

TEACHING NOTES

REFRAMING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: TEACHING WHITE PRIVILEGE IN THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM

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This article proposes a model of teaching diversity in social work education that includes significant content on White privilege. The authors first discuss some limitations of social work's current multicultural framework. Next, they introduce concepts and pedagogical strategies concerning White identity and privilege that are drawn from multicultural teacher training programs. Based on this literature, the authors argue that teaching about White privilege is fundamental to understanding the systematic oppression of people of color and raising self-awareness about social workers' roles and responsibilities with culturally diverse clientele. Concrete suggestions are offered for infusing this material across the curriculum and grappling with student resistance.

THE COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION'S (CSWE) *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* (EPAS) require accredited social work programs to include significant curriculum content on human diversity, populations at-risk, and social and economic justice. The MSW foundation curriculum, according to EPAS 4.1 must ". . . integrate content that promotes understanding, affirmation, and respect for people from diverse backgrounds" (Council on Social Work Education, 2001). Moreover, EPAS 4.2 stipulates that social work programs must ". . . educate students to identify how group membership influences access

to resources" and ". . . provide content related to implementing strategies to combat discrimination, oppression, and economic deprivation and to promote social and economic justice" (Council on Social Work Education, 2001).

Many schools and departments of social work/social welfare strive to meet these educational policy mandates by integrating themes such as diversity and social justice across the foundation and advanced curriculum sequences. In addition, programs typically require students to take a specific course or set of courses on human diversity, cross-cultural practice, or practice with diverse

populations. Among the various models for delivering diversity content, the most common pedagogical framework is a multicultural model that emphasizes tolerance for individual and group differences, understanding of various cultural norms, and cross-cultural communication strategies (Goldberg, 2000; Lee & Greene, 2003; Potocky, 1997). However, a review of models used to teach diversity in the social work curriculum reveal a lack of information on institutionalized racism and on White privilege in particular. Hamilton (2001) notes simply, yet aptly, "the matter of color is still a salient issue in social work" (p. 63).

Scholars and educators have long criticized the implementation of social work's multicultural lens as well as the lack of specificity in meeting CSWE's multicultural recommendations. Early on, Horner and Borrero (1981) charged CSWE's diversity mandates as being vague and impotent. Garcia and Van Soest (1997) have a different view about the locus of this confusion, asserting that it is social work programs' translation, rather than CSWE's mandate, that is unclear. Lee and Greene (2003) more recently discussed the challenge of teaching multicultural content due to the lack of student readiness to deal with these specific issues, and other educators have noticed barriers to students learning or applying the content (Comerford, 2003; Mildred & Zuñiga, 2004). One recent empirical study found that students were not learning as much content on oppression as faculty stated they were teaching (Bronstein, Berman-Rossi, & Winfield, 2002).

In this article, the authors recommend the inclusion of content on White identity and White privilege across the social work cur-

riculum. They argue that teaching about White privilege is fundamental to understanding the systematic oppression of people of color and raising self-awareness about practitioners' roles and responsibilities with culturally diverse clientele and communities. An additional benefit of this alternative model is the opportunity for the majority group of social work students (namely White students) to explore the meaning of their own ethnic and racial identities in relation to those whom they will encounter in their fieldwork and future professional practice. Arguments concerning the value of teaching about White privilege aren't entirely new. Almost 10 years ago, Swigonski (1996) urged an acknowledgment and exploration of White and male privilege in social work practice. Moreover, Garcia and Van Soest (1997) found that 71% of White social work students enrolled in a diversity class reported that White privilege acted as a barrier to learning about oppression. However, in compiling this article, the authors were unable to locate articles that have explicitly presented a rationale or roadmap for including content on White privilege in the social work curriculum. In this article, the authors draw from the literature found in sociology and education to offer concrete suggestions for incorporating content on Whiteness into standard social work coursework.

Teaching Diversity in Social Work Education

Models for teaching diversity content in social work can be seen to parallel the profession's socio-political history regarding practice with diverse ethnic and cultural population groups. Miriam Potocky (1997) historically

traced social work's relationship to diversity and oppression by articulating three models of education: the "assimilation model," the "cultural sensitivity model," and the "anti-racism model." The assimilation model, which is currently regarded as obsolete, viewed ethnic racial minorities as deviant and encouraged them to acculturate to culturally dominant Anglo-Saxon norms. Educators typically encouraged and taught this model in the early years of the profession.

