Situated Learning, Situated Knowledge: Situating Racialization, Colonialism, and Patriarchy Within Communities of Practice

Joe Curnow, University of Toronto, joe.curnow@mail.utoronto.ca

Abstract: This paper brings feminist theories of situated knowledge into theorizations of situated learning, arguing that racialization, colonialism, and patriarchy shape members' experiences of communities of practice. I argue that situated learning must accommodate standpoint epistemologies in order to theorize learning from the margins. Using an environmental activist group, I demonstrate how modes of full participation can be racialized, colonial, and gendered in ways that inhibit women and people of colour from being recognized as full participants. Video data from activist actions shows that dominant practices are rooted in standpoints and that the social locations of participants shape their learning and willingness to participate in racialized, colonial, and gendered modes of participation.

Introduction

As we focus our conversations around transforming learning at this International Conference of the Learning Sciences, we are presented with an opportunity to expand situated learning theory (Lave and Wenger, 1991) so that it is better able to account for transformations of learners from non-dominant racialized, gendered, and colonized standpoints. For decades, Black feminists (Collins, 1986), third world feminists (Mohanty, 1988; Sandoval, 1991), and standpoint feminists (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1992; Hartsock, 1983) have argued that the social location from which we experience the world shapes what we know and how we know it. Within situated learning theory, though, there has been little attention to power dynamics (Contu and Willmott, 2003) and social relations of racialization, class, gender, colonialism, dis/ability, or others. Situated learning argues learning is a process of becoming, where people move from positions of novice peripherality into positions of mastery through their engagement with the skills, dominant frames, and social processes of the community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). This view privileges the ongoing construction of community and how the immediate context shapes how participants perform skills, talk about their work, and work together.

However, within situated learning theory and the subsequent development of communities of practice theory (Wenger, 1998), the focus on local context leads to an erasure of the trans-local context. Communities of practice appear to exist outside broader social relations, free to enact whatever norms they want, unbound (or bound) by patriarchy, colonialism, and racism depending on the practices of the local community. In situated learning, it is assumed that communities of practice are not bound by social location or the standpoints of members in positions of mastery. This limits the theory's ability to analyze learning in diverse groups, where members of a community may not share worldviews or modes of engagement based on their social locations. Since this body of theory underpins much of sociocultural theories of learning, we must address this gap.

In the sections that follow, I revisit situated learning and critique the social constructivist elements of communities of practice that suggests communities create their own modes of practice and perform them outside of or ambivalent to dominant social relations. Drawing on feminist standpoint theorists, I argue that we cannot extract communities of practice from their historical context, and suggest an anti-racist, feminist, dialectical materialist approach to situated learning that centres, rather than erases, the standpoint of people producing and circulating knowledge in a community of practice. I then use a case study of learning in the environmental movement to illustrate how standpoint matters in the ways that practices are privileged, how people participate, and how mastery is achieved and not achieved in a community of practice. This data demonstrates that moving into full participation is not available to everyone equally, and people's social locations – constituted beyond the local community of practice as well as within it – dramatically impact their ability to become full participants.

Situated learning and communities of practice

Lave and Wenger (1991)'s theories of situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation explain learning as becoming, where through participation, members learn the skills and social performances of the community. Communities of practice are understood as groups of people engaged in ongoing collective work in a joint enterprise using shared repertoires (Wenger 1998). The theory articulates the learning process as legitimate peripheral participation, where new members move from the periphery into full participation gradually, through deeper immersion in the community. Rather than envisioning learning as mimicry or acquisition, situated learning claims people learn through absorption and integration into the community, where all members participate in generative, ongoing negotiation of the community itself, though in differentiated ways.

Situated learning and communities of practice theories have been critiqued for their inattention to power dynamics (Contu and Willmott, 2003) and their consensual framing of communities (Hughes, Jewson, and Unwin, 2011). Most of these critiques have centred on the nature of the employee relationship in workplace settings, where worker exploitation by capital is a core function of the relationship, defining and limiting the learning relationship to one of reproduction (Contu and Willmott, 2003; Hughes, Jewson, and Unwin, 2011). Far less attention has been paid to social relations of racialization, colonialism, and gender. While gendered participation has been addressed in a small portion of the literature (Hodges, 1998; Paechter, 2003; Salminen-Karlsson, 2006), nothing has extensively addressed the ways racialization and colonialism shape experiences of legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice. Notably, the pieces that have engaged women's experiences in a community of practice centre White women's experiences or undifferentiated women's experiences, a move that universalizes and flattens women's experiences into a unified whole that feminists of colour have argued against. The articles on women in communities of practice show not all practices are attainable (Hodges, 1998; Salminen-Karlsson, 2006). They identify the naturalized standpoint of mastery in the community of practice and name practices as masculine and in service to the ways men navigate the world.

