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Documenting Emotional Labor

An Exercise in Critical Communication Pedagogy

ABSTRACT This essay builds on Lawless's call to name and chronicle emotional work. The authors draw attention to the emotional labor that has become an institutional expectation of the academic position, particularly among people with marginalized identities, to name this labor as such and to use this documentation as evidence for compensation. The authors' emotional labor is grounded in critical communication pedagogy (CCP), which compels them to engage in a fundamentally different form of emotional labor, one that depends on relationship-building and the recognition of systemic and structural forms of oppression through reflexive care and performative listening. This form of emotional labor strives to understand people in context to account for how experiences are always enabled and constrained by various institutional structures and to generate possibilities for change. The authors offer autoethnographic accounts of their CCP-centered emotional labor, and then draw conclusions from a critical communication pedagogy perspective. KEYWORDS emotional labor, critical communication pedagogy, autoethnography, reflexive care, performative listening

It is the end of another long day. In separate houses, in different parts of the southern United States, we each lie in bed, revisiting our days, and making a mental list of tomorrow's schedule and to-dos. We have both spent our days teaching, working through office hours with students, attending department and committee meetings, and holding impromptu meetings with students and colleagues on the way to the bathroom and during our lunch breaks. One student stopped in for clarification on an upcoming major assignment; another student stopped by to discuss graduate school and request a recommendation letter. Then there was the colleague who needed help strategizing about confrontations that arise in the classroom, paired with the unexpected student who requested a few minutes, which turned into an hour, to chat about a difficult personal situation that may or may not need to be reported to one of the university's support systems.

Fretting over what we said and interactions we had, we realize a large amount of our day contains spending time with students and colleagues beyond the confines of our academic appointments. The service, research, and teaching work that academics engage in are all equivalent to lines on curriculum vitae. We can, to some degree, document the way we spend our time working to further our careers and/or on behalf of our universities. However, these vitae lines do not encompass every aspect of our jobs. The emotional labor we do is an unwritten additional job requirement to teaching, grading, preparing, researching, and department and university service work. While an element of emotional labor is required of most service jobs, it is disproportionately expected of

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people of marginalized identities.[1] By this, we mean identities outside of the cis, straight White man, especially a tenured or tenure-stream faculty member. As White, cis, straight women, we want to acknowledge the privilege we have in engaging this work, and the ways we have, ourselves, internalized normative systems. We acknowledge that the ways we are expected to engage in emotional labor are necessarily different from the ways of our colleagues who do not share our privileges. Noting that this hidden labor should be made visible, Lawless argued for the documentation of emotional labor as professorial work.[2] Lawless does not oppose this labor but argues for the need "to be honest about the 'work' that we are doing," thereby labeling it as work.[3] Lawless positioned emotional labor within the field of communication and articulates the implications of emotional labor for the relationship-oriented discipline. Communication as a major attracts increasing numbers of students but fails to increase hires, adding to the labor of communication scholars.[4] To address the growing need for labor, and the lack of compensation for such work, Lawless implores teacher-scholars to take stock of the labor they do in order to document it and to make arguments for change. She argues academics must "engage in microresistance through a four-step process: (1) recognize emotional labor as academic labor; (2) document the emotional labor that you/we do; (3) continue documentation through continued scholarly pursuit; and (4) make arguments for compensation."[5]

In this essay, we take up Lawless's call to document the emotional labor we do in our positions as contingent and junior faculty,[6] respectively.[7] We locate our emotional labor in critical communication pedagogy (CCP), which enables us to recognize and document this emotional work. Moreover, we argue that CCP prompts us to engage in a specific kind of emotional labor based on relationship-building and the recognition of systemic modes of oppression and offers us a way to theorize emotional work in scholarship. We begin this essay by situating emotional labor; we then describe CCP and how it instructs our performance of emotional labor. After taking up the call to document emotional labor, we next offer autoethnographic accounts of our own experiences with emotional labor to chronicle how this work plays out in our experiences as women in the academy and how it extends our labor well beyond the classroom. As teacher-scholars, we are drawn to critical autoethnographic and narrative methods to help us puzzle through, examine, and theorize what happens in the classroom. Moreover, critical autoethnographic methods allow us to examine how we are personally implicated in larger ideological systems. For us, engaging in autoethnographic writing is a critical act that is consistent with our approach to critical communication pedagogy. Generating these autoethnographic accounts enables us to theorize the world through our own experiences and extend the boundaries of epistemological knowledge beyond mainstream, conventional understandings.[8] Finally, documenting our own narrative experiences allows us to draw implications about emotional labor in a CCP context.

