

# It Started with a Tweet Calling White Social Work Educators in: Building a Professional Learning Community

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**Abstract:** This narrative documents the early stages of a collective called #SWEDUACTS. We are four White, female social work educators who have led the planning of a teach-in event held in October of 2020 and subsequent monthly drop-in, peer-led Professional Learning Community meetings drawing dozens of participants over nine months. We reflect here on how engaging in the planning and delivery of the drop-in sessions helps ground our commitment to anti-racist pedagogy as well as facilitates the capacity of other social work instructors to build their own capabilities as anti-racist social work pedagogues.

**Keywords:** Professional Learning Community, anti-racist pedagogy, practice community, reflective practice, social work faculty, social media, Twitter

Mandatory stay at home orders related to the impact of COVID-19 forced academia to shut its physical doors in March 2020 and transitioned all faculty and students to work remotely. On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin. This undeniably brutal police killing of an unarmed Black man sent shockwaves throughout the world (Cheung, H., personal communication, June 8, 2020). Social work educators began to express dismay through social media outlets. In early June of 2020, three weeks after the murder of George Floyd, four White female social work educators logged on to a Zoom video call in response to a Twitter thread discussing how social work educators and respective schools of social work ought to respond to ending police violence against Black Americans as well as addressing anti-Black racism in social work education. That initial meeting, over 18 months prior to the writing of this article, seeded the beginnings of a Virtual Professional Learning Community (VPLC). Ford et al. (2008) describe VPLCs as using Internet technology to facilitate engagement and interaction among faculty for the purposes of relationship building and learning, and they serve as an important option for faculty across a single discipline and when geographically dispersed (Brooks, 2010). Toner et al. (2022) surmised through research that because all faculty collectively were working remotely, they were operating on an equal playing field when it came to accessing meetings, building community, and sharing information. Additional research suggests that because the community is experienced in a digital environment, the VPLC has the potential to mitigate biases that may exist in face-to-face or synchronous settings (Trust et al., 2017).

## The Beginning

Twitter is great for many things: sharing resources, networking, professional development, and staying abreast of current trends and news. In some online communities like #SWTech, #SocialWorkTwitter, #SWFutures, and #TherapistTwitter, you can network with individuals you've never met in real life who have similar research interests or senses of humor—or perhaps you just like their morning hello tweet. The tweet which showed up in our feed on June 2, 2020,

was from Dr. Desmond Patton, a professor and the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Curriculum Innovation at Columbia University's School of Social Work.

Dr. Patton researches the intersection of gang violence and social media. He is the founder of the SAFE Lab and works in partnership with the Data Science Institute among other endeavors. Dr. Patton published a tweet calling out to White social work educators to stand as allies to Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) teacher-scholars. Patton's (2020) tweet said, "Schools of Social Work, can we join initiatives related to police violence? I know we're responsive to our own communities but it would be powerful to link up."

Reflecting on her thoughts at the time, author Parga says "I read Patton's tweet and the community organizer in me thought, this is completely doable. How could a school of social work not join these efforts?" She entered a reply of support and waited a day for comments and/or direction. Seeing additional posts for ongoing support, she sent a direct message (DM) to Dr. Patton expressing continued support and concern she had missed next steps.

Parga (2020) sent: "Just following up to your tweet about mobilizing with SSW. What is next? Are you going to convene a group or representatives? Brainstorm? Google doc? I just don't want to miss an opportunity to collaborate or drop the ball here. Time is right!"

Dr. Patton (personal communication, June 3, 2020) replied to this DM: "Really hoping a white colleague activate around this issue and mobilizes the community. I wanted to put the idea out there." Ready to activate and engage in action, Parga selected June 10, 2020, and tweeted out details to recruit faculty interested in mobilizing around Dr. Patton's tweet.

On June 10, 2020, three of us authors, also White social work educators, logged in to join Parga: Goldkind, Shelly, and Slayter. We discussed our experiences teaching and learning about anti-racist practices and pedagogies. Collectively, we agreed to continue the conversation and if we moved forward, increasing participation would be important. We brainstormed topics related to Dr. Patton's tweet, potential action(s) to take, and the option to collaborate with organizations already working in the space. The ideas generated in the brainstorm coalesced around mapping our networks of possible partners in supporting a grassroots anti-racist teaching group and some efforts to understand the student experience in social work classrooms.

