

All brain and still no body: Moving towards a pedagogy of embodiment in teacher education

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“Why do you keep doing this to me?” Body asked me one day
 “I don’t know... If I knew that, maybe I could finally stop and treat you right, with care and respect.”
 “I deserve nothing less from you” Body said
 “I know... it’s just that... I forget”
 “You forget what?” my Body asked of me
 “I forget that you matter... that I matter, that I am Matter”
 “Yes, you do. And yes, you are” She replied...
 (Lussier-Ley, 2010, p. 200)

We are four teacher educators who are interested in the role of emotions and embodiment in teacher education. The impetus for this study emerged after an embodied reflection workshop run by Rachel, Mandi, and Sharon at the 2014 SSTEP Castle Conference in which Monica participated. The workshop explored the ways in which teaching and learning to teach are emotional, cognitive, and embodied acts. After this experience we committed to a collaborative self-study, which we conducted between February and October, 2015, to track our attempts to use embodied pedagogies in our teacher education practices. In this study, we examine our efforts to enact embodied pedagogies in our practice and identify the challenges and benefits of doing so.

Background and theoretical framework

Two persistent issues in teacher education are the perceived gap between theory and practice, and an overemphasis on technical rational views of learning to teach. According to Macintyre Latta and Buck (2008), embodied pedagogies redress both of these issues as they integrate the mind, body and emotions in what Forgasz (2015) describes as “holistic approaches to teaching and learning” (p. 116). While Estola and Elbaz-Luwisch (2010) argue that “it is impossible to separate physical

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experiences from the emotional and cognitive” (p. 698), we note that embodied pedagogies are largely absent in the theorising of pedagogies for teacher education (see for example; Estola & Elbaz-Luwisch, 2010; Forgasz, 2015; Macintyre Latta & Buck, 2008).

Specifically, Nguyen and Larson (2015) refer to embodied pedagogies as those which invite “learning that joins body and mind in a physical and mental act of knowledge construction” (p. 332). They describe three conceptual elements of embodied pedagogy that we draw on in this study to define and analyse our various applications of embodied pedagogies in our practice:

(1) bodily and spatial awareness of sensation and movement: In teacher education, this might include, for example, focusing on physical classroom organisation or understanding how teacher and student body language impact teaching, learning, and communication;

(2) unification of mind/body in learning: This refers to the attention that teachers pay to their emotions and bodily sensations as part of the information that makes up their pedagogical reasoning or upon which they draw when reflecting on experience; and

(3) the body’s role as sociocultural context in teaching: In teacher education, this might include guiding students to pay critical attention to how they read their students’ bodies as the physical markers of gender, race, and sexuality.

These three elements of embodied pedagogy resonated with us. We recognised their influence on our own practices as teachers and were therefore enthusiastic about introducing them more explicitly as aspects of our teaching about teaching. And yet, our study revealed that we each struggled to do so. This chapter explores these difficulties, and documents our progress in seeking to bring embodied pedagogies more fully into our practice.

Aims of the study

The aims of our self-study are: (i) to examine our individual attempts to enact embodied pedagogies in our teacher education practices, and (ii) to develop a collective understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the use of embodied pedagogies in teacher education.

Approach

Fletcher and Bullock (2014) argue that self-study enables teacher educators to “describe and analyse the self-in-practice” (p. 695). In our research we sought to examine the way our developing philosophical beliefs about embodiment aligned with our pedagogical practices. Our research is characterized as a self-study because it attends to the criteria described by LaBoskey (2004). In particular, our self-study is self-initiated and self-focused as we attempt to examine and strengthen our practices of embodied pedagogy. Our research process is both collaborative and interactive, where the meaning is derived from our collective engagement with each others’ reflections and data. In this way, we developed “collective wisdom” (Davey & Ham, 2009) about embodied pedagogy. We also used different qualitative data collection methods to strive for trustworthiness. Sharing our work within our collective and the self-study community addresses the criterion of exemplar-based validation.

We began by reading *Teaching Bodies at Work* (Estola & Elbaz-Luwisch, 2010), using this as a catalyst for email-based conversations about the role of embodiment in our practices as teacher educators. In our email exchanges (32 emails over 10 months), we described our ongoing thinking about, and experiences with, embodied pedagogies, including the challenges we encountered as we sought to apply them in our teaching. Additionally, we each wrote a critically reflective narrative account of our experiences of the ways embodied practices manifested (or not) in our teaching over the course of 2015.

