

STL Ep 10: Krista Grensavitch

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SPEAKERS

Krista Grensavitch, Amanda Reavey



Amanda Reavey 00:02

Hello, my name is Amanda Reavey. Welcome to The Stereotype Life, where we talk about mental health, disability, and access in higher education. We release new episodes every other Wednesday at 12pm Central. So please subscribe on iTunes or wherever you get your podcasts and visit www.stereotype.life for this episode's transcript and additional resources. Hello, my name is Amanda Reavey and today I'm here with Dr. Krista Grensavitch. Krista is a lecturer in Women and Gender Studies, History, and Comparative Ethnic Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She received her PhD in history from UWM in 2019. So I'm really excited to have Krista here. For listeners who might not know The Stereotype Life podcast was my final project for her class – feminist pedagogy class which I took at UWM last spring. And from the class readings, I realized my goal for this project is threefold. One, I wanted to push back against symbolic annihilation by representing myself as somebody with a disability and mental health issues and show others what possible. Two, I wanted to share resources and connect with others through reciprocity. And Three, I wanted to share the journey in form of community ethics of care through practicing radical empathy. So thank you, Krista, for helping me think through this project and create it, and for being here today.



Krista Grensavitch 01:32

Thank you so much, Amanda, for having me. I can't tell you the extent to which I am excited and nervous and humbled and – such a mix of emotions that I'm feeling right now. I'm just so excited to be able to support this incredible project and to see it come to life in new ways and new iteration. So congratulations to you, and thank you so much for having me.



Amanda Reavey 01:57

Yeah. Thank you. Thank you so much. Ah, I'm nervous too. So, first question: how would you define feminist pedagogy? What might this look like in the classroom?



Krista Grensavitch 02:10

Yeah. So this is a question that perhaps, I hope that I always have an evolving answer to, as I continue to learn more about myself as an instructor, myself as a student, to learn more about feminism and intersectional feminism, as time and theory and practice extend. But, I guess in short, I see feminist pedagogy as a way of taking an intersectional feminist approach to practices of teaching and learning. And for me, I very much self-identify as an intersectional feminist. And the primary way that I see practice playing out in my life – hopefully for the long term, but in in this moment – is identifying myself as a feminist teacher or a feminist pedagogue, if I want to sound a little bit more fancy. So it means taking my understanding of feminism, of intersectional feminism, and putting it to daily, mundane, granular practice inside my classroom. And that could be a traditional academic kind of classroom. But I also see classrooms as being scenes and encounters and interactions of teaching and learning far outside just how we usually think about the academic classroom. So I think I gave you a really, really wide definition because I think, for me, it is a really wide and far-reaching commitment to my life.



Amanda Reavey 03:53

How would you define intersectional feminism or feminist pedagogy versus just regular feminist pedagogy?



Krista Grensavitch 04:02

Yeah, that's a great question. And I actually have in the forefront of my mind a really great thing that I saw today just going through Instagram, looking through my friend's Instagram stories. And it really resonated with me; this picture with text that said that feminism without intersectionality is white supremacy. So without a commitment to an

understanding of intersectionality and an application of an intersectional lens to feminism – meaning that we understand the intersecting systems of oppression that marginalize and keep in place and oppress certain groups of people, depending on how they identify – that without that kind of understanding in our feminism, we’re maintaining and perpetuating systems that oppress. So, I think without naming it as intersectional, that doesn’t necessarily call into question the kind of white supremacy that can happen and is happening within feminist circles and within feminist theorizing. So I believe in having to make that explicit. Because without making it explicit, I think we’re just upholding and perpetuating the status quo, which is one that is white supremacist.



Amanda Reavey 05:30

So as instructors we could, since the classroom is a microcosm of the real world, we could, in fact, further systems of oppression if we’re not aware of the intersectionality of what we’re doing or how we’re doing things.



Krista Grensavitch 05:48

Right. There are massive repercussions. And if we’re not doing the work of anti-racism, then we’re upholding systems that perpetuate racism.



Amanda Reavey 05:57

Yeah. So. Susan Iverson, which you had us read, I loved this quote, where she says, “A feminist pedagogy demands that we become personal with the materials studied.” And I think that’s part of intersectionality, too. Like, how do we consider intersectionality and make the material personal as instructors? But also how do you, as an instructor, make the material personal?



