Integrating Critical Family History with Collaborative Autoethnography in an Independent Study

Grettel M. Beltran, Sojourn Counseling Group
Adrienne L. Edwards-Bianchi, Department of Counseling and Human Services, and Child and Family Health Institute, East Tennessee State University ⓘ

ABSTRACT. In this collaborative autoethnography, we, a Mexican woman graduate student and a Black woman faculty member, engage critical family history to think reflexively about how our family histories interact with our intersectional positions as Women of Color in academia to influence how we approach teaching family science. Both participants collected genealogical and autobiographical data and reflected on them through interactive interviewing and critical self-reflection. Thematic analysis revealed two major themes: bringing historical trauma into the classroom and representing Women of Color in the classroom. We discuss our findings in the context of increasing understanding of the experiences of Women of Color in family science programs at predominately White institutions. We ruminate about the benefits and challenges associated with a graduate student and faculty member working closely together on such an in-depth and personally revealing project. Our research is grounded in reflexive practice in teaching family science.

Keywords: critical family history, collaborative autoethnography, independent study, graduate student-faculty collaboration, self-reflexivity

Integrating Critical Family History with Collaborative Autoethnography in an Independent Study

As a graduate student (i.e., Grettel Beltran) and faculty member (i.e., Adrienne Edwards-Bianchi) in family science, we sought to develop an independent study that moved beyond traditional faculty-directed research activities to a collaborative research experience in which we could be co-creators of knowledge through course design, course implementation, and experiential learning. To that end, we integrated critical family history (Sleeter, 2015) with collaborative autoethnography (CAE; Chang et al., 2013) as a joint approach to teaching qualitative research skills while helping us uncover and intensely explore how our family histories influence the way we engage the teaching process in family science. Critical family history emerged from critical race theory and is a unique way of conducting genealogical research that "interrogates the interaction between family and context, with a particular focus on power relationships among sociocultural groups" (Sleeter, 2015, p. 11). Collaborative autoethnography (CAE) is a collective, reflexive process of using autobiographical data to collectively explore individual and cultural experiences (Chang et al., 2013). In our experience, using CAE prompted "a shift from individual to collective agency" (Lapadat, 2017, p. 589) which allowed us to give a voice to our dual perspectives as Women of Color and teachers of family science at a predominately White institution (PWI) in the Western United States. Grettel is a Mexican woman and Adrienne is a Black woman. Since family experiences are dynamic across individuals and groups and each student and teacher has familial experiences that impact their perceptions and understandings of family life (Allen & Farnsworth, 1993), we used critical family history as a research tool to answer the following research question: How do the racialized experiences of our families in a sociocultural context in connection with our intersectional positions inform our teaching practices? Although critical family history is a burgeoning area of research, we believe we are the first family scholars to use it to investigate our teaching practices in the field of family science.

Our research is grounded in reflexive practice in family science (Allen, 2000). Reflexivity is an "interpretive process" (Daly, 2007, p. 196) through which researchers become mindful of how their biases and lived experiences impact their research (Allen, 2000). When faculty and graduate students engage in the reflexive process together as we have done, a collaborative learning relationship emerges (Allen & Farnsworth, 1993) that provides opportunities for mentoring and professional development (Moore et al., 2013).

In regard to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), family scholars and practitioners are beginning to incorporate SoTL into their teaching and practice (Maurer & Law, 2016). SoTL focuses on the application, production, and dissemination of emerging evidence-based findings that reinforce the teaching and learning process as an integral aspect of teaching family science (Maurer & Law, 2016; McKinney, 2003). The collaborative aspect of SoTL engages students to have an impact on their own learning experience (Cross & Steadman, 1996). Our research contributes to the growing body of literature on SoTL in family science in two key ways. First, across disciplines, most of the research on graduate student-faculty course collaboration focuses on designing and teaching undergraduate courses (Walters & Misra, 2013). Our research emphasizes the graduate student as an equal partner in research design, course implementation, data collection, and analysis and illuminates how graduate students' impact in the classroom reaches beyond teaching undergraduate courses. Our pairing of critical family history with CAE in an independent study course facilitates the teaching and learning process by enhancing pedagogical practice and developing a research experience that takes the students' specific needs into account, thus leading to a meaningful learning experience between both graduate student and instructor (Walters & Misra, 2013).

