direct influence on the culminating speech experience of the feminist argumentation course, the roundtable forum.

Summary

In chapter one, the theoretical assumptions of argumentation, feminist argumentation, and critical and feminist pedagogies were introduced and discussed in the context of creating an argumentation course from a feminist perspective. The specific purpose of this study was also presented, along with questions I, as the researcher, posed to help direct and guide the process of my research project. In chapter two, literature of pertinent theories and perspectives specific to this thesis project was reviewed. Feminist contributions to argument were positioned within a broad historic overview of argumentation theory with consideration of contemporary developments that position feminist perspectives within changes and new perspectives that began in the twentieth century. Feminist contributions came next, with an emphasis on the exposure of patriarchal control on the development of argumentation and the specific focus and reforms advocated by feminist scholars in order eradicate patriarchy. Deliberative democracy was addressed and how this new form of democracy embodies many aspects
advocated by feminists for the practice and development of argument. Deliberative democracy informed some of the creation of my feminist argumentation curriculum. Lastly, critical and feminist pedagogies were presented and their main tenets of classroom democracy, the roles of student and teacher as co-creators of knowledge, and giving voice to the oppressed and under-represented individuals and groups, were discussed to provide a foundation for the teaching philosophies that informed the methodological praxis of this thesis project.

Chapter Three discussed the methodological approaches I used in this study of the practice of feminist argumentation. I took a qualitative approach to the research where I observed two sections of the argumentation course I taught in the Fall of 2011. Ethnography, classroom observations, pedagogy praxis, as well as student feedback from the various classroom exercises and assignments were used to generate the research data. Feminist and critical pedagogies directly informed my methodological approach where the praxis of these pedagogies guided not only my teaching style, but also how I analyzed the course.

The analysis of chapter four presented the important themes that emerged from the research. The pedagogical practices within the classroom, main concepts of feminist curriculum, and the transformative nature of the class emerged as the predominant elements of this feminist argumentation course.

**Analysis.** The newly defined student/teacher relationship embodied in the class empowered students to actively participate in classroom discussion and activities. This heightened participation and awareness of their new role as “student/teachers” in our critical feminist pedagogy classroom allowed the students to learn from each other and
develop a new understanding of how we actually learn in a classroom. The focus on
generative themes had an important and positive impact on the students. The students felt
it made the course material more interesting and easier to learn because they could make
personal and relevant connections with their lives and experiences to the concepts and
class material. Feminist pedagogy’s unique emphasis on difference was also practiced in
the classroom. Those aspects of our identity such as race, class, gender, sexuality,
employment, etc., and how they shape and influence our experiences and perspectives
were highlighted throughout the class. This awareness of difference allowed the class to
comprehend the importance people’s differences have in our broader understanding of
important issues.

Three concepts of the cooperative feminist curriculum emerged from the course
material as the most important for the students. The importance of relationships among
arguers prepared the class to apply the cooperative paradigm to argumentation. The focus
on relationships allowed the human element become central to the purpose and practice
of the argument process. Empathy was one of the emotions we empowered in the class
and integrated into the arguing and reasoning process. The students adopted the power of
empathy as one of their guides to ethical and effective collaboration when working with
different and challenging ideas and perspectives. The last significant idea that emerged
was the power of difference and how the students discovered the importance to recognize
and value those things that make us different and unique rather than ignoring and putting
our differences aside.

The final important theme of the feminist argumentation class was the
transformative nature of the course. This feminist curriculum transformed the students’
assumptions of what argument is and how we use it. Making argument a collaborative effort among people surprised many of the students and made them reevaluate and change their previous assumptions. The resistance of some students to the “feminine” style and approach of the class reflected the social implications of our gendered communication styles. This resistance was transformed to more respect for alternative approaches to communication. This change demonstrated the ability and prospect of “feminine” ways of thinking and communicating to be adopted more throughout mainstream society. As the semester came to a close, many of the students acknowledged the transformative aspect of the class and how they came to understand and define argument differently. Students specifically remarked on the change that had taken place and were more aware of the unique perspective of the course and how it challenged the status quo.