Diverging from the assimilation approach, the cultural sensitivity model of the 1980s targeted change in workers and agencies because of their ethnocentricity and advocated a new model of culturally-sensitive practice. The locus of change moved from the clients to the workers and/or agencies, with the belief that diversity trainings could make workers more sensitive to cultural differences and allow them to work more effectively with culturally and ethnically diverse clientele (Potocky, 1997).

Lastly, the anti-racism model, which had a presence as early as the 1890s and re-emerged during the radical years of the 1960s, proposes that individuals in positions of power play a role in perpetuating institutionally racist practices that systematically disadvantage ethnic and cultural minorities. These powerful groups can include social workers (Potocky, 1997). The model stresses change at all levels of social work operation, including individual attitudes, agency policies, and the larger society. The model also suggests that social workers involve themselves in larger social movements to halt racism and oppression. According to Potocky (1997), the current multicultural social work education model encompasses strategies

from both the cultural sensitivity and anti-racism models, yet remains somewhat more focused on cultural competence and attitude re-adjustment, rather than comprehensive social change or anti-racism activism.

The multicultural thrust of social work education aims to provide skills for effective cross-cultural practice and, according to Lee and Greene (2003), contains three basic elements: cultural awareness, cultural-specific knowledge, and skills. Multicultural education accomplishes these goals in various ways, such as increasing students' self-awareness, encouraging self-reflection, and introducing teaching content more generally about diverse population groups. In addition, guidelines for competent practice with ethnically and culturally diverse populations are suggested in popular textbooks through the use of, for example, the ethnic-sensitive practice approach (Devore & Schlesinger, 1999) and/or the cultural awareness model (Lum, 2000).

Pedagogical models in social work programs are constantly being developed and refined to assist students in absorbing content on multiculturalism and diversity. These models share essentially the same goal, but differ in the strategies used to attain them. For example, Nagda et al.'s (1999) "Inter-group Dialogues Method" incorporates face-to-face meetings of students from different social identity groups with the goal of building alliances and understanding issues regarding social justice and diversity. Lee and Greene's (2003) "Transformative Multicultural Social Work Education Model" proposes a schema of cross-cultural learning according to four students' stances that include: (a) ethnocentrism, (b) information, (c) curiosity, and (d) reflexivity. Course

content consists of information to address these four stances. Nakanishi and Rittner's (1992) "Inclusionary Cultural Model" attempts to move students from an outsider (etic) to an insider (emic) perspective with clients by incorporating sociocultural theory and experiential classroom activities. These are just a sample of published models for delivering multicultural content.

The teaching paradigms discussed above all employ strategies to deliver useful knowledge about cross-cultural practice. However, they lack a fundamental component in that none explicitly discuss the influence of White privilege and its relationship to racial oppression, power, and inequities in access to resources. This gap is glaring for several reasons. Many educators have discussed the importance of teaching the concept of White privilege in multicultural education more generally (Hamilton, 2001; McIntosh, 1989; Rothenberg, 2002; Swigonski, 1996). The inclusion of content on oppression and social justice without mention of White privilege creates an imbalance in content as it silently maintains an assumption about the "hidden center" of White privilege. Brookfield (1995) describes assumptions as the "taken for granted beliefs about the world and our place in it" and suggests that, "we are our assumptions" (p. 2). When multicultural content is delivered in social work education, the understated yet pervasive standard of Whiteness that is typically used to judge clients' problems and experiences is covertly—rather than overtly—expressed.

In addition, the absence of content on Whiteness deprives White students of the opportunity to reflect on their own ethnic and

cultural identities (Garcia & Van Soest, 1997) or sift through ideas about how racism affects their own lives, yet forces minority students to focus on the "problematic" aspects of their own historic and current oppression. This sets up a situation for students of color to consistently feel that social problems "belong" to them, but not to Whites. Brookfield (1995) discusses the dynamics arising from culturally learned habits occurring in the classroom between majority and minority students. For example, students of color evidence a tendency to be silent because they are afraid of being criticized by their more privileged peers. A focus on Whiteness, presented alongside information about racial and ethnic oppression, levels the playing field by taking the burden off students of color to consistently explain or defend their values, traditions, and experiences of discrimination.