EMOTIONAL LABOR

Hochschild originally conceptualized emotional labor as the work service professionals do as dictated by their organizations, such as flight attendants having to continue smiling at

rude passengers.[9] Lawless defined emotional labor as "the development, management, and performance of affective work."[10] In other words, emotional labor involves the work and dedicated time that go into negotiating, managing, and empathizing with another person's emotions. Examples include active listening to sympathize or empathize, offering a space for another to work through emotional turmoil, potentially offering advice, helping connect to resources, and building relationships aimed at helping the other person succeed in some way.

Bellas extended emotional labor to academia, specifically identifying emotional labor in which professors engage.[11] This may be done in the classroom, where Bellas explained women are more likely to encourage participation while curtailing more domineering students.[12] Green claimed women and people of color do much of the invisible institutional "care work," including listening and problem solving.[13] Harlow expanded these arguments by looking at how race intersects with gender, specifically in classroom settings.[14] Much of the reductive connection between emotional labor and women is about an essentialist notion tying teaching to mothering, as Bellas argued they both "entail social expectations of nurturance, altruism, and self-abnegation."[15]

Even now, women professors are more likely to be treated like a mother than a mentor, to be "nurturing and forgiving regardless of the circumstances."[16] This translates to students approaching women professors more often for special favor requests and judging them more harshly if they do not grant those requests.[17] For instance, we have both been singled out by students to empathize with crises, ameliorate distress, and make accommodations for emotional anguish. Students have pulled us aside to cry in our offices, disclose personal information, and request (or demand) affective assistance. Students have deemed us mother figures based on how they perceive our caring, though rarely do they comment on how we organize the classroom or facilitate learning opportunities as evidence of our care. Instead, we have been asked to extend deadlines, meet about personal problems, create alternative assignments, and make a variety of special favor adjustments in the name of meeting students' needs. Denying such requests has resulted in students (and sometimes their parents) questioning our credentials and disparaging us as insensitive or "feisty" women. And though these instances often occur in our offices or at the end of class, this kind of work falls outside what we can count as part of our teaching portfolios, annual reports, and dossiers for promotion. The problem, of course, is that emotional labor takes up precious time and energy.[18] While this work does not have to be a negative experience,[19] especially in teaching,[20] it is also hard to account for in the teaching-research-service triumvirate of tenure and promotion or yearly reviews. Furthermore, there is little recognition for contingent faculty who cannot track this time in the same way as those in the tenure stream or may be juggling students and courses at multiple institutions. As current and former contingent faculty, we have found ourselves working more hours to account for how we are compelled to engage in emotional work in addition to preparing for classes and generating scholarship. For instance, one of us is a contingent faculty member with a 4-4 load[21] in addition to a service component to the department. This equates to two or three preps and an average of 80 to 120 students each semester. Although it may vary, one of us spends at least 15+ hours a week responding to

emails, holding impromptu meetings, developing connections with support services on campus, and cultivating departmental and university relationships in order to provide support for students and colleagues. Similar to the pull Lawless felt to engage in this emotional labor,[22] we find ourselves heartened to engage in this type of labor in the academy.

CRITICAL COMMUNICATION PEDAGOGY

Critical communication pedagogy is focused on changing how practitioners think and talk about teaching and learning in all instructional contexts.[23] Fassett and Warren developed ten commitments of critical communication pedagogues.[24] Wiant Cummins and Griffin summarize these commitments as "understanding identity and communication as constitutive and contextually meaningful, culture and language as central, power as fluid, and reflexivity and praxis as essential."[25] Additionally, CCP highlights a "nuanced understanding of human subjectivity and agency"[26] in addition to viewing dialogue as "both metaphor and method."[27]

Building from this framework, we define CCP as an approach to teaching that theorizes pedagogical spaces as a means of identifying how students, teachers, and social institutions communicatively constitute, disrupt, and transform lived educational realities. Emphasizing communication, CCP theorizes how both individual, mundane utterances *and* institutional texts constitute pedagogical spaces and bodies. CCP's focus on the constitutive function of communication also reveals how everyday productions of language undo, deconstruct, and change educational spaces and realities.

Moreover, our commitment to CCP implicates our approach to emotional labor in the following ways. First, emotional labor underscored by critical communication pedagogy means we must recognize that/how our students' bodies are communicatively constituted individually and in groups. When our students seek time with us, we first work to understand how our students' identities produce and are products of the systems in which we live. Second, emotional labor situated in CCP means we help students navigate and survive these systems. We draw attention to the system(s) at play and show students how they work. Third, we work to help students learn to subvert and change the system to generate more inclusive practices and spaces. This might mean we model examples,[28] or it might mean we work with students to recognize what agency they may already have within the system. And fourth, we work to resist systems, both on behalf of students and with students moving forward.