Second, our research contributes to the practice of SoTL with racial minority populations by including a Student of Color in the research process. Research and practitioner-based articles about involving racial and ethnic minority students in SoTL projects are limited. Felten and colleagues (2013) argued that Students of Color may not collaborate with faculty in SoTL research due to a "perceived lack of support from faculty or their own self-efficacy about their capacity to excel as co-researchers" (p. 66). Students of Color have funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) that provide insight into cultural norms and family processes in racial minority populations; however, such knowledge goes untapped when Students of Color are not included as collaborators in research.

What is Critical Family History?

Dr. Christine Sleeter introduced critical family history to the field of teacher education as a way of preparing pre-service teachers, particularly White pre-service teachers, to examine how aspects of power, privilege, and gendered roles in their family histories impact their teaching practices as well as their understanding of the experiences of diverse students (Sleeter, 2016). Critical family history provides teachers with a process for developing and using a multigenerational perspective to think reflexively about their families' sociohistorical experiences and examine their identities, which can strengthen how they teach about social justice and cultural diversity (Sleeter, 2015). Critical race theory informs critical family history in that it provides a critical lens for examining family histories in the context of racism and colonialism in the United States (Sleeter, 2015). According to Sleeter (2016), critical race theory compels us to recognize how our families operate within racialized networks and systems of power that influence family development and associations with members of other racial groups at different historical time periods.

Critical family history provides a formalized way of conducting genealogical research that allows scholars to not only learn about our lineages but to also visualize and examine how relationships among racial groups have impacted the trajectories of our families and ultimately our own lives. For example, Sleeter (2015) provided steps for collecting family history data: (1) gathering genealogical data such as census data and archival data such as historical family documents, and (2) analyzing that data by using the context questions framework consisting of questions about what relationships and interactions among racial groups were like around the time that one's ancestors lived. The *context questions framework* provides researchers with a critical lens to use to situate their family histories in a race, gender, and class context (Sleeter, 2008). The context questions framework consists of the following questions:

1. What other socio-cultural groups were in the vicinity of one's family (e.g., in the neighborhood, the town, the county)?
2. What groups were not nearby but could have been? Were there laws or policies that kept some groups away while others were favored?
3. What were relationships among socio-cultural groups and gender groups in the time and place where your ancestors lived?
4. What cultural communities, norms, and institutions existed at the time? (Sleeter, 2015, p. 7)

In the section on Data Collection, we provide a description and examples of how those steps were used in this study.

What is Collaborative Autoethnography?

The goal of autoethnography is to "expand the understanding of social realities through the lens of the researcher's personal stories" (Chang, 2013, p. 108). Autoethnographers collect data through self-examination, ruminating about past events and experiences, interviewing others, and analyzing historical data (Chang, 2013). In autoethnography, researchers have a dual role of both participant and researcher. Collaborative autoethnography (CAE) expands on autoethnography in that multiple researchers are charged with the task of thinking critically about and challenging the lenses of individuals who may or may not have similar points of view about the same sociocultural experience (Chang, 2013). Challenging each other's points of view, even when they are similar, allows scholars to learn more about themselves, understand more about power dynamics in relationships, and fosters a sense of community (Chang et al., 2013). Reflexivity is often used in CAE research and allows autoethnographers to make meaning of prior experiences in current time (Chang et al., 2013). Through CAE, family scholars can blend the roles of participant and researcher to think reflexively about how their family histories permeate throughout and influence their teaching practices.

In CAE, research begins with collecting individual data and then collecting group data with researchers who share a similar experience (McConnell et al., 2017). Individual data collection may involve (a) creating a list of events related to an experience; (b) gathering historical documents; (c) self-observation data that involves writing down behaviors and thoughts in real-time; (d) self-reflexive writing such as critical reflections; and (e) self-analytical data that involves interpreting thought processes about experiences (Chang et al., 2013). Writing prompts that consist of questions that guide self-reflexive writing may be used (for example, see Godbold et al., 2021). In our experience, the context questions framework in critical family history (Sleeter, 2015) served as prompts for writing critical reflections. Collaboration involves researchers coming together as a group to discuss individual data (Chang et al., 2013) and analyze and interpret it (Godbold et al., 2021 & McConnell et al., 2017). Group discussions may be recorded and analyzed as additional sources of data (Godbold et al., 2021). The group decides which method of data analysis, such as thematic analysis, to use (for example, see Godbold et al., 2021).