**Guiding Questions**

A few questions were posed in chapter one that guided the focus of my research project. Through my analysis in this thesis project, I answer these questions and discuss the implications of the research.

*What should a feminist curriculum look like?* This feminist course on argumentation was a class that combined the transformation of the physical space as well as the class curriculum to embody the feminist ideals of cooperation, collaboration and the importance of difference. Relationships were formed and encouraged in the classroom discussions and activities that emphasized the human element to our educational pursuits. Personal experience and unique perspectives encouraged and developed in class discussions were powerful in broadening awareness and understanding of the instructed
topics. I believe this thesis project demonstrated that a feminist curriculum can nurture relationships not only among members of the classroom community, but also encourage students to establish relationships with the curriculum, making personal connections with the material and relate it to their lives and experiences.

*How will students respond and react to this reformed curriculum?* The students were aware of how this curriculum challenged the status quo. Most students found it interesting and appreciated the new perspective of the course. Some students, however, were resistant to the cooperative and collaborative paradigm of feminist argumentation. I believe this resistance was grounded in the assumption that alternative or “feminine” ways of thinking and communicating are not seen as intellectual or effective. These feminine modes were challenged because masculine forms of adversarial and competitive communication and argumentation are seen as the standard and normal. The resistance of these students was not ignored and was openly discussed in the classroom. After these concepts of cooperation and understanding were practiced and used in classroom activities, however, they proved to be quite rigorous and challenging. The rigor of putting these “soft” and “fluffy” concepts into practice proved to transform the students’ resistance into understanding.

*How ingrained in our culture’s understanding of argumentation is the argument as war metaphor and competitive paradigm?* Most of the students came to the class thinking of argument as a competitive process. A considerable amount of time was spent in the classroom discussions and activities to get the students to think beyond competitive methods. Many times the students tended to make conversations and exchanges of ideas combative and adversarial. This tendency and the students’ competitive and adversarial
assumptions of argument demonstrated the influence the competitive paradigm had on the students understanding of argument. The students’ difficulty to think beyond competitive ways of evaluating and refuting ideas also shows how competitive and adversarial approaches are normalized in social practices when it comes to many aspects of decision making. This is indicative of the masculine and patriarchal bias of societal standards of communication.

The power and influence of this war metaphor on students entering the argumentation class reflects the effectiveness metaphors have in shaping many of our ideas. My thesis project demonstrated that a new understanding and paradigm of argument is possible. Thus, a new metaphor that illustrates a feminist cooperative paradigm of argument needs to be created to further our understanding of an alternative approach to argumentation.

*What impact will the democratic classroom environment and equitable classroom relationships of critical and feminist pedagogies have on the learning process, specifically towards cooperation advocated in this course?* The democratic classroom environment and other critical feminist pedagogical strategies of my thesis project had a very positive impact on the students’ learning process and understanding of the feminist curriculum. Critical feminist pedagogy created an educational space where the course material was complemented and reaffirmed by the behavior and use of the classroom space. Feminist critical pedagogy embodied feminist cooperative ideals in practice. Students responded positively to the critical facilitation of the educational space. The transformed student/teacher relationship and generative themes of the class empowered
the students to engage more in the learning process and make personal connections with
the material.

Implications

The results of my thesis project demonstrated positive implications for a feminist
transformation of the argumentation course as well as the practice of critical and feminist
pedagogies in undergraduate classrooms. This thesis project addressed the feminist
concerns of cooperation, understanding and difference. The curriculum incorporated the
invitational rhetoric of Foss and Griffin (1995) where the art of persuasion was replaced
with techniques that allowed the students to share perspectives. The argumentation course
was “womanized” and replaced the masculine and competitive paradigm of argument
with a cooperative and relational one (Gearhart, 1979; Lamb 1991a; 1991b). This
removal of the war metaphor broadened our understanding of argument beyond the
traditional confines of the adversarial and competitive and demonstrated the ability to
develop new ways to consider argument (Makau, 1992; 1997; Moulton, 1984).