Not only does critical communication pedagogy have implications for emotional labor, but it also compels us to engage in a particular genre of emotional labor as an act of pedagogical love.[29] While emotional labor includes a willingness to listen or to see all sides of an issue,[30] CCP-centered emotional labor asks more of pedagogues. It compels us to account for the ways emotional labor is work so that this labor does not merely sustain oppressive institutional structures, but instead works toward meaningful systemic change. We are galvanized by Lawless's call to account for and document emotional labor as an act of resisting the added work as an unwritten expectation without further compensation

in order to detail what goes into our positions as White women in the academy.[31] Moreover, we argue CCP compels us to engage in a fundamentally different kind of emotional labor, one that depends on relationship-building and the recognition of systemic and structural forms of oppression. In other words, we understand that institutions of higher education require teachers of all kinds to engage in emotional labor in order to maintain structural hierarchy and order. We recognize that not every pedagogue can or wishes to resist the systems within which we live; yet, we still must engage with emotional labor.[32] For instance, one of us recently completed a mandated—meaning it was once unwritten but has now been codified—mental health training about negotiating students who exhibit signs of distress by inexpertly assessing the level of distress and employing prescriptive phrases to diagnose the situation in order to direct students to other resources on campus. This training relied on instructors to engage in emotional labor, to be the first point of reference for students in distress, to negotiate their feelings, and ultimately, to refer students to other resources so they would not become a problem in day-to-day instruction and institutional operation.

CCP-centered emotional labor requires us to reflexively engage with power in its various iterations within instructional spaces. For us, this means generating modes of reflexive care and listening that acknowledge and attend to the evolving political and contextual factors of our classrooms and our students. Building on Noddings,[33] we describe reflexive care as the recognition of and subsequent response to students' lived experiences as they are shaped by individual and institutional structures. Reflexive care also means engaging students where they are in terms of expertise and experience and demonstrating a willingness to collaborate to co-produce knowledge in the classroom. For us, care means making expectations transparent and working with students to succeed within the parameters set for them in and beyond our classrooms so that they can survive and (we hope) thrive. It also means collaborating with students to find generative ways to live in and subvert institutional systems.

Similarly, as critical communication pedagogy practitioners, we are compelled to engage in emotional listening labor that emphasizes other-centeredness. Drawing from McRae's conceptualization of "performative listening," we understand listening as a generative act that happens only in relationships with others.[34] In his book, critical communication pedagogy and performance scholar McRae departs from skill-based approaches to listening to propose "performative listening" as a transformative pedagogy and research method.[35] McRae explains that "performative listening is a way of engaging in research and inquiry that works to know and learn from others through a performance of listening that is always grounded in the personal experience and social and historical contexts."[36] In other words, performative listening is both a method for examining how the world is produced and is itself world producing. We utilize performative listening in order to mark how the act of listening, which is a function of how we engage in critical communication pedagogy, is also productive. In terms of emotional labor, we listen to and for spoken and unspoken expectations of institutions, other stakeholders, our students, and ourselves. We listen for the ways our students' experiences and identities collide and how these collisions enable and constrain opportunities for students.

However, we argue that emotional labor that grows out of CCP provides possibilities to work with students in acknowledging structural modes of oppression and how those play out on student bodies in complex ways. In this way, CCP-oriented emotional labor reclaims the need for affective work, not as something that maintains the continuance of the system, but as essential to a relational approach to pedagogy that strives to understand people in context and account for how their experiences are always enabled and constrained by various institutional structures. For instance, evaluating the mandated training in terms of a CCP approach to emotional labor would mean recognizing the politics that go into assessing a student's mental state as well as how various contexts (the historical moment, the student's lived experiences, university expectations and structures, etc.) shape and name the student's "distress."

In the following section, we take up Lawless's call and offer autoethnographic narratives as our own forms of "microresistance."[37] We utilize autoethnography to document and theorize emotional labor, and to extend the autoethnographic tradition among critical communication pedagogy scholars who draw on the personal to make sense of how individual experience in classrooms reveals and is implicated in larger structural conditions and constraints.[38] Though these autoethnographic reflections are mere snapshots of the emotional labor we do, we draw attention to the ways CCP informs this form of emotional labor by emphasizing reflexive care and performative listening in personal narratives from Molly, followed by Aubrey. We recognize that emotional labor also happens within the classroom, but our narratives focus more on the one-on-one interactions that typically comprise our time spent doing emotional labor.

PERFORMING EMOTIONAL LABOR NARRATIVE 1: PANIC IS THE WAKE-UP CALL (MOLLY)

I watched it happen. I watched her breathing become shallow, her body tense up, her eyes flash the panic. This young Black woman student was a minute into a five-minute speech, and she was having a panic attack. I wondered in that moment if I could have foreseen it. We had talked for forty-five minutes the night before about how overwhelmed she was feeling about everything, about her seventeen-item to-do list, and the impossibility of achieving that list in a single day, even as I thought of my own, ever-growing to-do list. She admitted that her method is procrastination until the pressure of the deadline helps her churn out the work. She knew it was not the healthiest method, but why fix something that is not broken? So, I watched. I wanted to help her through it as I viscerally reacted to that familiar panic. I told her to keep pushing, to not give up. And she did not. I was incredibly proud as I asked after class, "Do you know how much courage it took to keep going?!"