In the next section, I introduce standpoint theory as a way of addressing situated knowledges within situated learning. Understanding and accounting for the different ways that people of colour and women know and participate enables us to theorize learning dynamics more effectively. Rather than assume all members will believe and adopt the same narratives that circulate in a community of practice or be able to enact forms of participation in the same ways, we need a situated learning that situates the knowledge of the members of a community of practice within their historical social relations.

Situated knowledge and standpoint epistemologies

Situated learning focuses attention on the immediate community and centres how particular groups produce and sustain practices and philosophies of the local community of practice. Situated knowledge and standpoint epistemologies, in contrast, locate people's ways of knowing within their social location. They argue, for example, that Black women understand and experience the world differently than White women and Black men based on how relations of patriarchy and racialization shape their lived experiences. This view of knowledge, while rooted in the immediate community experiences of gender and racialization, shift our attention to trans-local relations of power (Smith, 1987). So while it may seem that these two bodies of theory are speaking to each other, they actually speak past each other, with situated learning deeply attentive to the specifics of the local while situated knowledge attends to the ways the trans-local is enacted in the local.

Situated knowledge and standpoint theories have been sites of extensive feminist scholarship. Without engaging deeply in the nuances of the field, it is important to identify some of the major contributions situated knowledge theories offer situated learning. The first contribution is the basic premise that social location shapes what we know and how we know it (Collins, 1986; Harding, 1992; Haraway, 1988). Early feminist theorizations argued against the so-called objectivity and neutrality of dominant thought in sciences and sociology, and demonstrated the ways that the types of knowledge that those fields produced were rooted in the standpoint of White men. As a result, the questions asked and their answers interpreted the world through the experiences of men, ignoring questions that feminist scholars prioritized. Standpoint theorists argued that feminist research should be built from the everyday/night experiences of women (Smith, 1987), and include attention to reproductive and affective labour (Hartsock, 1982). Other feminist standpoint theorists argued that feminist viewpoints were superior because those standpoints saw the world with fewer distortions than men in their relative positions of power, suggesting that subjugated knowledges (Sandoval, 1991) were preferable because they allowed a more comprehensive view of social relations. This approach stresses that non-dominant standpoints not only perceive the world differently, but also that those standpoints open up more expansive understandings of social relations.

Patricia Hill Collins' work (1986) is foundational to this line of argumentation, and her contributions of Black feminist thought bridge situated learning in productive ways. Collins argues that people from outside White male dominance can learn to act in masculine and White ways, but that those people can also see and question dominant paradigms. She claims that people outside dominant social relations have perspectives and insights to offer, based on where they are situated within relations of racialization, gender, and other relations of oppression. She states that people of colour may choose to remain "outsiders within", opting out of certain communities and practices, and that learning to navigate dominant social relations is itself an accomplishment.

Black feminist thought and feminist standpoint theories are necessary components of situated learning. Without acknowledging that all forms of participation are rooted in certain peoples' standpoints, we cannot theorize learning, and we certainly cannot accommodate oppositional consciousness that seeks to challenge dominant ways of knowing and being. Acknowledging how communities of practice are situated within social

relations and enact them at the same time allows us to interrogate how dominant social relations can become normalized in a community of practice and how that reflects the standpoints of participants in positions of dominance. This articulates a more nuanced critique of learning that moves beyond mere reproduction, allows for non-dominant modes of participation, and centres critical praxis within communities of practice.

