Chapter Three

Who Do You Honor?
In *Chapter 2: Spaces of Learning*, we described what we call “spaces of learning,” and introduced you to the teaching and learning philosophies and strategies that we use. For us, spaces of learning are both figurative and literal, referring to classrooms as well as learning groups, reading groups, collectives, and working groups (self-organized groups that have formed around a particular issue).

In *Chapter 3: Who Do You Honor?*, we introduce you to the educators who have shaped our pedagogy. While we have not met (and cannot meet) many of these educators, their work is widely recognized and makes our writing, teaching, and ongoing transformation possible. Each person and group that we introduce you to has supported our approach to arts education, offering necessary holistic, embodied, and transformative practices.

We suggest that the following section be shared with the group as best suits your context, either read aloud—in whole or in part—or assigned to be discussed in your space of learning. Before you begin to read, we invite you to ground yourself in the space: notice the air on your skin and your feet on the ground. What are your feelings and sensations at this moment? What are you bringing to this text? Take a moment to become aware of this. We invite you to notice what comes up for you, as you are reading this chapter. We will ask you to reflect upon this at the end of this chapter.
When we gather together in spaces of learning, we imagine another, bigger circle of people that sit behind us, people who have taught us important lessons, people who have made our ongoing transformation possible, and people who have made our presence here possible. They might include our teachers and mentors, mothers, fathers, siblings, friends, artists, or authors of influential works. See the Naming Who We Invite Into Our Space of Learning activity in Chapter 4: Teacher/Facilitator Guides for more. We also want to name the people who are recognized for their contributions to critical pedagogy and to acknowledge the role they have played in shaping our teaching philosophies and strategies.

We will share the work of The Public Science Project, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Alice Sheppard, Paulo Freire, angel Kyodo williams, John Dewey, Generative Somatics, and the researchers who developed Studio Habits of Mind. We will introduce you to their writing as a way to understand our central teaching philosophies and strategies in practice. They embody action-oriented, contemplative, community- and place-based, critical, co-created, socially just, somatic and project-based teaching. Their work has made our teaching possible.

**Action-Oriented**

When we say action-oriented teaching, we mean teaching that connects learning to lived experience, creating a cycle of inquiry and action. To understand what an action-oriented teaching philosophy looks like in practice, we invite the educators María Elena Torre and Michelle Fine, co-founders of the New York City-based educational collective the Public Science Project (PSP), into the room, as well as their colleagues Maddy Fox, Eve Tuck, and Caitlin Cahill. They remind us that no research (or artwork) is “neutral,” existing without an agenda. Because no research (or artwork) is neutral, they suggest that all research should be conducted with careful consideration of the motivations for, and consequences of, that research. PSP developed a critical approach to participatory action research (PAR) where the people who will be most impacted by any research are invited to co-direct and co-produce that research. We aim to connect theory with practice, to find a “praxis.”

PSP quotes Paulo Freire, who wrote that “the silenced are not just incidental to the curiosity of the researcher but are the masters of inquiry into the underlying causes of the events in their world. In this context research becomes a means of moving them beyond silence into a quest to proclaim the world.”

We align ourselves with the ten agreements that members of the Public Science Project make:
1. We agree to value knowledges that have been historically marginalized and de-legitimized (i.e., youth, prisoner, immigrant) alongside traditionally recognized knowledges (i.e., scholarly).

2. We agree to share the various knowledges and resources held by individual members of the research collective, across the collective, so members can participate as equally as possible.

3. We agree to collaboratively decide appropriate research questions, design, methods and analysis as well as useful research products (i.e., making artworks and reports, videos and articles).

4. We agree to create a research space where individuals and the collective can express their multiplicity and use this multiplicity to inform research questions, design, and analyses.

5. We agree to encourage creative risk-taking in the interest of generating new knowledge (i.e., understanding individuals and the collective to be “under construction” with ideas and opinions that are in formation, expected to grow, etc.).

6. We agree to attend theoretically and practically to issues of power and vulnerability within the collective and created by the research. To strategically work the power within the group when necessary to benefit both individual and collective needs/agendas.