Krista Grensavitch 06:27

Yeah, that’s a really, really great question, and, I think, a great way to extend the conversation that Iverson is bringing up in that chapter. It’s really endless, the way that we can think about how to make the material personal. And I think what’s really distinctive about feminist theory and queer theory is that it challenges us to think about our own lives and our own lived reality. The old feminist adage, “the personal is political,” challenges us to say “Okay, here, here’s this reading on x” or “Here’s this article that expounds upon x. What bearing does this have on me in my life?” And I think in almost every instance of reading feminist or queer literature, there’s some sort of a personal challenge to think

about how we're implicated there, how our experiences might shed some further light on the matter at hand. So I think, to some degree, it's a frame of reference that you use if you're willing to take in what someone is writing or talking or speaking about and allow yourself that time and space to engage in critical reflection to think, "What bearing does this have on me? What is this calling me to do? How am I politicized by reading this? And then what do I have to do in return? So since I've taken this information in now now, what am I responsible to do? And how to act?" Does that make sense?



Amanda Reavey 08:07

Yeah, that we really need to be reflective about our teaching practices in who we are as people, because we can't really expect students to do the same if we're not also modeling that.



Krista Grensavitch 08:22

Precisely. Right. Yeah. So I'm in – yeah. I really appreciate the way that you distill that. I think my nerves are kind of reemerging a little bit again. And you ask these really simple, straightforward questions, and I'm getting myself in the weeds. But you just really turned that to help me think more clearly about what I was trying to say. So thank you. Yeah. What's so important is modeling those things. So modeling for students – okay, I'm taking in this piece of feminist literature through conversation and through class discussion or through us assignments – I can say this is how this has an impact on me. And I might reveal certain parts of my identity or personal life and explain how it maybe elicited a change in reaction for me so that students then feel empowered and liberated to do the same sort of thing. And this doesn't just have to be feminist literature. I think explicitly, there are those political calls. But this could be really anything. Reading in history, reading in, I don't know, maybe even math, to think about what that that text could call us to do.



Amanda Reavey 09:38

Yeah, I think, too, when you reveal how it's affected you as an instructor, it really challenges the idea that the instructor is an authority figure.



Krista Grensavitch 09:50

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's something that over the last, I guess, almost eight years of my teaching practice, I've really worked to think about how to use authority radically, or how to radically divest myself of authority, and becoming more and more transparent with the

other teachers and learners that I'm in classrooms with. Not that I'm attempting to overly reveal really innate personal details about myself but just willing to be radically transparent. And to see what sorts of outcomes can come from that. So that that's a sort of modeling that I tried to do in the classroom to show how I've become personal with the material. I used to be really guarded in the classroom. I think I was thinking a lot about the fact that I am not necessarily a lot older than a lot of my students, certainly when I was first teaching intro level classes eight years ago. But our Feminist Pedagogy classroom, for example, like, there are many of us, maybe even you and I, are very similar in age. So, socially, I think we take age to mean some sort of earned authority. And even though I can see the ways in which that's socially constructed that still makes me think about, like, how I'm not perceived as an authority figure or wouldn't be just based on our relative age within that classroom. And I think that kept me really closed in for a long time. And through some really great conversations with Cheryl Cater actually, who's a lecturer emeritus from UW-M. Just thinking about how to throw that out the window. To not let my – how I've been socialized and personally taken that in, that I somehow have to show myself to be a put-together, adult person. That I could just radically shut myself of that.



Amanda Reavey 11:59

Yeah, it makes me think of congruency. Like, what's going on internally should reflect what you're saying and doing externally. And vice versa.



Krista Grensavitch 12:10

Yeah. Yes. Yeah. I was not practicing congruency early on as a teacher. That's something that I continually work to become more congruent. Is that an appropriate way to say that?



Amanda Reavey 12:23

Yeah, yeah.



Krista Grensavitch 12:24

Yeah, that's a great term, a great – new frame of reference to think about. So thanks for introducing that to me.



Amanda Reavey 12:33

When I think of individual learners, I think about students with various learning styles and goals. However, in one of the articles you had us read, Christina Llewellyn and Jennifer Llewellyn talk about learner communities. What's the difference? How might we think about teaching in terms of creating learner communities?