Situated knowledge and learning in and beyond communities of practice

Lave and Wenger's discussion of full participation in a community of practice fails to accommodate social relations of race, colonialism, and gender in several ways. The first is their suggestion that communities establish their own practices and guidelines. While this is true in the sense that members jointly enact and produce their co-negotiated modes of participation, it separates the practices and the communities from the larger context. Communities of practice are situated within historical relations of racism, patriarchy, and colonialism, as much as we may try to resist. Suggesting that communities of practice are able to create their own practices outside of those dominant social relations de-historicizes them, making it seem as though the racism people face in a particular community of practice is rooted in the racism of that community alone, rather than being rooted in socio-historical and trans-local relations of colonialism and racialization. While the particularities of racialization are navigated in specific ways within a community, they do not act in isolation.

Another way that Lave and Wenger's descriptions of communities of practice fail to integrate racialization, colonialism, and patriarchy into their analysis is through the neutralization of dominant forms of participation by members in positions of mastery. Lave and Wenger propose a value-neutral approach to learning that suggests that whatever the norms of the community are is what will need to be learned within that community in order to become a full participant. This erases socio-historical difference between members in communities of practice and the ways social relations shape and limit members' ability to act in certain ways. This approach effectively removes the standpoints embedded in ways of knowing and being in a community, making it seem as though the full practices are not tied to certain standpoints, that all forms of practice are universally available and unbound by members' social locations. Lave and Wenger's approach also encounters problems in their articulation of "community", which has been critiqued extensively (Hughes, Jewson, and Unwin, 2011). It presupposes that communities are homogenous, free from power differentials, and open to everyone. When combined with the neutralization of standpoint, which makes it seem as though performing Whiteness, for example, is equally available to members of colour within a community, and the de-contextualization and de-historicization of social relations, this view of community erases the experiences of marginalization that many members of a community of practice experience based on their social location. This may have little to do with their learning, abilities to perform skills, or understanding of a community, but rather may have everything to do with their social location. It neglects the subjugated knowledges that non-dominant members bring communities of practice and erases different epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies of members from outside dominant social relations. In this way the notion of "community" masks a process of colonization, patriarchy, and racialization that erases forms of knowing and being.

This tension between situated knowledge and the theorization of full participation within communities of practice is an epistemological and ontological problem for situated learning. Theorizations of situated learning do not take seriously that how we know and what we know are rooted in how we are situated within social relations. This is an ontological problem in that it does not address the dialectical relationship between the local experiences of a community of practice with the trans-local relations. While racism, sexism, and colonialism may manifest in nuanced ways within a community of practice, those relations extend beyond the boundaries of the community, while being enacted and reproduced in the local space.

In the sections that follow I demonstrate how practices in an activist community of practice illustrate the ways modes of participations are rooted in particular ways of knowing and being – in this case, a White masculine mode of participation in a multi-racial, multi-gender environmental campaign. I trace how White male participants easily enacted the modes of participation and were rapidly recognized as masters while women and people of colour were kept from full participation despite their learning and mastery of skills within the community. I demonstrate how the modes of participation that were valued in the group in order to achieve full participation were rooted in White, masculine ways of being and knowing, while other modes of participation based in Black, Indigenous, and/or women's social locations were not valued and prevented members from marginalized social locations' participation from being recognized as full members.

Methods

Self location

Indigenous and feminist researchers (Absolon and Willett, 2005; Collins, 1986; Wilson, 2008) emphasize locating the self to clarify relational accountability (Wilson, 2008) and allow readers and research participants to fully understand why we engage particular questions. They challenge researchers to explicate how research fits into a broader theory of change that benefits communities we are accountable to. As a White settler, my approach to this research stems from White anti-racist allyship work while being accountable to communities of colour. As a cis woman, I enter into questions of marginalization and silencing in group settings through my experiences, in schooling and activist spaces, of having my voice silenced, ignored, and talked over. I feel a responsibility to the young women I work with to carve out alternative spaces and to help them to recognize the ways that their contributions are not equally valued based on their gender. I recognize that as a White cis woman, my racial and cis privilege shape my experiences as a woman and that the way I position myself and am positioned by others in groups is very much shaped by the multiple locations of privilege.