We leaned towards starting something new and listed potential ideas. Ultimately, we discussed how anti-racist work could look for White social work educators: consistently showing up and lift up BIPOC voices (especially in the social service community), while also identifying strategies and resources to bring that dialogue more accessibly into social work education.

We then discussed next steps, noting that this "group" needed more social work faculty involvement. To do that we would tap into our social capital, generate promotional materials, and use Twitter to activate our networks. We created and adopted a hashtag, #SWEDUACTS, which stands for Social Work Education Acts, reflecting our desire to focus on social work educators taking action. This was also an homage to Dr. Patton's (2020) initial tweet calling in social work educators and institutions to engage in collaboration.

Our specific recruitment efforts for the June 30th, 2020, “Amplifying Structural Racism and Police Brutality in Social Work Education” Zoom meeting welcomed approximately thirty social work educators. As large and small groups, we brainstormed.

At this June 30th meeting, individuals representing 18 schools of social work met for the first time to collaborate and design action. Two strategies emerged. One sub-committee decided to focus on advocacy and cultivating influencer relationships. This group wanted to contact, encourage, and advocate trade associations like state-level leaders as well as the National Association of Social Workers to take a more explicit anti-racist stance. The other sub-committee opted to plan a national teach-in focused on police brutality as a form of structural racism. While the advocacy influencer group did not ultimately achieve cohesion as an organizing body, the anti-racist teach-in group continued to meet and work collectively to plan a national teach-in and live Zoom event on October 27, 2020.

As #SWEDUACTS members collectively worked towards planning and confirming details for the week-long teach-in, a central focus to lift up the voices of social work scholars of color who were experts in the areas of police brutality and structural racism emerged. An official #SWEDUACTS event was created to be held during the week of the teach-in. We researched experts of color and engaged in a collaborative decision-making process with the larger #SWEDUACTS community members; this led us to invite the following as panelists for the event: Dr. Sharon Moore (University of Louisville), Dr. Tina Sacks (University of California at Berkeley), and Mr. Mel Wilson (National Association of Social Workers, Washington, DC). These scholars and activists were invited to serve on a panel of experts on the topic of police brutality as a form of structural racism for the National Teach-in. With over 500 social work educators and students registered, the #SWEDUACTS event included a welcome from Dr. Patton as well as a screening of the Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw 2016 TED Talk titled “The Urgency of Intersectionality.” Dr. Crenshaw’s TED Talk details the intersectionality of racism and sexism as they play out in incidents of deadly police violence and can be accessed here: [https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality)

### **Growing a Seed**

#SWEDUACTS offered five open peer-led drop-in preparatory sessions for educators interested in participating in the week-long October 26–30, 2020, teach-in. We did this knowing that it can be difficult to teach about race, racism, structural racism, and police brutality, and that faculty might want to have some support ahead of time in thinking about how to talk to their students about these topics. The drop-in support meetings were publicized on Twitter and sent out on national professional listservs. Over thirty participants from a variety of racial and ethnic groups attended each session. Educators were eager to talk, and some were anxious about how to engage their students in a useful and constructive dialogue about race relations centered on police brutality as a form of structural racism.

To support faculty, we discussed and modeled core tenets for engaging in difficult dialogues, such as setting up conditions for hard conversations in the weeks leading up to “the big week.” We talked about the group navigation of developing shared agreements, and specifics on how

the classroom would manage difficult dialogues. We brainstormed with our faculty colleagues' strategies for how to navigate "hot" moments and asked people to bring up examples of such moments and how they had handled them. We examined ways we had done things wrong ourselves and tried to create a learning space allowing for discomfort, growth, and openness. We held these conversations in large and small groups offering more intimacy of breakout rooms where colleagues excitedly discussed their lesson plans related to the teach-in.

It was through this experience that we began to realize that perhaps there was an ongoing demand for this type of dedicated space in social work education, not just in preparation for a teach-in. Slayter thought about all the times her colleagues at Salem State University complained about the fact that they never had the opportunity to actually come to a meeting to talk about teaching. Shelly reminded us that central to anti-racist practice is the need for consistently showing up. Parga recalled university emails encouraging faculty to hold space in their classroom "in light of recent events." It seemed like a need would be met by consistently creating space for social work educators to talk about how to engage in anti-racist practice as educators. This was the creation of the monthly drop-in structure which began in January 2021. Before detailing the work of our VPLC, we share the reflections of the four conveners of #SWEDUACTS on how they came to be part of this work.