Krista Grensavitch 12:55

Yeah. I think it's a "both/and" approach. So individual learners come to the classroom with different sets of skills, different sets of experiences, and each of those approaches – individual approaches – deserves to be recognized and honored. But they can also come together to create – to each be honored in a way that creates a fulfilling classroom community where there are multiple modalities or ways of communication, or ways of talking and learning and encountering texts. Does that make sense?



Amanda Reavey 13:36

Yeah.



Krista Grensavitch 13:37

In what I'm trying to describe as a "both/and" approach?



Amanda Reavey 13:40

Yeah, yeah. I mean, this project is multimodal, right?



Krista Grensavitch 13:47

Yeah.



Amanda Reavey 13:48

And the fact that you allowed that to happen, I don't know that this could have happened in a classroom that was like just very narrow in how they viewed learning and expressing how we learn or –

 Krista Grensavitch 14:05
Yeah.

 Amanda Reavey 14:05
– showing what we learned.

 Krista Grensavitch 14:09
I'm really glad to hear you say that. This is another thing that I try to think a lot about in the way that I learned myself and the way that I helped to facilitate, hopefully, helped to facilitate other people's learning. That just letting go and letting things happen and leaving room for what's unknowable can facilitate or can provide the right conditions for podcasts like this, for projects like this, to spring up. I think if you're too structured in what specific learning outcomes have to look like, then you can be missing so much.

 Amanda Reavey 14:55
So we've mentioned authority, we've kind of mentioned identity and unknowability. And you talk about that in your dissertation, which is titled "Thinking with Things: Reimagining the Object Lesson as a Feminist Pedagogical Device in the Humanities Classroom." So could you to that a little bit? I mean, we talked about authority a little bit, but identity and unknowability?

 Krista Grensavitch 15:21
Yeah. So just to give a little bit of background about my dissertation, I really wanted it to be something that is fully applicable by others. So instead of just explaining, from a theoretical perspective, why to use objects in the higher ed classroom, I wanted to be able to draw from my own experience and to illustrate for others how you might do that. Not to be fully prescriptive, but to kind of show a roadmap and to show some possibilities. So, I had three body chapters in my dissertation. And each of the chapters was based on a particular class that I had taught, or a part of a particular class, like an assignment for a class. So I really got to narrow in on those individual, different instances of teaching. And to try to bring in more of a theoretical conversation, as I was talking about each of those classes, I brought to light ideas of authority, identity, and unknowability. And each of these has bearing on any kind of a classroom in any way that I would talk about teaching. But they also provided these really nice, I think, maybe narrative arcs for how I was describing my experience with teaching and learning in that particular chapter. So for example, the

chapter that I was writing about unknowability, I'm describing a collaboration that I did with the Encyclopedia of Milwaukee Project, which is a big public history project that's home is here at UW-M. And it seeks to tell a history of the four-county area, including Milwaukee. And I was working with them to do some curriculum work. And any other experience I'd had with curriculum development before,, I could see the direct results of, or I thought that I could see any of the direct results of because they were in my own classroom. So my own classroom was sort of like a laboratory for the kinds of curriculum and readings and assignments and things that I was developing. But in developing curriculum for a large public history project that's hosted online, I couldn't fully know how other teachers and learners might take up these ideas that I was promoting and trying to provide resources for. So I guess, in that way, that's how unknowability played out. But like I was saying to you earlier, unknowability is a much larger concept, a much larger – it's not necessarily the right word for it. It's sort of like a central tenant to how I think about myself as a teacher, is leaving that room for unknowability and not fearing unknowability. So – oh, go ahead.



Amanda Reavey 18:22

Oh.



Krista Grensavitch 18:23

I'm talking a lot about it.



Amanda Reavey 18:24

Oh, no, it's great. I guess what's coming to mind for me is the collaborative aspect of teaching and learning. And it's almost like when you read a book, there's the book that the author wrote, there's the book that the reader is reading, and then there's a third space that's collaboratively created when they come together.



Krista Grensavitch 18:49

Yeah. Yeah. And if you don't – I think that there's really something to be lost if you don't recognize that third, liminal, co-created space at the outset. Or recognize that there's possibility there. So in centering unknowability and meditating on unknowability in that chapter, more specifically, that definitely allowed me a place in my dissertation, and then in my larger teaching practice, just to think about: what are the possibilities of unknowability and incorporating a full understanding that it exists? That we have to

prepare to be unprepared, I think is where unknowability derives from, at least in my mind,



Amanda Reavey 19:38

It makes me think that you need to be open to that space, because that's where the creativity is.