Data collection

This paper is based on an ongoing participatory action research project that examines how student activists learn about race, colonialism, and patriarchy through their involvement in environmental activist campaigns. Video was collected with the University of Toronto (UofT) fossil fuel divestment campaign. The group of young people met weekly. Meetings had from 11-42 participants, representing all years in school, (1,2,3,4,5, Law, MA, PhD). Men and women students attended in roughly even numbers and there were no openly trans or other gendered students. Racial and ethnic make-up shifted over the course of the campaign, but the group remained predominantly White, even as Indigenous, Black, Latino, South Asian, and East Asian students became increasingly involved, in terms of numbers and leadership in the group. Video was collected at 29 meetings, 6 actions and 2 focus groups over the course of the campaign, resulting in over 6,500 minutes of video. Videos last from 60-240 minutes, depending on the meeting length. Interviews and stimulated recall interviews (SRIs) were conducted with 8 focal participants. Interviews were semi-structured, lasting from 30-90 minutes. SRIs were held 1-2 days after a meeting and participants reviewed video, discussing group dynamics and their own thoughts during the meeting. SRIs lasted from 40-120 minutes and were held intermittently over the year, based on participants' interest and availability. Videos were captured from one to four angles and stacked so all streams are visible and watched and coded simultaneously.

Analysis

After video was collected, it was content-logged and pre-coded using preliminary codes based on the research question (including race, gender, and colonialism). The first substantial analytic pass of coding was conducted by five women participants from the group, one White, one South Asian, two East Asian, one Indigenous, and one Black man. We watched segments of videos from across the year together and coded "interesting" segments, asking the broad question of how race matters in our group, discussing every instance someone raised and making extensive notes. After conducting "interesting" coding on three segments from the beginning, middle, and end of the year, we reviewed consolidated them into codes that were most present in the video we reviewed and in our experiences of the group. Codes included default space, including instances where White settler participants assumed the room was White or settler by using "we" and universalizing their experience or by mobilizing White settler ways of acting and knowing in the group. Codes also included taking up space, tokenizing, dismissing, and labeling strategies as distractions. We assessed who was in a position of mastery by analyzing who made decisions for the group, who controlled what the whole group prioritized including types of work and mode of participation, who other members included in decisions or deferred to, and who was publicly recognized. Based on the coding, relevant segments of video were transcribed. A draft of this analysis was shared with the participants who co-developed the codes and their feedback was integrated.

Findings

The full practices of the divestment campaign at UofT included three main areas. The first was participating in meetings, where decisions and strategy were decided. The second set of practices was interacting with the official institutional actors of the university, including the office of the President, the Governing Council, and the President's Ad Hoc Committee. The third set of practices was publicly representing the campaign, most often by presenting to a group or presenting on a panel. Since the members who positioned themselves as masters were overwhelmingly White men, they effectively dictated what the important tasks were and how they

ought to be completed. We can trace how women and people of colour's performances were not recognized as legitimate by men in positions of power, which shows how the practices themselves were rooted in the standpoint of White men and were thus difficult for people from other social locations to master.

Participating in meetings

The divestment campaign met once a week for one and a half to two hours. Meetings were open to all members and were facilitated by rotating chairs. One of the main ways people established themselves as core members of the community was by participating vocally in the meetings. This ensured one's voice would be present and one could be involved in the strategy setting and decision making of the group. White men – particularly those in positions of full participation, though not only them – participated in meetings at very high levels. Men spoke far more often and for longer duration, and in doing so, they positioned themselves as experts.

Graham provides a good example of how participating in the space enabled him to move into a position of full participation very quickly. Graham had never been involved in activism before, but joined the group during his second month of law school at UofT. By the first all-group outreach meeting, he had already become a campaign lead and presented to new potential members, speaking assertively about the campaign and the importance of the "inside game strategy" where we focused on working through institutional protocols in order to win divestment. Graham's participation was marked by frequent speaking, responding authoritatively to questions, and weighing in often on the decisions of the group, typically masculine modes of engagement. Other members of the group often deferred to him, named him explicitly as an "expert", and cited his experience as important and helpful, despite the fact that he had less experience and formal expertise than other members.