She came to my office, and we discussed what had happened and what was happening in her life. I encouraged her to go back to the therapist she had already seen once, and to try to be as honest as possible with the therapist. As a rule, I think everyone needs a little therapy, but I certainly did not consider what implications there could be in me, as a White woman, suggesting that she should see a therapist. I assured her that she did not fail her speech *because* she kept going. I had planned that office hour for grading and

preparing for my next class, time I needed because it is almost the only time I have to do that grading and preparing. As an adjunct professor at the time, now a full-time instructor, the time I have on campus and the time after my children go to bed are the only times I can work. But I made the decision to take the time with this student because I thought she needed it more than I needed it to grade and prepare. This is part of teaching to me, knowing that my best-laid plans sometimes go awry, and I need to address the student and relationship in front of me rather than the mountain of paperwork on my desk.

She came back a week later to discuss life some more. She had talked to her stepdad, the only one she describes as being emotional in the family. This led to a conversation with her mother, who is more logical. She said her whole family is good at "logic-ing" their way out of situations. Her mother told her that she was not depressed, she was understimulated. "You are just bored," mother told daughter. My student wanted my take on the situation, acknowledging that my field is not in mental health. As a critical communication pedagogue, I knew this was dangerous territory. Instead of assuming this student's circumstances could be attributed back to her individual actions (or immediate actions of her family), I wanted to make sure my response attended to her story as implicated in a broader cultural narrative and context. Yet, I was left wondering about the power I had in that moment, of what my response might mean for the student. What did it mean that I, a White woman and a mother, was offering my opinion on what my young, Black woman student should do? What did it mean that I offered a narrative different from that of her own mother? I could not ignore the power inherent in my position—both that of teacher and of White woman—in my answer.

Knowing that my understanding would always be incomplete, my approach was to work with the student to come up with some plausible reasons her mother might have suggested alternatives to depression (e.g., they are a family of color, so they do not have the luxury of deliberating over their feelings and contending with what might be depression, or citing themselves as "broken" when they are already struggling to combat systemic racism). I wanted to acknowledge the cultural forces surrounding the student's positionalities and history, but I recognize this reading could be a problematic and clumsy attempt to address systemic barriers. By linking the student's individual circumstances to larger sociopolitical phenomena, we tried to negotiate the student's personal circumstances in context.

Recognizing again that I am not a mental health professional, the student and I then worked together to problem-solve strategies for moving forward. We talked about strategies for negotiating the class among her other classes, opportunities in which she could engage in self-care. And, ultimately, I told the student to trust herself, to follow her intuition, and to ask for additional help from people she trusted. I encouraged her to return to the therapist with whom she was working. I affirmed her choice to reach out for help, and when she left my office, she seemed more self-assured in terms of her next steps in the class and how to reach out for further assistance. I wanted desperately to help the student. I wanted to spend that time with her, validate her, and encourage her to let her know: "I see you. I hear you. I am going to try to understand where you are coming from, and then work with you to move forward, even as I recognize how whatever I have to offer may be inadequate." I want to be accountable for my own participation in a broken

system, which continues to fail, and I with it. I want to be able to work with the student while simultaneously acknowledging how we are both constrained by structural expectations, and how I have internalized structures in my own practices and solutions. So, as the minutes ticked by on my office clock, I stayed with her to find a way forward, to bear witness, to live with the failure of the system.

Reflecting on this particular situation, I realized that in order to facilitate a successful learning environment, it was necessary for me to take additional time and make additional emotional effort with the student, to push against the constraints of my job and time. To reflexively care for the student, I tried to meet her in the space she was in by collaborating with her to persevere through panic and to find strategies to navigate the expectations and constraints of the course, particularly in terms of speaking assignments. I wanted her to know she was not alone, that she could move through and negotiate panic and the course. And, through all this, I cannot be sure I did not fail her.

My goal was to focus on other-centered, performative listening in order to understand how we could work together to negotiate personal and institutional expectations and constraints, particularly in terms of how to move forward in the class and beyond. Sitting together in my office became about listening to and for context and how institutional structures shaped this student's experience and present struggle. I tried to listen to the specifics of what she was saying as well as how various individual, social, and historical conditions impacted the present issue. We worked together to brainstorm solutions to her feeling overwhelmed, to practice ways she might talk with her family about her apparent depression. In this way, we co-produced knowledge in our educational space, finding ways for her to subvert dominant stories surrounding mental health and strong, Black womanhood. This knowledge-building was about her literal survival, about helping her see ways through/out/around the depression and overwhelm. In other words, as a critical communication pedagogy practitioner, it was essential that I engage this specific form of emotional labor in order to collaborate with the student to address her issues in context and develop short-term goals so she could survive the semester.