Teaching Family Science at a Predominantly White Institution

Since the research discussed in this manuscript is based on the collaboration of a Mexican woman graduate student and a Black woman faculty member, we focus our discussion on Latina and Black women who teach at predominately White institutions (PWIs). Due to a scarcity of published articles on the teaching experiences of Latina faculty in family science, we looked beyond the family science discipline to discuss their experiences at PWIs. Students rate Latina faculty worse than White professors on course evaluations when Latinas employ a more authoritarian teaching style as opposed to a more relaxed one (Smith & Anderson, 2005). Further, Latina faculty have struggled with being ostracized by their colleagues who have described them as "not one of us, outsider, and other" (Medina & Luna, 2000, p. 58). Allen and colleagues' (2001) pivotal article on teaching in family science articulated the difficulties that Black women faculty encounter when teaching about families to White students. Such difficulties included negotiating how to respond to resistance from White students in the form of racist comments and dismissing the importance of racism as a necessary topic in a course about families (Allen et al., 2001). While Black women are sometimes met with opposition in teaching family science at PWIs, some Students of Color from underrepresented groups view Black women faculty as representations of their future professional selves (Few et al., 2007).

Developing the Independent Study

As a master's level student with a strong interest in qualitative research, Grettel wanted experience in data collection and analysis prior to doing a thesis. She approached Adrienne about offering an independent study because they were both interested in racial and ethnic minority family stability and well-being. We knew we wanted to explore our experiences as Women of Color in academia in a way that is not typically done in family science research. We decided to integrate critical family history, a research tool not routinely used in family science, with CAE as a way to examine how power, privilege, and gendered roles in family science instructors' backgrounds impact their teaching while providing Grettel with an opportunity to learn and practice qualitative research skills. We developed the independent study in three phases: (1) drafting the syllabus, (2) addressing ethical issues, and (3) practicing self-censorship.

Drafting A Course Syllabus

We had a meeting to draft the course syllabus. We worked together to draft it while Adrienne ensured it met university requirements. Involving Grettel in syllabus development empowered her as it allowed her to be involved in the structuring of learning activities. We worked together to develop a list of readings on critical family history, autoethnography, feminist theory, and qualitative methods that we thought were useful in answering our research question. We assigned Grettel the task of developing a literature review based on those readings. Our independent study reflects a truly collaborative endeavor in which we pooled our ideas and thoughts on course design and implementation.

Addressing Ethical Issues

To account for the power differential between graduate student and instructor, we discussed expectations for the course, including our comfort levels with sharing sensitive and emotionally charged personal experiences about racism and discrimination, authorship, and our respective visions for how the research should be implemented (Sawyer & Norris, 2009). We integrated our expectations, including that Grettel, the graduate student, could opt out of the research at any time without penalty, in the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application to serve as a contract for how to implement the research and to hold each of us accountable for adhering to that contract. Although Grettel could opt out of the research portion of the independent study, she would still need to complete a literature review on the assigned readings to receive credit for the course. Additionally, we included an informed consent document that served as another level of ethical accountability. In CAE research, authorship can be especially challenging as the authors' voices are integrated to create one story; therefore, authorship should be addressed early on in the structuring of CAE projects to avoid potential complications after manuscripts have been written (Chang et al., 2013). In our independent study, we included verbiage in the IRB application that no author could publish manuscripts based on the collaborative data without consent from the other author. We also discussed and agreed on the order of authorship for manuscripts and conference presentations.

Practicing Self-Censorship

While disclosing our family histories and our experiences in the classroom, we were mindful of how our disclosures would impact our family members and other important people in our lives. In CAE, researchers have a responsibility to protect the identities of those they include in their autobiographical stories (Chang et al., 2013). We intentionally practiced self-censorship which involves purposefully monitoring what one self-discloses during the research process so as not to bring harm to the lives of oneself or those around you (Philaretou & Allen, 2006).

Data Collection

Although we had dual roles of researchers-participants in the study, we functioned as participants during data collection. Therefore, we refer to ourselves as participants in the Data Collection section. Each participant collected individual data by engaging in critical family history work before engaging in collaborative work.