In this paper, we argue that teaching about Whiteness and White privilege in a comprehensive manner adds a level of inclusiveness to curriculum content on diversity and oppression and leads to a more sophisticated understanding of how social workers can intervene in cycles of institutional inequality and discrimination. Inclusion of White privilege content also contributes to the anti-racist model of social work education that seeks systemic and holistic, rather than individual or agency-based change concerning oppression. While teaching about White privilege will certainly not eradicate its manifestations on a national or global level, it will assist students, regardless of race, to acknowledge, discuss, and learn how to deal with the vicissitudes of White privilege as it permeates micro and macro social work concerns.

Studying Whiteness: Tools and Approaches

We propose that social work educators work toward an anti-racist pedagogy) that includes an exploration of the meanings and implications of White identity and White privilege. This approach to teaching diversity stems from scholarly discourses found in both sociology and education. In this section, we will explain the roots of this philosophical approach along with some of its applications in the field of education. We consider teacher training for work in multicultural settings to be similar to the goals of preparing social workers for cross-cultural practice and, thus, propose this as a parallel model.

Social Stratification and White Privilege

Sociology has long been concerned with mechanisms of social stratification. Sociologist Gerald Berreman (1991) eloquently defines social stratification as "a common feature of systems of shared social inequality—of ranked social categories—whether birth ascribed or not" (p. 40). One of the main forms of stratification in U.S. society is racial stratification, wherein White members of society are systematically rewarded and privileged, and people of color are subject to a host of institutional disadvantages on the basis of skin color. Systems of racial stratification are rooted in social rather than biological factors and are contextually and historically situated. For example, the very meaning of racial or ethnic group membership has shifted throughout history through legislation, policies, and various racial discourses. Moreover, definitions of

racial categories and associated privileges differ considerably between nations depending on social, political, and economic contexts (Omi & Winant, 1992). Although the meanings of "race" and racial categories are subject to considerable historical and contextual flux, the consequences of current racial stratification are found in economic, social welfare, legal, and education institutions, among other major social pillars (Lipsitz, 1998).

Sociologists argue that the invisibility of Whiteness and White privilege is one of the central mechanisms of racial stratification in U.S. society (Doane, 1991; Lipsitz, 1998). George Lipsitz (1998) sums this argument well by stating, "Whiteness is everywhere in U.S. society, but it is very hard to see" (p. 1). This invisibility means that although Whiteness is the central norm against which all other ethnic and racial groups are defined, measured, and differentially rewarded, most White individuals cannot, in fact, identify how they experience their own White identity or acknowledge what being White means to them. In fact, most White people typically deny belonging to any racial or ethnic group and are unable to pinpoint how Whiteness occupies a center or mainstream position in society or even in their own personal lives (Doane, 1991). These blinders effectively make it easier for Whites to continue to occupy a dominant and powerful role in structuring systems of social stratification without White individuals being made to feel responsible for racial and ethnic inequities. The invisibility of Whiteness as a social category also permits White individuals to personally deny how White privilege benefits their own lives. People of color, on the other hand, cannot avoid

seeing, experiencing, and living the manifestations of White privilege and are, therefore, more aware of its existence and consequences (Doane, 1991).

Applications of Whiteness Studies to Teacher Training

Scholars from the field of education have translated this sociological understanding of White privilege into concrete strategies to prepare teachers for work in multicultural settings. Teacher education has many parallels with social work education in that both have critics who suggest that a liberal multicultural model has similarly fallen short of exposing future teachers to critical analyses of race and oppression (Fine, 1997; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). Teacher training, like the "ethnic sensitive approach," has focused on attitude readjustment and issues of "difference," effectively eclipsing more socio-structural analyses of oppression and unearned privileges (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004).

In response to these concerns, some education scholars have developed a critical multicultural pedagogy that aims to move White educators toward becoming antiracist allies (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). Granting that unlearning racism is a long-term process that involves undoing years of socialization and internalized ideologies of racial superiority, the education literature defines several ways that information on Whiteness and White identity can be incorporated into teacher training. In this section, we will highlight a few of these strategies along with some identified barriers to teaching and learning this material.

Teacher education programs often use Janet Helms' (1990, 1995) theory of "White racial identity development" to assess students' progress in moving towards an anti-racist position in their work with culturally diverse students and families. Helms theorizes that White individuals develop racial identities along a continuum of awareness that differs from models proposed by Cross (1987) and other notable scholars of ethnic minority identity development (Phinney, 1990). For White individuals, Helms' stages of racial identity formation include: contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudoindependence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy. These six stages are not rigid or mutually exclusive; individuals may move in and out of stages depending on their circumstances, educational position, or other social and contextual factors.