Though positive results were demonstrated, further research needs to be done to
expound on concepts and issues that my thesis project did not address. Specifically,
future research should consider development of a new cooperative metaphor for
argument, the implementation of feminist curriculum in more advanced argument classes,
and investigate further how feminist ideals for argument and deliberative democracy
could be used to enhance students’ engagement in the political process. Lastly, more
research needs to investigate the implications when a new perspective or presentation of
traditional curriculum is presented and explicitly identified as feminist.
My thesis project removed the war metaphor from the argumentation process. I wanted to not only remove this competitive metaphor, but also develop a new argument metaphor that encompasses the cooperative paradigm and at the same time consider differences as important components that need to be recognized and even celebrated. This metaphor needs to capture the complex and nuanced aspect of how different perspectives contribute to a more complete understanding of the world. Differences should be an integral part of this new metaphor where the differences are actually interdependent to one another and contribute to understanding and enlightenment. Further discussion on the cooperative paradigm for argument should consider developing a complementary metaphor that embodies the important aspects of feminist cooperative argumentation.

The argumentation course that provided the basis for this thesis project was a general and introductory level course in argument. Further research could apply cooperative paradigms to upper level courses on argumentation and courses that investigate argument in specific contexts, i.e., politics, religion, etc.

Deliberative democracy was an important contributor to the class textbook as well as many classroom activities. My thesis project concentrated on making students aware of the importance of considering different perspectives and the specific ways in which this awareness and consideration is possible, i.e., through empathy, emotions, building relationships, etc. Further research on the relationship between feminism and deliberative democracy could be done to examine the impact and effect feminist approaches to cooperation and collaboration have on alternative political processes. Feminist argumentation concepts had a transformative effect on students’ use of argument in their lives. More research could focus on the influence of these feminist ideals and deliberative
forms of policy-making and their ability to transform young people’s engagement in the political process.

Further research could also investigate the impact of explicitly identifying cooperative and collaborative paradigms as specifically feminist. The resistance of some students to the practical use of the themes of this class prevented me from explicitly naming the perspectives of the class as feminist. Explicitly identifying the cooperative course as feminist could have broader implications on the acceptance or resistance to alternative argument curriculum that this research project did not address.

My own positionality should also be addressed as having a unique impact on the classroom experience and the students’ engagement with the cooperative and feminist curriculum. My identity and positionality gave me a specific lens and view of the classroom experience and influenced my experience and analysis of this thesis project. My positionality and significant identity markers of White, male, and homosexual also created a unique classroom environment and community that was specific to the project. The privileges of being White and male gave me certain credibility and authority in the classroom that could have made it easier for the students to listen to and engage with the alternative feminist concepts of the course. Though some students resisted the curriculum, overall, most of the students did not challenge these new concepts. My maleness and whiteness likely influenced the students’ acceptance and prevented them from challenging the new curriculum.

I feel my homosexuality also contributed to the classroom experience and students’ ideas on the cooperative and feminist course concepts. The concepts of difference and emotions might have seemed expected and even appropriate coming from
a gay male who does not manifest a masculine appearance or behaviors. The students’ possible acceptance of the course concepts based on my homosexuality has interesting implications on the gendering of our communication and society’s ideas about what communication and thinking is appropriate for specific genders and sexualities.

My experience as a homosexual person has allowed me to understand what it means to be from a non-dominant group. I know what it means to be judged, silenced and marginalized. These experiences gave me the ability to empathize with others from non-dominant groups or cultures (i.e., racial, ethnic, etc.), who are disenfranchised and silenced. Empathy has been an important focus of mine which guides me to always try to understand others as much as I myself wish to be understood. The importance I personally place on empathy is reflected in my thesis project.