Individual Data Collection

Genealogical Data

Each participant collected the following types of genealogical data on their respective families: (a) digitized birth, death, and marriage records; (b) census data; (c) obituaries; (d) and family pictures. The genealogical website Ancestry.com (https://www.ancestry.com/) served as a primary source of digital and census data for participants. Each participant also collected oral histories from family members, such as parents, to gain more nuanced information about the genealogical data.

Critical Family History Data Chart

Each participant developed a critical family history data chart using the context questions framework (Sleeter, 2015). The charts were used to visualize the sociohistorical experiences of their families. The charts were organized by decade with separate columns for maternal ancestors, paternal ancestors, historical context, and social context (Sleeter, 2013). Participants' interpretations of the historical and social contexts of their ancestors' experiences were recorded in those respective columns and reflected their use of the context questions framework. The participants printed out their charts and shared them with each other; however, the charts were not included in data analysis. The participants' critical reflections about the charts, however, were analyzed (see the section on Data Analysis).

Critical Reflection Data

The critical family history data charts generated critical thinking about the decisions participants' families made throughout history and the factors that caused them to do so. This thinking led to each participant writing a critical reflection based on their interpretations of their respective critical family history data and linking it to their teaching practices. Participants used the concurrent model of data collection in CAE in that each one wrote a critical reflection within the same window of time and emailed them to each other (Chang et al., 2013). They waited until each participant had completed their critical family history data chart to write the critical reflection.

Collaborative, Interactive Data

Participants collected collaborative, interactive data by conducting two interactive introspection sessions (Cohen et al., 2009; Smith, 1999) in which they interviewed each other about their critical reflections. Each interactive introspection section lasted for an hour. Those interactive introspection sessions allowed participants to respectfully challenge each other about their interpretations of their family histories in connection to their roles as Women of Color who teach family science and pushed them to dig deeper to uncover and explore the meanings they made from critically examining genealogical data. We took notes during the interactive introspection sessions that informed our data analysis. It is important to share that only one interactive, introspective session was planned.

The first interactive introspection session was so powerful, however, that it prompted the participants to write another critical reflection based on the ideas, feelings, and realizations that were uncovered during that session. The participants held another interactive introspection about the second

critical reflection. Each interactive introspection session was audio-recorded and included in data analysis (Chang et al., 2013).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was a collaborative endeavor. We use the pronoun "we" to indicate a shift from our roles as participants in data collection to researchers in data analysis. As a team, we collectively analyzed two separate datasets (i.e., two critical reflections per participant for a total of four) using thematic analysis (Saldaña, 2016). The decision to write four critical reflections was made logistically in that we followed the concurrent model of data collection in CAE (Chang et al., 2013) of writing critical reflections during the same window of time about our shared experiences of constructing and analyzing our critical family history charts (i.e., critical reflection number one) and engaging in the first interactive introspection session (i.e., critical reflection number two). Each experience resulted in a separate critical reflection for a total of four critical reflections. Evidence from each dataset was used to establish codes and themes. We coded together in person and via Skype. We engaged in line-by-line coding to develop initial codes. Then, we engaged in an iterative process of grouping and regrouping initial codes into subthemes until major themes that were salient to both participants' experiences emerged from the data. Analytic memos can be useful in identifying patterns that emerged across all of the data, including possible codes and themes (Saldaña, 2016), and thus were employed in data analysis. Specifically, analytic memos about the critical reflections and notes about the interactive introspection sessions informed the thematic coding by providing an additional level of support for the codes and themes we identified. Collective coding provided an opportunity for the scaffolding of qualitative analysis skills. Scaffolding refers to when a more skilled partner uses structured learning activities to assist a less skilled partner in acquiring new skills (Wood et al., 1976). For example, Adrienne modeled how to code data while simultaneously providing support to Grettel to help her identify appropriate codes at each iteration of the coding process. Scaffolding began when we started coding and included four meetings that lasted approximately two hours each. Scaffolding concluded when the thematic analysis was complete.

We identified two major themes that best explained the participants' interpretations of how their family histories interacted with their intersectional positions to influence how they engaged in the teaching process. The themes were (a) bringing historical trauma into the classroom and (b) representing Women of Color in the classroom. The theme, bringing historical trauma into the classroom, captured how reflecting on the impact that historical trauma has had on Families of Color served as a consciousness-raising experience that increased participants' awareness of how they approached the teaching process. The theme, representing Women of Color in the classroom, captured how reflecting on family histories revealed that dispelling stereotypes about Women of Color when teaching was important and compelled both participants to confront their subjectivities in teaching. The themes are discussed in detail in the sections below. Representative quotes from the critical reflections are included to provide support for each theme.

