"Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."
Pedagogy of the Oppressed
Paulo Freire

I firmly believe that a professor's job is to bulldoze the barricades of ignorance through effective teaching and high quality research. Effective teachers have the pedagogical skills to destroy barriers to learning so that students can clearly and readily understand the material being taught in relation to and through their life circumstances. For example, I utilize a pro-black feminist-womanist pedagogy in my lectures, discussions, and presentations in my Race and Ethnicity course. I have my students participate in autocritography, which includes writing and sharing critical reflection papers that engage their life experiences with the course readings. Through this exercise, students come to understand the diverse ways race, racism, and racial disparities are reinforced and countered in their daily lives.

Rarely are my pedagogical practices asymmetrical: teaching and learning is a reciprocal process between my students and me. To that end, I believe in creating collaborative learning environments whereby, I learn and obtain knowledge from my students, and by the same token, my students' learn and obtain knowledge from me. For example, while teaching my Stratification and Mobility course, I encourage students to use their sociological imagination to understand the role of objectivity in stratification research. Through collaborative learning, we learn that objectivity should not be understood as bias-free or value neutral, instead, objectivity should be understood as being open to new and/or contradictory findings to one's research.

As an instructor, I position myself as a resource for students of various backgrounds. My aim is to help students cultivate skills that facilitate knowledge acquisition and transmission. Thus, in my lectures and classroom discussions I focus on developing students' critical thinking skills and reflexivity. To achieve these goals, I tell my students to "question the answers." I encourage them to use scientific questioning while they read and study the course material. I also remind them that they must demonstrate reflexive thinking in class discussions and in their writing assignments. I inform them that students who think reflexively are people who think about thinking. They reflect on their thoughts and ideas. They ask self-reflective questions such as: "why am I thinking about this, what made me think of this idea, how did I learn this idea, why do I think this idea is right, why would someone say my idea is wrong?"

Recently, I have utilized these strategies in my Statistics course. In this course, I give students a topic without a dataset and I ask them to construct a research hypothesis. After they construct their hypothesis, I ask them to reflexively think about their hypothesis by answering the questions mentioned above. This exercise has been effective in developing my students' critical thinking skills and reflexivity. Furthermore, the exercise helps them recognize the benefits of these skills when conducting and evaluating research. By the end of the course, I am pleased by my students' ability to identify and challenge unsubstantiated stereotypes and prejudice through statistical data.