Data analysis

We commenced data analysis by re-reading our own narratives and email communications.

Working from an inductive approach, each of us identified key concepts and themes, making notes as we read, responding to the question, "What am I noticing on re-reading the data?" We then distributed this reflective writing to the rest of the group. We shared our individually identified themes among the group and discussed them via email as a process of reaching consensus. This process involved critiquing and questioning our own, and each other's interpretation of the data.

In our analysis we identified the following themes: (1) enacting personal pedagogies of embodiment; (2) choosing not to share with students our personal pedagogies of embodiment; (3) emotions as the spark for introducing embodied pedagogies; and (4) embodied pedagogical strategies engage students in different kinds and ways of learning about teaching.

Discussion

Using our narratives and reflections as illustrations, here we discuss the four themes, including connections we identified within the literature.

1. Enacting personal pedagogies of embodiment

In analysing our data, we saw the various ways in which our study encouraged us to pay attention to the role of embodied knowing as a dimension of our own pedagogical reasoning and action. In other words, these are our *personal* pedagogies of embodiment. For example, Monica reflected on her pre-existing tendency to draw on her embodied knowing in her teaching:

I think I have always been an embodied teacher but it has never been something that I thought much about. It was just another way of knowing, of seeing the world, of sensing about my students and their experiences in my classroom. (Monica, narrative account)

She also described her deliberate efforts to pay more particular attention to her embodied actions as a consequence of our study:

I am trying to be very aware of my body when I am working with my students- I am asking myself questions like "am I touching a student?" "did I touch a student" "why did I touch a student" "how am I carrying my body in class?" "where do I sit" "do I move around?" (Monica, 13 Feb)

Doing so enabled Monica to generate new reflective insights about what her bodily responses might indicate to her as symptoms not only of when things are going wrong in her classes, but equally significantly, when they are going well:

I felt such a surge of energy in my body- as I journaled about it I thought about how I so rarely focus on these sorts of moments- the teaching moments when things are going well- are clicking- are connecting- I feel almost high from it and usually I just leave it out there- but I am trying to very consciously pay attention to these different sensations in my body when I teach. (Monica, 13 Feb)

Estola and Elbaz-Luwisch (2010) found that consciously paying attention to bodies brought bodies into focus for them everywhere. In a similar fashion, these examples reveal how our study encouraged Monica to notice, to name, and to value her personal pedagogies of embodiment.

2. Choosing not to share with students our personal pedagogies of embodiment

Our data revealed ways in which we drew on our embodied knowing, and how we used our bodies in the service of our teaching. Yet, despite our recognition, we each struggled to foreground this aspect with our students. Rachel observed that "*my personal pursuit of embodied knowing and reflection has been off and on and intensely rewarding at different times... but in my work, I continue to struggle to make it fit, and certainly to give it the time and space it deserves*" (Rachel, 19 Aug). Sharon asked herself, "*Do I take advantage of the teachable moments with students to talk about the embodied aspects of teaching and learning?*" (Sharon, 12 Feb). In response, Monica reflected that, "*I feel like I both use my body and read bodies as an integral part of my teaching- it is one of my strengths- but I have never explicitly focus[ed] on this with my students*" (Monica 13 Feb).

Four key obstacles arose as we analysed our decisions not to explore with, or model for our students how personal pedagogies of embodiment contribute to teacher professional knowledge:

- a. Embodied knowing is not valued in the academy. Monica reflected, "*[O]ne of the tensions is that we exist in these academic contexts that are grounded in traditional notions of knowing, acting, and being- in the mind, through words, etc. and attempting to enact an embodied*

pedagogy requires being in tune to a completely different set of cues- some of which we may do instinctively but mostly not what is valued in our programs or becomes the norm" (Monica, 28 Aug).

- b. Embodied knowing is not valued by our students. Having introduced the idea of embodied knowing to her students, Monica noted that *"one of my PE student teachers said that doing all this stuff was cool- he was open to it - but that when he talked to some of the other students in different classes they thought this work sounded hippy dippy and out there"* (Monica, 13 Feb).
- c. We were not sure of the value of introducing our embodied knowing into our teaching about teaching. For example, Mandi was ambivalent about what was pedagogically productive as opposed to self-indulgent sharing when she wondered, *"When and how is it appropriate to bring our own embodiment into an explicit space with student teachers/other teachers?"* (Mandi, 9 Sep).
- d. We were so unused to unpacking our embodied knowing that we did not know how to do it. Rachel wondered *"if part of our tendency to not 'go there' is about not having a way to tap in to this sense-making in a way that feels safe - for them, for us, for the other students"* (Rachel, 9 Sep).