Results

Bringing Historical Trauma Into the Classroom

Analyses revealed that the multiple questioning and challenging during the interactive introspection sessions served as consciousness-raising experiences that helped both participants make connections between internalized family histories, historical trauma, and their teaching practices. Historical trauma refers to

A collective complex trauma inflicted on a group of people who share a specific group identity affiliation-ethnicity, nationality, and religious affiliation. It is the legacy of numerous traumatic events a community experiences over generations and encompasses psychological and social responses to such events (Evans-Campbell, 2008, p. 320).

For example, the impact of the European colonization of Mexican communities and the systematic enslavement of Africans in America have contributed to generations of People of Color who have internalized the pathology and degradation stemming from those traumatic events (Hanna et al., 2017). Some of the oral histories were new to the participants, and others they had heard years before as children. The internalization of oral histories about historical traumas impacted how both participants approached the teaching process, but in different ways.

Grettel had an affective experience of feeling uneasy while teaching about immigration. The interconnectedness of immigration and agricultural work among Mexican immigrants in her family history increased her awareness of the influence that such agricultural work had on her identity and how she feels when teaching about immigration. Further, it impacted what she chose to self-disclose in the classroom. Grettel wrote:

Oral histories have helped me realize that when it comes to discussing the topic of immigration, it creates this uneasy feeling that I must be illegal or possess a green card because I was born in Mexico. While I did not directly work in the fields like my ancestors, their work is heavily tied to the way I interact with others because I tend to withhold this information to avoid assumptions about my citizenship status.

On the other hand, Adrienne realized that her thought processes about teaching were impacted by the interaction of her family histories with her perception of the current political climate. She wrote, "I realize that my internalization of family stories is operating at a heightened level in my thought processes about teaching right now because I am teaching at a PWI, especially during a time when the political climate is so racially charged and polarizing." She expanded on her realization through the interactive introspection sessions with Grettel. Adrienne wrote:

I know now that the stories I grew up hearing about my family members' experiences as Black people in the Deep South instilled in me a desire to teach about Black families in a way that helps students understand how systemic oppression and discrimination on some levels disrupted and continues to threaten Black family stability.

As the more experienced instructor of the two participants, Adrienne shared that she included readings from underrepresented scholars in family science, storytelling, and multilevel questioning in her teaching to increase students' awareness about how historical traumas impact Families of Color.

Representing Women of Color in the Classroom

The second theme, representing Women of Color in the classroom, explains how critically examining the oppressive experiences of women ancestors in families helped participants to visualize their role as teachers. The link between the experiences of women family members and teaching practices was exacerbated by being among the few Women of Color at a PWI. We identified two facets from family histories that impacted teaching: (a) dispelling stereotypes and (b) confronting subjectivities when teaching.

Dispelling Stereotypes

Both participants felt a sense of responsibility for challenging and dismantling negative stereotypes about Women of Color. Teaching involved two simultaneous processes of covering course material while counteracting pejorative stereotypes about Women of Color. For Adrienne, negative stereotypes about Black women coupled with the racism and discrimination her ancestors experienced fueled her desire to challenge such stereotypes. Challenging the angry Black woman stereotype (Morgan & Bennett, 2006) was particularly important to Adrienne because she found it to be one of the most pervasive stereotypes about Black women. Morgan and Bennett (2006) described the angry Black woman stereotype as a perceived sassiness, hostility, and aggressiveness of Black women that has become accepted as "an essential characteristic of Black femininity" (p. 490). Refuting the angry Black woman stereotype was important to Adrienne for other reasons as well. For instance, students from various racial backgrounds told her that she was the first Black teacher they ever had, and she was aware that Black women faculty sometimes received more negative student evaluations than their White counterparts (Perry et al., 2015). Further, Adrienne noted that the perceived aggressiveness of Black women sometimes fueled racialized and gendered discrimination of them in academic spaces in the form of faculty and students viewing them as "less capable" (Walkington, 2017). Adrienne wrote:

> What does it really mean to be someone's first Black teacher? Due to Jim Crow laws, my ancestors weren't allowed to go to school with White people much less teach them. Yet, I teach White students on a daily basis. Being someone's first Black teacher means that I have the responsibility, whether I want it or not, to challenge the negative stereotypes and images of Black women and families that emerged from the days of slavery and the segregated South.

