

CHAPTER 2.

RECIPROCITY AS EPICENTER: AN ‘AFTER-ACTION REVIEW’

Mariana Grohowski

Journal of Veterans Studies

Feminist scholars have critiqued the methods and methodologies of empirical human-subjects research for being hegemonic and exploitative, stressing the imperative for reciprocity in civic engagement and human subject based research in rhetoric and composition. In an effort to “articulate a language that clarifies how civic engagement happens” (Orr, 2011, p. 7), Grohowski details the methods and methodology developed while working with two disabled women veterans to stress the importance of feminist intervention and political activism as driving principles when engaging in research with participants who belong to misrepresented populations. Grohowski discusses the process of developing reciprocal relationships with case study co-interpreters through the interrelated methods of listening, understanding, and strategic disclosure. In addition to outlining a methodology in which reciprocity is epicenter, she stresses that partnerships with minority groups must draw upon innovative approaches and modalities for fostering access and inclusion.

Rhetoric, writing, and literacy studies (RWLS) scholars have shared methods and intentions for developing reciprocal relationships with participants. Some identify their use of reciprocity as experimental (Gorzelsky, 2012); others classify reciprocity as part of an activist agenda (Blythe, 2012; Cushman, 1996, 1999; Goldblatt, 2007). Feminism as a political, ideological, and scholarly perspective has appropriated activism as an essential tenet (Blair, 2012; Blair & Tulley, 2007; Himley, 2004; Jack, 2009; Powell & Takayoshi, 2003; Sheridan-Rabideau, 2009; Royster & Kirsch, 2012). Given the interdisciplinary nature of feminist research, many scholars outside the field of RWLS note the links between feminist research, activism, and reciprocity (Gluck, 1977; Harding, 1987, 1991; Lather, 1988; Naples, 2003; Orr, 2011; Smith, 2012). According to Shulamit Reinharz (1992) specific themes of feminist research make it a form of activism

and support the researcher in developing reciprocal relationships with her participants. Feminist research “includes the researcher as person; and attempts to develop special relations with the people studied” (p. 240). Indeed, researchers who conceive of research as relationship building consider reciprocation imperative (Powell & Takayoshi, 2003; Goldblatt, 2007; Cushman, 1996; Gorzelsky, 2012; Selfe & Hawisher, 2012; Berry et al., 2012; Royster, 2000; Grabill, 2012; Adams, this collection). As Mary Sue MacNealy (1999) has explained, when researchers, such as feminists, interrogate “political and cultural issues . . . such research often is, or becomes action research, undertaken with the idea that change will occur in the researcher as well as the research subjects as a result of participation in the research project” (p. 233). The “change” MacNealy speaks of is reciprocally experienced between the researcher and her participants; furthermore, this change is activist-in-nature because it advances the quality of life for those involved (see Berry et al., 2012).

Like Katrina Powell and Pamela Takayoski (2003), I developed reciprocal relationships with co-interpreters amidst conducting research. Like Powell and Takayoshi, my aim is to articulate how and why I negotiate(d)¹ such relationships with co-interpreters. The authors contend: “discussions of reciprocity can take on a mystical aura that avoids engagement with the complicated negotiations of building reciprocity. Without narratives of prior experiences . . . researchers can find themselves unprepared” (p. 401). By detailing the methods and methodologies of case study research conducted with two disabled female U.S. military veterans—Tanya Schardt and BriGette McCoy²—I outline a “research stance” (Grabill, 2012) for which reciprocity is epicenter.³

According to Jeff Grabill (2012), “A research stance is a set of beliefs and obligations that shape how one acts as a researcher” (p. 211). Heeding Grabill’s advice, I explain how my research stance and methodology were developed in the hopes of guiding other researchers to practice reciprocity when working with misrepresented populations. Furthermore, I stress that a methodology for which reciprocity is epicenter is activist, but it must be employed with consideration and care. The interconnected, reciprocal relationship building practices of understanding, listening, and strategic disclosure orient my methodology. I explain each practice to articulate my methodologies, which are a form of feminist intervention. As characteristic of feminist scholarship, exemplified in many of the chapters in this collection, I employ narrative to stress the subjective nature

1 While project has ended, our relationships are ongoing.

2 Both women insisted, like Lary in Rosenberg’s co-authored chapter with Howe (Chapter 4, this collection), that I use their actual names. Tanya and BriGette’s rationale was to ensure that their contributions and sacrifices were written into history.

3 My use of “reciprocity as epicenter” is inspired by Smagorinsky’s (2008) article.

of my stance as researcher and friend to co-interpreters Tanya and BriGette. Though feminists have a considerable legacy and expertise on both theorizing and enacting transparency and reflexivity, so does the U.S. military, through the After-Action Review (AAR).

According to the U.S. Army, the After-Action Review (AAR) is “a professional discussion of an event focused on performance standards, that enables soldiers to discover for themselves what happened, why it happened, and how to sustain strengths and improve on weaknesses” (TC 25-20, 1993, p. 1). Drawing on analysis, interpretation, reflection, and collaboration, AARs afford improvement for both “soldiers and leaders” to evaluate and support training operations (p. ii). Furthermore, AARs result from a rhetorical situation and cultural institution that values efficiency and precision. The rhetorical situation of an AAR affords service members clarity surrounding a battle or training exercise, with the intention of fostering a more successful military unit. In principle, the AAR shares with RWLS scholarship—including but not limited to the feminist scholars in this section of this collection—the recommendation to articulate and reflect upon their methods and methodologies (see Williamson & Huot, 2012). I shift now to information about Tanya and BriGette’s social locations and the design of our case studies.