7. We agree to excavate and explore disagreements rather than smooth them over in the interest of consensus (as they often provide insight into larger social/political dynamics that are informing the data).

8. We agree to use a variety of methods to enable interconnected analyses at the individual, social, cultural, and institutional levels.

9. We agree to conceive of action on multiple levels over the course of the project, to think through the consequences of research and actions.

10. We commit to an ongoing negotiation of conditions of collaboration, building research relationships over time.³

As teachers, we are given time and resources to study and to conduct research. We situate our research in relationship to the labors of organizers and activists who are working toward a liberatory politics. For example, we introduce our students to members of worker cooperatives, organizers building community land trusts, and activists who are protecting water rights. We do not see these actions as separate from ways of being an artist.

How do you situate your research? What are your ways of being an artist in the world? How are you in the world and how is the world in
you? When looking at projects, we often ask, “Does this project make you want to take action? If so, in what ways?” See Chapter 6: How Are You in the World and How Is the World in You? for more.²

**Community- and Place-based**

When we say community- and place-based teaching, we mean that learning cannot be separated from the places and the people that we each learn in relationship with: your friends and family, your spaces of learning, your communities and groups, the school system, and the institutions that surround you. To get a sense of how community- and place-based learning works in practice, we invite Robin Wall Kimmerer into the room. She reminds us to hold our own contradictions with compassion. Dr. Kimmerer is a scientist, writer, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She shares a practice from the Citizen Potawatomi Nation that speaks to the profound capacity of reciprocity to build community with all living things.

The guidelines for the *Honorable Harvest* are not written down, or even consistently spoken of as a whole—they are reinforced in small acts of daily life. But if you were to list them, they might look something like this:

- Know the ways of the ones who take care of you, so that you may take care of them.
- Introduce yourself. Be accountable as the one who comes asking for life.
- Ask permission before taking. Abide by the answer.
- Never take the first. Never take the last.
- Take only what you need.
- Take only that which is given.
- Never take more than half.
- Leave some for others.
- Harvest in a way that minimizes harm.
- Use it respectfully. Never waste what you have taken.
- Share.
- Give thanks for what you have been given.
- Give a gift, in reciprocity for what you have taken.
- Sustain the ones who sustain you and the earth will last forever.⁴

We bring Kimmerer’s teachings into our contexts, as warnings against extractive, individualistic, and competitive tendencies in the arts and in the academy. By asking you to consider what you are taking, and how to give gifts, she might guide you toward an economy of mutuality. In
our own spaces of learning, we begin with a formal statement that pays tribute to the original inhabitants of the land. We continue to acknowledge that decolonization is not a metaphor, it is a practice of recognizing the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. See Chapter 8: Understanding the Lifecycle from Multiple Perspectives for more.

Many of our assignments and activities acknowledge the space of learning itself. Again, spaces of learning are both figurative and literal, referring to classrooms as well as learning groups, reading groups, collectives, and working groups (self-organized groups that have formed around a particular issue). We pay attention to the physical space—the floor, the furniture, the room—as well as the people who are learning together. We talk about the space of learning as a community of practice. We ask: What communities (geographic, identity-based, professional) are you bringing into this space of learning?

**Socially Just**

When we say socially just teaching, we mean that we aim to create a space that affirms the dignity of all people. We ask that you commit to educating yourself and your peers about the privileges and oppressions that people are subjected to based upon their age, class, cognitive and physical abilities, gender expression, nationality, race, religion, and sexuality, among others. To get a sense of what socially just teaching is like, we invite Audre Lorde (1934–1992), the New York City-born, self-described “Black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet” into the room because she speaks truth with a fierce love that addresses the need for vulnerability in collective dedication to justice. This is no easy task. At a conference, Lorde said:

I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. And of course I am afraid, because the transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self-revelation, and that always seems fraught with danger. But my daughter, when I told her of the our topic and my difficulty with it, said, “Tell them about how you’re never really a whole person if you remain silent, because there’s always that one little piece inside you that wants to be spoken out, and if you keep ignoring it, it gets madder and madder and hotter and hotter, and if you don’t speak it out one day it will just up and punch you in the mouth from the inside.”