My identity is not solely marginalized and oppressed. My identity frames more nuanced and complex experiences and perspectives. My identity marker of homosexual intersects with my other markers of white and male. This combination within my identity provides me with multiple and diverse experiences and perspectives. I know the challenges of being “othered” (homosexual) as well as the privileges of being “normal” (White, male). My ability to recognize the layers and complexities within my own identity prompts my interest in encouraging others to always consider the nuanced and complex aspects of the world. My emphasis on the nuanced and complex is also shaped by what I believe it means to be homosexual and queer. My queer identity disrupts the notion that requires my maleness to be “masculine.” My queerness challenges the binary of masculine and feminine and embodies and celebrates the possibilities of variances and
difference. These aspects of my identity and experiences influenced my analysis and experience of my thesis project.

Developing a feminist perspective in the argumentation course combined with critical feminist pedagogy praxis enabled a transformative research process. The curriculum, the classroom environment, and the classroom relationships were all transformed into an awareness and embodiment of liberating and alternative ways of knowing and thinking. I was also transformed. My experience in the critical feminist classroom made me just as much a student as I strived to have the students become teachers. The lessons I take away from this feminist and pedagogical experience will guide and shape my life as an educator. The pedagogical skills I learned in this research process gave me the opportunity to recognize how I continuously learn and grow from the world and those people around me.
References


Lamb, C. E. (1994). *Logic and feminist argument: Yet again, can the master's tools dismantle the master's house?* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Nashville, TN.


Appendix A

COMS 225/L ARGUMENTATION

Instructor: Andrew West
Section:
Office:
Email:
Office Hours:

Course Description
This course is an introduction to cooperative argumentation- where collaboration, cooperation and open mindedness are seen as important components of critical thinking, reasoning, and logic. The skill sets learned in this class allow you to effectively identify and articulate your beliefs, values and emotions, along with developing understanding and sensitivity to perspectives that differ from your own. The art of deliberation will also be developed in this class, where the solid understanding of one’s own position along with the positions of others can be used to generate effective problem solving.

Required Texts

Other course readings may be assigned and distributed in class.

COMS 225/L Student Learning Outcomes

COMS 225/L is available for General Education (GE), Basic Skills, Critical Thinking requirement.

GE SLOs for COMS 225
SLO 1  Apply critical thinking skills when listening, reading and speaking.
SLO 2  Create, organize, and support ideas for various types of oral presentations.
SLO 3  Evaluate contexts, attitudes, values, and responses of different audiences.
SLO 4  Identify, evaluate, and apply different styles of presentation utilizing effective delivery techniques in public speaking.
SLO 5  Demonstrate acceptable ethical standards in research and presentation of materials, including proper verbal citations.

Assignments
Weekly Quizzes are brief multiple choice and/or short answer questions which will cover weekly readings and prior class discussions. They will also serve as study guides for the Midterm & Final exams. Weekly quizzes serve as an incentive to stay on track with class readings as well as aid participation in classroom discussions.
Perspective Paper assignment is a 5 page paper where you discuss your perspective on a family, interpersonal, and or community issue. In this paper you will identify and explore the influences that shape your perspective. Consideration of varying perspectives is also required with a discussion of the possible influences of those different perspectives. More detailed instructions to be given in class. Due October 12th

Roundtable Forum is a debate forum activity where a group of 6 speakers all contribute different perspectives to a controversial topic. It is a great opportunity to practice the cooperative argumentation skills of this class in a debate-like setting. More detailed instructions to be given in class. Due November 14th – 23rd

Deliberation Log is the written component of the roundtable forums that allows the groups to identify the issues, commonplaces, claims and evidence of the discussed arguments with reflections on the preparation and proceedings of the forums themselves. More detailed instructions to be given in class. Due November 28th – 30th

Midterm & Final are multiple choice and/or short answer question exams that allow you to demonstrate comprehension of the text readings and classroom discussions. The final exam will be cumulative. Due October 19th & December 14th

Class Participation is determined through active engagement in classroom discussion & activities, communication with instructor, attendance, and peer reviews of involvement during group assignments.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Quizzes</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perspective Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundtable Forum</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberation Log</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instructor reserves the right to adjust final course grades on the basis of student’s performance in course assignments and classroom participation.