ROLL-CALL⁴

Women U.S. military personnel and veterans are misunderstood and misrepresented because their stories and contributions have been marginalized from public accounts (Grohowski, 2014; DAV, 2014; Santovec, 2015). In the paragraphs that follow, I align information about the social locations Tanya and BriGette occupy, alongside national statistics of female U.S. military personnel and veterans; I do so in an effort to foster increased understanding of Tanya and BriGette’s positionalities, including the vulnerabilities they face as disabled American women veterans. Information is provided in Table 2.1.

Tanya is a white woman in her late thirties (see Figure 2.1). BriGette is a black woman in her mid-forties (see Figure 2.2). Tanya and BriGette are representative of the two largest demographics of U.S. women military veterans nationally. In fact, the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (NCVAS) (2016) revealed “White Non-Hispanic” women comprise 67.3 percent of the national population of women veterans, while “Non-White Non-Hispanic” women veterans comprise 24.4 percent (p. 17). These statistics correlate with Pew Research

⁴ In all branches of the U.S. military, roll call is “the act or the time of calling over a list of names of person belonging to an organization, in order to ascertain who are present, or to obtain responses from those present” (Farrow, 1919, p. 519).

findings (see Patten & Parker, 2011), which calculated that white women made up the largest percentage of active duty servicewomen while black women were a close second (p. 5).

Table 2.1. Co-interpreter information

Co-Interpreter	Tanya	BriGette
Race	White	Black
Age	30-40	40-50
# Dependents	0	2
Status	Student & Service-Connected Disabled Veteran; Medically Retired	Service-Connected Disabled Veteran
Military Branch	Army	Army
Military Era	Persian Gulf II	Peace Time / Pre-Persian Gulf I
Military Occupational Specialty	Armament Repaired 45 (Tank Turret Repairer)	Data Telecommunications Specialist
Length of Service (years)	10.5	4
Deployments	3, Iraq	0
Rhetorical practices	Drawing & painting	Television & film public speaking & social media-networking
Noted experiences	Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast	· Raped twice during service · Homelessness (1+)
+ Traumatic Brain Injury & Post-Traumatic Stress	Yes, both	Yes, both

In the same report by NCVAS, the largest percentages of women veterans served during “Gulf War II or post-9/11 (2001).” Tanya’s ten and a half years of service falls into this category. Coming in at a close second is the number of women who served during “‘Peacetime only’ [from] May 1975 to July 1990,” when BriGette served her four-year enlistment (p. 5).

Tanya is a combat veteran, though U.S. military and civilian societies have failed to recognize that women have been serving on the frontlines with men in every conflict since the Revolutionary War (Holm, 1992; Monahan & Neidel-Greenlee, 2010). Moreover, the Defense Business Board (DBB) (2010), using the total number of active duty military in 2010, identified that the majority

of personnel, at forty percent, had *never been deployed*, while eleven percent had deployed three or more times (p. 23). In other words, of the less than one percent of the total U.S. population that serves in the post-9/11 military, a smaller segment deploy or see combat during their service (see Pew, 2011).



Figure 2.1. Tanya Schardt photo. Iraq 2003. Image description: Tanya is shown in Iraq in her army fatigues, holding her M16 and wearing a helmet. She is posed in front of a mural on a brick wall of Saddam Hussein with his arm raised. Photo courtesy of Schardt.

Although BriGette, unlike Tanya, was not exposed to combat, she experienced violence and trauma. BriGette was raped on two different occasions during the first year of her service. In 2016, the Department of Defense reported that 6,172 male and female active duty U.S. military personnel reported being sexually assaulted (raped) during the fiscal year—“a 1.5 percent increase from the reports made in fiscal year 2015” (p. 8). Researchers found that a military woman’s “race and rank” had significant influence on experiencing sexual harassment (Buchanan et al., 2008, p. 358). Specifically, “black women reported experiencing more severe, less common forms of sexual harassment” than white female counterparts (Buchanan et al., 2008, p. 358). These findings correlate with Tanya’s and BriGette’s experiences.



Figure 2.2. BriGette McCoy photo. 1989. Photo courtesy of McCoy. Image description: BriGette is shown in Germany wearing her army (dress) uniform and hat.

INFLUENCES OF MILITARY EXPERIENCE

Writing on the over diagnosis of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD / PTS⁵), Allan Horwitz and Jerome Wakefield (2012) noted, “twenty percent of returning veterans have PTSD” (p. 186). PTS results from military sexual trauma (MST) (Buchanan et al., 2008, p. 358; Kelly et al., 2008). Military women with PTS from MST have a high probability of homelessness (NCHV, n.d., p. 1). According to the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans (NCHV), the rate of female veteran homelessness has increased and female veterans with MST, “are 6.5 times more likely to experience homelessness” (p. 1). After honorably discharging from the military, BriGette found herself without a place to live while working to support herself and her family. Indeed, these diverse factors of social location influence how Tanya and BriGette experience and make meaning in their lives.

5 There’s a divide on dropping the word “disorder” from the diagnosis “post-traumatic stress.” Whereas Caplan (2011) and Rigg (2013) support the drop to reduce stigma and expose the source of soldiers’ stress (e.g., war trauma), the APA support keeping the “D” to ensure veterans receive disability benefits. (See Moore, 2013).

DESIGN AND METHOD

My project, to which Tanya and BriGette contributed as case study co-interpretors, sought to address the rhetorical practices of female U.S. military veterans. Though Tanya and BriGette have unique and distinct multimodal rhetorical practices, both women share the premise that composing is a form of advocacy. Indeed, both women understand their rhetorical practices as forms of activism. Tanya's preferred practice of drawing is a private activity employing tactile composing technologies like pencil, paint, and charcoal; conversely, as a national public figure for women veterans, BriGette engages public technological platforms of video and social media. I conceive of both Tanya and BriGette's rhetorical practices as a form of feminist intervention within and beyond the military veteran community.