When we share Audre Lorde’s *The Transformation of Silence into Action* with students, we facilitate a discussion about what gives each person the
courage to move from silence into action. We acknowledge that a lot of fear, anxiety, and distrust can arise as people share their urgent concerns with people that they do not know well. To navigate this terrain, we invite bell hooks, a feminist theorist, writer, public intellectual, and cultural critic into the room. hooks reminds us that it is difficult to allow our old ideas and habits to transform. hooks writes:

Students taught me, too, that it is necessary to practice compassion in these new learning settings. I have not forgotten the day a student came to class and told me: “We take your class. We learn to look at the world from a critical standpoint, one that considers race, sex, and class. And we can’t enjoy life anymore.” Looking out over the class, across race, sexual preference, and ethnicity, I saw students nodding their heads. And I saw for the first time that there can be, and usually is, some degree of pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches. I respect that pain. And I include recognition of it now when I teach, that is to say, I teach about shifting paradigms and talk about the discomfort it can cause.8

bell hooks and Audre Lorde remind us that as teachers, our daily experiences of privilege and oppression shape our learning. If you are a white person, you might experience “racial stress” in conversations about race because white people are surrounded by images and narratives that reinforce their racial identity.9 If you are a person of color, you might experience generational and embodied wisdom, rage, anxiety, and grief, that come from present day and ancestral trauma and resistance.10

If you are a white facilitator, please note that white people will likely reveal their racism when you bring anti-racist dialogue into the room. To prepare to facilitate conversations about race, we (Susan and Caroline) have joined and formed antiracist groups to support our ongoing transformation. If we can accept and remember regularly that there are good reasons to distrust white educators, including us, it inclines us toward seeing where racism still animates our classroom. If we allow ourselves to forget this, it inclines us towards a masked perception. We believe that we are better anti-racist educators when we take implicit bias tests,11 continue to participate in antiracist groups, and remember that we (Susan and Caroline) are racist and must continually undo our own racism. We have found the Actor—Ally—Accomplice visualization of white people’s development in antiracist work helpful.12 If you are a white person, where are you in this work?
White Actor

Definition: The actions of an Actor do not explicitly name or challenge the pillars of White supremacy which is necessary for meaningful progress towards racial justice.

Action: Read, watch films, and attend events to gain greater knowledge of white privilege, white supremacy, institutionalized racism, the prison industrial complex, etc. Study and deal with your white guilt and white fragility.

White Ally

Definition: Ally is typically considered a verb—one needs to act as an ally, and cannot bestow this title to themselves. Being an Ally is not an invitation to be in Black and Brown spaces to gain brownie points, lead, take over, or explain. Allies constantly educate themselves, and do not take breaks.

Action: Take action beyond your own learning by engaging with other White people. Start conversations and share your learning with other white people in your life, especially those you are closest to (family members, children, neighbors, colleagues). Go to workshops and trainings. If you have a reading group or book club, purchase and read materials from authors of color that address these issues.

White Accomplice

Definition: The actions of an Accomplice are meant to directly challenge institutionalized racism, colonization, and White supremacy by blocking or impeding racist people, policies, and structures. Accomplices’ actions are informed by, directed and often coordinated with leaders who are Black, Brown First Nations/Indigenous Peoples, and/or People of Color.

Action: Organize other white people to study these issues together, attend events as a group, invite speakers to meet with your group. Don’t just go to the workshops—instead, organize for them to host trainings for you, your friends, your family, your co-workers, your neighbors, etc.