Adrienne intentionally avoided reinforcing the angry Black women stereotype in her teaching by respectfully listening to and acknowledging students' viewpoints, even those that were different from hers, and remaining calm if students became resistant to learning about teaching topics. Adrienne viewed herself as a "tangible representation of the history of Black women in the United States," and challenging stereotypes about Black women that have dominated discourse in U.S. society for generations was important to her.

Dismantling stereotypes about the sexuality of Women of Color, such as the hyperfertile Latina woman and the hypersexual Black woman, was a common thread in both researchers' critical reflections. The stereotype of Latina women as hyperfertile refers to "their supposedly excessive reproduction, seemingly abundant or limitless fertility, and hypersexuality" (Chavez, 2013, p. 75), which feeds fears about a growing immigrant population (Barcelos, 2018). Grettel wrote, "As a guest lecturer in undergraduate courses, I shatter stereotypes that students may have that Mexican women get pregnant, drop out of school, and live on welfare because I am living proof that this isn't true for all Mexican women." Grettel thought reflexively about her perceptions about how other people react when she defies sexual stereotypes about Latina women. Grettel wrote, "It's almost as if these people I encounter are upset that I am shattering negative stereotypes about Mexican women."

The sexual exploitation of African slave women helped to create a Jezebel stereotype about Black women as oversexed, promiscuous women who reproduce quickly and survive on welfare; moreover, the Jezebel stereotype serves to "shame and silence" Black women (Harris-Perry, 2011). Adrienne wrote, "As a Black woman, I am aware of the history of the sexual objectification of Black women in the U.S. dating back to times of slavery. I make it a point to include teaching topics that compel students to think critically about how sexual stereotypes objectify Black women." Although the

participants are from different racial minority backgrounds, challenging stereotypes that characterize the sexuality of Women of Color was salient in both of their critical reflections.

Confronting Subjectivities When Teaching

The subjectivities participants realized that impacted how they thought about teaching were related to their expectations versus the realities of teaching. They struggled with reconciling their expectations of what it would be like to teach family science at a PWI with how the teaching actually unfolded in the classroom. Their struggle seemed to be rooted in how relatable they expected to be to Students of Color. Analysis revealed that, although they expected to have understood connections with Students of Color at PWIs that would quickly facilitate teacher-student relationships, those relationships did not always quickly develop or look like how they imagined. Adrienne wrote, "My conversation with Grettel today made me rethink my expectations of how students should connect or respond to me. Grettel wrote, "I assume that my interactions with Students of Color are going to go one way when in reality they do not." The interactive introspection sessions were influential in helping both participants to make sense of discrepancies between their expectations and the realities of relationships with students.

Discussion

Our collaborative autoethnography (CAE) highlights how family histories can impact how Women of Color approach the teaching process in family science. Two major themes emerged from data analysis: (a) bringing historical trauma into the classroom and (b) representing Women of Color in the classroom. When we began our research, we did not know where our critical family histories and self-reflexive writing would lead us. Historical trauma emerged as a critical component of our work as family science instructors. The more we uncovered how historical trauma influenced generations of our families, the stronger the connection between our critical family histories and our teaching became. Self-reflexive writing and interactive introspection sessions revealed historical trauma to be an underlying current that informs our teaching.

The small and underrepresented presence of Women of Color in higher education impacted our roles as family science instructors. Students of Color sometimes turn to Faculty of Color as role models; however, given the limited number of Faculty of Color available, meeting the needs of those students can be difficult (Cole et al., 2003). We recognized the need for same-race role models among the students we teach. For instance, Grettel shared: "I realized that some Students of Color depend on us for support because we are of the same race. As an advisor, Students of Color felt relieved that I looked like them and understood their experiences."

Benefits and Challenges

We realized the benefits and encountered challenges associated with a graduate student and faculty member working closely together on CAE research. We discuss three benefits recognized from our collaboration. We also discuss three challenges that emerged during our collaboration and how we resolved them. We believe that sharing the benefits and challenges associated with our independent study may help other family scholars anticipate what to expect when integrating critical family history with CAE in their own research.