Krista Grensavitch 19:45

Yes. Yes, and I – absolutely. And in trying too hard to dictate everything that happens, I think that's a really not good space for me in terms of mental health. And perhaps not a good space for students in terms of their mental health, feeling like everything has to be dictated and structured so discreetly. I think I would try to spend more of my mental and emotional energy making sure – if I were a student who was aiming to do what the teacher wanted me to do – I would spend so much mental time and energy trying to make sure that it fits the directions as described instead of just experimenting and see what could be made manifest by like a really beautiful intersection of ideas and – yeah.



Amanda Reavey 20:40

Yeah. Rather than trying to find what the "right" answer is or what the professor wants, it's allowing for something else to happen or allowing for there to be more than one correct answer or something.



Krista Grensavitch 21:00

Yeah, right. Which I think allows me to go back to one of the earlier questions you asked about feminist pedagogy and how I would define that. And I want to add there that, as a feminist teacher or as a person who engages in feminist practice through feminist pedagogy, I want to think of myself as just a facilitator. That I want to do my best to make sure that the conditions are right for students to be able to critically engage and to critically produce.



Amanda Reavey 21:36

So it's more about holding space.

 Krista Grensavitch 21:39
Yes. Yeah, exactly.

 Amanda Reavey 21:42
I like that. What about –

 Krista Grensavitch 21:45
Yes! Good! I'm glad!

 Amanda Reavey 21:49
[Laughs] I feel like some of the terms that I'm throwing out there, some of the things I'm thinking about, are, like, just actually are things in psychology. So I'm almost thinking about the psychology of teaching rather than the pedagogy of teaching. So I don't know. That's where I'm going.

 Krista Grensavitch 22:09
I think there are some really helpful intersections there.

 Amanda Reavey 22:11
Yeah. Maybe that'll be my dissertation. [Laughs]

 Krista Grensavitch 22:16
Yes. Keep me updated!

 Amanda Reavey 22:19
What about authority and identity?

 Krista Grensavitch 22:23
Yeah. So identity is the way that I would talk about that, or I talked about that in my dissertation. And the way that I think about it a lot now is to think about identity from an

intersectional approach, which is what we talked about a little bit earlier. And helping students to understand that they are positioned in a complex matrix that is in flux. And that their identities deserve to be recognized and honored within the space of the classroom and they deserve to be represented and explored within the archives within historical narratives. So both individual students and teachers and learners ourselves should be present, but also that we can recognize the vast identities of others historically. And then authority – that also gets back to something we were talking about earlier – how to both recognize it and how to seed it. Yeah.



Amanda Reavey 23:33

What do you mean by seeded?



Krista Grensavitch 23:36

"Cede" like c-e-d-e? Like –



Amanda Reavey 23:39

Oh, okay. Yeah, got



Krista Grensavitch 23:43

Homonyms names are hard. [Laughs] We're mostly the audio here.



Amanda Reavey 23:49

Yeah, and I do have a automatic captioning system that comes up, but it did spell it as s-e-e-d, and I was like, "That cannot be right."



Krista Grensavitch 24:00

You know, now that I think about it, I think I like both ways, both "cede" like relinquish and "seed" as in plant in terms of authority. I think that both of them have really considerable bearing. Because, yes, I'm hoping to cede, relinquish my own authority in the classroom, and to plant seeds in other teachers and learners who might be sharing that space to think about the ways in which they could inhabit authority, especially if they've never been invited or thought that they could do that previously in a classroom.



Amanda Reavey 24:38

How do we – for people who might be hesitant – how do we invite them to do that?



Krista Grensavitch 24:47

Mm hmm. I think that there are explicit ways and also stealthy ways that people who are in a position to facilitate classrooms can do that. So there's the ability to have that head on conversation, perhaps, with students to say, these are your assumptions, these are maybe our social, collective assumptions about who has authority in a classroom. You may enter this classroom thinking that I am imagining you to be a passive receptor of knowledge, and I'm here to pour my knowledge into your vessel. So there's ways to explicitly talk about it in classroom spaces where you're naming authority for what it is, and you're asking students to resist that, maybe push back on it, both you and in other kinds of classroom spaces. But then I think that there are more stealthy ways to do that by, like, curricular design. So asking them maybe to center themselves, to engage in a lot of personal reflection, to use first person in their reflection, to use "I" language when they're completing assignments is a way for them to begin inhabiting a space of authority without necessarily knowing that that's what they're doing. But maybe come to realize that later on through further reflection.