Critical

When we say critical teaching, we mean that we aim to understand the historical forces, root causes, and conditions that make our present moment, personal experiences, and worldviews possible. We investigate our bias as we question dominant narratives, ways of seeing, and ways of being. To give you a sense of a critical teaching philosophy in practice, we will share an excerpt from an interview we conducted with Alice Sheppard. Alice is a dancer and choreographer who attends to the complex intersections of disability, gender, and race by exploring the societal and cultural significance of difference. We met Alice when we were all at a residency in 2016, and we have stayed in touch ever since because we share a commitment to cultural equity. Alice has created new spaces of learning for herself and for many disabled dancers. Alice said:

I think I am one of the few disabled dancers who has brute forced my way into an education. As an academic, I had access to the field of critical disability studies.... That language and framing of critical race studies, critical gender studies, [and] critical disability studies frames my studio practice. It frames my sense of knowing that I have the right to go to [dance and performing arts places], to be in these spaces, and fully take part in the work that continues in these spaces. In addition to that, I am one of the few disabled dancers who has had access to professional training, in part because I was able to convince someone in New York to teach me. Literally
convince.... I made sure to work with the [performing arts] field’s recognized leading dance artists and put myself in conversations with the field’s visual and performing artists....

When Alice Sheppard had to “literally convince” leaders in the field of dance to train her, she revealed to these leaders that their definition of dance was narrow and ignored the entire history and practice of disability dance. As teachers, we believe that it is our responsibility to critically engage the conditions that shape the education that we provide to students. In our classes, for example, we provide a model to visualize the scales of intimacy and structural forces that determine beliefs, behaviors, and actions surrounding education in the arts. See the Social-Ecological Model in Chapter 6: How Are You in the World and How Is the World in You?

**Student-centered**

When we say student-centered teaching, we mean that we see ourselves as facilitators supporting collective and self-discovery through developmentally appropriate prompts. In arts education, this is called a “student-centered” approach. As Philip Yenawine writes, “learning only occurs when learners are ready; people internalize, remember and use only what makes sense to them.” To give you a sense of a student-centered teaching philosophy in practice, we invite Paulo Freire (1921–1997), the Brazilian educator, into the room. His approach and method of teaching, known as Popular Education, acknowledges that we are all teachers and we are all learners, and, for us, overlaps with student-centered teaching. Our pedagogy should be directed in relation to the issues that are urgent for us in our communities. We have been particularly impacted by Chapter 2 in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire writes:

> In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry.

Freire lists common beliefs held by teachers and students that “mirror oppressive society as a whole” and which must be transformed to create a space for liberatory education:

- The teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
• The teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
• The teacher talks and the students listen meekly;
• The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
• The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
• The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
• The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
• The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
• The teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.¹⁷

How do we transform these common beliefs about the authority of the teacher and the “emptiness” of the students in our spaces of learning? We have learned from student-centered and popular education that we must start by gathering together to study and act upon the issues that matter to the group as a whole and individually. We recognize that everyone comes into the space of learning with lived experience that we can honor and learn from. See the Asset Mapping / You Already Have What You Need activity in Chapter 4: Teacher/Facilitator Guides for more.↗

We connect the concerns in people’s lives to the systemic conditions that shape them. See Chapter 6: How Are You in the World and How Is the World in You? for more.↗

**Contemplative**

When we say we use a contemplative teaching strategy, we mean that we see we believe that the ability to pay attention is essential to the work of any person. The strength of your imagination, curiosity, and capacity for prolonged thought can be cultivated with rigor. You can learn ways to bring yourself back into the present moment and become aware of what arises.¹⁸ To give you a sense of a contemplative teaching strategy in practice, we invite angel Kyodo williams into the room. Kyodo williams is an ordained Zen priest and a Sensei. She is the second Black woman to be recognized as a teacher in the Japanese Zen lineage at the time of this writing.¹⁹ In addition, we invite members of The Center for a Contemplative Mind in Society into the room. They developed a toolkit called Creating Contemplative Community in Higher Education with the capacities we have listed on the next page. Perhaps you would like to focus on developing one or more of these capacities in the process of making
your next project within a space of learning:

