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Mindful Practices to Interrupt White Supremacy in Higher Education: Opportunities for Educators in Service Learning and Community Engagement

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Mindful Practices to Interrupt White Supremacy in Higher Education:
Opportunities for Educators in Service Learning and Community Engagement
A Thesis Presented for the Master of Arts Degree in Mindfulness Studies

December 2018

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Abstract

This thesis proposes reflective practices for educators to interrupt white supremacy in higher education service learning programs. It is relevant today as higher education institutions look more closely at their history, often upholding or benefitting from slavery, racism, indigenous removal, and other forms of race-based exploitation. Other work on this topic demonstrates the power of reflectivity and mindfulness practices in reducing the impact of racial biases. The heart of this creative thesis is a research-based curriculum for a learning community of educators to develop capacity to incorporate reflectivity, meditation, and liberatory pedagogies into their classrooms. This curriculum is designed for implementation within higher education settings over the course of an academic year, but could be easily tailored for other settings. While studying the impact of this curriculum on implicit biases is beyond the scope of this thesis, future study is warranted in measuring the effectiveness of this curriculum and its components.

Keywords: meditation, white supremacy, white privilege, higher education, service learning

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Assumptions from dominant ideologies are reinforced everywhere, and so are the hardest to look at in ourselves.

~Gillie Bolton

Mindful Practices to Interrupt White Supremacy in Higher Education:

Opportunities for Educators in Service Learning and Community Engagement

Higher education has long operated as a leadership training ground for the privileged few. While much has changed since the days when higher education was legally restricted to the white, male landed gentry, elite colleges and universities remain less racially and economically diverse than the communities that surround them. And as W. Carson Byrd, an assistant professor of pan-African studies at the University of Louisville and author of *Poison in the Ivy: Race Relations and the Reproduction of Inequality on Elite College Campuses*, notes, students at elite institutions embrace a concept of inclusion and diversity that does not threaten the power structures within which they are learning and in which they aspire to spend their careers (Roll, 2017). One way many elite institutions seek to improve their community relationships is through service learning programs, in which educators require students to participate in structured community-based volunteerism as a part of their course work. This well-intentioned effort can have the unintentional effect of perpetuating the elitism and community othering that it seeks to break down.

Historical racial inequality is woven throughout institutions of higher education, yet often rests just out of sight. This distressing history and its current legacy are harder to ignore when directly considered. Byrd identifies the powerful mental gymnastics that allow students in elite

higher education institutions to both value diversity and refuse a structural analysis of injustice and inequality.

Students in these institutions frequently benefit from being around other privileged peers that can blind them to the structural inequalities limiting people's access to the same educational spaces they seem to "naturally" fit in, and how inequality may manifest on these campuses as well to hinder the achievements of their peers. It is a complex puzzle of how students rationalize their position in elite spaces with colorblind conceptions of merit and individualism they hold dearly, and the prospects that racial inequality can often be the result of something other than a person's efforts. (Roll, 2017)

This skew in perspective impacts not only students, but also faculty, staff and other adults on college campuses. As educators, we have a professional responsibility to examine our own conscious and unconscious biases as products of our society, and to interrogate how these pervade classroom environments. (This paper is not meant to exclude others, but rather is geared toward the specific practices of higher education professionals who interact directly with students; certainly, other roles inside and outside higher education are also implicated in youth development, white supremacy, and historical inequality.) Reflective practice is one way to explore the linkages between personal backgrounds, assumptions, and values. Bolton (2010) argues that "reflection and reflexivity are essential for responsible and ethical practice" (p. 5), allowing for an increased capacity to examine the alignment (or lack thereof) between values and practice. This is particularly important for those of us working in service learning fields, as our students are carrying the pedagogy of the classroom out into the community. We have a particular responsibility to interrupt the "pedagogy of whiteness" (Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012) that pervades our field. Regardless of our personal backgrounds, we bring attitudes,

biases, epistemologies, and assumptions to our work; incorporating a deep practice of reflection and reflexivity can help us to continuously examine our identities and positionalities in the same way we expect our students to do. When we can bring self-aware and open-minded subjectivity to our work, we can incorporate it as an asset within our learning environments.

Within this paper, I will begin by explaining some of the language I will be using throughout the paper. I will follow that with a literature review that explores both the history of service learning and recent research into mindfulness and bias. I will follow this with an examination of Brown University's approach to both liberal arts education and service learning and make an argument for the inclusion of reflective practice by educators as a natural extension of the University's open curriculum and response to its own historical relationship to the slave trade; the historical positionality, approach to education, and role within the field demand that Brown's practice exist on the cutting edge of interrupting white supremacy. Finally, I will introduce the learning community curriculum I propose as a starting point for developing the willingness, skills, and aptitudes to interrupt the pedagogy of whiteness.