I am left wondering what she would say. Would she say I helped her? Would she say that she felt the performative listening and reflexive care? Would she regret that she had come to me? Looking back, I wonder what more I could have done to connect her with resources across campus that might have allowed her to find the solutions she sought on her own terms. From my limited perspective, I hope the additional time we spent together felt useful for her in achieving her goals moving forward. Perhaps it is too easy to say that I engaged in these specific forms of CCP-driven emotional labor without also having the student's voice present. To some degree, as critical communication practitioners engaging in emotional labor, all we can do is engage our students with the best knowledge and empathy we have available now and continually seek to learn, do, and be better.

PERFORMING EMOTIONAL LABOR NARRATIVE 2: FEELING FAILURE. AGAIN. (AUBREY)

Returning home late for the fourth or fifth time in a row, I tap my thumbs on my steering wheel as I replay the events of my day. In addition to my role as teaching faculty, I am also

the foundational course director; this means I coordinate all sections of public speaking across three campuses and run the teacher training program for incoming instructors (graduate students, adjunct, and visiting faculty) in my home department. In this position, I regularly meet with graduate teaching instructors and adjunct faculty in and outside of teacher training workshops, sessions, and meetings. Providing structural resources, such as instructional methods, curricular materials, and assessment guidelines are all part of the job. In addition to my assigned duties, I spend a significant amount of time providing emotional support and encouragement for new teachers, who are often graduate students and first-time teachers. For instance, today I led a three-hour teaching workshop on methods for engaged learning, and then spent an additional hour speaking with an instructor about how she was finding it difficult to plan for class and complete assignments for her graduate courses in addition to struggling to pay rent and buy groceries, all while taking care of an elderly parent. And, though this situation is weighing heavily on my heart, it is the most recent scene with one of my undergraduate students that occupies my mind.

My courses, workshops, and meetings are long over, and I am packing up to leave when I look up to find one of my undergraduate students tapping lightly on my open door. I have met with this student, who is also an athlete, several times, but I have not seen or heard from him for more than three weeks despite sending him a series of messages including institutional mandated grade reports.

The student tells me he is embarrassed about his absences. He apologizes for "invading" my office and pleads with me not to fail him from the course. He becomes increasingly upset, and when I note his distress, he tells me his grandmother died at the beginning of the semester. I can tell he is trying not to cry, but when I ask, he describes how his grandmother helped raise him, how she always believed he would get to college. He describes how he and his grandmother would have meals together and how she made him feel loved when he felt like no one else cared. I hand him a tissue when he tells me there's a void in his life and his family where she used to be.

He tells me how he thought he had everything under control but has been struggling to focus on course work and complete assignments. As a student-athlete, he was able to travel home only briefly for the funeral but does not know when he will be able to return. His family lives several states away, and he sees them only a couple of times a year because of training and regular-season play. He misses his family and is feeling guilty about his absence in the time of tragedy. As a Black, first-generation college student, he has not wanted to ask for help, fearing it would look weak and place even more of a burden on his family. He is also concerned that he will lose his scholarship and does not want to let his family down because he feels like his family is depending on him to earn a college degree.

I express sympathy for his loss. I also try to acknowledge his feelings and the risk it took for him to share this information with me. I am worried about the student's progress in my class, and though I recommend that he be in contact with his academic adviser to chart out options for the rest of the semester, I also want to affirm his request for help.

As I listen to his story, I think about how though there are campus resources for this student, the systemic obstacles he is facing are tantamount, particularly the structural

emphasis on race and class privilege that forwards meritocracy and individualism, which has compelled him to try to assimilate and make it alone. And, though I know I am only one teacher, implicated in the system by my authority and my Whiteness, I want to acknowledge his position in this moment, which is enmeshed in constraints, and I want to give him a break. So, we talk through a plan for him to successfully complete the class, which includes some alternative assignments that I will have to take some time to craft. We also talk about other resources available to him on campus in case he wants help with his writing projects or wants to discuss his grief with someone who has more expertise than myself. He is grateful and tells me it is a relief to be able to talk through his situation and have a clear, achievable plan for moving forward. And when he gets up to shake my hand and leave, though I know I have just put more work on my to-do list, I feel optimistic. I send him a follow-up message outlining the newly created alternative assignments and tell him I look forward to his returning to the next class. In the coming weeks, I contact the student and have several calls with advisors in the Athletics Department, but I do not hear back from him. He never returns to class. Over time, I lose track of him but never the feeling that I have failed.