- **FOCUSED ATTENTION**: I am able to practice lucid and attentive awareness, noticing distraction and returning to focused attention.
- **CALMNESS**: I am able to practice grounding, centeredness, a sense of ease of being, and equanimity.
- **PATIENCE**: I am able to remain present amid delays or repetitions. I am aware of my own feelings of annoyance or frustration, noticing them without acting upon them.
- **WISDOM**: I am able to practice understanding, perspective-taking, and clarity of thought.
- **COMPASSION**: I am able to practice sensitivity and care with myself and with others, sensing interdependence and connection to all of life.²⁰

**Co-Created**

When we say we use a co-created teaching strategy, we mean that we acknowledge that everyone is capable of being a teacher and a learner. We aim to balance our authority as teachers (who have many years of experience) with our desire to create a learning space where the group actively shapes the learning environment. To give you a sense of a co-created teaching strategy in practice, we invite John Dewey (1859–1952), the North American philosopher, into the room. Dewey taught that aesthetic experience should be experiential, dialogical, and embodied. Dewey’s work in the 1930s and 1940s sought to emphasize dialogical methods of learning. He believed that nourishing the capacity for dialogue is central to all democratic processes. These claims in his 1934 essay “Art as Experience” resonate with us:

- Art has to become integrated into everyday life. It must be accessible to all, meaning it must leave elite museums and private galleries.
- The traditions in Western philosophy separating mind and body led to descriptions of an aesthetic experience as spectatorial and contemplative, rather than active, productive, and experiential.
- Aesthetic experience should involve the whole body, not just the mind’s ability to imagine and the senses that receive external stimuli.²¹
Somatic

When we say we use a somatic teaching strategy, we mean that we are committed to teaching and learning that respects the whole body, working with all states of dis/ability. We challenge the space of learning norm of sitting in silence by bringing in experiential and embodied practices that connect all aspects of our sensing, thinking, feeling, moving bodies. To give you a sense of a somatic teaching philosophy in practice, we invite Alta Starr, Staci Haines, and RJ Maccani into the room. They are members of Generative Somatics. Generative Somatics (gs) was founded by Haines in 2000 (originally as GenerationFive). Haines combined the core embodied leadership methodology of the Strozzi Institute, where she trained, with her work on healing trauma and movement building through grassroots organizing. Today, gs teaches courses around the country. Starr and Maccani have shaped us with their embodied social-justice organizing and facilitation work. gs writes:

As individuals and groups, we have developed ways of navigating life, oppression, and privilege, and too often, trauma, that both take care of us and can limit our choices. These habits or “survival strategies” live in our bodies, and often show up under pressure, shaping our relationships and leadership, sometimes in ways that undermine our present-day values. Thinking or talking our way into new habits is often frustrating and short-lived. Somatics offers a holistic, practical approach to understanding our default habits and practicing how we want to be. Learning “from the body up” opens up a wider range of choices and actions, reminds us of what we long for and affirms our inherent wholeness. Our leadership and our lives become more aligned with what we most care about.

Through our courses, movement partnerships, and practitioners network, gs develops leaders and organizations that possess the following embodied skills in their organizing and activism as well as in their daily lives.

Perhaps you would like to focus on developing one or more of the following capacities in the process of making your next project within a space of learning:

- **Self-awareness/Embodiment**: I consistently recognize how my thoughts, feelings, and actions are connected to one another. I recognize that embodiment is crucial to ensure that I have access to all the capacities I need. I practice agility and can interrupt my own habits.
• **CONNECTION:** I am reliably able to form and sustain trusting, authentic relationships and to compel others to a shared vision. I am a supportive presence amid difficulty. I am able to give and receive grounded, useful feedback.

• **COORDINATION / COLLECTIVE ACTION:** I am reliably able to take powerful, life-affirming actions rooted in shared values and vision in teams, partnerships, and alliances. I remain responsive to evolving conditions.