These obstacles in drawing from the body as a legitimate form of knowledge were felt differently by each of us at different points and reflect the complex consequences of the marginalisation of the body in educational spaces (Estola & Elbaz-Luwisch, 2010; Macintyre Latta & Buck, 2008; Satina & Hultgrin, 2001). In teacher education, this marginalisation of the body and continued privileging of cognitive-rational ways of knowing reflects a contradiction in which propositional and practical knowledges about teaching problematically misalign (Loughran, 2006). As Monica observed: *"It seems like teacher education and universities are rarely embodied pedagogical spaces despite the fact that so many of us implicitly value this kind of knowing - what a bizarre and contradictory tension!"* (Monica, 28 Aug).

3. Emotions are the spark for applying embodied pedagogies

Despite our ambivalence, each of us either discussed embodied knowing or used embodied pedagogical strategies at various points during the period of our self-study. In analysing these experiences, we identified that the most ready opportunities to do so were when we were exploring content related to the emotions of teaching and learning. Wondering how to begin to integrate embodied pedagogies in her teaching, Mandi commented *"[p]erhaps simply acknowledging your feelings is a good start - for both student teachers and teacher educators - and that your feelings can drive you to do certain things and not other things ...?"* (Mandi, 20 Aug). This was, indeed what Rachel did in her teaching as she made *"a deliberate attempt to bring my body into the frame... To model that I am feeling things in my body that they can't know about but that those feelings (bodily and emotional) are manifesting in ways that will be affecting them and me"* (Rachel, 9 Sep). Responding to Rachel, Sharon realised that:

I'll often talk about my own memories of how I felt the bodily signs of nerves before my first teaching, or how I still feel those things at the start of a new year - the quickening of the pulse, the flutter in the stomach, sometimes, a creeping tension across the top of the forehead. But your email Rach makes me think about how I just 'tell' - I don't really unpack these- I expect them to make the connections. I don't explicitly talk about how to RESPOND or LEARN from these things - just about how I notice them. There's a lost opportunity right there. (Sharon, 9 Sep)

Loughran (2006) describes modelling as "the overarching need for teacher educators to pay attention to their own pedagogical reasoning and reflective practice and to create opportunities for their student teachers to access this thinking about, and practice of, teaching" (p. 9). In this instance, Sharon recognised the 'lost opportunity' to model for her students, Estola and Elbaz-Luwisch's (2010) idea that "by listening to the actions and reactions of the body, teachers can keep their reflections close to practice" (p. 714).

Mandi described a similar 'lost opportunity' to engage deeply with her students about embodied emotions:

I had an experience a week ago, that I felt was an opening to explore embodiment in an authentic,

natural way, when a student teacher commented that he couldn't continue reading the article that we had set for class because he felt almost physically sick in response to it. He had just taught a class involving group work that went horribly wrong. Then when he read the article he began to understand what he did wrongly and it was very upsetting to him. The more he read, the worse he felt about himself, as growing understanding was connected into his emotions ... It felt like a golden moment ... I really wanted to work with that moment, although the only thing I did was 'mark' it, acknowledge it and invited him to say a bit more about it, although he couldn't say much more than he already had. Of course, it could have also been something we opened up for the whole group but somehow we didn't and the moment passed. (Mandi, 9 Sep)

Our findings, in section 2 (above), point to some of the reasons why 'somehow' Mandi allowed the moment to pass. This new awareness affords us opportunities to respond differently to such moments in our future practice.

4. Embodied pedagogical strategies engage students in different ways of learning about teaching

In our teaching, we each experimented with embodied pedagogical strategies that encouraged our students to learn through their bodies and/or to understand more about the idea of coming to know through embodied processes. Writing about her final class for the semester, Sharon described her application of an embodied pedagogy for teaching about teacher wellbeing:

We ran this class where we asked the students to think about their placement experiences and what kinds of things they noticed in themselves – ie stress, anxiety, happiness and then we talked about what they notice in their bodies that allow them to know and recognise these kinds of feelings and emotions... One of the most interesting (and powerful) things for me about this was the fact that my colleagues shared and talked about their bodily noticing and responses too - so we had a group of PSTs and 3 teacher educators talking about the body and how we might learn from it. (Sharon, 30 Oct)

Significantly, in pioneering a simple embodied pedagogy of mind/body unification (Nguyen & Larsen, 2015), Sharon invited a revaluing of embodied knowing by both her students and her colleagues, thereby challenging the first and second of our own obstacles to embodiment described in section 2 (above).