Attendance

Attendance is required. 3 tardies = 1 absence. Absences incur the following penalties:

- 2 absences = NO DEDUCTION
- 3 absences = 2% deduction from final course grade
- 4 absences = 4% deduction from final course grade
- 5 absences = 6% deduction from final course grade
- 6 absences = 8% deduction from final course grade
- 7 absences = 10% deduction from final course grade
- 8 absences = 12% deduction from final course grade
- 9 or more absences = FAILING GRADE IN THE COURSE
Policies

Academic Honesty: Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to University policies regarding academic honesty, as specified in the current CSUN Catalog and Schedule of Classes. Cheating in any form or plagiarizing any part or parts of any oral or written work is automatic grounds for receiving a failing grade in the course. In addition, a report will be filed with the Dean of Students for further possible action (including expulsion from the University). If you are uncertain about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, consult the University catalog and schedule of classes for definitions and for information regarding your rights and responsibilities.

Excused Absences: Absences due to personal illness or medical emergencies must be cleared via written documentation ON THE DAY YOU RETURN TO CLASS (no exceptions). Changes in work schedule, personal celebrations (e.g., birthdays) transportation problems, etc. are NOT considered legitimate reasons to excuse an absence. If you are traveling on University related business, notify the instructor in advance of your scheduled absence.

Class Schedule
(subject to change)

Week One
Monday August 29th
  Introduction to course and syllabus
  Introduction Speeches
Wednesday August 31st
  Introduction Speeches continued
  Roundtable Forum and Paper topics discussed

Week Two  Text Chapter 1, Critical Thinking
Monday September 5th  
  Labor Day Holiday - No Class
Wednesday September 7th
  The Questioning Habit, Values & Assumptions

Week Three  Text Chapter 2 Ethical and Effective Dialogue
Monday September 12th
  Emotions & Dialogic Communication
Wednesday September 14th
  Attentive Listening & Safe Communication Environments

Week Four  Text Chapter 3, Cooperative Argumentation
Monday September 19th
  What is Argumentation & Ethics of Interdependence
Wednesday September 21st
  Argumentation, Decision Making & Deliberative Communities
Week Five  Text Chapter 4, Elements of Argumentation
Monday September 26th
  Reasonableness & Claims
Wednesday September 28th
  Issues & Commonplaces

Week Six  Text Chapter 4, Elements continued
Monday October 3rd
  Presumptions, Burden of Proof
Wednesday October 5th
  Evidence

Week Seven  Text Chapter 5, Context and the Deliberative Community
Monday October 10th
  Perspectives & The Audience
Wednesday October 12th
  Communication Contexts
  Perspective Papers Due

Week Eight
Monday October 17th
  Midterm Review
Wednesday October 19th
  Midterm

Week Nine  Text Chapter 6, Ethical Advocacy and the Deliberative Community
Monday October 24th
  Advocacy & Power
Wednesday October 26th
  The Deliberation Log

Week Ten  Text Chapter 7, Evaluating Arguments
Monday October 31st
  Group 1 Practice Roundtable
Wednesday November 2nd
  Group 2 Practice Roundtable

Week Eleven
Monday November 7th
  Group 3 Practice Roundtable
Wednesday November 9th
  Group 4 Practice Roundtable
**Week Twelve** Roundtable Presentations  
**Monday November 14**<sup>th</sup>  
*Group 1 Roundtable*  
**Wednesday November 16**<sup>th</sup>  
*Group 2 Roundtable*

**Week Thirteen** Roundtable Presentations  
**Monday November 21**<sup>st</sup>  
*Group 3 Roundtable*  
**Wednesday November 23**<sup>rd</sup>  
*Group 4 Roundtable*