In the first stage of Helms' (1990, 1995) rubric, a person in the contact phase is typically unaware of racism and will generally claim to have a color-blind lens or mentality. This stance typically represents an uninformed racial consciousness. When the person starts to learn about White privilege, he or she may move into the next stage known as "disintegration," which implies a breakdown in old ways of thinking and believing. If the White individual becomes adverse to disintegration and tries to "blame the victim" for challenging his or her belief system, he or she may resort to the "reintegration" phase in which one would minimize the significance of racism and free oneself of personal responsibility for solving racial inequities. If an individual instead acknowledges the many vicissitudes of racism

and their part in maintaining beliefs about White superiority and racial minority inferiority, he or she can begin to move towards a more anti-racist identity entailed in the "pseudo-independent" identity status. Further development of White identity in the "immersion/emersion" stage is signaled by truly considering Whiteness in all of its many layers in society and taking action to stop institutional racism. And finally, the sixth stage, "autonomy," is marked by an individual's ability to actualize his or her new understanding of the self and others without constant conscious reflection.

With this theory of White identity development, some multicultural teacher training programs attempt to move White students past the reintegration phase and into the pseudo-independence and autonomy phases of identity development. This training and personal work prepares students to teach in environments where their students' educational behaviors and skills, and those of their families, have been dramatically shaped by institutionalized racism. Rather than accepting the mainstream ideology that makes Whiteness invisible, if potential teachers can grasp how Whiteness confers unearned and invisible social privileges, they can begin to form an anti-racist identity in their work (Lawrence, 1997). Some scholars argue that White teachers who have more fully developed racial identities are likely to have more success in their work with multicultural students and families (Carter & Goodwin, 1994).

The development of White students' racial identities along Helms' continuum is accomplished in several pedagogical fashions. A few of these strategies are described here.

Teaching about White identity. Several critical multicultural education scholars observe that White students are often alienated from positioning themselves in any ethnic or racial grouping (Fine, 1997; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; Rosenberg, 1997). In her qualitative study of White mothers of biracial children, O'Donoghue (2004) found that her research participants were unaware of their identities as White individuals until they experienced racism within their family system. Often without these personal experiences to launch the awareness process, one way to approach White identity is to ask students to construct biographies of their own origins, to see that they share cultural background and meanings with groups beyond just being "White." This type of exercise helps all students connect with an ethnic or racial past and identification with particular belief systems and values.

Raising awareness of White privilege. Once a basic understanding of White identity is established, many educational programs expose students to the pervasiveness of White privilege, a process that breaks down the typical denial concerning the invisibility of Whiteness (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). Raising awareness can be achieved through readings, films, personal testimonies from White activists and educators, or other interactive training tools. Short, pithy readings are often used, such as Peggy McIntosh's (1989) seminal piece, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," which offers a very personal and pointed account of a White feminist becoming aware of the daily benefits of her skin privilege. Reflection on these types of testimonies is instrumental in guiding White students to

consider their unearned privileges and to be able to discuss them openly in a group setting (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997).

Building empathy. Education scholars discuss the use of empathy to motivate anti-racist work in contrast to a more common understanding of empathy as a facet of altruism (Goodman, 2001; hooks, 1994; Rosenberg, 1997). For example, it is important in this type of education to caution students against having "empathy" for the plight of people of color rather than having an actual vision of reframing White privilege (Rosenberg, 1997). Goodman argues that empathy can catalyze involvement in systemic change if an individual can get beyond a "blame the victim" mentality but is not overwhelmed or paralyzed by "White guilt," meaning the nagging anxiety about playing a role in the widespread suffering among people of color. This balance can be achieved through exposure to oppressed people's life experiences vis-a-vis books, movies, and personal stories, as well as facilitating group members in sharing their own stories of their role in systems of oppression—whether they are agents or targets of institutional "isms" (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997).

Service learning. Teacher preparation programs often coordinate brief service learning, meaning volunteer placements for students to engage in anti-racist work with local community groups. These hands-on activities encourage students to link with organizations where they can work collaboratively with community members to facilitate macro-level social change (Das Gupta, 2003). Since social work students are typically involved in the field-work setting, this strategy would be less fre-

quently used in a social work curriculum, yet still remains a possibility.