Monica engaged her students in a similarly well-being focused embodied pedagogical strategy but, in her case, students undertook prior training in breathing and meditation processes which might be understood more as an example of Nguyen and Larson's embodied pedagogies that encourage bodily awareness of sensation and movement. Monica observed that:

They seemed to appreciate findings ways to manage their stress and re-energize themselves. And interestingly my physical education students who so often feel left out of the conversations, were front and center for the training. (Monica, narrative)

Monica's observations about her physical education students reveal that while embodied knowing is a largely marginalised discourse within the academy (obstacle 1) and amongst students (obstacle 2), there are some for whom embodied knowing is a more comfortable approach. Incorporating embodied pedagogical strategies in our teaching therefore contributes to the inclusivity of our classrooms. Monica went on to describe the reflective discussion of their body-based work which:

involved talking about how to bring these techniques into their classrooms and also why it might be of value. These were productive conversations- about the culture of urban schools- the needs of the children- and the notion of creating safe and positive spaces for their lives. (Monica, narrative)

Unpacking their embodied learning in this way served to "encourage [Monica's students] to reflect and act more explicitly as embodied, and attend to their own learning, and that of their students as embodied" (Hunter, 2011, p. 189).

Rachel applied an embodied pedagogical strategy that falls under all three of Nguyen and Larsen's (2015) conceptual categories of embodied pedagogies. Using a drama-based approach for exploring Brookfield's (1995) four lenses for critical reflection required Rachel's students to employ spatial and bodily awareness as they sculpted each other's bodies into positions that they then 'read' to prompt a unified mind/body reflective process. She reflected:

I've never had students seem to understand so quickly and so profoundly for themselves: the way

in which different people perceive events from different situations and the partiality this creates in the reflective process; the importance, therefore, of trying to see the situation from multiple perspectives in order to redress the limitations of our own perspectives; and, crucially, the power of embodied reflection in order to make concrete and visible these otherwise abstract concepts. (Rachel, narrative)

Rachel's observations of the depth of her students' learning through embodied reflection confirm Nguyen and Larsen's (2015) proposition that "subject matter requiring action and spatial engagement highlights the mutually informative activities of body and mind in ways that lead to new modes of perception" (p. 335). Reflecting on why she thought the students had so readily engaged in this embodied pedagogical strategy (compared with other earlier attempts in which she had faced students' reluctance), Rachel concluded:

It was because I didn't make it about embodied reflection. It was about reflection. And I just used an embodied process. In the same way that I might use a discussion or writing based approach. I taught as though embodiment was a legitimate way of exploring ideas and as though embodiment offered a powerful form of sense-making. I stopped marginalizing embodied knowing and in doing so, the students experienced it not at the loony fringes, but at the centre of reflective learning. (Rachel, narrative)

This reflection raises an important question about the degree to which our own ambivalence (obstacle 3, above) is a factor in our students' un/willingness to engage in embodied pedagogies (obstacle 2).

Conclusion

Lawrence (2012) argues that "promoting and practising embodied pedagogies often means breaking through boundaries and challenging dominant ideologies and epistemologies" (p. 76). In this study, we set out to explore those boundaries as they manifest in our own practice and whether, and how, we are able to break through them.

Through our self-study we became more explicitly aware of our struggles to recognize and take advantage of 'teachable moments' to talk about embodied aspects of teaching and learning. We identified two key challenges: how to flatten both our own, and the institutional, hierarchical privileging of discursive-cognitive-logical-rational knowledges over embodied-felt-emotional ones and our need to make explicit the taken for granted aspects of our embodied pedagogy and practice. Talking explicitly and modeling the ways embodied knowing forms part of our pedagogical reasoning and decision making is something that we consider important in working with pre-service teachers. In doing this work, we are all working "towards a pedagogy of embodiment" (Mandi, Aug), and we encourage other teacher educators to consider how they, too, might return bodily knowing to teacher education practices.