Like many teachers, my work follows me home. The time that I engage in emotional labor extends well beyond traditional working hours. This is increasingly true in the time of the pandemic as I do all my work from home. There is now no separation between home and work.[39] As a faculty member and foundational communication course director,[40] I am in constant contact via email and collaborative team-based video software (e.g., Teams), not only with my students and colleagues but also with the graduate student instructors, visiting and adjunct faculty who teach public speaking, and their students. Committed to critical communication pedagogy, I approach my instructional roles as places to "examine how systemic injustice is produced in communication in order to challenge domination and aim towards inclusivity and equity."[41] By inclusivity, I do not mean to indicate tolerance that recreates normative hierarchies. For me, inclusivity is about bringing new voices to the table to radically re-imagine and reconfigure structural expectations. In practice, this means spending time with students and instructors to build relationships, listen, bear witness to lived experience, and attend to the ways I am implicated by and perpetuate systemic injustices even as I seek to transform them. It means I embrace emotional labor as part of my commitment to critical communication pedagogy.

And yet, I recognize this is not enough, and perhaps at the same time, it is too much. I want to do this labor. I want to account for this labor. And I still fail. The system still fails. My emotional labor cannot make up for systemic oppression, nor should I be so arrogant to think it can. My experience as a White woman—born to teacher-parents, who helped me navigate educational hurdles, who first left my family to attend graduate school, and who has had great success in adapting to various educational settings—is vastly different from the life experiences of the Black, first-generation student-athlete in my class. I often fall into a trap of wanting to help students. However, without examining how that desire and manifestation of help are enmeshed in Whiteness, I risk re-centering myself, Whiteness, and other systems of dominance. It is not an accident that I have been

successful and that my student struggled. I have been enabled to work hard and succeed, while he has been enabled to work hard and continue struggling, especially during a crisis, such as the death of his grandmother.

While I am compelled to engage in emotional labor, I must also recognize how this same work may enable the structural expectations that stack the deck against marginalized students. I have in some ways internalized the system in order to succeed within it. I must therefore be careful of how I also reproduce structural conditions in my classrooms and with students. I must similarly recognize how my attempt to disrupt the status quo may leave it in place. By stepping in to help the student, perhaps I disrupt business as usual. However, in stepping in and taking on this labor, perhaps I also obfuscate the larger institutional issues, which enable the structure to proceed unchanged. As I reflect on my student and on my commitment to critical communication pedagogy, I want to dedicate myself to finding ways to account for and be reflexive about this labor.

REFLECTIONS

These are but two accounts of many we could tell about the emotional labor we perform in higher education. Emotional labor is undeniably difficult, sometimes outright painful, and often draining. But, sometimes, we get to see how our emotional labor is also valued by the people with whom we work and share that time. For instance, we are fortunate to have one another with whom we can commiserate, strategize, and write about these experiences. Looking at care and listening as we have discussed above in light of our narratives, we offer the following as implications of emotional labor from a CCP perspective.

First, we remember that "to do critical communication pedagogy is to do reflexivity, to imagine the role one plays within systems of power."[42] We have to acknowledge the identity of the instructor engaging in the emotional labor work. Again, as White, cis, straight women, we have privilege in our ability to find resources on behalf of others; we may have more privilege in getting others to work with us on students' or colleagues' behalves, even in our current and former roles as contingent faculty. In our positions as director or coordinator of the introductory course, we may carry more institutional privilege or power to speak with and on behalf of others. Thus, we see as an implication of a CCP-centered emotional labor to first acknowledge our intersectional identities, and then to use what privileges we may have to help others. As we engage in this emotional labor, our goal is to acknowledge our privilege and work with others to generate more inclusive opportunities.

Second, our ability to find and access resources on another's behalf is also about being creative with resources. We recognize that if it goes unchecked and unacknowledged as work, the hidden industry of emotional labor can support the status quo in higher education by expecting a significant amount of affective support beyond job requirements laid out in annual contracts and position assignments. As critical communication pedagogues, we are committed to reclaiming emotional work as essential to the relational approach to CCP, which works toward inclusivity and transformation. We also recognize

that we are implicated in and by the very systems we are trying to change, which means part of our work with CCP is to survive and subvert, even as we may unwittingly uphold them. That is to say, we try to work within systems in order to change them, knowing that we also benefit from those systems (e.g., Whiteness). Moreover, as we address our own work–life balance, we know we live in a neoliberal system that demands us to become "capital-enhancing agents."[43] Our attempts to achieve a work–life balance that is probably impossible stems from the cost–benefit analysis neoliberalism demands of women under the guise of "emancipated womanhood."[44] We must be creative in how we make use of our time, and documenting, as Lawless encourages, may ultimately become an accounting for where and to whom our time goes.[45] In short, a CCP-centered emotional labor requires creativity in caring for and listening to those in our lives inside and outside the academy.

Third, we return to Lawless's call for microresistance.[46] Although we recognize how achieving a balance in our lives is impossible in this neoliberal system, we also see how some form of resistance comes with the ability to set boundaries, an ability we are still learning to incorporate. Rottenberg argues that neoliberalism produces individualized subjects who are "entirely responsible for their own self-care and well-being."[47] Working within the system, then, to establish room for our own self-care is a form of microresistance. Emotional labor underscored by CCP recognizes how demands on our time ultimately put the onus of responsibility solely on our shoulders to manage time, ignoring how the system continues to demand more work with less resources. In terms of emotional labor, this may look like setting boundaries about when, for whom, and for how long we are willing to engage in labor for others. Unfortunately, this microresistance is in tension with to whom we can refuse; there are certainly requests from chairs, deans, or other administration for which refusal might result in disciplinary action against us. So, we must identify what is or is not within our control in terms of boundary-setting given the power structures at play in our privileged identities and career security.

Lastly, this may mean we consider how we might situate ourselves within a system in order to affect meso- or macro-resistance as well. As nontenured faculty, what are the ways we might be able to work within the system designed against us? Perhaps documenting the emotional labor we do could become a norm that helps us redefine requirements for tenure or recognition for our labor. This is also a direction we see for future work. We find it imperative to identify places where we can use our emotional labor to disrupt and change how the system operates. We are also committed to forging boundaries around expectations of emotional labor so this work is counted as work, not exploited by institutional pressures that are content to let us do more work for less.

CONCLUSION

We are searching for one another in a large lobby. We are meeting up at our national conference. Though we have talked on the phone and via video conference over the last year, there is nothing quite like being able to reach across and hug one another or to stop one another midsentence to ask a random question or receive reassurances about

upcoming presentations. We get things done that will count at this conference in terms of our professional dossiers. But in the precious time we get together, we spend a lot of time inquiring about one another's families, recounting moments of celebration and crisis, and assuaging one another's fears of inadequacy (in our jobs, as parents, as partners, as friends). In these moments, we depend on one another to engage in emotional labor not only to generate new possibilities and a way to transform institutional structures, but also to survive. These small moments are also part of our documenting. The emotional labor we do for one another is also inspired by CCP.

Because people with marginalized identities are disproportionately relied upon to engage in emotional labor, it is imperative for us to document and theorize this emotional labor as work so as not to let it become normalized and remain uncompensated.[48] This means generating language to describe this labor in annual faculty evaluations, and in applications for promotion and employment. It also means making space in academic conferences and research outlets for stories of this labor.

This essay builds on Lawless's call to write up emotional labor,[49] and further extends this call by directly positioning emotional labor in critical communication pedagogy. We argue that by locating this emotional work in CCP, we are able to identify and account for emotional labor to make it count through theorizing it in our scholarship. Further, we argue CCP compels us to engage in a fundamentally different form of emotional labor, one that depends on relationship-building and the recognition of systemic and structural forms of oppression. For us, this means acknowledging how institutions of higher education expect teachers of all kinds to engage in emotional labor in order to maintain structural hierarchy and order. Instead of maintaining the institutional hierarchies, CCP-oriented emotional labor intervenes in the status quo. CCP-centered emotional labor emphasizes the need for affective work as an essential part of a transformative relational pedagogy. This form of emotional labor strives to understand people in context to account for how their experiences are always enabled and constrained by various institutional structures and generates possibilities for change.

In the autoethnographic tradition, which embraces story to illuminate and theorize the social experience, we advocate for more stories of emotional labor to further chronicle this work and theorize its implications. The opportunity to develop autoethnographic accounts of emotional labor may even inspire new insights into how to approach academic roles. For instance, as a result of writing this piece together, we are now working to develop language to capture these efforts on annual evaluation reports, which we have discussed at conferences. This piece has also changed how we interact with and advocate on behalf of colleagues and students as we attempt to set more transparent boundaries. To this end, we call for the creation of academic forums and special journal issues that solicit these narratives, so that as scholars we can come together to acknowledge and archive this effort as well as generate new, transformative possibilities.

Through sharing personal narratives in this essay, highlighting examples of the emotional labor in which we engage, we identify how our academic lives are spent in service of others (students and colleagues) in ways not officially recognized by the academy. In our commitment to CCP, we reclaim this hidden labor as essential to building relationships

for collaboration toward change. Specifically, we demonstrate how CCP-centered emotional labor requires a commitment to reflexive care and performative listening that aim to collaborate with students to generate more inclusive conditions and opportunities. ■

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NOTES

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1. Myra Green, "Thanks for Listening." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 19, 2015. www.chronicle.com/article/thanks-for-listening; Mary Ellen Guy and Meredith A. Newman, "Women's Jobs, Men's Jobs: Sex Segregation and Emotional Labor." *Public Administration Review* 64, no. 3 (2004): 289–298. www.jstor.org/stable/3542594; Audrey Williams June, "The Invisible Labor of Minority Professors." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 8, 2015. www.chronicle.com/article/the-invisible-labor-of-minority-professors
2. Brandi Lawless, "Documenting a Labor of Love: Emotional Labor as Academic Labor." *Review of Communication* 18, no. 2 (2018): 85–97. doi:10.1080/15358593.2018.1438644
3. Lawless, "Documenting a Labor of Love," 92.
4. Lawless, "Documenting a Labor of Love," 91.
5. Lawless, "Documenting a Labor of Love," 92.
6. In the United States, contingent faculty refers to both part-time and full-time faculty who are hired off the "tenure-track" system. "Tenure-track faculty" are guaranteed consideration for a permanent post. "Tenured faculty" have secured permanent employment. What is significant about contingent faculty is that their institutions make no lasting commitments to their academic labor. Though their employment contracts can sometimes be renewed, these contracts are temporary. As temporary, or "contingent," they typically do not have the job security afforded to their tenure-track and tenured colleagues. "Junior faculty" refers to those faculty on tenure track who are newer to their academic positions.
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10. Lawless, "Documenting a Labor of Love," 86.
11. Marcia L. Bellas, "Emotional Labor in Academia: The Case of Professors." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 561 (1999): 96-110. doi:10.1177/000271629956100107
12. Bellas, "Emotional Labor in Academia."
13. Green, "Thanks for Listening," para. 10.
14. Roxanna Harlow, "'Race Doesn't Matter, But . . .': The Effect of Race on Professors' Experiences and Emotion Management in the Undergraduate College Classroom." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (2003): 348–363. www.jstor.org/stable/1519834
15. Bellas, "Emotional Labor in Academia," 98.

16. Larisa R.G. DeSantis, "I'm Your Mentor, Not Your Mother." *ScienceMag*, November 2, 2017. www.sciencemag.org/careers/2017/11/im-your-mentor-not-your-mother, para. 4.
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18. El-Alayli, Hansen-Brown, and Ceynar, "Dancing Backwards in High Heels"; Green, "Thanks for Listening."
19. Bellas, "Emotional Labor in Academia"; Alexander C. Kafka, "Instructors Spend 'Emotional Labor' in Diversity Courses, and Deserve Credit for It." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 15, 2018. www.chronicle.com/article/Instructors-Spend-Emotional/245108; Sherianne Shuler and Beverly Davenport Sypher, "Seeking Emotional Labor: When Managing the Heart Enhances the Work Experience." *Management Communication Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (2000): 50–89. doi:10.1177/0893318900141003
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21. A 4-4 load indicates that an instructor teaches four courses or sections of a course during the fall semester and four sections or courses in the spring semester.
22. Lawless, "Documenting a Labor of Love."
23. Leda Cooks, "The (Critical) Pedagogy of Communication and the (Critical) Communication of Pedagogy," in *The Sage Handbook of Communication and Instruction*, eds. Deanna L. Fassett and John T. Warren (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010), 293–314.
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27. Fassett and Warren, *Critical Communication Pedagogy*, 54.
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35. McRae, *Performative Listening*.
36. McRae, *Performative Listening*, 36.
37. Lawless, "Documenting a Labor of Love."

38. See, for example, Bryant Keith Alexander, "Performing Culture in the Classroom: An Instructional (Auto)Ethnography." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (1999): 307–331. doi:10.1080/10462939909366272; Bernadette Marie Calafell, and Andy Kai-chun Chuang, "From Me to We: Embracing Co-performative Witnessing and Critical Love in the Classroom." *Communication Education* 67, no. 1 (2018): 109–114. doi:10.1080/03634523.2017.1388529; Benny LeMaster, Danny Shultz, Jayvien McNeill, Graham (Gray) Bowers, and Rusty Rust, "Unlearning Cisheteronormativity at the Intersections of Difference: Performing Queer Worldmaking through Collaged Relational Autoethnography." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2019): 341-70. doi:10.1080/10462937.2019.1672885; Claudio Moreira and Marcelo Diversi, "Missing Bodies: Troubling the Colonial Landscape of American Academia." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (2011): 229–448. doi:10.1080/10462937.2011.573190; John T. Warren, "Reflexive Teaching: Toward Critical Autoethnographic Practices of/in/on Pedagogy." *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 11, no. 2 (2011): 139–144. doi:10.1177/1532708611401332; Colin Whitworth and Anna Wilcoxen, "Disclosing Lives, Reading Bodies: A Duo-autoethnography of Queerness in the Classroom," in *Queer Communication Pedagogy*, eds. Ahmet Atay and Sandra L. Pensoneau-Conway (New York: Routledge, 2020), 209–224.
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40. A foundational or introductory communication course director might elsewhere (in the U.S.) be called a basic course director. This person oversees the teaching of the introductory communication courses—often public speaking. The director frequently is in charge of teacher training, which means they work with graduate teaching assistants to prepare them for, and work with them during, their first experiences of post-secondary teaching. Directors also navigate or mitigate pedagogical concerns for the course as a whole.
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42. Fassett and Warren, *Critical Communication Pedagogy*, 86.
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48. Guy and Newman, "Women's Jobs, Men's Jobs."
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