Amanda Reavey 26:16

And by using "I" statements, they really start to, um, I can't think of the word that I'm trying to think of. But they're really – oh, ownership. They're taking ownership of their of their learning that way.



Krista Grensavitch 26:34

Right, but they're not some like, passive third party – that they're not writing in some sort of like passive third person voice. This false sense of neutrality. But that they're actually owning their identities by saying, "I believe that x happened" or "I believe that this is -" whatever.



Amanda Reavey 26:54

Which teaches leadership skills too.

 Krista Grensavitch 26:57
Yeah, so yeah.

 Amanda Reavey 27:00
Thinking about how, not just – we're not just learning how to learn in a classroom, but we're learning how to apply it to outside, you know, outside the world. Yes, like, so I'm teaching an intro rhetoric class. Yes, okay, I want you to know what "rhetoric" means, but really, I just want you to learn how to learn in how you learn as a student, and what are some of the more personality traits that you have that you can develop that will apply to your life outside the classroom?

 Krista Grensavitch 27:37
Right, right. Yeah, I think that that's so hubristic and really selfish to think about teaching only for the sake of teaching within a classroom or within that particular classroom space. But instead, I think we should be teaching so that students can engage and critically engage and reflect in a much larger and broader world. And that's –

 Amanda Reavey 28:08
Oh, go ahead.

 Krista Grensavitch 28:09
Oh, sorry.

 Amanda Reavey 28:09
No, no –

 Krista Grensavitch 28:10
I'm thinking about unknowability again. And what's at stake there, or what emerges there, in committing to teaching so that students engage outside of our classrooms is that oftentimes, there's no idea, or we have no idea, what learning outcomes are. Because we don't observe students all the time, and they don't report back to us about the interactions that they have within that semester, or maybe even years after that semester.

So we just have to sort of hope for the best that we've furnished them with tools and habits of mind that they can then carry with them and think "Well, I don't know, but good luck."



Amanda Reavey 28:58

And cross our fingers that something, you know, there's something that they can apply. Yeah.



Krista Grensavitch 29:03

Right. Yeah.



Amanda Reavey 29:05

Your dissertation in the title has the words "object lessons." What is object lesson? And then how can we incorporate or co-create by incorporating objects?



Krista Grensavitch 29:19

Yeah. So, object lessons are – that refers in in some part to a real, historical, pedagogical form that has its roots in radical teaching practices from Switzerland and Germany and then later in the UK in the 18th and – or, I'm sorry – 19th and 20th centuries, and came to the US in the 19th and 20th centuries, as well, as a way of teaching young children through their interactions with objects. So it really means what it says. It's learning different ideas, different concepts through physical manipulation of objects. There's a very long history there, which is just starting to be written. So someone on my dissertation committee, Sarah Carter, did her research, her own dissertation research, and wrote a book about "the object lesson" in that kind of historical form. But object lesson also has metaphorical meaning within our society. So we could talk about an object lesson in whatever – in a – I'm coming up short and being able to describe this. But suffice to say that object lesson has both a real history and a contemporary metaphorical meaning. And the way that I was thinking about object lessons in my dissertation is to draw from both of these historical realities, or from the historical reality as a teaching practice and from the metaphor, and to think about what value objects have in our contemporary classroom, and to try and revise, resuscitate, bring back this idea of teaching and learning through and with physical objects. And the place that that first emerged for me is thinking about how historical accounts are often so focused on written text. So some archaeologists, I think this emerges from archaeology, talk about the so-called "tyranny" of the text,

meaning that texts are given the utmost authority in thinking about what a true historical account is. But in actuality, texts represent and are written by such a narrow portion of the population, that couldn't possibly be representative or tell an inclusive broad account of anything. But what is far more available and far more mundane are physical objects. So the kinds of traces that we have left from past societies, past civilizations, even contemporary ones – the objects that we have far outweigh the texts that are available. So if we can start to think about how to incorporate objects in a classroom, objects in the ways that we create knowledge, which archaeologists have done, art historians have done, and historians are increasingly doing. If we can bring this into the classroom, then we might be able to see, or we might be able to create, I contend, far more identities. We might be able to see or detect or elevate far more identities and complex realities than we could if we're looking to text alone.