Benefits

The following benefits emerged from our research: (a) a safe learning environment to share counterstories (Solòranzo & Yosso, 2002) about the experiences of Women of Color in academia; (b)

feminist mentoring; and (c) increased self-awareness. Counterstories arise from individuals "whose experiences are often not told" (Solòranzo & Yosso, 2002, p. 32), and we were able to share our narratives about our experiences at a PWI that may be contrary to the experiences of our White counterparts. A feminist mentoring relationship, which can be beneficial for students as it increases their awareness of how power operates in their lives and impacts them in professional and personal ways (Moore et al., 2013), naturally developed through our research. Our self-awareness was increased through the interactive introspection sessions in CAE, which served as consciousness-raising exercises by allowing us to safely examine and process how our family histories and identities as Women of Color influence how we view ourselves as family science instructors. In regard to SoTL, previous research in higher education supports increased self-awareness, specifically an in-depth understanding of how identity, beliefs, and values intersect to influence SoTL practice, as a beneficial outcome for faculty-student research partners who engage in CAE (McConnell et al., 2017).

Challenges

We encountered the following challenges: (a) negotiating the researcher-participant role; (b) preparing to self-disclose; and (c) exposing our inner selves. Being both researcher and participant was challenging in our research because of the need to ask each other thought-provoking questions during the interactive introspection sessions (i.e., participant role) but also to analyze reflexive thinking about important family historical information (i.e., researcher role). Taking on dual roles was necessary for CAE to be effective, and fluctuating between roles was a gradual process to embrace (Chang et al., 2013). Self-disclosure is an essential and beneficial aspect of integrating critical family history with CAE; however, researchers should be mindful of the impact that self-disclosure has on the learning process. In our experience, Adrienne (the faculty member) modeled how to use self-disclosure in the context of graduate student-faculty collaboration to demonstrate how to disclose and what sorts of information should be shared. We exposed our inner selves by revealing our innermost subjectivities and vulnerabilities to each other, thereby allowing each collaborator a deeper look into the complexities and realities of each other's lived experiences. Such exposure is not without risks. Allen and Piercy (2005) discussed that autoethnographers risk losing some power over their own stories and open themselves up to having those stories dissected by others who may criticize them. We reconciled tensions associated with making sense of how our family histories impacted us while contemplating the consequences of making those family histories public by practicing self-censorship and using collective storytelling to reinforce and retain power over our experiences as Women of Color at a PWI.

Recommendations

Process Sensitive Family Data

Autoethnography is a transformative method of inquiry that provides researchers with opportunities to embrace the vulnerabilities that accompany self-disclosure and self-reflexivity while providing opportunities to revisit and reframe meaningful experiences (Custer, 2014). In the case of CAE, co-researchers should use respectful, stimulating questions to challenge each other to translate revelations learned from family histories into self-reflexive narratives that can be used to increase awareness of their pedagogical practices. In our experience, we constantly monitored how the telling of our stories, albeit in a safe learning environment, was impacting us and could potentially impact our families who would eventually read our work (Ellis & Rawricki, 2013).

Allow Sufficient Time for Genealogical Praxis

When using genealogical research tools to collect family data, allow enough time in the data collection process to thoroughly examine multiple pages of digitized documents and census data. For instance, we devoted the first half of the semester to gathering and analyzing genealogical data of multiple generations in our families. Allowing ample time to collect data facilitates an in-depth exploratory analysis of family histories necessary in critical family history research.

Limitations and Conclusion

We argue that critical family history can deepen self-examination by giving graduate students and faculty a means of analyzing how their family histories seep into their teaching practices. There are a few limitations to note about our research. First, our research focuses on the experiences of Women of Color at a PWI. A similar study with Men of Color at a PWI may yield different narratives about connections between family histories and pedagogical experiences. Second, Women of Color at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) may offer a different lens on how a critical family history approach informs their understanding of their teaching practices with a population of students who are mostly Students of Color. Lastly, a comparable study with White women may lend insight into how family histories influence the pedagogical practices of women family science instructors who are not racial minorities. Although limitations are noted, we conclude that integrating a new form of critical genealogical research (i.e., critical family history) with CAE allows family scholars to investigate how family histories, intersectional positions, and teaching practices are interconnected while facilitating graduate student learning and providing opportunities for mentoring and professional development.

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