Both BriGette and Tanya possess and employ distinct rhetorical practices while negotiating unique barriers in order to compose. Though they share similar barriers in order to compose (e.g., anxiety, exhaustion, headaches, body pain), both enact diverse rhetorical strategies that demonstrate their exigency and agency to compose. Given the barriers they experience, the design and approval of our case studies hinged on reciprocity and collaboration. I had to be inclusive to their needs and preferences and able to accommodate their requests; however, Tanya and BriGette had to inform me of their needs and preferences so that I could oblige. Like Margaret Price (2003), I was approved to design procedures with co-interpretors from inception to account for their access needs. In accordance with the approved methods for our case study, data collection spanned the months of June through September 2013 and accounted for eight meetings. Whereas Tanya and I had face-to-face meetings at her home; BriGette and I held our meetings through telephone or video conferencing, due in part to our geographical distance and at her request—as physical and psychological barriers make electronic communications more accessible. BriGette informed me that when we talked by phone she'd lay in her bed; but when we talked through video conferencing, she sat in her “therapy chair,” designed to relieve back pain.

Co-interpretors responded warmly to designing the methods for conducting our interviews and having options for participating. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for providing options for interviews was not an issue. Given my desire to foster reciprocity, it was imperative to design and employ accessible data collection methods. Employing accessible data collection methods is a form of political activism; it ensures that individuals whose voices have been historically and systematically marginalized from institutional or research practices can participate, thereby validating their experiences and influencing change (see Berry et al., 2012; Walters, 2010; Price, 2003).

Individual interviews lasted between one and two hours. While the audio of each meeting was recorded, I took handwritten notes to attune myself to listen and retain information. Though I prepared for each interview with a list of topics or questions, I promoted the concept of “co-interpreter” by letting Tanya or BriGette lead. Interviews that generated the most on-point content to my research questions were facilitated through the process of artifact interviews.⁶ As Doug Hesse, Nancy Sommers, and Kathleen Blake Yancey (2012) have explained: inquiry upon objects, “provoked observations and feelings, associations and questions we likely would not have produced through other means” (p. 326). Tanya and BriGette exemplified Hesse et al.’s (2012) claim. Because both women suffer from Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Posttraumatic Stress (PTS), as they have explained: psychological and physiological processes influence their memories. However, when our conversations began with their artifacts (e.g., drawings; photographs; videos) both women shared candidly. In order to explain my methodology of reciprocity, I begin with an explanation of how I fostered understanding—a crucial first step in establishing reciprocal relationships and conducting ethical research as a form of feminist intervention.

UNDERSTANDING OR RESEARCH STANCE: EMBRACING THE MARGIN

As a feminist researcher during the ninth and “final” year of the war in Iraq (2011), I found inspiration in Sandra Harding’s (1991) call for researchers to “reinvent [them-] selves as other” (p. 268). Lucky for me, I was already ware of my status as “other” to the population and issue I sought to investigate (the rhetorical practices of military women) and as a writing studies researcher. I felt empowered by Harding’s call for a “standpoint,” or “research stance” (Grabill, 2012) that “exploit[s] the gap . . . [between] margin and center” as a valuable site for meaning making (p. 276). Krista Ratcliffe (2005), Shannon Walters (2010), and Jay Dolmage and Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson (2010) have identified the advantages of inquiry taken up from the margins. In her work on “cross cultural identification,” Ratcliffe (2005) considered “the margin between” identification with others as offering an awareness (p. 73). In their work on feminist disability studies, Dolmage and Lewiecki-Wilson (2010) suggested researchers to “look to the margins to understand the function of the outlier as the ground against which particular forms of knowledge come into view” (p. 32). Though my social location was difficult to accept initially, my ability to move between identification and non-identification with co-interpreters was precisely how I was able to develop reciprocal relationships with Tanya and BriGette.

6 The audio and transcript is an example of an artifact interview with Tanya (see p. 48).

My efforts to foster reciprocal relationships with Tanya and BriGette were conceived as a result of understanding my social location or positionality as researcher; reflectively occupying “the margin and the center” (Harding, 1991; Ratcliffe, 2005; Dolmage & Lewiecki-Wilson, 2010) allowed me to sidestep an authoritative “researcher” stance so that I could be open to receive their ideas and expertise. By situating myself “in between” understanding, I became aware of Tanya and BriGette’s generosity and of opportunities that I could respond to their offers in kind, thereby fostering reciprocity. Though I primarily use their names, I also use the term “co-interpreter.” Articulating my use of the term supports my methodology in which reciprocity is epicenter and the degree to which the reciprocal strategies of understanding, listening, and strategic disclosure facilitated additional opportunities for fostering reciprocal relationships as a form of feminist intervention.

DEFINING TERMINOLOGY: CO-INTERPRETER

My use of the term “co-interpreter” was inspired by Thomas Newkirk (1996), who suggested that researchers invite participants to “respond to interpretations [and] offer counterinterpretations” (p. 13). Newkirk is neither the first nor the only scholar to suggest such collaboration (see Lather, 1986; Kirsch, 1993; Grabill, 2007; Spinuzzi, 2005; Powell and Takayoshi, 2003; Cushman, 1996; Berry et al., 2012; Adams, this collection; Rosenberg & Howes, this collection). Nevertheless, it is from Newkirk that I borrow the term and practice of soliciting counter-interpretations to data, findings, and drafts. At times, I refer to Tanya and BriGette as “co-interpreters.” But as Takayoshi (2003) explained in her efforts to foster reciprocity with her research participant Nicky—Tanya and BriGette did not embrace the acts Newkirk and others promote.

