

# Advising to Transgress

Reflecting on the language of bell hooks

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# bell hooks

**Gloria Jean Watkins**

- **Author**
- **Teacher**
- **Feminist**
- **Scholar**
- **Activist**



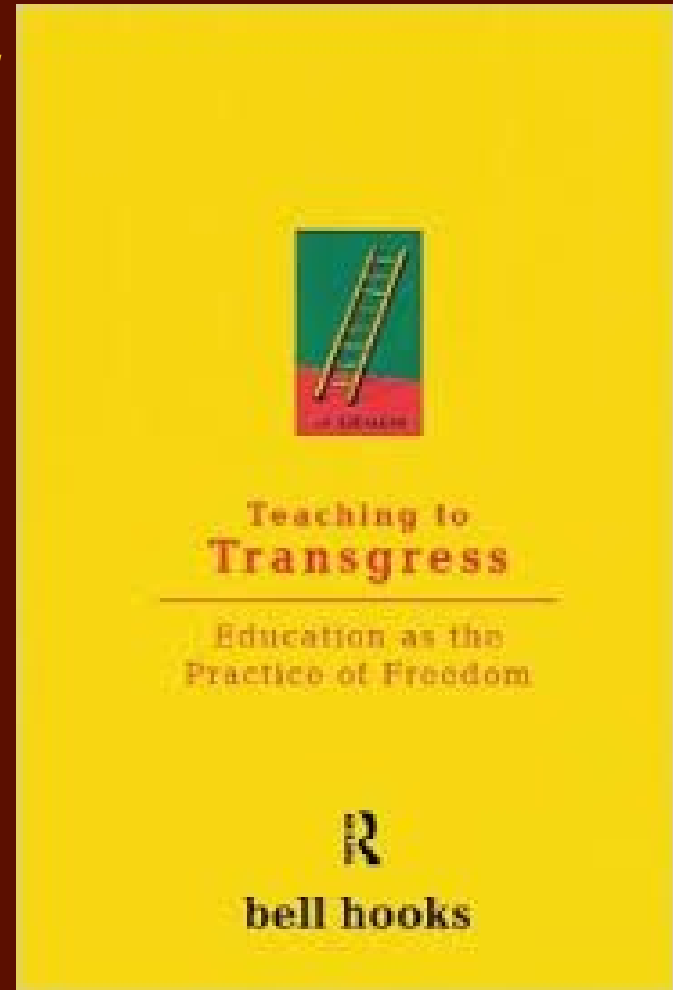
**The Real bell hooks**

@bellhooks

# *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*

- **Narrative Enriches Context**
- **Personal Experiences**
- **Race, Class, Gender**
- **Perspective & Bias**

hooks, b., 1994, Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom,



# Parallels to Advising

## NACADA Approaches to Advising

### Academic Advising Approaches

[Home](#) » [Resources](#) » [NACADA Companion Resources](#) » [Academic Advising Approaches](#) » [Advising as Teaching](#)

### Advising as Teaching and the Advisor as Teacher in Theory and in Practice

#### *Academic Advising Today, Clearinghouse, and Journal Articles*

Crookston, B. B. (2009) A developmental view of academic advising as teaching. *NACADA Journal* 29(1), 78-82. doi:10.12930/0271-9517-29.1.78. Retrieved from <http://nacadajournal.org/doi/pdf/10.12930/0271-9517-29.1.78>

Hitchcock, T. (2013, September). Advising as teaching for advisors. *Academic Advising Today*, 36(3). Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Advising-as-Teaching-for-Advisors.aspx>

Lance, A. (2009, June). Advising is teaching: Advisors take it to the classroom. *Academic Advising Today*, 32(2). Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Advising-IS-Teaching-Advisors-Take-it-to-the-Classroom.aspx>

Lowenstein, M. (2005) If advising is teaching, what do advisors teach? *NACADA Journal*, 25(2), 65-73. doi:10.12930/0271-9517-25.2.65. Retrieved from <http://nacadajournal.org/doi/pdf/10.12930/0271-9517-25.2.65>

Pettay, R. (2007, June). Making the transition from prescriptive advising to advising as teaching. *Academic Advising Today*, 30(2). Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Making-the-Transition-from-Prescriptive-Advising-to-Advising-as-Teaching.aspx>

# When did we first read bell hooks

- **John**
  - 1999, 2005
- **Danielle**
  - 2005

**Who else has  
read bell hooks?**

**What book, author, or theorist has had the most influence on your professional development or advising practice?**

# **“Unpacking” bell hooks**

**How do we interpret what she has written?**

- Critically?**
- Through our own lenses/experience?**
- Over time?**

# How has bell hooks influenced us?

- **Understanding of Education/Society**
- **Scholarship & Academic Interests**
- **Practice & Interactions with Students**
- **Personal/Professional Development**
- **Challenge to Stay Engaged**



**Danielle**

# Feminist Politics

**“It seemed that individual black women active in feminist politics were often caught between a rock and a hard place. The vast majority of white feminists did not welcome our questioning of feminist paradigms that they were seeking to institutionalize; so too, many black people simply saw our involvement with feminist politics as a gesture of betrayal, and dismissed our work” p. 122**

# Interpretation...

- **These are concepts that simultaneously unify and divide us**
  - This must be recognized by white women and women of color
  - Becoming comfortable enough to address oppression while building relationships
  - This, in turn helps me to empower my students

# **Social Justice as Learning**

**“Confronting one another across differences means that we must change ideas about how we learn; rather than fearing conflict we have to find ways to use it as a catalyst for new thinking, for growth” bell hooks p. 113**