Amanda Reavey 33:09

Cool, and how do we – how would we incorporate that into the classroom?



Krista Grensavitch 33:17

Oh, there are so many ways to do this. So, to give an example, I was teaching an Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies course a couple of semesters ago. And I collaborated with Abby Nye, who is the instruction archivist at UW-M, at our library. And there were five main units that I taught over the course of the semester that attempted to equip students with disciplinary habits of mind, from Women's and Gender Studies, so they could have an understanding of what privilege and oppression was, they could have an understanding of what intersectionality is, they could have an understanding of what the social construction of gender meant. But instead of just giving them theoretical tools, I wanted them to be equipped with real, physical manifestations of that. And instead of just understanding the theoretical parameters of those really complex ideas, I wanted them to be able to have a chance to flex their disciplinary habits and muscles of what it meant to be a practitioner of Women's and Gender Studies. Okay, so we can understand what social construction of gender is. But what does it mean to identify that in something else? And to talk about it and to critically engage with that? So I've worked with Abby to identify five different objects or sets of objects, that at the end of that unit, students would go to the library, or go to the archives as a class and look at these objects and start to be able to have intensive discussions with one another like, "Okay, now that we know what this idea is, how do we put it into action? And where do we see the workings of this in the object at hand?" So the final object that we looked at that semester were these dolls that were created by a local grassroots organization called "Women Against Rape" or WAR, and these dolls were meant to instruct MPS students about bodily autonomy and also to

indicate to a trusted adult if they had been sexually violated or physically violated. So looking at these objects allowed students to think in deeper and more complex ways and more challenging ways about lots of things; social construction of gender, intersectionality, pedagogy, even, thinking about these dolls as teaching tools. So instead of reading a text or listening to something and taking in, they were exercising what it was like to engage as a practitioner of Women's and Gender Studies or feminist theory.



Amanda Reavey 36:18

I'm thinking.



Krista Grensavitch 36:19

Yeah.



Amanda Reavey 36:20

Yeah. At – I'm thinking about when we look at objects – or part of, um, thinking beyond text and looking at objects, we're considering what's missing.



Krista Grensavitch 36:37

Yes. Yeah.



Amanda Reavey 36:42

And – go ahead.



Krista Grensavitch 36:44

No, I want to hear you finish that. Go ahead.



Amanda Reavey 36:47

Oh, I – well, for me, I think sometimes what can be missing or what people don't think about are people with disabilities, especially invisible disabilities. So I do have a question related to that. But I wanted to know: what were you going to say before I –



Krista Grensavitch 37:09

Oh, yes. Thinking about what's missing; the term that I would often rely on when I was writing my dissertation and thinking even now are gaps and silences. So, if we're simply relying on the written record, where are the gaps and silences that could not, that aren't representative, that don't communicate the complex, lived reality of a wide breadth of identities?



Amanda Reavey 37:43

I like that. Gaps and silences. Like, what's in the silence, what's in the liminal space? When I was doing my MFA, I was thinking a lot about the spaces – I called it the space inside "borderline." Like, what is that space that's not quite A or B, but is like this malleable liminal space between the two that we don't often look at. Like, what's in a line? Like, a line divides, but there's something in that line, as well. It's not so one or the other.



Krista Grensavitch 38:18

It's not a void, I think, is an important understanding to have. That it's not blank or empty. It's not a vacuum. That unknowable. But it's still there.



Amanda Reavey 38:32

Yeah. And affects us and how we perceive the world and how we are in the world. And being – figuring out how to be aware of that, I think, is important.



Krista Grensavitch 38:45

Right. Right. Agreed.



Amanda Reavey 38:50

So thinking of what missing: how does your work and incorporating objects or even feminist pedagogy in general, like, intersect with disability studies and thinking about how to make our teaching materials and classrooms accessible?