**Week Fourteen**  
**Monday November 28**<sup>th</sup>  
Roundtables 1 & 2 Discussed  
*Groups 1 & 2 Deliberation Log Due*  
**Wednesday November 30**<sup>th</sup>  
Roundtables 3 & 4 Discussed  
*Groups 3 & 4 Deliberation Log Due*

**Week Fifteen**  
**Monday December 5**<sup>th</sup>  
Reflections on course  
**Wednesday December 7**<sup>th</sup>  
Cooperative Argumentation in Everyday Life

**Finals Week**  
**Wednesday December 14**<sup>th</sup>  
Final Examination 8:00 am – 10:00 am
Appendix B

COMS 225/L ARGUMENTATION

Instructor: Andrew West
Section:
Office:
Email:
Office Hours:

Course Description

This course is an introduction to cooperative argumentation—where collaboration, cooperation and open mindedness are seen as important components of critical thinking, reasoning, and logic. The skill sets learned in this class allow you to effectively identify and articulate your beliefs, values and emotions, along with developing understanding and sensitivity to perspectives that differ from your own. The art of deliberation will also be developed in this class, where the solid understanding of one’s own position along with the positions of others can be used to generate effective problem solving.

Required Texts


Other course readings may be assigned and distributed in class.

COMS 225/L Student Learning Outcomes

COMS 225/L is available for General Education (GE), Basic Skills, Critical Thinking requirement.
GE SLOs for COMS 225
SLO 1 Apply critical thinking skills when listening, reading and speaking.
SLO 2 Create, organize, and support ideas for various types of oral presentations.
SLO 3 Evaluate contexts, attitudes, values, and responses of different audiences.
SLO 4 Identify, evaluate, and apply different styles of presentation utilizing effective delivery techniques in public speaking.
SLO 5 Demonstrate acceptable ethical standards in research and presentation of materials, including proper verbal citations.

Assignments

Weekly Quizzes are brief multiple choice and/or short answer questions on weekly readings and prior class discussions. They will also serve as study guides for the midterm & final exams. Weekly quizzes serve as an incentive to stay on track with class readings as well as aid participation in classroom discussions.
Perspective Paper assignment is a 5 page paper where you discuss your perspective on a family, interpersonal, and or community issue. In this paper you will identify and explore the influences that shape your perspective. Consideration of varying perspectives is also required with a discussion of the possible influences of those different perspectives. More detailed instructions to be given in class. Due October 12th

Roundtable Forum is a debate forum activity where a group of 6 speakers all contribute different perspectives to a controversial topic. It is a great opportunity to practice the cooperative argumentation skills of this class in a debate-like setting. More detailed instructions to be given in class. Due November 14th – 23rd

Deliberation Log is the written component of the roundtable forums that allows the groups to identify the issues, commonplaces, claims and evidence of the discussed arguments with reflections on the preparation and proceedings of the forums themselves. More detailed instructions to be given in class. Due November 30th

Midterm & Final are multiple choice and/or short answer question exams that allow you to demonstrate comprehension of the text readings and classroom discussions. The final exam will be cumulative. Due October 19th & December 14th

Class Participation is determined through active engagement in classroom discussion & classroom activities, communication with instructor, attendance, and peer reviews of involvement during group assignments.

Grading

Weekly Quizzes 5%
Perspective Paper 10%
Midterm 10%
Roundtable Forum 20%
Deliberation Log 20%
Final 15%
Class Participation 20%
The instructor reserves the right to adjust final course grades on the basis of student’s performance in course assignments and classroom participation.

Attendance

Attendance is required. 3 tardies = 1 absence. Absences incur the following penalties:

2 absences = NO DEDUCTION
3 absences = 2% deduction from final course grade
4 absences = 4% deduction from final course grade
5 absences = 6% deduction from final course grade
6 absences = 8% deduction from final course grade
7 absences = 10% deduction from final course grade
8 absences = 12% deduction from final course grade
9 or more absences = FAILING GRADE IN THE COURSE
**Policies**

**Academic Honesty:** Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to University policies regarding academic honesty, as specified in the current CSUN Catalog and Schedule of Classes. Cheating in any form or plagiarizing any part or parts of any oral or written work is automatic grounds for receiving a failing grade in the course. In addition, a report will be filed with the Dean of Students for further possible action (including expulsion from the University). If you are uncertain about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, consult the University catalog and schedule of classes for definitions and for information regarding your rights and responsibilities.