## **Our Stories**

### **Slayter**

I entered into this work as a believer in the concept of what Dr. Estela Bensimon (2006) coined as equity-minded practice. In her conceptualization, this approach involves four actions on the part of the practitioner: awareness of racial identity, awareness of racialized patterns, reflection on racial consequences of actions, and agency to produce racial equity. In the context of social work education, equity-minded teacher/practitioners take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students, and critically reassess their own practices through engaging in what is known as reflexivity and reflectivity (Schön, 1983, 1987; Simmons, et al., 2021).

To be reflexive as an educator, you consider and investigate your interactions through introspection as they occur. You do this given the cultural, historical, linguistic, and political context that you exist in. With reflection, on the other hand, the focus is on a variety of factors; these can be spoken, nonverbal, or emotional, but you also consider your thoughts that follow the actions you take in the classroom. All of this is applied to the "in between" the student/s and social work educator and the interaction they share with the classroom or field placement. A central question to ask oneself as an equity-minded practitioner/educator is "How do I create and influence knowledge about my teaching practice that I use to make decisions about pedagogy?" In this way, I believe that equity-minded practice can call upon the tenets of the anti-oppressive social work practice framework (Jeffry, 2005), in which we engage in reflectivity and reflexivity about the social locations and power dynamics between social worker and client (Jeffry, 2005).

My first job out of college in 1990 was working as the facilitator of a women's collective that was devoted to the intersectional purpose of fighting racism and sexism (University of Minnesota Young Women, an affiliate of the Young Women's Christian Association). Working in a group of people from all races and ethnicities for the first time was a wake-up call, and I had to confront my own White privilege and my own ingrained racism. It was a painful but necessary process that set me on a path towards becoming an anti-racist practitioner. I now know that as a White person, the work of reflecting on one's privilege and ingrained racism is never done, but is just part of the process, and that's ok. I am happy to use my own mistakes and negative experiences as a model for others who are just entering this process since the wakeup call that many had after the murder of George Floyd. There's good learning in those. I have written extensively about the racial justice accountability processes I have gone through in my own school of social work and those reflections may be helpful to some (Slayter, in press).

My belief in the equity-minded practice approach and in the use of anti-oppressive practice links to my commitment to anti-racist practice as a social work educator. I am committed to consistently showing up in order to create space for other social work educators to wrestle with what it means to engage in anti-racist practice. That means learning about what anti-racism is, wrestling with our own racism, sharing our successes, and especially sharing and unpacking our failures—all in community. I believe that #SWEDUACTS is about building an impetus in the larger community of social work educators towards a shift in our culture. This will be a shift towards more racial identity awareness among White educators, more capacity to sit with and teach about difficult content—topics such as race relations, racism, white privilege, whiteness, white supremacy, white fragility, and Anti-Blackness. I also believe that this will, over time, translate into us being able to assist our students in being able to do the same work with their clients. In the year that I have been involved in #SWEDUACTS, I have been struck by how often people seem to have no basic knowledge about what it means to be anti-racist, and have not done the basic work of grappling with what that concept means to them. This says to me that we need to make a consistent space to help people begin that process, in which we can offer non-judgmental peer support. People helped me on my journey, and I want to give back. It's "all hands on deck" time, and we have to stay in the fight.

## **Parga**

I chose to enter this space initially as a way to flex a community organizing muscle. I saw an opportunity for unique partnerships, identified self-interest, and a possible win-win for stakeholders. I stayed because I have found a community outside of my institution and a level of accountability I could never have alone to reflect and learn.