Krista Grensavitch 39:08

Mm hmm. So I think a way to answer that is to go back to that tripartite

identity/authority/unknowability and to focus a lot on ideas of authority and identity that are central to my understanding of feminist pedagogy and that might have bearing on disability studies and inclusivity and accessibility. So I think that, again, ceding – both ways [cedeing and seeding] – authority is an important start to this. Because I think with authority, or at least the instructor having their own sense of authority, that can make situations where they sort of have myopia about themselves and their own importance within the classroom and their own agenda. Where if we're relinquishing authority and we're promoting it in other students, then where they are in their – they're in that complex matrix of identities, be them – be it disability, that they have legitimate space to hold in that classroom within or in the eyes of that authoritative, or that authority figure, the instructor. That's that's sort of a half-formed thought. I need to work that out a bit more. But I think maybe – is that understandable to you to hear me say that?



Amanda Reavey 40:55

Yeah, I was just thinking of how we – sometimes people just need permission to own their own space and to be in their own space, in that something that by relinquishing authority and putting the authority, in a sense, on the student that they have permission to be who they are and be in their own their space. They deserve to take up their space.



Krista Grensavitch 41:27

Right. Right. Precisely. Yeah. Thank you for taking that in and echoing that back. That seems to be a lot more clear to hear you articulate it. But then also thinking about identity too. So I said earlier something about intersectional feminism – or if feminism is not intersectional, then it's white supremacy. But it's also ablest if it's not intersectional. So, taking up intersectional feminist pedagogy calls us to think about how systems of oppression impact us and impact students. And if we're really taking an intersectional feminist pedagogical approach, then students with disabilities are students who require accessibility, which is – everybody requires some level of accessibility that is identified and that is honored within the classroom. It's necessary for everyone's teaching and learning. It's necessary for classroom community formation, if you are truly taking an intersectional feminist approach to teaching.



Amanda Reavey 42:46

That's like the "acknowledging each other," like acknowledgement the – I'm almost thinking of the Buddhist term "namaste," like, you know that –

 Krista Grensavitch 42:55
Yeah.

 Amanda Reavey 42:56
I forgot what the exact word is. That I – the human in me or the person in me sees the person in you, and here we are creating this unknowable space.

 Krista Grensavitch 43:08
Right, right. Yeah.

 Amanda Reavey 43:12
Is there anything that I didn't ask or any advice that you'd like to share words of wisdom you'd like to share about? Anything that we've talked about, related?

 Krista Grensavitch 43:25
Yeah, actually, a piece of advice does come to mind; a piece of advice that was given to me by another feminist instructor, that really liberated my sense of who I was as a teacher. Which is to own the mistakes that you make in the classroom and to address them and to address them openly. So, perhaps you said something, you responded to something within a classroom space, and you didn't like the way that you did it? Instead of ignoring it and instead of repressing it and thinking "Well, next time I will do X." You can certainly do that, but take the opportunity when you revisit the classroom space again or you're with that community to share with students. For example: "You know, I don't really like the way that I responded to this person's question. I thought about it over the weekend. And this is what I would like to say. This is how I would like to amend my response." And to have that possibility opened up to me as an instructor, but I could make mistakes and I could own them, and I could address them was so liberating for me. And I hope that me saying this can perhaps give other people permission to do the same thing and not to – sort of, like, own our fallibility, to own the eventuality that we will make mistakes, that we will say things and do things that we don't necessarily feel comfortable with, that we want to amend. And to know that we have the ability to amend them. And perhaps that means that there's harm done that we won't actually fully be able to address outside of our knowing. But I think that there still is so much possibility and being able to address it and come back to it, and to model that for students and for other people within the classroom.



Amanda Reavey 45:31

Yeah, that goes back to what we were talking about congruency. Exactly.



Krista Grensavitch 45:35

Yeah.



Amanda Reavey 45:37

Cool. Well, thank you so much for doing this podcast with me. I really appreciated it.



Krista Grensavitch 45:43

Yes, of course. Thank you for having me. I loved our conversation and I have so much more to think about. So, thank you for for responding and listening and echoing back so many wonderful things.



Amanda Reavey 45:57

Okay, no problem. Alright, bye. Thank you for listening to this week's episode of Stereotype Life. If you enjoyed this episode, please leave a review on iTunes and consider supporting us at www.stereotype.life/donate. Lastly, this episode's transcript was created by Frankie Martinez and the music titled "Fresh Fallen Snow" was created by Chris Hogan. We are always looking for more team members so if you're interested, please contact us via our website. Until next time, have a good one. Bye!