Like feminists, disability studies scholars interrogate and subvert issues of hegemony and inequality. A disability perspective challenges “normalcy” and “ability” and substantiates how disability is a critical and generative site for meaning making (Dolmage & Lewiecki-Wilson, 2010, pp. 31-32). Furthermore, as Shannon Walters (2010) has stressed, research methodologies informed by disability are activist in projects that include individuals with disabilities as co-researchers or interpreters (p. 434). Because Tanya and BriGette both identify as disabled American veterans, and because their unique social locations influence their perspectives, I came to rely on Tanya and BriGette as co-interpreters in shaping research findings and outcomes. Integrating Newkirk’s concept was one effort I made to foster reciprocal relationships with Tanya and BriGette, an effort facilitated through the process of listening.

LISTENING TO FOSTER UNDERSTANDING

I've been told that I am a "good listener." But after listening to audio-recorded practice interviews, I found I was *not* a good listener. Of course, "good listening" is vital in qualitative human subject-based research and compounded by the fact co-interpreters admitted to feeling unheard in U.S. civilian and military/veteran cultures. A researcher can jeopardize data collection if she does not listen effectively. Listening is challenging and always biased (DeVault & Gross, 2012). Furthermore, to learn to listen one must "unlearn" one's habituated listening practices (Ceraso, 2014; Ratcliffe, 2005).

Determined to listen for understanding and to foster respect for my co-interpreter's unique insights, I followed Margorie DeVault and Glenda Gross's (2012) advice and acknowledged my listening limitations. I made notes and developed codes that accounted for my listening biases, e.g., when I interrupted or spoke over the interviewee and if, when, and how I filled the gaps instead of allowing for silence to bookend the interviewee's response. During a practice interview, I interrupted my interviewee with what I anticipated would be her response. After asking the interviewee a question and before she could answer, I'd offer the guess I'd contrived in my head. I learned that not only were my assumptions always wrong, but by listening to see if my guesses were right, *I wasn't listening*. Indeed, as Ratcliffe (2005) has argued: "listen to discourses not *for* intent but . . . *with* the intent to understand" (p. 28 emphasis original). In other words, to be a good listener I had to stop listening to hear my ideas parroted back.

Though this process was time consuming and humbling, it elicited reflection, questioning, and critical understanding akin to feminist research (See Johnston, this collection; Royster & Kirsch, 2012; Reinhartz, 1992). Furthermore, it offered a means of "accountability for checking my practices and approaches" (Johnston, this collection) and the opportunity to unlearn my bad listening habits. Stephanie Ceraso has argued that listening is dependent on making the familiar strange. When I was able to "defamiliarize" the process of listening during practice interviews, I began to grasp Ceraso's suggestion for a heightened approach to listening that is contingent upon occupying a marginal space feminist and disability studies scholars call for to increase understanding (Harding, 1991; Ratcliffe, 2005; Dolmage & Lewiecki-Wilson, 2010).

By listening, I grasped Nancy Naples' (2003) thorough disproving of the "insider / outsider debate," which she identifies as catalyst for neglecting the fluidity of identity and one's social location. However, as Ceraso (2014) and Ratcliffe (2005) attest: listening and as a result, understanding, occurs through multiple modes of communication. Ready to listen to women veterans, I took to

social media (i.e., Facebook) where I put in time and effort to listen to women veterans.

Jen Almjeld and Kristine Blair (2012) and Heidi McKee and James Porter (2010) support this approach. While Almjeld and Blair (2012) credit the affordances of the Internet (and social media platforms in particular) for aiding the researcher in establishing and maintaining a transparent identity. McKee and Porter (2010) discuss the considerable labor involved in establishing one's credibility online. By approaching my interactions online from the framework discussed above (offered by Harding, 1991; Ratcliffe, 2005; Dolmage & Lewiecki-Wilson; Naples, 2003), while I clocked many hours listening (or observing) in online communities to female veterans, when I acted, I did so in a reciprocal manner as inspired by Ellen Cushman's (1996) activist efforts—I offered my assistance to women's requests I could provide. I answered one woman's request for help completing a disability claim form. While what I did was according to rhetoric and composition scholars a form of activism (see Blythe, 2012; Cushman 1996, 1999; Gildenspire, 2010; Goldblatt, 2007; Grabill, 2007). I acted with the intention of being reciprocal—to give back for all of the information and insights I received as a member in an online community.

Like Dirk Remley (2012), I was reluctant to use the “activist” label because I tend to think of activism on a grander scale, as being part of a movement. But as a feminist researcher working in an area of disability studies, I am apart of two activist movements. I am by default, performing activist interventions (Dolmage & Lewiecki-Wilson, 2010, pp. 32-33; Walters, 2010, p. 434). The type of activism I am comfortable with is on a personal level—when I am personally equipped to do so. But in re-reading Cushman (1996), I understand that these efforts are activist in nature when, as Blair (2012) has maintained, such actions are “deploy[ed with] an activist politics,” or “with the goal of empowerment in mind” (pp. 65-66). These feminist interventions allowed me to interact with women veterans, which compelled women veterans, by their own volition, to “vouch” for me when I posted.⁷ Listening with the intent to understand taught me that in the women veteran community, reciprocity and trust are paramount. Thanks to the scholarship of Lauren Rosenberg and Emma Howe, I have come to conceive “*listening [in and of itself as] a feminist intervention*” (this collection, emphasis added).