Prior to #SWEDUACTS, I had a deep misunderstanding about the fluidity and ongoing nature of developing an anti-racist practice. I anchored my anti-racist actions in how I treated others and stayed very much in the present moment. I thought about but never deeply questioned my privileged childhood, colonial education, or the opportunity to make adult life choices. I recognize the advantages now, and also the choice I get to make on when and how I do the work. My social work practice started at a small non-profit in City Heights, the most diverse community in San Diego. The high schools I worked in at the time had a 34 percent graduation

rate, 100 percent free and reduced lunch, and were designated Title 1 schools. Although I felt like I was embedded in the community, at the end of the day, I got in my car and drove out of the area where I worked and into my mostly White suburb. I later supported programming in 200 affordable housing units and maintained food-coop programs and workforce development contracts. My role evolved as it most often does with small nonprofits, and I worked on donor development with small family foundations. The irony, reflecting now, is outside of my work directly with clients, my interactions were with people who looked like me. There was a lack of BPOC in leadership positions, the majority of the foundations were wealthy White families, and for most of my time the field organizations were led by White males. I hardly questioned the structure, impact and intent, quantity over quality, hiring practices (Gray, 2019), or individualism and avoiding conflict (Okun, 1999).

#SWEDUACTS and the faculty who show up each month have a permanent spot on my calendar, and it has become a dedicated space to unpack, unlearn, and deeply reflect how I can develop an anti-racist pedagogy in my social work classroom.

### **Goldkind**

When I took my first adjunct teaching job, the year prior to joining my university full time, I was handed a syllabus and little else. At the time PowerPoint was less ubiquitous, so there were limited materials to share, but also no real sharing culture. I relied on cold calling professors whose textbooks I admired to help me craft a cohesive learning plan for my students. In my practice life, I had spent over a decade working in youth development organizations, as well as school adjacent programs. Luckily, I had exposure to theories and models of teacher training from the secondary school world. In parallel, I also spent three years early in my career at an organization called the Posse Foundation. Posse exists to diversify highly selective liberal arts colleges. Young people are offered a merit leadership scholarship based on their communication skills and are sent to college with a mission of having hard conversations about racial justice on predominately White college campuses.

My constitutional inclination and ability to lean into hard conversations as well as my personal and professional values around social justice and human dignity were a great match for the work of the Posse Foundation. In many ways, my ideas about creating brave spaces where learning can happen in discussion and dialog are grounded in the Posse ethos. Now, in my thirteenth year in higher education, I have taught Fordham University's Human Rights and Social Justice course for over five years. Prior to the world learning of George Floyd, my classes were commonly talking about issues of race, anti-racist social work practice, and how to bring an equity and social justice lens into social work services. Without specific training, I have cultivated a reflective teaching practice focused on building anti-racist social work educators. Now, a year or more after the murder of George Floyd and the explosion of interest in being and doing anti-racist work, it is important to me to continue to develop as a reflective anti-racist teacher. I personally think our students deserve nothing less.

## **Shelly**

I hold a staff position at the University of Buffalo School of Social Work as Director of Community Engagement and Expansion. I take our school's curricular focus on human rights and trauma-informed perspectives and anti-racist social work to new locations to build community and share resources.

My interest in anti-racist social work stems from reading Black feminist writers (particularly Crenshaw's original 1989 law review article on intersectionality), and Indigenous authors writing on resistance to settler culture (i.e., Kauanui, 2018; Simpson, 2021; Weaver, 2019), and decolonization (i.e., Del Vecchio et al., 2018; Tuck & Yang, 2012, 2021).

I also was part of the global movement working to end violence against women in during my decade working at a rape crisis center in the 1980s and 90s. Through the internet and email, those networks spanning the world shared strategies to address the myriad forms of gender-based violence: child sexual abuse, sex trafficking, female genital cutting, marital rape, and child marriage, and more. The networking revealed the very different solutions and barriers that different traditions, cultures, and governments employ to address this epidemic. It fostered an early commitment to cultural humility.

Throughout my nine years at the University of Buffalo, I have developed a Professional Learning Network (Hitchcock, 2020; Hitchcock et al., 2019) while managing the university's Twitter account. I'm part of the original group that started the #MacroSW "Twitter Chats" in March 2014. The chat is a weekly Thursday evening synchronous conversation on the micro-blogging platform Twitter and an example of the power of using digital strategies to build on- and offline communities. #SWEDUACTS is a natural progression that deepens my experience in digital activism and organizing on social justice issues. Through Twitter, we act to advance current social work education to an explicit anti-racist pedagogy and practice.