In contrast, we can trace Ariel and Amil's participation in the group. Though they had been involved in the campaign and environmental organizing on campus longer and in more comprehensive ways, their modes of participation, rooted in their racialized and gendered performances, kept them from being recognized as full participants. Ariel, a White woman in fourth year, had been involved in the group longer than all but two participants. She was a co-president of the group, yet her authority was continually questioned, with her male colleagues regularly talking over her, making decisions without her, and attributing her contributions to other men. One example of the ways she had participated in the key practices of the community was her interaction in group meetings. This was one of the most important and visible ways that group members demonstrated their authority and positioned themselves as experts. In meetings, women spoke far less frequently and for shorter durations each turn, and were engaged in exclusive talk between a small group of insiders half as often. When women were engaged in exclusive talk, Ariel was almost always the woman included. She often inserted herself into conversations and participated vocally in a very different way from most of the women and people of colour in the room. In these exclusive talk turns, though, she was almost always outnumbered 2:1 by men and her participation was often made up of continuer statements, to acknowledge other people's contributions and encourage them to keep going, rather than her own substantive contributions. This was true in her speaking over all; her mode of participation tended to be highly gendered. She asked questions rather than speaking in declaratives (as the men in positions of authority did), she hedged her statements with qualifiers and apologies, and she often ended her statements at a higher pitch, even when she was not asking a question. Her feminine performance of the practices often meant that the men in positions of mastery did not treat her as an authority, and engaged other men in decisions without her. At the end of the year in a focus group, multiple women said they had not known she was a co-president. Her mode of participation was considered peripheral, and she was kept out of many of the important high stakes activities, having to fight for her inclusion in many instances.

While Ariel's participation was kept peripheral because she performed the core practice but did not do it in a masculine way, Amil's experience showed how his social location precluded doing them. As a fourth year Black man and immigrant to Canada, he did not perform certain practices because he knew his performance of would be judged as inadequate for his Black racialized mode of engagement. Though he had been involved in environmental organizing for three years on campus, he almost never spoke and was asked for his opinion only once during the first year. His non-participation in group meetings meant that most of the men in positions of mastery cast him as peripheral, despite his engagement in the tasks of the community of practice. Amil described his decisions to not speak in a stimulated recall interview saying:

> I'm generally more reserved in meetings... being in White spaces… in general… have that effect, personally, on me. It's something I've been dealing with since I've been at this university, in terms of putting out your opinions and having them scrutinized, because in instances it's been very vicious.... [White people say] "you see things this way because it affects you" and it's like you can't make an objective argument because you are somehow self-

> interested in this... and it just shuts me down right away […] every time I say something in a White space, in my mind it's like: how are these people perceiving what I say?

Amil made explicit the racial norms of the community that he had to navigate, including the Whiteness of the space. He talked about his pervasive sense of otherness and his "hyper awareness" of how White people perceived what he said (or did not say) and acknowledged that he did not think and speak in the same way those in positions of authority within the group did. Rather than push back against them and experience the blowback he anticipated, he stayed silent in meetings and talked to people one on one or in small groups outside the meetings. His strategy made sense for his social location, but had the impact of keeping him from being recognized by the men in positions of mastery in the group, despite his skills, his experience, and his expansive understanding of climate change and impacts in frontline communities.

Both Ariel and Amil were not treated as masters in the community of practice, by other members or by the men in positions of mastery, because the ways they participated were shaped by their experiences of patriarchy and racism, both in this specific community of practice and beyond it. As a result, they did not get acknowledged for their contributions to the community, while a brand new White man did quickly and easily and was able to drive the strategy decisions for the group.

Notably, women of colour almost never spoke in the group, regardless of how long they had been involved or how much work they put in behind the scenes. Their opinions were rarely sought and decisions were regularly made without any participation from women of colour, even on discussions of race, gender, and intersectionality. Their non-participation seemed to be considered a legitimate form of participation, which raises concerns about whose standpoints are required for decision-making, whose are not, and how that impacts framing, strategies, and approaches to political action.

Framing, strategy and theory of change

Strategy is the next area where we can see a core practice being demonstrated. At UofT, strategy was often negotiated at the weekly meetings, where the speaking dynamics noted above played a significant role in establishing whose ideas were included in short and medium term strategies. Group strategy was a process of frame alignment, where in order to be brought into the full forms of participation, one had to buy into the dominant logic of divestment. The people who started the campaign initially had charted an institutional course that consisted of going through the UofT's official process for divestment, including preparing a brief, gathering signatures, and supporting the brief in consultation with the President's Ad Hoc Committee for evaluating the petition. This required alignment with a theory of change that centred logical argumentation and respecting the institutional process, rather than protest, confrontation, or more direct resistance.