# Interpretation...

- **In order to bring forth authentic change, difficult conversations must take place**
- **Healthy, cognitive dissonance leads to paradigm shifts**
- **My willingness to re-think ways of helping and advocating for students is essential for me to remain effective**
- **Challenging idea, not people**

# Risk of Engagement

**“In recent years, many white male scholars become critically engaged with my writing. It troubles me that this engagement has been viewed suspiciously or seen merely as an act of appropriation meant to enhance opportunistic agendas. If we really want to create a cultural climate where biases can be challenged and changed, all border crossings must be seen as valid and legitimate.” Still risk involved. Page 131**

# Interpretation...

- **Perfectly describes the friendship that John and I developed in spring 2005, and have sustained ever since**
- **Discussions about Beverly Daniel Tatum and bell hooks**
- **My in-class book review of *Ain't I a Woman***
  - John became one of my best allies
- **Helps me to teach my students about crossing boundaries and building friendships outside of their immediate circles**

# Biases

**“If we examine critically the traditional role of the university in the pursuit of truth and the sharing of knowledge and information it is painfully clear that biases that uphold and maintain white supremacy, imperialism, sexism, and racism have distorted education so that it is no longer about the practice of freedom. p 29-30**



# Interpretation...

- **Understanding one's biases is a critical aspect of self-discovery**
- **When spoken honestly and with respect, biases can lead to authentic conversations**
- **When policies are used to uphold policies/practices that discriminate, then inappropriate lines are crossed**
- **This helps me to assist my students through their own self-reflection and authentic dialogues**

**John**

# **Theory as Liberatory Healing**

**“I found a place of sanctuary in ‘theorizing,’  
in making sense out of what was happening.  
I found a place where I could imagine  
possible futures, a place where life could be  
lived differently.” P 61**

# Interpretation...

## Imagine Possible Futures

- Advising Theorists are the Rockstars - [@RDScheckel](#)
- Ally Development
- Multicultural Competence

## Theory & Student Healing

- How do they make sense of the world
- Identity Development & Intersectionality

# Limits of Training & Knowledge

**“Many folks found that as they tried to respect ‘cultural diversity’ they had to confront the limitations of their training and knowledge, as well as a possible loss of ‘authority.’ Indeed, exposing certain truths and biases in the classroom often created chaos and confusion. The idea that the classroom should always be a ‘safe,’ harmonious place was challenged. It was hard for individuals to fully grasp the idea that recognition of difference might also require of us a willingness to see the classroom change, to allow for shifts in relations between students.” p 32**

# Interpretation...

## Limits of Training & Diversity

- Don't burden others, we all need to address it

## Willingness to Leave Our Comfort Zone

- It may not be a 'safe space' for others
- Twitter - National dialogs & connections

## Letting go of Authority

- Avoids Micromanagement
- Leads to Trust & Respect

## Knowing Limits & When to Refer

# Transgressing Boundaries

**“To enter classroom settings in colleges and universities with the will to share the desire to encourage excitement, was to transgress. Not only did it require movement beyond accepted boundaries, but excitement could not be generated without full recognition of the fact that there could never be an absolute set agenda governing teaching practices. Agendas had to be flexible, had to allow for spontaneous shifts in direction. Students had to be seen in their particularity as individuals...” (hooks, 1994, p. 7).**

# Interpretation...

## **No absolute set agenda for Advisement**

- Learning, Reflecting, & Evolving
- Changes in Politics / Roles / Technology

## **Spontaneous Shifts**

- Shifts in the Classroom
- Shifts in Advisement

## **Seeing Students as Individuals**

- How Do We Foster Excitement in Advisees?



# **Don't Fear Mistakes**

**“In all cultural revolutions there are periods of chaos and confusion, times where grave mistakes are made. If we fear mistakes, doing things wrongly, constantly evaluating ourselves, we will never make the academy a culturally diverse place where scholars and the curricula address every dimension of that difference.” p 33**

# Interpretation...

**I now expect and embrace chaos**

## **Paralysis of Fear**

- Fear of different roles or new situations
- Not certain what to contribute
- Need to advocate & support

## **Fear of not having “the” answer**

- Teaching changed the way I interact with advisees

# **4 Group Quotes Discussion**

**What do these quotes  
mean to you:**

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**Personally?**

**Professionally?**

**For Advising Students?**

# Thinking of Each of the Group's Responses

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**Common Themes?**

**Differences?**

**Empowerment?**

# **Advising to Transgress**

# Praxis & Critical Reflection

**Combination of “action and reflection upon the world in order to change it.”** p14

- Critically reflecting on advisement?
- Empowering our students to change the world?
- Fostering self-actualization & well-being in ourselves and others?

# Breaking Down Barriers

- **Overcoming Obstacles & Prejudice**
- **Risks/ Dig Deeper/ Move Beyond Fear**
- **Willingness to Remain in Dialog**
  - Fear of engaging complicated / messy issues?
- **What are the Barriers that We Put Up?**
  - Are we proactive or motivated by crisis?



# Redefining Connections to Students

## Sharing of Narratives

- How do we foster student voices?

## Building Authentic Relationships

- Deconstructing Power
- Engaging in Respectful Critical Dialog

## Ongoing Reflection & Redefinition

- How do we theorize/make sense of advising

**Knowing what you know  
now, how can you apply bell  
hooks ideas to your advising  
practice / life.**

**Feel free to pull from the quotes in the handout  
or contact us at a later date.**