Barriers and Resistance

Several potential barriers may arise in teaching about White privilege, the first and foremost being student resistance. Resistance to this material is commonplace, particularly among White students who are comfortable with a "color-blind" mentality (Frankenberg, 1993; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). Ruth Frankenberg's 1993 in-depth study of White identity construction among women suggests that resistance to learning about White privilege is even more profound than resistance to learning about the effects of racism, because racism as a problem could conceivably belong to others, whereas White privilege can and should be internalized more personally. Scholars propose that this resistance is akin to the invisibility of Whiteness and White privilege in dominant society, in that the dynamics of the classroom mirror the suppression and resistance to recognizing White privilege found more broadly (Fine, 1997; Giroux, 1997). This makes sense since, from an early age, young White people are taught not to be "prejudiced;" however, on the flip side, Whites are not necessarily challenged to understand or accept the manifestations of their unearned privileges (Frankenberg, 1993; Rothenberg, 2002).

One of the main facets of resistance is the tendency for White students to view material on White privilege as being "anti-White" or even racist or prejudiced against Whites (Gillespie, Ashbaufgh, & Defiore, 2002). This inclination can even be intensified if the teacher or leader is a person of color his or

herself.¹ Strong feelings about the unfairness of "White-bashing" or being "anti-White" can lead to defensiveness rather than meaningful education, dialogue, or growth. Hence, Gillespie et al. (2002) warn of the importance of maintaining a balance between larger structural and social relations as well as personal responsibility for racism.

Another potential pitfall of White privilege education identified in the teacher training literature is the tendency for students to feel that if they "own" their privilege, their work on the issue is accomplished and complete (Levine-Rasky, 2000). As Levine-Rasky and other scholars suggest (Giroux, 1997), it is important to stress that learning about privilege is a means to an integrated analysis, but not an end in itself. The goal still has to be focused on anti-racist praxis, particularly in settings where cross-cultural encounters are frequent. Once students have moved past the anxiety raised by confronting the many manifestations of White privilege, the goal of the educational program would be to work through the resistance process to move to the further stages of White identity development according to Helms' (1990, 1995) schema. The work should not stop at the initial recognition phase.

Although student resistance to White privilege education is quite common, researchers have found some very positive effects of these efforts among education and

teacher training students. Some of the outcomes that have been documented in using these strategies include: personal shifts in thinking, teachers becoming more aware of how White privilege impacts their own lives and those of the students and families with whom they work, and changing teaching practices (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). Others report that the use of material on White privilege helped students to feel more comfortable in engaging in anti-racist activism in their own communities and challenging other White people's racial stereotypes (Gillespie, 2003). Hence, although not all students will necessarily work through their resistance, this basic approach to anti-racist teacher training is still valuable (Feagin & Vera, 2002).

Integrating White Privilege Content Into Social Work Curriculum

Based on the known limitations of social work multicultural education and the advent of pedagogical practices developed in related fields, we believe that content on White privilege and White identity should be integrated across the social work curriculum, as well as emphasized in specific courses on diverse populations or cross-cultural awareness. The idea that content on cultural diversity ought to contain information on White privilege is justified by empirical studies of diversity education. For example, being White and middle-class were two main criteria that Comerford (2003) found to be a barrier to learning cultural diversity content in social work education, and Garcia and Van Soest's (1997) study connected students' reflection on their own social identity to their ability to learn about oppression. In this

¹This is a phenomenon that the authors found in our respective classes, with the White students being quicker to feel attacked or less defended in the course section of a practice with diverse populations class taught by a professor who is a person of color.

section, we offer some suggestions for moving toward the inclusiveness of this content across the social work curriculum.

First, content on White privilege should be emphasized in the cross-cultural/diversity courses to promote self-awareness and increase understanding of racial and ethnic oppression. Lee and Greene (2003) argue that students must engage in consciousness-raising to become educated around diversity issues. This process requires that students become aware of their personal experiences with privilege and social injustices, even if they are members of the dominant ethnic or racial group. In our own experience of designing and teaching a diversity course, education concerning White identity and White privilege accomplishes this task more effectively than just introducing material on ethnic minority development and/or the oppression of people of color.

The integration of content on Whiteness is also important in specific courses such as human behavior in the social environment, policy, and/or practice. For example, in a human behavior course, including content about White identity development, as opposed to framing the issue as "normative development" versus "minority development," can help White students to assess the influence of their racial or ethnic identity formation on their own life experiences, in addition to those of some of their clients. In a policy course, rather than focusing on how social policies such as housing, education, or welfare disadvantage people of color, discussion could center on how these policies maintain privileges for White people.