**Excused Absences:** Absences due to personal illness or medical emergencies must be cleared via written documentation ON THE DAY YOU RETURN TO CLASS (no exceptions). Changes in work schedule, personal celebrations (e.g., birthdays), transportation problems, etc. are NOT considered legitimate reasons to excuse an absence. If you are traveling on University related business, notify the instructor in advance of your scheduled absence.

**Class Schedule**

(subject to change)

**Week One**

**Wednesday August 31st**
- Introduction to course and syllabus
- Introduction Speeches
- Roundtable Forum and Paper topics discussed

**Week Two**  Text Chapter 1, Critical Thinking

**Wednesday September 7th**
- The Questioning Habit, Values & Assumptions

**Week Three**  Text Chapter 2 Ethical and Effective Dialogue

**Wednesday September 14th**
- Emotions & Dialogic Communication
- Attentive Listening & Safe Communication Environments

**Week Four**  Text Chapter 3, Cooperative Argumentation

**Wednesday September 21st**
- What is Argumentation & Ethics of Interdependence
- Argumentation, Decision Making & Deliberative Communities

**Week Five**  Text Chapter 4, Elements of Argumentation

**Wednesday September 28th**
- Reasonableness & Claims
- Issues & Commonplaces

**Week Six**  Text Chapter 4, Elements continued

**Wednesday October 5th**
- Presumptions, Burden of Proof & Evidence
**Week Seven**  Text Chapter 5, Context and the Deliberative Community  
**Wednesday October 12**
- Perspectives & The Audience  
- Communication Contexts  
- Midterm Review  
  *Perspective Papers Due*

**Week Eight**  
**Wednesday October 19**  
*Midterm*

**Week Nine**  Text Chapter 6, Ethical Advocacy and the Deliberative Community  
**Wednesday October 26**  
- Advocacy & Power  
- The Deliberation Log

**Week Ten**  Text Chapter 7, Evaluating Arguments  
**Wednesday November 2**
- Group 1 & 2 Practice Roundtable

**Week Eleven**  
**Wednesday November 9**
- Group 3 & 4 Practice Roundtable

**Week Twelve**  Roundtable Presentations  
**Wednesday November 16**
- Group 1 & 2 Roundtables

**Week Thirteen**  Roundtable Presentations  
**Wednesday November 23**
- Group 3 & 4 Roundtable

**Week Fourteen**  
**Wednesday November 30**
- All Roundtables Discussed & Sharing of Resources  
  *All Deliberation Logs Due*

**Week Fifteen**  
**Wednesday December 7**
- Reflections on course & Cooperative Argumentation in Everyday Life

**Finals Week**  
**Wednesday December 14**
- Final Examination 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm
Appendix C
Perspective Paper

Step One: Identify your selected topic. Be sure the topic relates directly to a family, interpersonal, and or community issue. Successful completion of the assignment should not require “research” other than review of notes from class discussions, class text, discussions with available others, and insights and information attained through your life’s experiences. If you find that any other “formal” research is required to complete the assignment, it is important to change topics.

Step Two: State your essay’s central thesis. Be sure your thesis relates directly to your chosen family, interpersonal, and or community issue.

Step Three: Identify the central issue guiding your essay. Be sure that this issue reflects your thesis. Be sure as well to frame the issue as a question.

Step Four: Summarize your opinion and perspective on the issue. Discuss in depth those things that influence and inform your opinion (values, experiences, culture, etc.) Discuss how they influence your perspective & opinion.