## **Growing Roots**

When it comes to anti-racism work, the needs of the BIPOC communities have centered more on the need to foster resiliency and recover from harms continuing to occur. In contrast, for the White members of our community, we have needed to develop awareness of our White racial identity, our white privilege, and our white fragility in an effort to move towards being active and accountable allies to our colleagues and friends. This was explained to every meeting's attendees as a way to model a best practice for anti-racist pedagogy across contexts. In addition, we were conscious that we were four White women, all in social work academia, convening this project. We wanted to participate as non-experts and practice a peer-led approach of showing up around key questions for discussion and exchange of tools related to anti-racist pedagogy in social work education. Being mindful of the aforementioned structure, the January 2021 drop-in session was designed as implementation of community guidelines (Table 1) and large group introductions (10–15 minutes), randomized breakout groups (30–35 minutes), and a large-group report out session (10–15 minutes).

**Table 1**

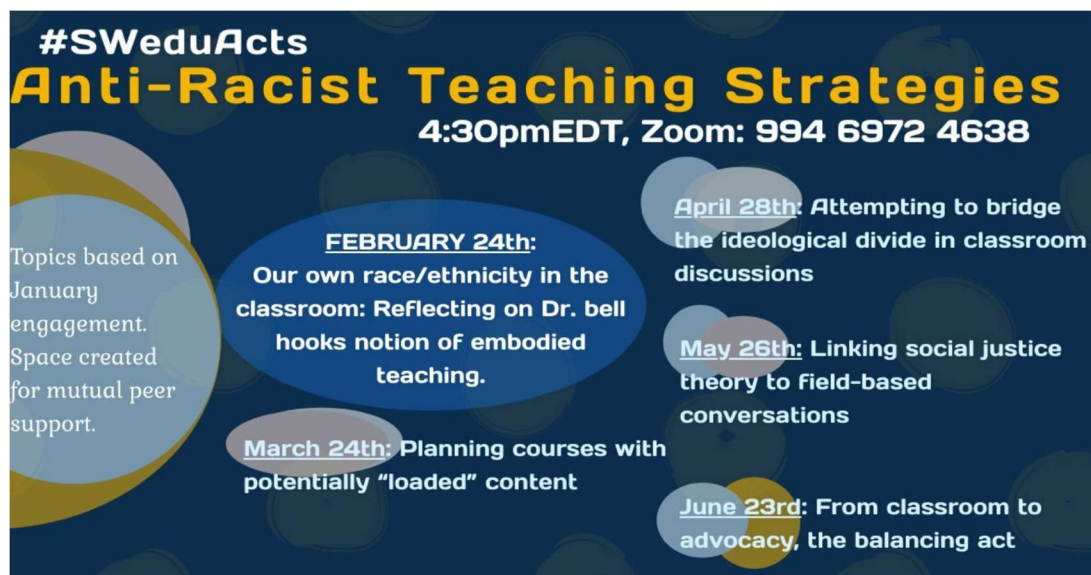
*Community Guidelines*

Participate as you are able.	Take feedback with an open heart and don't be defensive; own your own impact.
Engage with one another respectfully, acknowledging that this is a really difficult and challenging topic for many and also a challenging time in our world.	Prepare to be vulnerable and uncomfortable in your learning ... That's the way learning often happens!
Respect one another's views.	Wrestle with the material.
Maintain confidentiality—leave details in this Zoom room, but take learning with you.	Ask for help!
If you are confused about a comment, ask for clarification, but assume positive intent.	Take care of yourself.

The January meeting goal was to gather input and identify what the attendees wanted to explore around anti-racist teaching strategies for the entire semester. Figure 8 outlines these topics.

**Figure 8**

*Spring 2021 Monthly Topics, Dates, and Login Information*



The verbal report back was noticeably lackluster. As a result, in the debriefing collectively a decision was informed by one member's school implementation of racial and ethnic affinity groups during faculty meetings. This was based on her experience preparing faculty for a teach-in on the Black Lives Matter movement and the benefits of using racial and ethnic affinity groups. Affinity groups are used to call people into a community or group based on a shared aspect of identity (Strong et al., 2017). When talking about race and ethnicity and implicit bias,



for example, it can be helpful for people of specific racial and ethnic groups to talk about this on their own to facilitate openness and depth within the conversation, as instructors' experiences vary widely. The February meeting embraced the new opt-in feature for Zoom breakouts for folks to choose to go into a White or BIPOC group to discuss the monthly topic. The feedback from the February group was that members "didn't know where they would like to go" or that they had difficulty choosing because, for them, "deciding about racial identity included multiple ethnicities." Being responsive to feedback, the March breakout rooms added in an additional room option of a "non-affinity group" so it had the potential to include both White and BIPOC participants who wished to engage in dialogue together. After three meetings, it was clear that there was an unmet need for social work faculty from across universities to come together in virtual spaces to discuss anti-racist pedagogy and our own evolving anti-racist practices personally and professionally.