• **CONFLICT AS GENERATIVE:** I am reliably able to effectively engage and transform interpersonal and organizational breakdown. I ask for and offer accountability and repair, in a way that generates more dignity and trust for everyone involved.23

**Project-Based**

We also use a project-based teaching strategy, which enables you to synthesize information by creating projects. We invite researchers and educators Lois Hetland, Ellen Winner, Shirley Veenema, Kimberly Sheridan, Diane Jacquith, and Jill Hogan into the room. They developed the Studio Habits of Mind24 framework from 2001 to 2013 at Harvard to describe the benefits of arts education. Perhaps you would like to focus on developing one or more of the following capacities in the process of making your next project within a space of learning:

• **DEVELOP CRAFT AND SKILLS:** The materials and tools I use are chosen intentionally and applied with care. I skillfully incorporate new techniques as well as make connections to my previously made artwork/experiences.

• **ENGAGE AND PERSIST:** I challenge myself to embrace my artmaking problems and to develop a distinct focus within my work.

• **ENVISION:** I imagine and practice many ideas/processes before and during my artmaking.

• **EXPRESS:** I am reliably able to create works that convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning. I spend a lot of time identifying the sources that form my beliefs, and I assess whether my sources are credible. I see myself in a state of continuous transformation, seeking to identify the root causes and historical conditions that form my beliefs and knowledge.25

• **OBSERVE/RESEARCH:** I spend an extensive amount of time observing my subject matter, artmaking processes, and/or the environment around me that I may have otherwise missed.

• **REFLECT / SKILLFUL LISTENING AND COMMUNICATING:** I am reliably able to think and talk with others about an aspect of my
work or working process, and learning to judge my own work and working process and the work of others. I can listen actively, with curiosity, and can communicate my thoughts and feelings.26

• **STRETCH AND EXPLORE:** I take risks in my artmaking and learn from my mistakes.

• **UNDERSTAND (ART) COMMUNITY:** I am reliably able to interact as an artist with other artists (i.e., in classrooms, in local art organizations, and across the art field) and within the broader society. Art is in parentheses here as it can easily be switched with other disciplines, like science or history.

**Reflection**

1. At the beginning of this chapter we invited you to honor all those who have inspired you, shaped your values and beliefs, and enabled you to be present in your spaces of learning. Which people do you feel most aligned with, and why? We ask again: Who would you like to add to this circle to make your ongoing transformation possible?

- The Public Science Project:
- Robin Wall Kimmerer:
- Audre Lorde:
- bell hooks:
- Alice Sheppard:
- Paulo Freire:
- angel Kyodo williams:
- John Dewey:
- Generative Somatics:
- Researchers who developed Studio Habits of Mind:
- Who else?

2. What feelings and sensations came up for you while you were reading this chapter? For example, did you feel surprise, frustration, or excitement? How did you hold these in your body? For example, did you sense these emotions in your shoulders, neck, and back while reading this chapter? *See the Social-Emotional Intelligence Project Reflection activity in Chapter 4: Teacher/Facilitator Guides.*
Teaching Tips

• Our favorite way to teach involves break out groups. People love to get to know one another in focused conversations (and facilitators get a moment to relax and sense the room). We like to use the think-pair-share model, where people reflect on something alone, then share their thoughts with a partner or small group, and then report back to the whole class.

• Often, students do not appreciate the significance of the tools around them until they are out of school and can no longer access those tools. We focus on access to tools in order to bring awareness to the abundance of equipment that a school environment provides.

• We have found that visual resource librarians often know a lot about copyright, and are willing to come into to explain copyright to groups. To find free legal advice, you might (1) see if your local college or university has free intellectual property legal clinics, (2) contact a local nonprofit to see if they have an Intellectual Property Lawyer on their board, or (3) contact Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts.
1. In addition, see the many people mentioned in Acknowledgements.


17. Ibid., 73.


23. Ibid., included with the permission of Alta Starr and Staci Haines.


25. The statement, “I spend a lot of time identifying the sources that form my beliefs, and I assess whether my sources are credible. I see myself in a state of continuous transformation, seeking to identify the root causes and historical conditions that form my beliefs and knowledge,” was added by the authors and is not included in “Studio Habits of Mind.”

26. The statement, “I can listen actively, with curiosity, and can communicate my thoughts and feelings,” was added by the authors and is not included in “Studio Habits of Mind.”