Step Five: Summarize the opinion and perspective of those who disagree with your thesis. Discuss in depth those influences you think inform these opinions and perspectives and discuss how they work to shape those opinions and perspectives.

3-5 pages, Double Spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt. font
Appendix D

Roundtable Format

• Moderator introduces topic and panel, provides an overview of key terms and commonplaces, and identifies selected issues (5 minutes).
• Speaker 2 provides a presentation in support of a perspective on the issue (5 minutes).
• Speaker 2 responds to audience questions (3 minutes).
• Speaker 3 provides a presentation in support of a different perspective on the issue (5 minutes).
• Speaker 3 responds to audience questions (3 minutes).
• Speaker 4 provides a presentation in support of a different perspective on the issue (5 minutes).
• Speaker 4 responds to audience questions (3 minutes).
• Speaker 5 provides a presentation in support of a different perspective on the issue (5 minutes).
• Speaker 5 responds to audience questions (3 minutes).
• Speaker 6 provides a summary of diverse perspectives on the issue (7 minutes).
• Panelists question one another and offer additional insights (10 minutes).

• Moderator facilitates class discussion of perspectives presented, encouraging exploration of diverse points of view, and identification of additional issues for group exploration (10 minutes).

Speaker Responsibilities:

Moderator: Introduces the topic and panel, provides a concise and clear overview of key terms and commonplaces, and identifies the group’s selected issues. During this presentation, the Moderator answers “Why are the issues important? What is at the heart of the controversy and why? “ Following the closing panel exploration of issues, the Moderator is responsible for facilitating class discussion of the perspectives presented. During this segment of the forum, the Moderator is responsible for encouraging exploration of diverse points of view, and for assisting the class in identifying additional issues for further exploration.

Speakers 2-5: These presenters are expected to clearly articulate his or her perspective on the issues. These speakers are responsible for offering a clear articulation of the issues and for providing strong, relevant and comprehensive support for his or her claims. These speakers are responsible for responding directly to the previous speaker’s perspective. During this presentation, the speaker is expected to anticipate and address key concerns. Anticipation of other speakers’ concerns is key during these presentations.

Speaker 6: This presenter is responsible for providing a clear, concise, and articulate overview of diverse perspectives on the relevant issues. The speaker is expected to attend thoughtfully to observations and concerns raised during all aspects of the forum (including each of the four “formal” presentations, during audience questioning, and during the panelists’ final exploration of issues).

Audience Question Periods: Speakers are expected to respond thoughtfully to each question, responding to the audience’s informational needs. Responses should be concise and clear, and respondents should avoid needlessly prolonged answers. As a result of audience cross examination, the deliberative community should be better informed or otherwise better equipped to make judgments about relevant issues.

The aim of the Roundtable is to enhance the deliberative community’s capacity to make fair, reasoned, and informed decisions on relevant issues and to sustain and build community (rather than to win or to persuade others).
Appendix E

Deliberation Log

Organizational Structure (See pages 206-223 in the text for a sample)

Section One:
• Statement of issues
• Statement of commonplaces
• Key terms with definitions

Section Two:
1. Key claims in support of diverse positions on the issue
2. Evidence (with citations) in support of key claims
3. Values and assumptions underlying key claims

Section Three (Reflection Questions):
This section of the deliberation log deepens the capacity for ethical and effective deliberation and advocacy. In this section, you are asked to respond to the following questions:

1. How might relevant perspectives on the subject be informed by individuals’ standpoints? And how might perspectives on the subject be informed by relationships with other standpoints and views? Be sure to use concrete examples to illustrate and support your claims.

2. In preparing for the roundtable and deliberation log assignments, to what extent did the group consider the relevant criticisms of members’ views? Be sure to use concrete examples to illustrate and support your claims.

3. How fully and effectively has the group considered the actual effects of relevant decisions on the lives of those affected? To what extent did the group construct a means of accountability for responding to critique and unintended consequences—both positive and negative—that allows for continued responsible action? Be sure to use concrete examples to illustrate and support your claims.