In direct practice courses, learning about

the effects of White privilege on forming relationships and building trust with clients would be beneficial. Often in cross-cultural interactions, clients request workers whose racial backgrounds are similar to their own, which has a negative effect on young White students in their field settings. Providing strategies for handling such interactions would help the workers to more effectively intervene in such situations. Careful thought needs to be given about the placement of the White privilege content in these situations. During the initial sessions when students are getting acquainted with the course, professor, and peers is not optimal timing. Consider positioning this content toward the middle of the course and build from there.

Second, the emotionality of teaching this content must be discussed among faculty with support from like-minded peers (Comerfold, 2003). Content on White privilege provokes strong emotions (Garcia & Van Soest, 1997). Unlike other social work courses, faculty who elect to teach this content need to know that they are dealing in a psychosocial space that includes influences from family, peers, and community (Comerfold, 2003) as well as cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors (Lee & Greene, 2003). Educators must be prepared to feel discomfort, just as their students will feel discomfort. Support from administration and colleagues is essential, especially to grapple with student resistance and possible complaints about the material.

Third, in addition to emotionality, faculty will need to be equipped to handle a significant amount of student resistance to this material and a wide range of personal reactions to grappling with the concept of White

privilege. Educators should expect challenges from majority students who might think that White privilege does not exist and also from minority students, who may raise concern that issues of racism are being relegated to a less important status. Mildred and Zuñiga (2004) suggest that educators explore and work with students' resistance to content of multicultural courses using four strategies: (a) resistance as a source of information about the group process, (b) resistance as a measure of students' readiness, (c) resistance as a reflection of the larger sociopolitical context; and (d) resistance as a resource for facilitating student learning and engagement. Moreover, emphasizing fairness and justice may help students to understand and accept the material (Rothenberg, 2002). For example, Garcia & Van Soest (1997) propose a two-stage process that helps students to develop empathy for themselves and then helps them to develop empathy for those who are oppressed.

Fourth, instructors must receive institutional and peer support for teaching this material. In discrete courses on cultural diversity, emotionality about White privilege and its relationship to racial oppression may be very strong and especially hostile toward a professor with an ethnic or cultural minority background. In such a case, co-teaching by professors with different backgrounds is suggested, such as in Walters, Strom-Gottfried, & Sullivan's 1998 model of teaching diversity in field education. Brookfield (1995) argues that trust is developed in a classroom situation, especially when professors respectfully disagree. While co-teaching can present administrative complications due to the drain on resources and problems with scheduling, it

would be valuable to faculty and students alike for courses that deal with White privilege and racism.

Our final suggestion is that this course content on White privilege should be systematically evaluated to assess its effectiveness in preparing students for multicultural practice. It will be important to assess if this content improves students' self-awareness, their ability to relate cross-culturally, or their skills and comfort in working with diverse population groups. There are only a few prior studies that collected this type of information (e.g., Garcia & Van Soest, 1997), so measurement instruments will need to be refined and targeted specifically toward these goals.

Conclusion

Social work education must be a dynamic endeavor if students are to be prepared to provide effective services to clients. Curriculum must build on the foundations of social work education while incorporating material that is in keeping with contemporary discourses and social problems. Content on White privilege and White identity is lacking in social work programs across the nation, yet in the field of education, a critical pedagogy has emerged to transform traditional multicultural education into an anti-racist praxis for professional and personal development. We believe that social work should follow this trend. Teaching about White identity gives all students a chance to reflect on their personal ethnic and group membership experiences and how these play into the worker-client exchange. This content should not replace other important diversity concerns related to gender, age, sexual orientation, and other axes of difference. Rather, the

reality is that people know and talk about White privilege, especially members of minority groups (hooks, 2002). In acknowledging the existence of this pervasive social privilege, students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds can learn how to more effectively deal with it, particularly in practice situations.

The authors recognize that including content on Whiteness is not without controversy. Educators who tackle this material need to be prepared, regardless of their own race, to receive support for their efforts and to contend with resistance, and must decide how to deliver this content in a manner that facilitates, rather than inhibits, learning and growth. In conclusion, we agree with bell hooks (1994), that teaching and learning about cultural diversity often demands being comfortable with that which is uncomfortable.

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