### **Developing a Sprout**

While our work with #SWEDUACTS is new, the process of building and sustaining educator Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) has a long history in secondary and higher education. Many of the definitions and practices of PLCs come from the secondary school world. Hord (1997) describes a PLC as a community of learners, where teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning, and act on their learning. The evidence supporting PLCs suggests they have the potential to improve student achievement and student learning outcomes (Harris & Jones, 2010). PLCs can also be powerful vehicles for changing instructor behaviors (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Effective PLCs can be characterized by shared values, a focus on student learning, and reflective dialogue and action enquiry (Hord, 1997; Mason, 2003; Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007). Surprisingly, while PLCs are common features of K-12 education, they are less utilized in post-secondary, college, and university environments (Price, 2005).

### **Conclusion**

On a good day, teaching is complex, uncertain, and filled with dilemmas (Clarke, 1995). Often new post-secondary instructors are expected to have excellence (Matheson, 2020) in their teaching with little to no formal training in addition to scholarship and service demands from the institution (Fitzmaurice, 2008). It has been noted that if you are a faculty of color, the challenges the "Ivory Tower" add on—cultural taxation, discrimination, and emotional labor—are compounded (Harris et al., 2017). #SWEDUACTS aims to assist educators in brainstorming about how to engage in anti-racist pedagogy.

After a year (at this time of writing) of holding monthly Zoom engagements, the #SWEDUACTS collaborative feels strongly that there is a need for improving anti-racist pedagogy in social work classrooms. Our self-organizing group has stepped in to fill a gap not met at the university level nor via the Council for Social Work Education. As scholars as well as teachers, we understand and make sense of the world through information dissemination. As such, included with this paper is a collection of discussion questions for consideration in social work classrooms based off of our own work with #SWEDUACTS (see Appendix). We have

proposed a pre-conference workshop using this same model at a large social work education conference. Additionally, two of the authors are crafting a manuscript on the application of a theoretical model for anti-racist pedagogy to online teaching for publication in an academic journal.

Thinking strategically about the future of our collective, we have identified a threefold approach which can contribute to moving social work education towards building and adopting new techniques and approaches for teaching about race, racism, antiracism, privilege, and oppression. At the individual level, we encourage individual faculty and field educators to embrace both their curiosity and their commitment to the difficult and challenging work of reflective and reflexive anti-racist pedagogical practices. As a result, we will continue to hold monthly sessions in which social work educators can self-select into peer support sessions on anti-racist teaching topics. We believe that this same work also needs to be supported at the mezzo or groups level by program coordinators and chairs. For example, social work educators can do better to meet the needs of our students of color, who are often overlooked in these conversations, while the needs of White students are centered in teaching about race, racism, and antiracism (Fulambarker Buehler et al., 2021). We can also build on the one area many BIPOC scholars and community members have called on schools of social work to be responsive to: diversifying the theoretical base from which we craft our entire curriculum—although much more work is needed (e.g., Maglalang & Rao, 2021; Odera et al., 2021; Ortega-Williams & McLane-Davison, 2021; Tillotson et al., 2021). Institutionally, deans and directors can model their commitment to reflective and reflexive practice around anti-racist pedagogy by integrating this content in strategic planning, faculty and staff agendas, and other university settings.

Pointing to one specific lever of change is not the social work way. As systems thinkers who have found a path of self-reflection, we encourage you to think about your own teaching practice, your department's policies and procedures for grading, curricular development, and even admissions. Simmons et al.'s (2022) approach to equity-minded practice in the consideration of grading is one guide to how to do this work, with a nuts-and-bolts description of the work. It is critical to look for where whiteness is centered and how the collective "we" can continue to move towards building more equity and inclusion for all the voices. At the end of the day, we accepted the call to action and brought about change.