Graham demonstrated his alignment with the philosophies of the group right away, and he took up leadership of the inside game strategy within his first month of involvement. Here he advocated for meeting with the President's office staff and working through official channels. He, and the other White men from the inside game group, stressed "not rocking the boat", and in a strategy meeting he said, "We don't want to give the Governing Council any reason to dismiss us... they are on Governing Council because the game works for them, because the system works for those people. They're all wealthy and a lot of WASPs in there, and that sort of thing. So we're left with, how do we play that game?" Again and again, the White men in positions of mastery brought the group back to a theory of change based on compliance with institutional protocol and rooted in non-confrontational action, including providing logical arguments to the administration when they engaged us.

In contrast, Amil balked at this strategy, as did other members of colour, arguing that the institutional pathways do not work for everyone, and rarely work for people of colour, poor people, and other marginalized groups. In one moment of contestation in a meeting this exchange occurred:

Sam:	If we can get 200 people sit in the Governing Council room at the meeting wearing, like, suits with divestment X's pinned to them and divestment signs – I think that'd be powerful.
Amil:	Do we have to wear suits?
Sam:	Uh, generally Governing Council meetings are like – you dress up.
Amil:	Is there like a dress code?
Graham:	No, it's not like 'men must wear blazers' –
Sam:	It would be frowned upon if you just showed up in a t-shirt and jeans.

Amil:	But if a bunch of students go in there... let's not play that weird respectability politics –
Sam:	I think we *should* play –
Amil:	– They're not going to kick us out –
Graham:	No, they won't.
Sam:	Look, they won't kick us out, but they *will* respect us more if we play into their respectability politics.

The exchange made explicit some of the philosophical underpinnings of the group, where women and folks of colour pushed back against the logic that the system would work for us and that we should try to conform to the dominant relations that govern it. Amil's disagreement made plain the different ways that different participants navigate the world and how it underpins the strategic choices of the group. Even though Amil was active in the inside game breakout group, he never fully bought into the idea that the governing council would bend to persuasive arguments. His life experience suggested that the system would not always work for him. Because of his view on this, rooted in standpoint, he was kept at the margins of the inside game group. He was not invited to speak to the President's staff or the Ad Hoc Committee (only White people from the group interacted with them). However his analysis of the situation does not suggest he is not competent, has not mastered the skills, or has not learned—in fact his ability to navigate the system differently demonstrates his learning and ongoing negotiation of White supremacist colonialism. Keara, a Cree woman in first year, also identified the inside game philosophy as central to the group, and said that she could never support it, because she knew that institutions like UofT did not work in Indigenous students' interest. Students of colour within the group believed that Governing Council would not interact with them as they did with the dominant White men, and did not always trust the men from our group to broker in our collective interest, but worried that the Whiteness of the approach would serve to tamp down the racial justice components of the campaign that they advocated for.

Public presentations

Our group also prioritized outreach to groups through public presentations. In order to be a full member of the community, one had to be able to coordinate and deliver presentations to groups on and off campus in order to persuade them to endorse the brief. Being able to perform this public task was an important marker of full participation. It demonstrated one's grasp of the issues, framing, and strategy, as well as one's ability to speak persuasively and build coalitions with other power brokers on campus.

Joanna serves as an example of this process. As a 3rd year White woman, she had been involved in other environmental work on campus, but joined the divestment campaign halfway through the year. She talked about herself as a "bold woman" and about her ability to "lean in", joining in the activities that only the dominant men tended to participate in as a way of proving herself. On her second meeting, she volunteered to chair the meeting and she continually volunteered to take on public speaking tasks that tended to include only the people in positions of full participation. In a women's focus group she noted that it was not enough, saying:

> Our breakout group has consistently been, like, going to groups to seek out endorsements. I feel like – pretty consistently – um, we've had a buddy system of two people going each time. And every time there has been at least one male – like, intentionally – it feels like intentionally. And yeah, I mean, I went to the medical society, originally I think I was supposed to go with Sam, and then Sam couldn't make it, so then they were like, oh Graham, he'll go with you. It's good because they are knowledgeable... but women are knowledgeable too. I don't think there's a single group that we presented to this entire year that there hasn't been one of the like, three or four main White males that went with someone else – whether that was a man or a woman. I wasn't encouraged to go alone, I wasn't even told it was an option would be for me to go and present alone or to go with another woman.