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Enacting self-study methods to explore critical engagement in synchronized online learning spaces

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This self-study describes our professional inquiry connected to the notions of *critical engagement* while teaching synchronized online literacy courses. As two veteran literacy teacher educators, we were required to teach synchronized graduate literacy courses exclusively online at our respective institutions. Synchronous courses require the instructor and students to be online at the same designated time using technology that attempts to simulate a face-to-face context. Having prior experience with asynchronous teaching (students working on their own time), we felt the synchronous format was far superior and the best option to deliver meaningful instruction in an online context. Nevertheless, we still shared concerns about transferring our face-to-face instruction into a synchronized space because of our own biases. That is, we believed face-to-face learning was ideal for the literacy teacher education classes we taught. Although we could draw from two decades of distance learning literature to inform our endeavors (Archambault, 2011; Moore & Kearsley, 2011), we still felt apprehensive.

One complexity causing this apprehension centered on how synchronous online instruction would allow for *critical engagement*. Wohlwend and Lewis (2011) highlighted one notion of critical engagement through the words of Toni Morrison (1992) who described her own reading process—while reading we can become *engaged in* and *watch* what is being read simultaneously. These dual cognitive processes of *presumably unselfconscious engagement* with *decidedly self-conscious observation* provided us one lens by which to explore our pedagogy, noting the places we fully *engaged*, feeling fluid and immersed in the virtual space, and the places we consciously *watched*, sensing a distance within the teaching space. However, within this notion of critical engagement, we could not ignore the power dynamics affecting the act of engagement and watching. Thus, we also drew from the concept of *power*.

Foucault (1980) explained, power is not a thing; power rests in the relationships of people as they interact. McNiff and Whitehead (2006) further described this abstract notion, “[Power] moves

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through . . . relationships like quicksilver, permeating personal boundaries and infiltrating attitudes and discourses” (p. 174). Applying this lens to our data made it possible to better understand how power was negotiated—either neutralizing or disrupting the power dynamic within the act of *engagement* and *watching*. Thus, we asked: What are the connections and interconnections between *engaging*, *watching*, and *power* in our synchronized online classes, and how did these notions impact our teaching, such as how/where one is engaged and how/where one watches? In answering these questions, we took heed of the *Zeichner Paradox* described by Hamilton and Pinnegar (2015). In short, Zeichner (2007) critiqued self-study researchers for not connecting their research questions to a larger context—both in content and teacher education. To avoid these pitfalls, we connected our questions to a larger context, building off Bair and Bair’s (2011) study, which uncovered “adoption of online instructional technology has outpaced our knowledge of how it might best be used for instruction,” thus they placed a call on researchers to understand the nuances of online teaching in more complex ways (p. 1). Our study seeks to respond to this call—exploring synchronized online learning via self-study from a critical engagement perspective.

Methods

We both collected data in our graduate literacy courses from two sections taught over two semesters (four total sections) to K-12 in-service teachers seeking a master’s degree in Literacy Studies. Our respective universities, located in the United States, use an online interface called BlackBoard Collaborate (BBC), which facilitates synchronized class sessions. While teaching in BBC, we used various collaborative tools to simulate face-to-face sessions, such as: video and audio tools for verbal and visual communication, break-out rooms for discussion and small group work, public and private chat boxes for message writing, as well as application and desktop sharing, polling, PowerPoint importation, and whiteboards.

Data included: (a) transcripts from each digitally recorded BBC session and observation notes from the breakout room sessions (note: BBC does not offer a recording feature when students move to breakout sessions); (b) curriculum artifacts; and (c) researcher’s journals that contemporaneously documented our raw emotions after each class session. For overall rigor, we employed Pinnegar and Hamilton’s (2009) self-study inquiry tools and served as critical friends (Samaras, 2011).

To answer our research question, we analyzed each data source using three analysis tools. First, we used directed content analysis tools (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), coding with predetermined categories of critical engagement—engaged and watched. For reliability, we collaborated by making a master list of our codes (Smagorinsky, 2008), being sure to assign the same units of meaning as we negotiated these codes to each piece of data. As we worked through our coding process, we had a few points of divergence and convergence when coming to agreement of what evidenced unselfconscious engagement compared to decidedly self-conscious. For example, when we coded written conversations from students engaged in the chat feature, we often relied on memory, asking ourselves, did we recall watching the chat room as we taught? When we engaged, the data showed we acknowledged the written chats by either reading the chats aloud or responding to what a specific student wrote. When it appeared we ignored the chat, we had to sort out the coding—what constituted our own unselfconscious engagement compared to decidedly self-conscious? Determining codes for these types of communications took negotiation on our part. However, our conversations about these codes helped us better define these notions in concrete examples emerging from the data. In the end, our analysis showed robust evidence supporting the acts of engagement and watching.

Second, to further our understanding of these notions of *engagement* and *watching*, we employed nodal moments as an analysis tool to each data source. In short, Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) described nodal moments as a “pattern in experience”, which opens space for a reinterpretation of the lives and experiences of both the writer and the reader (p. 5). Therefore, returning to the data we noted patterns of how critical engagement brought about tension, paradoxes and cause for new discernment, while interrupting some of our assumptions around engagement and online instruction. Once we identified the nodal moments, we quantified the most repeated ideas—

signifying our pattern of experiences. In this, we identified three of the most repeated notions from all data sources: *communication*, *relationships*, and *attitudes*.

Finally, we applied Richardson's (2000) "writing is a way of 'knowing'—a method of discovery and analysis" (p. 923). For us, the writing process included multiple revisions, which helped us further pare down the data so we could analyze these three repeated notions of *communication*, *relationships*, and *attitudes* in concrete, specific ways, thus, noting and unpacking the fluctuating power dynamics found in the act of *engagement* and *watching*. During the writing process, we discovered these three nodal moments were not unique to online teaching as they resonated in our face-to-face classes, as evidenced in our researcher's journals. Yet, in answering our research question, our analysis showed these nodal moments took on unique nuances within the synchronous online classroom, which impacted our teaching in different ways, causing us to wrestle with power dynamics through a new lens. Although numerous examples from the data emerged, we share one or two exemplars for each finding.

Synchronized online classes impact communication engagement

Our analysis confirmed communication tensions arose as we both engaged and watched repeatedly. For the most part, during all synchronous online classroom meetings, the main form of communication was verbal dialogue as instructors and students talked to each other using the microphone feature. This verbal communication took on the form of direct instruction from the instructor or a student presenter, small group discussions in break-out rooms, and one-on-one conversations between instructors and students. However, tensions were evident in our researcher journals as we noted our comfort in engaging and dissonance in watching during this verbal communication. For example, Elizabeth wrote:

I asked students to share feedback on their experiences in the online classroom. One student shared, "I was worried about not being in a 'real' classroom setting, but you do an excellent job encouraging professional conversations and creating a community feel during our online classes." Last night, students shared meaningful insights. I perceived they were engaged. I felt engaged. Yet, I simultaneously felt dissonance because I couldn't see everyone at the same time. It's such a strange feeling as a teacher. So, I was happy to get the positive and affirming feedback.

Charlotte also noted these tensions in her journal.

I have a new appreciation for a Radio Disc Jockey (DJ) because there are moments I'm making a joke or asking a rhetorical question and I switch to a more deliberate watching mode because I feel lost in how I am being received—I don't know how DJs can stand this one-way communication.

Although BBC is not a one-way mode of communication, we both experienced distressed moments, feeling like we needed more feedback from our students. To compensate in these moments, the transcripts show we both elicited student feedback by requiring them to use the emoji signs. Specifically, Charlotte repeatedly asked her students, "Please give me a thumbs up..." Analysis showed these communication moments often encroached into instructional time, impacting our teaching. We noted in our researcher journals feelings of disorganization and always being behind. Thinking through these tensions, we recognized the power dynamics shifting between instructor and student as we repeatedly asked students for feedback, looking to validate our own acts of engagement. Our act of *watching* within the synchronous online classroom created a unique need for extra student feedback—more so than in the face-to-face classroom. Thus, verbal communication neutralized the power dynamics, however, our inability to physically see students throughout the whole class disrupted the power dynamic, creating dissonance as we *watched* with fear of failing to *engage* our students in meaningful learning experiences.

Beyond elicitation of student feedback, our analysis of the data showed an additional way the power dynamic neutralized—through the use of the BBC chat feature, which provided students opportunities to pose questions and share comments in written form, somewhat akin to back channeling. Analyzing the written chats, we noted a mixture of comments. While they most often centered on course content, *engaging* students and instructors, they also centered on community building, such as jokes and connections being made, and validation of one another. For example, one chat episode said (names are pseudonyms):