### **End Note**

Debates regarding how to write about identity abound. One article that captures the spirit and scope of these debates as related to race is presented by the *Columbia Journalism Review* (Perlman, 2015) and recommends capitalizing Black, but not White. Arguments in favor of capitalizing White are made by Appiah (2020) and the National Association of Black Journalists (2020) who argue for the explicit recognition of White racial identity through capitalization. The language in the present document reflects the wishes of the authors, who choose to capitalize both Black and White when referring to racial identity. When discussing concepts such as whiteness and white supremacy, we do not use capitalization. We encourage the readers of this

work to make their own decisions about language use based on a thoughtful review of the literature and based on their contexts.

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## Appendix

### **February session: Our own race or ethnicity in the classroom: Reflecting on embodied teaching**

Text from Dr. bell hooks for group to reflect on:

*“Professors are in the classroom to offer something of ourselves to the students. The erasure of the body encourages us to think that we are listening to neutral, objective facts, facts that are not particular to who is sharing the information. We are invited to teach information as though it does not emerge from bodies. Significantly, those of us who are trying to critique biases in the classroom have been compelled to return to the body to speak about ourselves as subjects in history. We are all subjects in history. We must return ourselves to a state of embodiment in order to deconstruct the way power has been traditionally orchestrated in the classroom, denying subjectivity to some groups and according it to others. By recognizing subjectivity and the limits of identity, we disrupt that objectification that is so necessary in a culture of domination.”*

bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (p. 139)

Discussion questions:

1. How do I honor my own lived experience as a Black woman when speaking to classes of mainly White students?
2. As a faculty of color, how do I manage heated conversations between students of color and White students?
3. As a White faculty member, how do I manage heated conversations between students of color and White students?
4. As a White faculty, how do I best support students of color in primarily White classrooms so that they can have a voice if they want one, without tokenizing them?

### **March session: Planning courses with potentially “loaded” content:**

Discussion questions:

1. How do you create a safe space in a virtual world?
2. How do you create a safe space when in an asynchronous vs. synchronous model?
3. How do you balance course content with addressing important issues not in the curriculum?
4. In revising courses, how do you create intentional content and not reactionary content?
5. What particular skills and frameworks can be used to help with intensity around certain issues such as race, privilege and oppression. How do I juggle and hold all that while reading faces on the screen?
6. How do you teach students to take abstract concepts and research and apply them to day to day practice, all tied together?
7. How do you manage the isolation of teaching topics and get connected with others teaching?

### **April session: Attempting to bridge the ideological divide in classroom discussions**

Discussion questions:

1. How do you speak to topics from both sides with civility and professionalism? Topics might include flying the confederate flag or one’s position on immigration.

2. If the location of your school is conservative it can be difficult to broach racial justice issues. How do you bridge that within an organization, do you change the curriculum?
3. How can you be critical of social workers' efforts in a reflective way?
4. Have you had success in using social issue debates in the classroom?
5. Students often come to class with good intentions but a lack of skill in terms of how to talk with each other (unless they are agreeing), how do you handle this?

### **May session: Linking social justice theory to field-based conversations**

Discussion questions:

1. How do conversations about race, privilege, oppression, etc. show up in field education?
2. Do people use specific anti-racism-focused assignments or frameworks when covering these issues in field seminars?
3. How can we boost the capacity of our field instructors to be able to talk about race, privilege and oppression with our students given what they are getting in the academic classroom setting?

### **June session: From classroom to advocacy, the balancing act**

Discussion questions:

1. How can you help students find their own voices in this process so they can be agitators, disruptors in the institutions they will work with in the future?
2. How are others navigating any advocacy they do with their administration on their campuses around issues of justice and calling out white supremacy?
3. Students are sometimes energized to change the injustice they see, how can we navigate that organizationally? How much as faculty do you get involved in such efforts?

—

We will kick-off the 2021–2022 academic year with a short brainstorming session to hear about the topics you want us to touch on re: anti-racist pedagogy in social work over the course of this year. We will also explore what it means to be an anti-racist social work educator. We will review definitions of anti-racism and touch on the basics of anti-racist pedagogy in social work education before splitting into breakout groups for discussion.