She recognized the gendered control of recognition of full participation and that she was kept from it. Joanna, more than any of the women or people of colour in the group, played by the rules of the community or practice. She presented publicly, spoke often and assertively in meetings, but still was not recognized.

Conclusions

In this community of practice, race, colonialism, and patriarchy shaped whose/which modes of participation were deemed legitimate and whose/which were not. Dominant social relation played out through the full

practices of the community and entrenched White men in positions of mastery, while people of colour and women's modes of participation remained peripheral. White men in the group experienced the modes of participation as neutral and familiar, while other members worked at a disadvantage in adopting the forms of participation deemed appropriate or the logic that underpinned them. Regardless of engagement and experience, people of colour and women did not become recognized as full participants in the community of practice.

As learning scientists, we cannot afford to ignore the ways race, colonialism, and gender shape communities of practice through their histories and continuities. When people of colour and women are kept at the periphery – either through so-called "failure" to perform Whiteness and masculinity or through acts of resistance, it is not adequate to suggest they cannot/have not reached full participation, or that their position of peripherality is legitimate. None of these explanations capture what is happening as people in dominant positions normalize their everyday ways of interaction and have their reproduction of dominant social relations conflated with learning, mastery, and full participation. They do not account for how people at the margins deftly navigate the community to achieve small concessions, to gain recognition, and to withdraw, resist, or embrace their outsider status. Through the terminology of the theory we would articulate their position as legitimate peripherality, but there is nothing legitimate about being marginalized based on one's race and gender. When we ignore the standpoints of people in positions of mastery and the full practices they seek to reproduce, we suggest to members from other social locations that through their participation and engagement they might achieve full participation. But when racism, colonialism, and patriarchy make it impossible or disproportionately difficult, this may not be the case. We cannot assume that everyone has the same potential to act and understand in the same ways. In doing so, we pathologize oppressed peoples and their inability to become full participants and legitimize the racist and sexist modes of participation that keep women and people of colour on the periphery of communities. Standpoint epistemologies represent one intervention that begins to bring attention to social relations, history, and difference. Acknowledging standpoint is a necessary step toward a more comprehensive transformation of situated learning to account for race, colonialism, and patriarchy in and beyond communities of practice.

References

Absolon, K., & Willett, C. (2005). Putting ourselves forward: Location in Aboriginal research. *Research as resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and anti-oppressive approaches*, 97-126.

Collins, P. H. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black feminist thought. *Social problems*, *33*(6), S14-S32.

Contu, A. & H. Willmott. (2003). Re-embedding Situatedness: The Importance of Power Relations in Learning Theory. *Organization Science*, *14*(3), 283-296.

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist studies*, 575-599.

Harding, S. (1992). Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is "strong objectivity"? *Centennial Review*.

Hartsock, N. C. (1983). *The feminist standpoint: Developing the ground for a specifically feminist historical materialism.* 283-310. Springer.

Hodges, D.C. (1998). Participation as Dis-Identification with/in a Community of Practice. *Mind, Culture, and Activity, 5*(4), 272-290.

Hughes, J., Jewson, N., & Unwin, L. (Eds.). (2013). *Communities of practice: Critical perspectives*. Routledge.

Lave, J. & E. Wenger. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. NY, NY: Cambridge.

Mohanty, C.T. (1988). Under Western Eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist review*.

Paechter, C. (2003). Learning masculinities and femininities: Power/knowledge and legitimate peripheral participation. *Women's Studies International Forum, 26*, 541– 552.

Salminen-Karlsson, M. (2006). Situating gender in situated learning, *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, *22*.

Sandoval, C. (1991). US third world feminism: The theory and method of oppositional consciousness in the postmodern world. *Genders*, (10), 1-24.

Smith, D. E. (1987). *The everyday world as problematic: A feminist sociology*. Toronto: U of T Press.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge Press.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Winnipeg: Fernwood.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Jody Chan, Amil Davis Tresanne Fernandes, Keara Lightning, and Jade Wong for their participation in developing this analysis. Thanks to Thelma Akyea, Andrew Kohan, and Genevieve Ritchie for their conversations throughout the process. This work was funded by the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship.