NAVIGATING THE ACADEMIC TERRAIN: UNDERSTANDING HOW
GRADAUTE ASSISTANTS MANAGE EMOTIONS

by

DaJuan T. Ferrell

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. Jackie Eller

Dr. Foster Amey

Dr. Angela Mertig

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ABSTRACT

There has been little research done that addresses the socio-emotional experiences of individuals who are graduate assistants and students. In working to fill this gap in the literature, my thesis project explores the experiences of graduate assistants as they manage their emotions and the responsibilities associated with being both a graduate assistant and a student. To understand this phenomena, 18 in-depth interviews were conducted with graduate assistants from a southern university. After utilizing analytic description, four representative themes were pulled from the data. These themes show that graduate assistants utilize purposive smiles when providing academic service to students, engage in various forms of emotion acting (deep, surface, and transformative) as a means of managing emotions, work to construct professional interactions with faculty, and utilize time management strategies as a way to manage their graduate assistant and student responsibilities.

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Introduction

The process that led to this thesis started when I was unexpectedly offered a graduate assistantship during the latter part of my first semester as a graduate student. Upon accepting the position, I quickly worked to learn how to manage the role in terms of perception and responsibilities. Then, as a result of collecting articles on emotion management for my assigned faculty member, I became fascinated with the social construction of emotions and the performance of emotion management. Eventually, I began to wonder how I used emotion management in my newly gained graduate assistant position. Finally, I arrived at a point where I started to wonder how other graduate assistants utilized emotion management as they managed their academic careers. Thus, the purpose of this study is to assess how graduate assistants engage in emotion management in academic settings. The study will also provide narratives for the experiences of graduate assistants as they navigate their graduate career and manage the responsibilities and expectations of being both a graduate assistant and student.

In order to fund their education, students may act as graduate assistants to pay for tuition and other fees associated with their graduate education; therefore, ascending the academic ladder and attaining an assistantship is a critical event in a scholar's academic career. As a result of assuming this role individuals must learn to manage the expectations associated with the position such as managing their emotions to fit particular situations and interactions and also managing the responsibilities of being both a graduate assistant and student.

This study is sociologically important because it will further the discussion of emotion management while also providing insight on the experiences of graduate

assistants. The progression of time and the shift of workers from factories to jobs of service require new factors, such as emotion management, be studied and assessed. Though graduate assistants are not producing material goods as workers of the past did, they are still selling their labor by providing services in which they assist supervisors or mentors. Within the graduate school setting, graduate students who also assume the role of graduate assistant must maintain the responsibilities of both roles and display an appropriate image of themselves by displaying emotions that allow for congruence between their role and the situations and interactions that will occur in their academic settings. In order to understand how graduate assistants managed their emotions and managed their dual roles, I conducted 18 in-depth interviews.

Literature Review

Becoming a Graduate Student

Once college students attain their bachelor's degree, they have multiple options in relation to their future including attaining employment or continuing their educational pursuits in a postgraduate setting. Students who choose the latter option move from the role of undergraduate student to graduate student. This choice for a graduate career could relate to the desire to attain more knowledge of a discipline, a need to attain necessary qualifications for a future position such as teaching or conducting research (Anderson and Swazey 1998) or could be the result of a "push" by an undergraduate professor or mentor (Bieber and Worley 2006).

William Brink's (1939) study of graduate school admission reveals a selection pattern that remains in many educational institutions today which includes the

requirement that a student be intellectually qualified, effectively trained by their undergraduate program, and possess a personality that will be congruent with the academic setting. Thus, because of the rigor of graduate education and the societal expectations placed on scholars with advanced degrees there is a need for individuals to effectively assume the role of graduate student. Once admitted many students engage in the graduate student role which generally holds expectations that differ from those of an undergraduate. At this level of educational training, research is a vital part of the role of a graduate student with students working to complete theses and dissertations. In terms of other responsibilities, graduate students focus on course work and taking exams (Anderson and Swazey 1998).

Socialization of Graduate Students

As discussed above, traditionally individuals who choose to enter a graduate program must make a transition from the role of undergraduate to graduate student. In order to make this transition individuals undergo a socialization process (Brim and Wheeler1966; Weidman, Twale and Stein 2001). While this process is not exclusive to the graduate student population, within the context of graduate school, socialization is described as the process by which students come to gain knowledge, skills, and values that are necessary for successful entry into a professional career, which requires an advanced level of skill and knowledge. During socialization individuals internalize norms, values, and beliefs. Then based on the internalization of these factors graduate students form identities and commitment to the profession. However, internalized factors will help not just in the students' future career paths but also allow the students to learn and internalize the norms and standards found in their academic department. This is

likely because the socializing agents of the students will be faculty members of a pre-existing department that not only has a goal of producing competent professionals but also students who can assimilate effectively into the department. There are four stages involved in the process of socialization of graduate students: anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal (Weidman et al. 2001).

First is the anticipatory stage, which involves the student becoming aware of behavioral, attitudinal, and cognitive expectations that relate to a role they wish to assume (Weidman et al. 2001). Original impressions of graduate school can result from the media, such as shows on television. Individuals also gain information about the graduate student role through observations and interactions with current role incumbents. Pre-existing knowledge of a role will only help with socializing if information attained is accurate. The next stage in socialization is the formal stage. During this stage students are admitted into the program and receive formal knowledge about their future profession. (Clark and Corcoran 1986; Weidman et al. 2001). Socializing agents (faculty) clearly state and document their expectations, which are then diffused among graduate students.

During the informal stage, the novice student is immersed in the graduate culture and because of this immersion they are able to learn the informal expectations of the role through interactions (Weidman et al. 2001). Though some information does come from faculty members, students generally develop social networks consisting of peers that provide social and emotional support (Staton and Darling 1989; Weidman et al 2001). Graduate students enter their graduate programs and as a cohort they progress through the process together. Thus, they are able to develop relationships with one another and provide support for each other as they navigate the graduate student experience. The

fourth and final stage known as the personal stage finds graduate students assuming the role of professional (Weidman et al 2001). At this stage the student has learned to meet the expectations of the role while also meeting personal needs. The student reconciles discrepancies with their former image in order to assume the professional identity.

Forming a Mentor Relationship

Through the classroom graduate students have a means to gather and learn necessary information for their field of study; however, this space alone is not able to effectively provide students with the variety of knowledge and experience accumulated by professors (Brown, Davis and McClendon 1999). Thus, it is while in the role of graduate student that they engage in mentor/mentee relationships with socializing agents (faculty members). Mentoring is a process in which a novice is positively socialized by a knowledgeable individual in order for the novice to learn traditions, practices, and frameworks of the professional organization. These mentoring relationships can be with the faculty member the student is assigned to assist or professors that the student has met. The dynamic of the mentor/mentee relationship is likely learned during socialization in which graduate students learn the parameters and normative expectations of the relationship in general and with specific professors. It is then through this mentor/mentee dynamic that students can listen and observe the actions of the mentor (Austin 2002). During these observations mentees can observe how faculty allot their time, follow departmental policy, interact with students, and converse with colleagues. Austin (2002) stresses the importance of mentoring by noting that apprenticeships can foster the development of professional identities.

Defining the Graduate Assistant Role

Graduate study not only involves some students making an educational commitment to institutions but also a commitment to be employees (Hayden 2001). According to the Department of Education, as of 2012, there were 355,916 graduate assistants (U.S. Department of Education 2012). These individuals generally work up to 20 hours per week and are assigned to faculty members to assist. In a study conducted by Dudly (2009) graduate teaching assistants reported that their responsibilities included maintaining grade books, making copies and teaching courses. It appears this utilization of graduate students in teaching positions has been deemed beneficial because as Lafar (2003) observes there has been a shift of teaching duties from full time professors to graduate students and adjunct professors. However, this responsibility is also beneficial to the graduate assistant because it allows the assistant to gain teaching experience.

Just as individuals must be socialized to become graduate students, graduate assistants also undergo a non-exclusive socialization process by which they must become assimilated assistants within their department. According to Parks (2004) graduate teaching assistants must transform themselves from outsiders into insiders. First, graduate assistants must orientate themselves to their new environment. Next, the assistants must be inducted or formally installed into their respective departments. Then, assimilation occurs which finds the assistant becoming a "member" of the department. This assimilation likely involves the assistant accepting the rules and behavioral expectations. Assistants reach insider status by engaging in appropriate activities.

Myers (1998) noted that it is through supportive communication relationships and information seeking strategies that newcomers are integrated into their respective

departments. Supportive communication relationships are those relationships with members of the organization that enhance the individual's work life. Two of the most important relationships developed by graduate assistants in academic settings are mentor and peer relationships. Mentors provide academic and future career guidance. Peer relationships appear to be vital, because graduate teaching assistants help each other in making sense of the expectations of their roles (Duba-Biedermann 1994) and also depend on one another for attaining information (Myers 1998). While information seeking, graduate assistants engage in an overt strategy that involves direct interactions with organization members. In order for new graduate teaching assistants to be successful they must engage in information seeking especially with faculty members (Myers 1998).

Despite the information presented above, little discussion is present in the literature in reference to the socio-emotional experiences of graduate assistants and students. A quantitative study on the concerns of graduate assistants, found that a major concern was the management of both the graduate assistant and student role (Cho et al. 2011). The researchers noted that graduate assistants were concerned about how to effectively allocate time to perform the responsibilities associated with each role. Thus, it could be observed that graduate assistants experience conflict in successfully balancing time to fulfill each role. Another worry noted in this research was concern with communication. Since the roles of graduate assistant and student are dualistic within academia, graduate assistants also reported concerns communicating with faculty and students.

Selling Labor

Employing Emotions as Graduate Students

In *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feelings*, Hochschild (1983) recounts a selection from Marx's *Das Kaptial* called "The Working Day." The selection provides an account of the harsh working conditions of a young boy, who is described as working 16 hour shifts at a wall paper factory in order to obtain wages. The child is described as an instrument of labor who uses his physicality to work behind a machine to produce wallpaper rolls. The child understood that his job was done upon producing a satisfactory number of wallpaper rolls. The young boy in this account like so many other individuals of the predominately industrial time period, sold their manual labor to capitalists or owners of production in order to be paid wages. While employees were given money for their services, this engagement of material production has been described as alienating to employees as they did not own the materials they produced nor did they own or control their labor (Ritzer 2008).

The discussion above addresses labor within a secondary or an industrially based economy. However, there has been a shift in which society has moved from being primarily based in the secondary industry to being driven by the tertiary economy or the service industry (Jaret, Reid, and Adelman 2003). Employees within a secondary industry understand that their job is complete when sufficient goods have been produced in relation to their job responsibilities (Hochschild 1983). In service related jobs workers are not simply working with inanimate objects but with people whom they must serve. In order for service employees to know they have successfully done their job customers must feel content with the services provided to them by the employee. A vital component

in providing satisfactory services is the engagement in emotion labor. Hochschild (1983) describes emotion labor as one inducing or suppressing feelings in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind of others. An example of this would be a flight attendant who is feeling angry and frustrated after dealing with unruly passengers on a 12 hour flight but cannot express these feelings because company policy says that each flight attendant must greet and interact with passengers in a "friendly" manner. So, rather than displaying anger, the flight attendant manages her feelings in order to display a range of emotions that could project "friendliness," such as happiness and excitement. This management of emotions will likely allow for positive interactions between the flight attendant and passengers and also ensure that the flight attendant's emotional displays are in line with those emotional expressions deemed appropriate while in the work setting.

Employees find out and learn about these rules of emotion by way of training materials or by observing other employees. As employees smile to display joy and happiness, visually display excitement to show appreciation for their job, and graciously help customers in order to ensure that their emotions fit within their work setting they are selling their labor. In essence like the manufacturer of the secondary industry who does not own the act of assembling products, these employees of service no longer own these emotional displays while they are in their work setting. The rules of the organization have given these individuals parameters for emotions and feelings that are acceptable and those that are not. Thus, as Hochshild (1983) predicts, these service workers experience alienation from their emotions.

Upon reviewing the literature I found that there are various research projects studying emotion management in occupations such as health (Bolton 2001) and food service (Leidner 1999); however, there is little discussion of emotions in collegiate settings. More specifically there is little discussion of emotion management in relation to graduate assistants. Most research that has been done focuses on the relationship between professors and emotions. Previous research has found that professors in collegiate settings constantly work to distance themselves from emotions and personal aspects of themselves in academic settings (Neumann 2006). The utilization of emotions and personal narratives while teaching in a classroom setting can be viewed as undermining the professor's effort by rendering information delivered as less serious, unscientific, and lacking objectivity. Ironically, Bellas (1999) notes that professors are service providers who perform many elements associated with Hochschild's emotion labor. Bellas describes professors as engaging in face to face interactions with various individuals such as colleagues, staff, and students. As professors perform their roles in academia they attempt to elicit emotions in people they interact with by managing their own emotional displays.

However, as graduate assistants take more responsibility in academia such as acting as adjunct professors and assisting in the responsibilities of professors, they too become service workers who engage in emotion labor. However, because graduate assistants occupy a unique social position in the hierarchy of an educational institution their performance of emotion labor is directed towards professors, mentors, students, and staff to ensure they are able to elicit certain emotions in these individuals to allow interactions to proceed in favor of the graduate assistant. Graduate assistants must

develop and display positively perceived emotions while in their respective academic settings to allow them to be viewed as fulfilling the role of graduate assistant, ultimately allowing them to continue obtaining their financial funding.

Graduate assistants are expected to display behaviors and emotions deemed congruent with both their academic department and assigned professor(s) in order to be perceived as completing services associated with the role. In order to do this the graduate assistant must work to control the way he or she is perceived. It can be asserted that in order to mold and present a desired impression there must be a display of "correct" emotions in relation to the setting and others involved in the interaction. In order to engage in performances that consist of proper emotions an actor may engage in what Hochschild calls surface acting or deep acting. Surface acting involves a lack of congruence between a social actor's feelings and actions (Hochschild 1983:37). This technique gives service workers the ability to display situationally correct emotions in order to do their job, even when these outward displays do not match the way the employee feels. An example of this could be a graduate assistant working to be perceived as calm and confident as he or she lectures for the first time, while actually feeling nervous.

The next technique, deep acting, is required when there is a desire for congruence between the social actor's feelings and actions (Hochschild 1983:38). This technique can be achieved by individuals framing situations in a manner that will result in the person actually feeling the appropriate emotions associated with the setting. An example of this could be a graduate assistant framing the classroom as a place of hierarchy, in which he or she occupies a higher position than the undergraduates being taught. As a result of this

framing technique the graduate assistant may feel and display confidence. In service jobs the management of feelings and outward displays of emotions once paired with actions can first create certain impressions of social actors. Next, the impressions will then likely invoke certain feelings in others. While in the academic setting if a graduate assistant pairs the "correct" actions with "proper" emotional displays, to project a particular impression to elicit certain feelings in others in order to attain wages or funding, then they have effectively engaged in emotion labor.

Considering previous literature and the issues I have addressed, particularly the absence of sociological research on emotion management among graduate students, the purpose of my study is to assess and gain knowledge of how graduate assistants manage their academic positions particularly in terms of emotion management. Implicitly, I will also gain an understanding of how individuals make sense, maintain, and experience the duality of being both a graduate assistant and student.

Methods

Sample and Recruitment

Upon gaining approval from the Institutional Review Board, I interviewed 18 graduate assistants (seven men and 11 women), at both the masters and doctoral level, from a southern university. This sample consisted of graduate assistants from a variety of academic colleges including the College of Basic and Applied Science, the College of Behavioral and Health Science, the College of Business, and the College of Liberal Arts. In order to participate in the study these participants had to have been graduate assistants

at some point and have their assistantships awarded through the academic department in which they received or will receive their graduate degrees.

Initially, I utilized snowball sampling as a means to obtain my sample. Snowball sampling is described as a procedure in which the researcher accesses informants through contact information that is provided by other informants (Noy 2008). Thus, I used my existing network to recruit initial participants and these individuals were asked to refer other graduate assistants to participate. Then, in order to access more potential participants I worked with the College of Graduate Studies to have an email sent to all graduate assistants asking those who qualified to participate in the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

In-depth interviewing was the sole method of data collection in this study and all interviews were conducted face-to-face. I completed each interview within one session which lasted between 30 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes. In order to increase accuracy when transcribing and interpreting interviews I utilized a digital recorder, which I only used upon gaining permission from participants. Participants were asked a variety of questions that were designed to allow them to construct their experiences managing their emotions and the responsibilities associated with being both a graduate student and assistant (See Appendix A). While I did use an interview guide to address specific areas I also worked to ensure participants were able to guide the interview. In doing this I wanted participants to have the ability to explore and reflect on experiences as they emerged and to also provide insight into areas not covered in the interview guide.

In order to analyze the data, I engaged in analytic description. Analytic description is a process in which recurring patterns or themes are identified in order to

develop a cohesive representation of the data (Warren and Karner 2010:218). While reviewing the data I thought about what the data were saying and how they related to my research questions and the gaps in the literature. Next, I developed notes and interpretations on each interview transcript. Then I utilized open coding to pull patterns and themes from the data. In utilizing open coding I worked to reduce the possibility of missing patterns. Through this process I found many themes relating to how graduate assistants managed their emotions and their dual roles that I condensed into four themes which I believe fully represent the data. The themes are purposive smiles, emotion acting, constructing professional interactions, and coveting time.

Results

Managing Emotions

My interviews with the 18 graduate assistants provided a unique understanding of their experiences. More specifically, I was able to see how graduate assistants used their emotions to fulfill expectations associated with their roles as graduate assistants. When discussing what they perceived as departmental expectations, I found that assistants felt that it was their job to be professional, approachable when interacting with students, to leave students with positive impressions of their learning experiences, and "to do what you say you're gonna do and be where you say you're gonna be." These graduate assistants appeared to recognize these expectations and understood that students are the customers of academia and that they as graduate assistants needed to take an active role in ensuring students had positive learning experiences. Perhaps as a result of having primarily graduate teaching assistants, I came to find that most participants discussed

emotion management only in relation to interactions with students. In order to gain

information on experiences of emotion management when interacting with faculty or

peers, I had to ask specific questions that referenced faculty and peers or actively probe.

Assistants appeared to be most cognizant of their need to manage and display particular

emotions when providing services to students.

Purposive Smiles

In order to meet what they perceived as departmental expectations for positive

services to students graduate assistants utilized various emotion strategies. One way

graduate assistants worked to cultivate these positive experiences was by using positive

emotional displays that would allow students to feel comfortable in the class and

engaging in one-on-one interactions with the graduate assistant. The one facial expression

that was utilized by the majority of graduate assistants to accomplish this goal was the

smile. The perceived vitality of the smile in service work can be traced through various

studies, particularly Hochschild's (1983) study of emotion management which found that

flight attendants described their smile as their best asset in assisting passengers. Graduate

assistants also appeared to work from the rationale of the flight attendants in that they

believe that facial expressions can communicate emotions and intent of action (Parkinson

1995).

Upon engaging in a dialogue with various graduate assistants, I found that they

saw smiling and the positive social cues tied to it as their best tools for establishing

relationships with students and creating conducive learning environments. One graduate

assistant, Amber, discussed how she smiled to show her freshmen that they should not

feel intimidated by her and could approach her. Nicole too understood the utility of smiling to establish rapport with and support for students in a statistics class. She stated:

> Smiling, I think especially in a stats course because people get very…people don't like statistics which makes it a challenge to begin with trying to teach them. So, it helps to smile and you know different types of smile like the assuring "oh it's okay to ask that." I think a smile can encourage students to be more vocal or make me seem more approachable.

Nicole's purposive smile is used in a course (statistics) that tends to be unsettling for some students; however, as she smiles, she is actively working to establish herself as prepared to support and assist students in understanding the course material. Donovan noted his use of a smile to project his supportive position and also explicitly discussed his use of a smile to construct a comfortable learning environment. Donovan states:

> Smiling, its goes again to approachability. It's interesting you walk into a classroom and you are on the roster. You are the teacher and it doesn't matter your background these kids don't know where you're coming from. They don't know who you are. To them you are the professor and that surprisingly…I don't know about your classes but at least it seems to be true in the math department that they respect you as the professor. So, you typically don't have to spend as much time on what I would think of as establishing authority. Now you wanna maintain authority and they know you are in charge; however, it's much harder to get them to feel comfortable in your classroom. So, smiling helps put them at ease and creates for their learning environment. If you're not tense it's easier to think and reason and easier to ask questions. So, smiling would be the biggest asset.

Donovan's discussion displays a graduate assistant who is aware of the importance of establishing and maintaining order; yet, because he feels that the role of professor already garners respect in his department, he places more focus on being approachable and ensuring students are comfortable in the classroom as they learn.

Donovan, like Amber and Nicole's discussion of the utility of their smiles, displays a

trend found with various other graduate assistants in this study. Many graduate assistants

use their smiles to cultivate pleasant environments and interactions with students. As

these graduate assistants worked to foster these educationally conducive interactions with

students their efforts aligned with the nurturing component associated with instruction

(Bellas 1999). According to Bellas nurturing occurs in postsecondary education because

the professors at this level nurture the minds of students by assisting them in discovering

their interests and by sparking intellectual and emotional growth in them. Thus, it makes

sense that as graduate assistants work to assume the responsibility of professors and take

on the role of educational leaders, they too work to use their smiles as one method of

extending their services to students in order to show their willingness and preparedness to

assist students in their academic careers.

Emotion Acting

While graduate assistants constantly referenced that smiling was vital to their

work, upon being presented with questions relating to emotion management they were

immediately confronted with recalling instances and scenarios in which they felt the need

to manage their emotions in order to produce positive or situationally appropriate

emotional displays. Graduate assistants discussed matters of both their academic and

personal lives as reasons for experiencing emotions that they felt were not congruent with

academia. There were frequent discussions of having to manage emotions because of

being frustrated, tired, or stressed from their lives and it was in these instances in which

there was strain in their personal and (or) academic life that graduate assistants generally

discussed the need to engage in some type of emotion management. I found that there

was a variety of "emotion acting" utilized to follow the expectation of providing students with positive learning experiences which included deep, surface, and transformative acting. This variety of emotion acting displays the ability of graduate assistants to tailor interpretations and enactments of rules based on their perception of self and interactions with students (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993). It was by way of deep acting that Christopher was able to not only cope with his grandmothers' passing but also provide the service of academic instruction to students. He states:

> When I was a MA student I was living with my grandma when she was slowly dying, that's one of the reasons I was living with her. She had in-house hospice care and it took her a couple months to pass away and on the day that she did finally die I was scheduled to go to work. Now, I should have probably called in? I did not call in. I was not really dealing well with the scene at the house which as you might imagine is bleak, them removing the body out, my family is all there, everyone is upset, lots of grieving. I just couldn't take it so I went to work. It was actually a huge relief to go to a place where I could compartmentalize all those emotions and say I will deal with these things later. Right now I will talk about how to write an introduction. It was very easy so I needed that.

Christopher went on to state that grieving was not congruent in academia and for this reason he sought out his work setting. Goffman ([1959] 1990) asserts that as individuals navigate the social world, they are constantly attempting to gain information to allow them to define situations in order to understand what is expected of them and what is expected of the other actors. In appraising the taboo of negative emotions in academia, Christopher defined and framed his workspace as an area that should be devoid of negative emotions that could hinder the learning experiences of students (Gradney 2000). In doing this he was able to manage his emotions by physically removing himself from the grief occurring in his home life in favor of gaining "relief" as a result of

adhering to the norms of academia and entering his instructional space. Then he was able

to focus on teaching students writing skills rather than focusing on negative emotions.

Lana also discussed the necessity of framing academia as a place where negative

emotions are inappropriate in order to engage in deep acting as a means to teach students.

She states:

> I'm human so you're bringing these human feelings, these natural intact feelings that may have happened with their personal life, your research, something may have happened with your advisor, or another individual, but the idea is that once you enter your room you leave all that behind because now you're entering your work setting where you are the face of this information. You are that memory that that student is supposed to walk away from and feel like "I got it today," " I'm excited," or "I learned something new," and when you're creating this hostile negative environment you've already disputed that flow of information and energy by tenfold probably which makes the students be unreceptive to anything else that's going on in the class because it's almost contagious. Sometimes you have to come into the classroom and leave any negative feelings behind.

Lana raises several interesting points. First, she notes the struggle of emotionally

dealing with the issues of the personal and academic life, but she also observes that those

problems should not enter the classroom. Thus, Lana engages in deep acting and works to

reconcile negative emotions by framing the classroom as an environment for learning in

which she is the "face of information" and that her duty is to ensure students leave her

class with some understanding of the course material. Hochschild (1983:85) notes that

social actors engaging in deep acting must "put together things that threaten to pull apart"

and in doing this the actor works to find appropriate ways of defining and emotionally

reacting to situations. This element of deep acting is found in both Christopher's and

Lana's narratives. Each actor expressed the problematic nature of experiencing negative

emotions in academia and the need to reconcile these emotional discrepancies before entering the work setting within the university. In order to "put the pieces together," the classroom/work area was framed in a manner that defined negative emotions and experiences as problematic and not -worthy of being displayed. Thus, unconducive emotions are "left" outside, allowing graduate assistants like Christopher and Lana to shift focus from their troubles to the task at hand. The need for Christopher and Lana to eradicate "problem" emotions from classroom/instructional settings highlights the general expectation of academia that negative emotions should not be expressed by professors in the presence of students (Bellas 1999).

While Christopher and Lana utilized deep acting to conduct their work, most graduate assistants discussed their need to engage in surface acting when providing services to students. These graduate assistants constantly discussed the need to display situationally appropriate emotions as a means to hide or mask their negative feelings. This parallels the narratives of the nurses involved in Sharon Bolton's (2001) study who felt they had to constantly work to "keep up appearances" or display emotions they were not feeling. Many graduate assistants recounted the need to display happiness while teaching when they were indeed tired or stressed, projecting cheerfulness to be at work while having no desire to be there, or displaying neutrality while actually feeling sympathy for students who had been given a failing grade. Nicole, like the various graduate assistants above also discussed the utility of surface acting while teaching. She states:

> First, of all I'm really bad at that. I'm one of those people who wears their
> emotions on their face but I can definitely be stressed and tired and I try to, if I

can't muster up joy and excitement, I will muster up at least neutrality. There are times when people will ask questions that I just literally said the answer to three times and then I'm annoyed but I just calmly and patiently respond again. So yeah there is definitely some suppression of annoyance that goes on with this assistantship.

Nicole's narrative is interesting in that she appeared to see herself as an emotionally open individual; yet, within academia, she understands that being emotionally blunt and displaying what one is actually feeling could undermine the positive learning experiences of the customers (students) and potentially undermine her identity as graduate assistant to students. Being stressed, tired, and annoyed are feelings that are seen as negative in a university setting and are understood as needing to be abandoned when working with students. Nicole's account aligns with the narratives of professors involved in Constanti's and Gibbs' (2004) study who felt that they were not allowed to feel stressed or frustrated with their job as faculty members. According to Costanti and Gibbs (2004) as faculty emotionally censor themselves they not only shield students from negative emotions but also protect universities from being targets of these negative feelings. Another graduate assistant Mary also discussed the need censor her to "true" feelings while conducting review sessions. She states:

Umm usually during the review sessions - they're usually in the evenings so I am tired and they aren't the most exciting things in the world. So, trying to keep them engaged for two hours and focused is kinda . . . obviously I have to put on excited and like that type of thing and its kinda discouraging cause you look out and you know they're falling asleep or you know you're kinda like…agh! You're supposed to be asking questions like so what's the point of this. So, trying to stay upbeat and positive even though it's not the most exciting thing.

In order to conduct a productive review session, Mary understands that her emotional displays can set the tone for the session and negatively impact students' learning experiences. If she is to facilitate a positive environment for students, she has to utilize her emotional displays to keep students motivated and engaged. Mary's response also highlights the performative nature of teaching. According to Bellas (1999) it is not enough for professors to know and deliver information but they must perform. If educators are to motivate or keep the attention of students they must be prepared to personalize lectures or display their excitement of the material. This is exactly what Mary does as she works to display emotions like excitement even when she is tired or feels like students are not actively participating or listening.

While most graduate assistants either engaged in deep or surface acting one graduate assistant, Nancy utilized a technique I describe as transformative acting. This type of acting involves individuals beginning their emotion acting as either surface or deep acting but shifting to the alternative form of acting as a result of changes in situations or by social actors recognizing feelings or emotional displays as genuine or disingenuous; therefore, resulting in a shift to the alternative emotion acting that accommodates these feelings or displays. Nancy discussed her engagement in transformative acting when she talked about instances in which she begrudgingly had to go to work. It was during these times that she disclosed that she had to smile and display excitement that she was not feeling; however in order to move from surface acting to deep acting, she framed herself as an "authentic" person who could only display an inauthentic smile for so long. So, she asserted that if she smiled and projected excitement

long enough, the genuine feelings associated with smiling eventually emerged; thus, allowing for synchronization between emotional displays and feelings.

Constructing Professional Interactions

In working to further construct the reality of these graduate assistants, I asked them how they wanted to be perceived, and I found that the vast majority of graduate assistants wanted to be seen as professional, competent, hardworking, and deserving of their position. Upon probing, I found that graduate assistant particularly wanted faculty to see them this way. In shifting my focus to gain a greater understanding of how graduate assistants made sense of their role as GAs, I came to find out that graduate assistants involved in this project were very aware of their increased position within the academic hierarchy. I found that many graduate assistants saw themselves as colleagues or junior faculty; thus, denoting the increased gap between them and undergraduates and the decreased gap between them and faculty. Graduate assistants effectively created a dichotomy in which they situated faculty and themselves as "us" (educators) and placed students in the "them" group. Students were the customers or outsiders coming into their (graduate assistant and faculty) place of business (classrooms/tutoring labs) in order to be served. Thus, if professors are emotion workers and graduate assistants see themselves relatively speaking in positions similar to faculty then they too would focus their emotion acting towards students.

This arrangement works in line with Parks' (2004) discussion of graduate assistants' assimilation into their department in which they reach the final stage of socialization and begin to see themselves as "members" of their department. It makes sense that GAs in this study focused their discussion of emotion management on students

because students are the individuals that graduate assistants are managing their emotions towards in order to do their job. But, generally and as a result of their increase in status graduate assistants are closer to faculty members than students, leading them to share more aspects of themselves with faculty than they do with students. Many graduate assistants asserted that they felt they had good relationships with faculty members particularly those faculty members that they saw as mentors. Some graduate assistants even saw faculty members as friends. Most GAs believed that faculty members were vital to their academic careers as they could assist in their scholastic efforts and dispense career advice.

Does this mean that graduate assistants did not manage emotions with faculty since they technically were not customers? I came to find out that while graduate assistants were more likely to have positive relationships with faculty and share various aspects of themselves, there were indeed parameters in place for disclosure. Graduate assistants tended to have no desire to share bad news or negative aspects of themselves with faculty. In continuing to peel back layers of graduate assistant and faculty interactions, I came to find that GAs walked a "tightrope" while interacting with faculty. They worked to present particular selves (Goffman [1959] 1990) in order to maintain their desired impressions and continue positive relations with faculty by not disclosing information that could undermine their identity as graduate assistants. Graduate assistants were more likely to use emotion management as a method to accomplish this goal. While facing personal dilemmas, they would use either surface acting and hide negative emotions they were feeling or deep acting and "leave their emotions at the door" when

interacting with faculty. Lana provides a very interesting peek into the dynamics between faculty and GAs. When discussing instances of "bad" news, she states:

> Faculty members, because they see me on a daily basis, it at sometimes becomes a matter of what's wrong and they wanna be able to judge is this enough for you be upset about and bringing this into this environment. You may be upset about it and now they wanna judge is this valid in this environment and that can be a struggle at times. (*What's not valid?)* Personal. (*Does personal not belong in the department?*) Nooo! (*I thought it did.*) No, because in the department it's professional, scholarly, collaborative. Most of the time you stay on the surface… oh my boyfriend… my husband we did this…it's never we had this argument and I'm pissed because he said this. It's not that because now you're confusing the two realms and I don't do that.

Lana's narrative provides a glimpse into her construction of interactions with faculty, which coincided with the way other GAs frame their discussions. Interactions with faculty are pleasant and personable not personal. Focusing on "surface" topics ensures that their conversation remains in an enjoyable/agreeable realm which aligns with the desired perceptions of GAs while also keeping faculty away from information or knowledge of the graduate assistant's life (academic and personal issues) that could be viewed by faculty as troubling or potentially problematic. Lana's discussion also highlights another theme among graduate assistants in that they understand that while they join faculty members as the service providers of academia, they are still being evaluated by faculty members, and the two major factors that can undermine their ability to be seen as competent role worthy professionals are the display of negative emotions and discussing undesirable experiences. Mary also notes her fear of displaying negative emotions when interacting with faculty. She states:

I feel like if I wasn't my best self it would maybe damage the relationship and the rapport we have with students and my faculty member. I feel like if I was grumpy all the time or something like that I feel like he (assigned faculty member) would be like okay now you need to be somebody else's problem. Like I feel like it's more common to get maybe moved around than it is to lose your GA so like you know I guess I wouldn't wanna get moved around unnecessarily.

Almost all of the graduate assistants literally laughed at the question "how does a graduate assistant lose an assistantship?" because based on "GA folklore," it is believed that it is almost impossible to lose an assistantship. However, while Mary also agreed with the belief that it was difficult to lose an assistantship, she was very aware of the fact that negative emotional displays could cause her to be branded by her assigned faculty member as a "problem" that needs to be passed to someone else. Thus, in order to maintain her current assistantship arrangement, Mary feels she must keep the grumpiness away from her meetings with her assigned faculty member. Beyond graduate assistants being less likely to disclose and display negative experiences and emotions to faculty out of worry of negative evaluations, they were much more open to share their true feelings and experiences with members of their cohort as a way to not burden faculty with their problems. Amber states:

[Bad day] I'm going to my cohort going to vent and let them know that everything just went to crap outside and now I have to teach in ten minutes so I'm really open with how I feel with them. With faculty no, not gonna express it because it's not their problem. Not that it was my cohort's problems but [my] cohort can sympathize a bit more.

This statement echoes elements of other graduate assistants who did not want to share negative aspects of themselves with faculty because they were seen as being

"important," "busy;" or focused on the task at hand and did not have time to deal with the issues of a graduate assistant. Cohorts on the other hand were vital in providing emotional and social support (Staton and Darling 1989; Weidman et al. 2001) for graduate assistants in terms of facilitating outlets for expression of frustrations and problems. Members of cohorts were generally seen as a source to unleash stress or act as an emotional "punching bag" because these individuals, unlike faculty, share the same position in the organizational hierarchy (Kram and Isabella 1985) and likely share similar experiences, thus allowing them a better capacity to empathize. However, while it may appear troubling that graduate assistants cannot present their "true" selves to faculty, it may actually be a positive. Setting limits on interactions allows for the development of boundaries. In the case of most graduate assistants, interactions with faculty were generally pleasant but professional while deeper levels of the personal were off limits and ultimately protected. However, one graduate assistant and her assigned faculty member blurred the line between professional and personal. In discussing her now "volatile relationship" with her assigned faculty member, Christine states:

> Sure my professor called me out in class (*Can you focus it on the grad assistant role?*) hmm umm (*Oh is this the grad assistant role?*) Well yes. Well that's where the problem comes in. Okay so because of the grad assistant role she and I talk on a peer level because of the work we've done together requires vulnerability on her part and my part and so she's like "we're gonna be friends when you graduate." So we talk, like banter and back and forth, and then we get into class and she banters back and forth and she says some stuff that hurts me and I'm like…you know. I'm trying to keep it together and I'm tearing up.

Christine goes on to say that the faculty member then instructed students to write nice things about Christine and put them on her desk because apparently "she's feeling

sensitive," which only added to Christine's embarrassment. Christine's narrative depicts a graduate assistant and faculty member who have established a deep connection beyond GA and faculty, and while this could be positive it also displays the discrepancy in power between the GA and faculty. The two can utilize banter outside of academia and can perceive each other as "equals," but once they step into a classroom or instructional area the power difference reemerges and the faculty member retains leverage and power to assess and critique, which can take on a new level of hurt once the professional parameters are no longer in place.

Managing Dual Roles

In my discussions with the graduate assistants, I learned a great deal about their emotional experiences but I also had the opportunity to gain insight on their thoughts and experiences in being both a graduate assistants and students. As I conducted the interviews I found that individuals saw the roles as intertwined and at times participants would forget which role they were talking about. According to graduate assistant Thela she could not imagine one role without the other. She states:

> Well you see in my anthropology class, in my undergrad, we talked about liminality and we had to find a liminal group to talk about. I did talk about the grad students because it is a very liminal stage, constant transition and you're out of one stage but not quite into the other one right. So…that might get a little complex but I don't think of being a grad student without being a grad assistant 'cause I'm poor. So they come together naturally and maybe that's why I have higher expectations of a grad student myself included than some other people because I connect it so closely with work roles and the professional role and actual job type thing. For me it's not just school it's work they go together. I can't imagine . . . I know it happens, I can't imagine one without the other for me because if I'm not a grad assistant I'm probably not going to school.

Thela's discussion displays the academic "limbo" graduate assistants experience in that as GAs they are junior colleagues to faculty but they are also students working toward learning the necessary knowledge needed to become masters of their disciplines. In this sense they are both professionals and students simultaneously. Thela's statement also highlights the utility in being both a graduate assistant and student in that the individual's expectations of themselves are raised. In understanding that their academic performance impacts their graduate assistantships and that their performance as graduate assistants affects their educational funding, individuals work to be successful in both roles. Thus, in understanding the importance of each role, I sought to find out how graduate assistants managed the expectations and responsibilities of each role.

Coveting Time

Upon reviewing interview transcripts I came to find while participants seemed to be able to effectively manage their dualistic roles, there were some undercurrents of "surviving" the experience of being both a graduate assistant and student with some participants describing the process as "hell," "difficult," "stressful," and jokingly discussing the need for alcohol as a means to cope. As I dived deeper into my discussions with the graduate assistants, I found that this strain was related to the fact that graduate assistants frequently felt crunched for time as they attempted to juggle both the graduate assistant and student roles. Graduate assistants constantly discussed the need to effectively manage time and set priorities which align with the concern of time from the graduate assistants involved in Cho et al.'s (2011) study. In discussing how she managed both roles Nicole states:

> Sometimes, I just take it day by day like what needs to be done today what can be put off until tomorrow like you know. So like a lot of prioritizing goes by what's due next so that's how I manage it. I do try to think in the beginning when I had more time I could kind of think week by week but as of now until the end of the semester, it's gonna be day by day you know. That's how I get through it.

Not only does Nicole's discussion display undertones of the "survivor" mentality but it also provides insight on the need to set priorities for the tasks based on their due dates in order to manage the roles. This resonated with the narratives of other graduate assistants in that because there is a limited time frame available to accomplish tasks for both roles, graduate assistants generally construct schedules and set priorities for tasks that they feel are most important for particular days or time. However, there are times in which the responsibilities of the dual role clash. In these instances graduate students engage in "strategic maneuvers" that allow them to manage time and tasks as a means to "satisfy" the expectations of each role. This can be effectively seen in Lana's discussion. She states:

> Sure yeah time barriers like making sure you're prepared for class the next day but you haven't even done your reading for your class. What's more important? More than likely your class is gonna come first…the class that you're teaching because the other class if you didn't read you can pick it from other people. (*Is that problematic?*) Not for me because I've never done that but as a strategy that's what, how I would approach it. I've never not read for my class. (*Is it problematic that you have to undermine the reason you're here to learn?*) Sure, but you do it because it's one of those . . . it's another hypocrisy like everyone knows. When I was graduate assistant in another area I was supposed to be working 20 hours a week. No, I was supposed to work an under 40 week. I'm here 60 plus hours a week. We know that, everyone knows that but you still gotta get this done. And it just becomes a way of managing the system.

In her discussion, Lana notes the need to push personal academic tasks to the periphery in order to fulfill the excessive time demands of the graduate assistant role. In doing this, she notes that if more importance is placed on the graduate assistant role then there may be a need to utilize various tactics such as spring boarding off the reading efforts of other students as a means to satisfy expectations of the student role. While Lana discussed the need to prioritize the tasks associated with the graduate assistant role as a result of time constraints, other graduate assistants discussed the exact opposite, in that they emphasized the need to reduce the "interference" of their assistantships in doing work for their classes. In order to do this they utilized various tactics that allowed them to subtract time designated from their assistantship to work on coursework which included rushing review sessions in order to a finish paper, doing homework during lab hours, and intentionally cutting tutoring sessions short to do homework. All these strategies may appear problematic at first glance because they undermine the graduate assistant and student expectations but it actually highlights the salience of time constraints experienced by graduate assistants and their need to use "innovative" tactics to satisfy requirements of each role.

Thus, in working to successfully manage each role participants spent a great deal of time working within and outside of academia performing tasks given to them by professors or administrators. As a result of a lack of control of their time and activity, some graduate assistants noted the need to exert some form of control of their time. In these instances graduate assistants discussed the need to set activities associated with their personal lives as priority as a means to re-establish some semblance of control such as setting specific times during the day to watch television or spending time with family

and friends. After the birth of her son, Amber decided to gain some control of her time by making the decision to not respond to anything on specific days because she felt she could no longer be at her department's beck and call "at all times" anymore. Kelly also discussed her need to rebel against her employer. She states:

> One day I just didn't care if I came into work and I knew I had a workshop I had to go to cause we would go and present to classes and I knew I had to do it and it was at 9:10 am. I was fed up with having to get here early because I get here 15 minutes early and I leave 15 minutes later so I'm doing longer than 20 hour work weeks. So I was just fed up with doing longer than 20 hours work weeks for these people. So I said screw it. I'm not gonna walk through the door until 9:00 am. We were late to the workshop. It was not professional and I felt badly about it but we were only what two minutes late but I just didn't care. It felt really good. But I did slack and the professor ended up calling because he was worried we weren't gonna show up and so of course management hears about it I did feel a little badly. But it did feel good to say I just don't care anymore. That was the biggest I don't care and it felt so good.

Like Lana, Kelly also notes the discrepancy between the expected 20 hour work week and the actual overtime that occurs as a graduate assistant. In perceiving that she was unfairly coming to work early and leaving later than expected, Kelly worked to exercise her agency and control of her time by intentionally arriving to work late. As Kelly gleefully recalled how good it felt to exert some control over her time by undermining the efforts of her employers, I was drawn to think of the narratives of the other graduate assistants. Their discussions coincided with Karl Marx's and Engel's ([1848] 2007) discussion of the proletariats and their efforts to rebel against the bourgeoisie by engaging in various acts that could undermine the production activities of capitalists such as destroying pieces of machines or setting factories on fire. In a sense these graduate assistants like the proletariats, are engaging in acts of micro aggression by

conducting acts that not only display their ability to exert some control in their working environment but also their capacity to temporarily halt the work productivity of their employers by way of not answering emails or intentionally showing up to work late.

Discussion

This research project has provided me insight into how graduate assistants manage their emotions and manage responsibilities associated with their dual roles as graduate assistants and students. I have come to understand that these participants utilize their smiles as a means to construct pleasant learning environments, which is similar to the efforts of flight attendants who discussed the use of their smiles to create pleasant flying experiences for passengers in Hochschild's (1983) study. I discovered that graduate assistants recognize emotion management as a tool to be utilized when interacting and providing services to students. In order to produce positive learning experiences for students, graduate assistants utilized three forms of emotion acting: deep, surface, and transformative acting. I also found that GAs were most cognizant of their emotion management in relation to interactions with students rather than faculty. This finding was actually startling because I expected graduate assistants to explicitly express the need to manage emotions with both students and faculty as a desire to construct particular images in order to maintain their assistantships; however, upon closer analysis, it makes sense that graduate assistants would not consciously associate their emotion management efforts with faculty since they see these individuals as colleagues and not the individuals being directly served. Yet, because graduate assistants want to maintain

particular perceptions in the eyes of faculty, they ultimately managed their emotions to conceal negative aspects of themselves that could undermine their identity.

While it could appear to be problematic that graduate assistants may refrain from sharing particular aspects of themselves with faculty, it actually may serve as a protective measure in academic settings. For example, in her narrative Christine's discusses her volatile relationship with her assigned faculty member as a result of them changing their interactional parameters. Thus, there may be some utility to maintaining pleasant, yet professional, relations with faculty. Graduate assistants were more likely to be emotionally open with members of their cohort, which made sense given these are individuals who share similar experiences and generally could not negatively impact another's ability to maintain a particular position. As I worked to uncover the various presented selves of graduate assistants, I came to find that graduate assistants were most emotionally honest with their peers or members of their cohort, moderately honest with faculty, and least emotionally upfront with students. I also found time was a major concern for participants, and that they managed their dual roles as graduate assistant and students by attempting to manage their time, setting particular tasks as priority and utilizing a variety of strategies to accomplish responsibilities for both roles when there were clashes in tasks. This concern with time among graduate assistants also illuminates a common struggle within the larger society in which societal members juggle their various roles and obligations within a perceived limited amount of time available. I found it very interesting that graduate assistants engaged in resistance behaviors as a means to exert control over time and activities as a result of constantly conforming to the schedule and activities of academia. Though these graduate assistants are not likely preparing for a

revolution, as Marx felt the proletariats were, they do appear to be aware of their constraints as employees and students of academia and work to exercise their agency as a means to exert control over their lives inside and outside of their work settings.

As I reflect back on my experiences conducting this research project, I can continually think of how my being a graduate assistant both helped and hindered my interviews. Since I was a fellow graduate assistant, participants were willing to assist a comrade in the research process; yet, because I am also a graduate assistant, sometimes participants expected me to fill in the gaps for them or provided non-descriptive responses since they felt I would understand without their elaboration. In these instances I worked to encourage participants to elaborate or informed them that I was not familiar with what they were discussing. I feel that this at times confused or frustrated graduate assistants because they appeared to want me to display my knowledge and understanding of the graduate assistant experience but it was vital that I let them construct their experiences. Thus, these interviews provided a platform for me to strengthen my in-depth interview skills.

In completing this thesis I hoped to produce a work that filled the gaps found in the literature relating to graduate assistants and their management of emotions and their dual roles. While Bellas (1999) provided an understanding of how professors managed emotions within academia, there is little discussion within the literature of graduate assistants and their management of emotions. Thus, in finding that graduate assistants utilize purposive smiles and engage in various forms of emotion acting in order to effectively assume their role as graduate assistant, I am able to build from Bellas' (1999) research on professors as emotion managers and add to the literature that graduate

assistants also manage their emotions while in academia. The data also provided a rich understanding of how participants managed the responsibilities of being both a graduate assistant and a student which is another area that has limited discussion within the literature. From the data I was able to assert that time management is both a strategy and concern for participants when attempting to manage their dual roles. These findings reinforce and add to the Cho et al.'s quantitative study (2011) which found that participants were concerned with how to allocate time to meet the demands of both the graduate assistant and student role. After completing this research project, I think it would be beneficial to conduct a focus group with both graduate assistants and faculty in order to gain a holistic understanding of how each group manages emotions towards one another and in relations to students. This could potentially allow for more research on emotion management in academia and also provide a more in-depth understanding of the relational dynamics that exist between faculty and graduate assistants.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IRB

12/17/2013

Investigator(s): DaJuan Ferrell, Jackie Eller
Department: Sociology
Investigator(s) Email: Dtf2m@mtmail.mtsu.edu, Jackie.Eller@mtsu.edu

Protocol Title: "Managing Emotions in Academia "

Protocol Number: 14-167

Dear Investigator(s),

The MTSU Institutional Review Board, or a representative of the IRB, has reviewed the research proposal identified above. The MTSU IRB or its representative has determined that the study poses minimal risk to participants and qualifies for an expedited review under 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110, and you have satisfactorily addressed all of the points brought up during the review.

Approval is granted for one (1) year from the date of this letter for 25 participants.

Please note that any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918. Any change to the protocol must be submitted to the IRB before implementing this change.

You will need to submit an end-of-project form to the Office of Compliance upon completion of your research located on the IRB website. Complete research means that you have finished collecting and analyzing data. Should you not finish your research within the one (1) year period, you must submit a Progress Report and request a continuation prior to the expiration date. Please allow time for review and requested revisions. Failure to submit a Progress Report and request for continuation will automatically result in cancellation of your research study. Therefore, you will not be able to use any data and/or collect any data. Your study expires 12/17/2014.

According to MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who works with data or has contact with participants. Anyone meeting this definition needs to be listed on the protocol and needs to complete the required training. If you add researchers to an approved project, please forward an updated list of researchers to the Office of Compliance before they begin to work on the project.

All research materials must be retained by the PI or faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) for at least three (3) years after study completion and then destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity.

Sincerely,

Kellie Hilker
Compliance Officer/ MTSU Institutional Review Board Member

APPENDIX B: Interview Guide

Graduate Student Role

1. Could you describe the setting and atmosphere associated with your classes? (Example are you classes competitive or supportive)

2. What do you believe are your responsibilities as a graduate student?

3. Describe yourself in terms of how you behave or present yourself when you are occupying the role of graduate student.

4. Do you believe that there are certain rules or expectations in the way graduate students should present themselves in an academic setting? What are these rules?

5. Can you think of a situation when your emotions or the way you felt conflicted with these rules?

6. Do you feel that displays of feelings or emotions that contradict expectations of graduate students are sometimes appropriate? Why or why not?

7. How do you feel your performance as a graduate student compares to your classmates?

8. We discussed expectations or rules you felt were associated with being a graduate student. Now, can you think of a time when you have used your expression of contradictory emotions to benefit you in academic setting? (Use example to assist in understanding). Or have you displayed contradictory expressions of emotions and faced constraints?

9. Graduate school can be challenging, do you feel you have a support system in your department academically?

10. Can you think of a time when you had to rely on your support system in your department?

Graduate Assistant Role

11. Could you describe the setting and atmosphere of the location in which you carry out your graduate assistantship?

12. What are your responsibilities or expectations as a graduate assistant?

13. Do you believe that there are certain rules or expectations in the way graduate assistants should present themselves while in their department? What are these rules?

14. Can you discuss a situation in which you monitored or managed the way you presented yourself while in the role of graduate assistant because of your awareness of these rules?

15. Discuss the relationship or dynamic you have with your assigned faculty member.

16. Do you believe you have to monitor the way you present yourself while interacting with this faculty member?

17. Do you feel the need to constantly present your best self while in your academic department? Explain

18. How do you present yourself when interacting with your students, faculty, and members of your cohort?

19. Can you describe a situation in which you felt you were being a "good" or effective graduate assistant?

20. Now, has there ever been a time when you felt you were being a "bad" or ineffective graduate assistant? Can you discuss the experience?

21. Do you feel you have support while occupying the role of graduate assistant from your academic department? Could you explain?

22. Do you feel it is important to have a mentor? Why?

23. Do you have a mentor? Could you describe your relationship dynamic?

Dualistic roles

24. Do you believe your performance in one role (graduate assistant or student) affects your likelihood of maintaining the other role? Why do you think this?

25. How do you manage the expectations of being both a graduate student and assistant?

26. Have you ever experienced conflict attempting to manage both roles?

Concentration on attitudes towards emotion management

27. Do you believe there are different expectations for the men and women in the way they present themselves in your department? How are men and women expected to present themselves?

28. Think of a time when you were having a "bad" day while in your academic setting how did you present yourself in in relation to other students and faculty.

29. Now think of a day when you were having a "good" day. How did you present yourself in relation to faculty and students?

30. When in your academic department, how do you want to be perceived? How do you go about ensuring you a perceived in this manner?

31. What are your career goals?