I was able to initiate the long process of gaining trust and establishing my credibility by practicing transparency and reciprocity on Facebook, which is where I met BriGette. I reached out to her after seeing her in the documentary *Service: When Women Come Marching Home* (2011). Contacting her through

7 Requests for participation on electronic surveys for dissertation research.

Facebook was intentional because in the documentary⁸ she credits Facebook for helping her meet other women veterans and learn about resources. However, contacting BriGette through Facebook was also my only method. We did not share mutual contacts or a geographic location. Our correspondence was limited to and possible because of social media. I didn't start out by asking her to be my research subject, though I was interested in learning more about her and saw her rhetorical practices as feminist and activist. Instead, I asked if I could do anything for her. Once she learned that I was a student and researcher, she suggested the idea of a case study to me. To listen to that conversation or to read the written transcript of it, visit <https://soundcloud.com/mariana-mare-grohowski/clip-of-phone-conversation>. I share this short excerpt to exemplify the reciprocal nature of how our conversations occurred. The listener can hear our shared laughter as well as identify how the tones of our voices reflect our feelings and personalities. Though this conversation occurred in 2013, BriGette and I regularly have conversations like the one in the audio clip—full of laughter and dialogic reciprocity.

One of my colleagues, Tanya's former writing teacher, initiated our connection. We met at our campus Starbucks and I offered to buy her chai. She appreciated this small gesture and agreed to meet the following week. It took dozens of cups of chai and conversation for Tanya to trust me to share any of her military experiences. In short, relationships with BriGette and Tanya were established in advance of requests for research studies. Had these relationships not first been established, I would not have sought out the approval to conduct case studies.

I wanted to be as reciprocal as possible for three reasons: (1) Because of the personal relationships I had established with Tanya and BriGette; (2) the generosity of their time, expertise, and support to me as I was undergoing my research; and (3) because I understood that as former members of the military they were trained to serve. In fact, some veterans consider military service as the highest form of civic engagement (Handley, 2016). And recent research indicates that veterans volunteer more than other segments of the U.S. population (Matthieu, 2016). Given Tanya and BriGette's exigency to serve and contribute to my research, I argue that reciprocity as a form of feminist intervention is imperative when working with current, former, and future members of the military.

Over time, it became apparent⁹ that both women had their own activist goals in mind. Both women saw the platform of my research as potential to disprove limiting stereotypes about military women and disabled veterans. Indeed, their

8 Which she maintains in her Senate testimony. (See H031313, 2013).

9 From the (individual) conversations I had with Tanya and BriGette respectively.

motivation to participate was in part an activist effort to facilitate social change for disabled American women veterans.

STRATEGIC DISCLOSURE AS RECIPROCITY

Whereas reciprocation is defined as an exchange for mutual benefit or as responding to offers in kind; strategic disclosure is defined as an exchange of information. Margaret Gutsell and Kathleen Hulgin (2014) liken strategic disclosure to fostering inclusion through information design. The authors have called for the use of “narratives to construct and promote a common sense . . . [and] provide the opportunity for vicarious experience” between interviewer and interviewee (pp. 91-92). Considered as a practice of active listening, I experimented with strategic disclosure during interviews. Because I wanted to foster understanding and identification with them, at times I disclosed personal information in the hopes of softening feelings of uneasiness when they shared sensitive information.

During interviews, opportunities would arise in their narrative retellings where I related to their expressed emotions or scenarios. For example, as I came to understand the frustration Tanya experienced in her relationships with her sisters, I shared that I too have a complicated relationship with my sister. In short, moments presented themselves where I felt compelled to strategically disclose personal details I would otherwise withhold. DeVault and Gross (2012) classified strategic disclosure as a form of “feminist interviewing” where the interviewer “reveal[s] research interests and political commitments” (p. 215). Keeping with my goals as a feminist researcher to be transparent, reflective, and reciprocal: practicing strategic disclosure was a method not unlike those employed in other areas of my collaborative research i.e., sharing interview codes or emerging findings.

I would employ strategic disclosure when interviewing Tanya and BriGette in order to acknowledge the relevance of their narrative experiences, and to encourage their continued involvement in the project. I practiced brevity and moderation in my efforts, given what I had learned about myself during my practice interviews. I did not want to monopolize the interview, which they could interpret as not listening or invalidating their experiences and perspectives. Acts of information reciprocation (i.e., strategic disclosure) in interviews fostered a conversational approach advocated by Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher (2012), whose work implies the use of strategic disclosure in their interviews with participants; Selfe and Hawisher’s work promote the feminist agenda of pushing against “boundaries” of “traditional” research practices by fostering empathy and understanding with co-interpreters, which thereby broadens our

understanding of how knowledge is made and shared (Selfe & Hawisher, 2012; Cushman, 1996; Kirsch, 1993). Our interviews were opportunities for collaborative meaning making. For example, the following video clip and written transcript (accessible at <https://youtu.be/od8Y5aXWZPQ>) showcases Tanya and I discussing her watercolor painting “Chaos.”¹⁰

An additional act of reciprocation initiated through strategic disclosure resulted in a collaborative project between BriGette’s nonprofit and my intermediate writing class. During one of our interviews, BriGette expressed her passion for education, digital pedagogy, and a desire to compose and broadcast video interviews with grassroots advocates working on veterans’ issues. In the interest of reciprocating her generosity as co-interpreter, I disclosed that I was in the process of designing a service-learning course where my students could treat BriGette as a “community partner” or client to “write for” (Deans, 2000). Students prepared questions and pitched their ideas for executing her plan. Over the course of the semester, students composed a website for her project (see figure 2.3). Each military veteran and advocate has her own individual page with information about her contributions to the veteran social justice community.

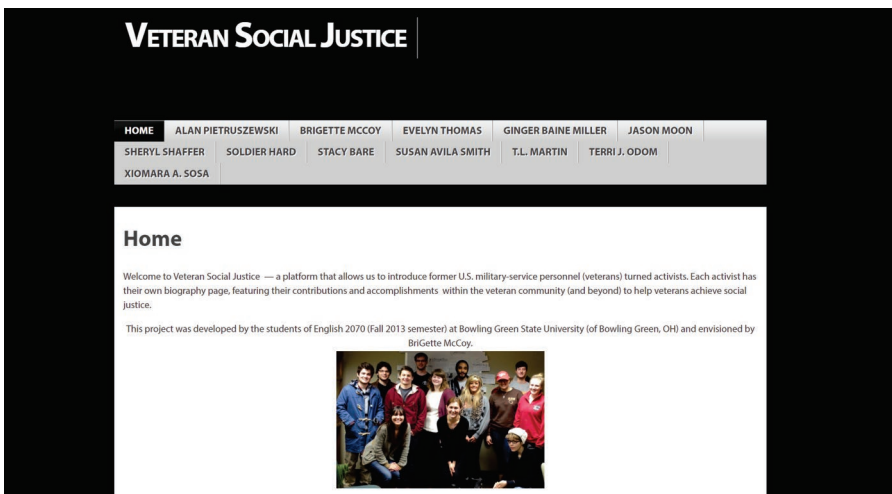


Figure 2.3. Screenshot of students’ website. Retrieved from <https://veteransocialjustice.wordpress.com/>

To gather information about their advocate, students had to immerse themselves into the veteran community and become ethical online researchers (McK-

10 When Tanya speaks I hear strength, certainty, and calm-composure in her voice though she is being vulnerable by sharing the details of her emotional battles. Conversely, in my voice I hear nervousness while trying to convey genuine admiration of her artwork and feelings.

ee & Porter, 2010; Almjeld & Blair, 2012). Fostering reciprocity with BriGette while encouraging her expertise and interest was the impetus of the community partnership and students' activist project. BriGette was pleased by this endeavor because she has spoken publically about it.¹¹ Similar acts of strategic disclosure, reciprocation, and activism happened between Tanya and me. To facilitate Tanya's expressed interest in sharing her military contributions and sacrifices with a broader audience, and in order to change her disparaging experiences as a student veteran on our shared college campus, I introduced Tanya to faculty members and staff who could help her share her story. Tanya has since shared her narrative in multiple class lectures and was spotlighted by her campus and community as a change agent for disabled students and female veterans (see Carle, 2015; Feehan, 2015).

CONCLUSION

A feminist methodology for which reciprocity is epicenter, facilitated through the interrelated practices of understanding, listening, and strategic disclosure has allowed me to develop reciprocal and lasting relationships with co-interpreters, Tanya and BriGette.



Figure 2.4. Mariana & Tanya, 2015. Grohowski photo.

11 She shared the partnership in her video interview for Veterans Helping Veterans (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qqsh8X7OkI4>).



Fig 2.5. Mariana & BriGette, 2013. Grohowski photo.

Deploying a methodology that privileges reciprocity and relationship building fostered collaborative, activist efforts within the community of disabled American female veterans and is a form of feminist intervention. While reciprocity is claimed by many scholars to be an “essential” practice for ethical research, it is not a given in all research relationships and should not be treated as such. Indeed, Powell and Takayoshi (2003; 2004) argued that establishing reciprocal relationships with participants is not always in a researcher’s best interest, let alone is it always possible. Establishing and maintaining a reciprocal relationship—especially between researcher and a co-interpreter is a member of a vulnerable population—is complicated and labor-intensive work, as articulated by Megan Adams in her chapter in this collection. Like Adams, Eli Goldblatt (2007) has articulated the demands of reciprocal relationship building. In short, Goldblatt, among others link relationship building with research participants and community partners to activism (see Sheridan-Rabideau, 2009; Blair et al., 2011; Blythe, 2012; Cushman, 1996, 1999). Reciprocal relationship building in research with individuals from marginalized populations, such as disabled American female veterans, is considered a form of activism and therefore, feminist intervention because research projects can amplify the voices of individuals who that have been marginalized from tradi-

tional research (Walters, 2010). Working with individuals from marginalized populations and tackling issues of social justice, is and has always been, an essential element of feminist theory building and praxis (see Blair & Tulley, 2007; Blair, 2012; Royster & Kirsch, 2012; Dolmage & Lewiecki-Wilson, 2010; Harding, 2012). As I have articulated, reciprocity and activism can be fostered through many forms. The methodological practices of understanding, listening, and strategic disclosure, though they are fraught with complications and place additional demands on researchers and co-interpreters, offer feminist interventionists a means of fostering

REFERENCES

- Almjeld, J., & Blair, K. L. (2012). Multimodal methods for multimodal literacies: Establishing a technofeminist research identity. In K. L. Arola & A. F. Wysocki (Eds.), *Composing (media) = composing (embodiment): Bodies, technologies, writing, and the teaching of writing* (pp. 97-109). Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders*. (5th Ed). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.
- Blair, K. L. (2012). A complicated geometry: Triangulating feminism, activism, and technological literacy. In L. Nickoson & M. P. Sheridan (Eds.), *Writing studies research in practice: Methods and methodologies* (pp. 63-72). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Blair, K. L., Fredlund, K., Hauman, K., Hurford, E., Kastner, S., & Witte, A. (2011). Cyberfeminists at play: Lessons on literacy and activism from a girls' computer camp. *Feminist Teacher*, 22(1), 43-59.
- Blair, K., & Tulley, C. (2007). Whose research is it, anyway? The challenge of deploying feminist methodology in technological spaces. In D. DeVoss & H. McKee (Eds.), *Digital writing research* (pp. 303-317). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Berry, P. W., Hawisher, G.E., & Selfe, C. L. (2012). *Transnational literate lives in digital times*. Logan, UT: Computers and Composition Digital Press/Utah State University Press. Retrieved from <http://ccdigitalpress.org/transnational/>
- Blythe, S. (2012). Composing activist research. In K. M. Powell & P. Takayoshi (Eds.), *Practicing research in writing studies: Reflexive and ethically responsible research* (pp. 275-292). New York, NY: Hampton Press
- Buchanan, N., Settles, I., & Woods, K. (2008). Comparing sexual harassment subtypes among black and white women by military rank: Double jeopardy, the jezebel, and the cult of true womanhood. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 32(4), 347-361.
- Carle, J. (2015). Class of 2015 success stories: True grit. Bowling Green State University News. Retrieved from <http://bgsu.edu/news/2015/05.html>
- Ceraso, S. (2014). (Re)Educating the senses: Multimodal listening, bodily learning, and the composition of sonic experiences. *College English*, 77(2), 102-123.
- Chase, S. E. (1995). *Ambiguous empowerment: The work of narratives of women school superintendents*. Amherst, MA: Massachusetts University Press.

- Cushman, E. (1996). The rhetorician as an agent of social change. *College Composition and Communication*, 47(1), 7-28.
- . (1999). The public intellectual, service learning, and activist research. *College English* 61(3): 328-336
- Cushman, E., Powell, K., & Takayoshi, P. (2004). Response to 'accepting the roles created for us: The ethics of reciprocity. *College Composition and Communication*, 56(1), 115-156.
- Deans, T. (2000). *Writing partnerships: Service-learning in composition*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Defense Business Board. (2010). Reducing overhead and improving business operations: Initial observations. Retrieved from <http://dbb.defense.gov/Portals/35/Documents/Reports/2010/FY10-10>
- Department of Defense. (2017). Annual report on sexual assault in the military fiscal year 2016. Retrieved from http://sapr.mil/public/docs/reports/FY15_Annual/FY15_Annual_Report_on_Sexual_Assault_in_the_Military.pdf
- Department of Labor. (2013). Section 503. Vietnam era veterans' readjustment assistance act of 1973. Retrieved from http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/vevraa/vevraa_rule_qa_508c.pdf
- Department of the Army. (2003, September). TC 25-20 A leader's guide to after-action reviews. Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Department of the Army. Retrieved from http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/ccap/cc/jcchb/Files/Topical/After_Action_Report/resources/tc25-20.pdf
- DeVault, M. L., & Gross, G. (2012). Feminist qualitative interviewing: Experience, talk, and knowledge. In S. N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *The handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (2nd ed., pp. 206-236). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Disabled American Veterans. (2014). *Women veterans: The long journey home*. Cold Springs, KY: Disabled American Veterans. Retrieved from <https://www.dav.org/wp-content/uploads/women-veterans-study.pdf>
- Dolmage, J., & Lewiecki-Wilson, C. (2010). Refiguring rhetorica: Linking feminist rhetoric and disability studies. In E. E. Schell, & K. J. Rawson (Eds.), *Rhetorica in motion: Feminist methods and methodologies* (pp. 23-38). Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburg Press.
- Farrow, E. S. (1918). "Roll call." *A dictionary of military terms*, (p. 519). New York, NY: Thomas Crowell Company.
- Feehan, J. (2015, May 10). Army vet conquers battle for college degrees at BGSU. *Toledo Blade*. Retrieved from <http://www.toledoblade.com/Education/2015/05/10/Army-vet-conquers-battle-for-college-degrees-at-BGSU.html>
- Flower, L. (2008). *Community literacy and the rhetoric of public engagement*. Carbon-dale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Gindlesparger, K. J. (2010). The sadder the story, the bigger the check: Reciprocity as an answer to organizational deficit models. *Community Literacy Journal*, 5(1), 96-106.
- Goldblatt, E. (2007). *Because we live here: Sponsoring literacy beyond the college curriculum*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

- Gorzelsky, G. (2012). An experimental approach to literacy studies. In K. M. Powell & P. Takayoshi (Eds.), *Practicing research in writing studies: Reflexive and ethically responsible research* (pp. 349-372). New York, NY: Hampton Press.
- Grohowski, M. (2014). Moving words, words that move: Language practices plaguing U.S. servicewomen. *Women and Language*, 37(1), 121-130.
- Grabill, J. T. (2007). *Writing community change: Designing technologies for citizen action*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- . (2012). Community-based research and the importance of a research stance. In L. Nickoson & M. P. Sheridan (Eds.), *Writing studies research in practice: Methods and methodologies* (pp. 210-219). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Gutsell, M., & Hulglin, K. (2014). Superscripts don't fly: Technical communication to support ordinary lives of people with disabilities. In L. Meloncon (Ed.), *Rhetorical accessibility: At the intersection of technical communication and disability studies* (pp. 83-95). Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company.
- H031313. (2013). Sexual Assaults in the military: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Personnel, U.S. Senate. [Full transcript]. Retrieved January 24, 2015 from <http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/13-10-3-13-13.pdf>
- Harding, S. (1987). *Feminism and methodology: Social science issues*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Harding, S. (1991). *Whose science? Whose knowledge? Thinking from women's lives*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- . (2012). Feminist standpoints. In S.N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *The handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (2nd ed., pp. 46-64). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Handley, D. (2016, April). Another mission: Citizenship pedagogy in the first-year writing classroom. Paper presented at the annual Conference on College Composition and Communication. Houston, TX.
- Hesse, D., Sommers, N., & Yancey, K. B. (2012). Evocative objects: Reflections on teaching, learning, and living in between. *College English*, 74(4), 324-350.
- Himley, M. (2004). Facing (up to) 'the stranger' in community service learning. *College Composition and Communication*, 55(3), 416-438.
- Holm, J. M. (1992). *Women in the military: An unfinished revolution* (2nd ed.). Novato, CA: Presidio Press.
- Horwitz, A., & Wakefield, J. (2012). *All we have to fear: Psychiatry's transformation of natural anxieties into mental disorders*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Jack, J. (2009). We have brains: Reciprocity as resistance in a feminist blog community. In K. L. Blair, R. Gajjala, & C. Tully (Eds.), *Webbing cyberfeminist practice: Communities, pedagogies, and social action* (pp. 327-344). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Kelly, M., Vogt, D., Scheiderer, E., Ouimette, P., Daley, J., & Wolfe, J. (2008). Effects of military trauma exposure on women veterans' use and perceptions of veterans' health administration care. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 23(6), 741-747.
- Kirsch, G. E. (1993). *Women writing the academy: Audience, authority, and transformation*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- . (1999). *Ethical dilemmas in feminist research: The politics of location, interpretation, and publication*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

- Lather, P. (1986). Research as praxis. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(3), 257-277.
- MacNealy, M. S. (1999). *Strategies for empirical research in writing*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Matthieu, M. (2016). The mission continues: A conceptual framework and selected brief screening measures for evaluating civic service and health outcomes among returning U.S. veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 1(1).
- McKee, H. A., & Porter, J. E. (2010). Rhetorica online: Feminist research practices in cyberspace. In E. E. Schell, & K. J. Rawson (Eds.), *Rhetorica in motion: Feminist methods and methodologies* (pp. 152-170). Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburg Press.
- Monahan, E. M., & Neidel-Greenlee, R. (2010). A few good women: America's military women from World War I to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. New York, NY: Anchor.
- Moore, B. (2013, April). 'Disorder' is proper label for post-traumatic stress. *Army Times*, 32-33.
- Naples, N. A. (2003). *Feminism and method: Ethnography, discourse analysis, and activist research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. (2016, March). *Profile of women veterans: 2014*. Retrieved from http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Women_Veterans_2016.pdf
- National Coalition of Homeless Veterans. (n.d.). *Homeless Female Veterans White Paper*. Retrieved from <http://www.nchv.org/images/uploads/HFV%20paper.pdf>
- Newkirk, T. (1996). Seduction and betrayal in qualitative research. In P. Mortensen, & G. E. Kirsch (Eds.), *Ethics & representation in qualitative studies of literacy* (pp. 3-16). Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Orr, C. M. (2011). *Women's studies as civic engagement: Research and recommendations*. National Women's Studies Association and Teagle foundation. Retrieved from http://www.nwsa.org/files/WomensStudiesasCivicEngagement2011Revised_Finalpdf-1.pdf
- Patten, E., & Parker, K. (2011). *Women in the U.S. military: Growing share, distinctive profile. Rep.* Washington DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/women>
- Pew Research Center Social & Demographic Trends. (2011). *The Military-civilian gap: War and sacrifice in the post-9/11 era*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2011/10/veterans-report.pdf>
- Powell, K. M., & Takayoshi, P. (2003). Accepting the roles created for us: The ethics of reciprocity. *College Composition and Communication*, 54(3), 394-422.
- Price, M. (2003). *Mad at school: Rhetorics of mental disability and academic life*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Ratcliffe, K. (2005). *Rhetorical listening: Identification, gender, whiteness*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Remley, D. (2012). Re-considering the range of reciprocity in community-based research and service learning: You don't have to be an activist to give back. *Community Literacy Journal*, 6(2), 115-132.

- Rigg, J. (2013). Traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress: The 'signature wounds' of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. In R. M. Scurfield & Col K. T. Plantoni (Eds.), *War trauma and its wake: Expanding the circle of healing* (pp. 113-133). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Royster, J. J. (2000). *Traces of a stream: Literacy and social change among African American women*. Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburg Press.
- Royster, J. J., & Kirsch, G. E. (2012). *Feminist rhetorical practices: New horizons for rhetoric, composition, and literacy studies*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Santovec, M. L. (2015). Women vets: An underserved population. *Women in Higher Education, 24*(1), 1-2.
- Selfe, C. L., & Hawisher, G. E. (2012). Exceeding the bounds of the interview: Feminism, mediation, narrative and conversations about digital literacy. In L. Nickoson & M. P. Sheridan (Eds.), *Writing studies research in practice: Methods and methodologies* (pp. 36-50). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Sheridan-Rabideau, M. P. (2009). *Girls, feminism, and grassroots literacies: Activism in the girlzone*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Smagorinsky, P. (2008). The methods section as conceptual epicenter in constructing social science research reports. *Written Communication, 25*(3), 389-411.
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Zed Books, Ltd.
- Spinuzzi, C. (2005). The methodology of participatory design. *Technical Communication, 52*(2), 163-174.
- Walters, S. (2010). Toward an accessible pedagogy: Dis/ability, multimodality, and universal design in the technical communication classroom. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 19*(4), 427-454.
- Williamson, M. M., & Huot, B. (2012). A modest proposal for common ground and language for research in writing. In K. M. Powell & P. Takayoshi (Eds.), *Practicing research in writing studies: Reflexive and ethically responsible research* (pp. 31-58). New York, NY: Hampton Press.