This project is personally important to me. My own identity and positionality impact my own work and shape my perspective. That perspective has been deeply inscribed by my family's experience, as American Jews, of being invited into whiteness. My grandparents had a highly racialized experience of Jewishness. And while my sister and I have had an experience of complete assimilation into the benefits and privileges of whiteness, the current re-racialization of Jewishness exposes the fragility and flexibility of racial classes. Because Jews were included in the GI Bill, and were eligible for FHA loans, my family and many others had an opportunity to move from working class to professional class in two generations; this was not available to Black veterans of World War II. In a very personal way, my grandfather was able to leave me money

that I used as a down payment for my home: this is intergenerational wealth in action. It feels very important to me to use my unearned privilege to help interrupt the system of racial hierarchy in this country. Working in a higher education institution quite literally founded on the proceeds of the slave trade, I feel called to interrupt passive white supremacy that persists counter to our espoused values. When I read Mitchell, Donahue, and Young-Law's (2012) "Service Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness," I recognized many aspects of the programming at my center. This project is one small and specific way that I can incorporate my academic and professional work with my passion for racial justice.

Notes on Language

Language and terminology are important foundations for shared understanding, and therefore it is useful to begin with some definitions. This paper uses several terms that bear further clarification. I have done my best to incorporate terms that were unclear to me when I began this research project; terms which my literature review revealed had multiple or conflicting definitions; terms which might be further broken down; terms which have a colloquial definition which may not align to the technical use herein; or terms for which a foundational shared understanding are critical for further understanding of the ideas described below. This is not intended to shut down further dialogue on the meanings of the terms included below, or to be a comprehensive dictionary of all terms used throughout the paper, but rather to help provide clarity about my thinking as I write this paper. Readers are invited to disagree or respond to these definitions at will.

Service Learning, Community Engagement, and Engaged Scholarship

Hatcher and Bringle (1997) define service learning as "a type of experiential education in which students participate in service in the community and reflect on their involvement in such a

way as to gain further understanding of course content and of the discipline and its relationship to social needs and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (p. 153). While the terms “service learning,” “community engagement,” and “engaged scholarship” all have nuanced differences and specific importance, for the purpose of this paper I will be using them interchangeably to mean a transdisciplinary learning environment in which academic work and community-based volunteering are combined with intentional reflection for the primary purpose of deepening a student’s understanding of the academic material and community dynamics.

White Supremacy, White Privilege, and Pedagogy of Whiteness

White supremacy has traditionally been understood as active racism, or the conscious belief that white people are superior to those of other races, especially Black people, and should therefore (continue to) dominate society. Okun (2016) posits that White Supremacy Culture is a system of cultural characteristics “used as norms and standards without being pro-actively named or chosen by the group” and, as pervasive cultural touchstones, can be exhibited by people of any background in ways that unintentionally privilege the dominant culture over other cultural understandings. White privilege, then, is the result of the unearned benefits bestowed upon those who are phenotypically white. As a white feminist scholar, McIntosh (1988) defines white privilege as “an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks” (p. 188). In fact, the power structures that uphold and privilege whiteness demand that white people not see them/ourselves as “an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture,” but rather that they/we see only “an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will” (McIntosh, 1988, p. 189). In other words, white

supremacy culture no longer relies upon actively racist white supremacists to exist; the passive acceptance of white privilege and attribution of these benefits to individual efforts rather than structural inequality is sufficient to perpetuate it.

Pedagogy of Whiteness

Many of the cultural characteristics Okun (2016) identifies relate directly to the classroom, including perfectionism and either/or thinking; fear of conflict/politeness; individualism; a right to comfort; objectivity; and power hoarding. These characteristics, when practiced within the academic environment of higher education, contribute to what Mitchell, Donahue, and Young-Law (2012) term a “pedagogy of whiteness.” In particular, this pedagogy entails discomfort with strong feelings, especially anger, demonstrated by students of color; an expectation that discussions of race are loaded and should thus be put off until the end of a semester; and a lack of interruption of obliviousness to structural inequality and other microaggressions within the classroom. I will be using the term “pedagogy of whiteness” throughout this paper, as it gets most closely to the system of normalizing whiteness/dominant culture in the context of community engaged and service learning classrooms. It is important to note that neither White Supremacy Culture nor the pedagogy of whiteness require any overt racial bias to persist; they can be upheld by people who value diversity, equity, and inclusion but who have not yet done the inner work to recognize how the dominant culture has seeped into their praxis.

Educator, Instructor, Professor, Facilitator

Though there are very real differences between the educational roles of faculty and staff in higher education, and in the pedagogical expectations and supports that each receives, for the purposes of this paper I will be using the term “educator” to refer to anyone who has a curricular

or co-curricular role facilitating classroom-based student learning in service learning or community engaged higher education programming. The majority of those holding educator roles within US-based institutions of higher education have themselves been taught in classrooms that uphold the pedagogy of whiteness and mimic the values of the heteropatriarchal white supremacy culture in which we are all marinating on a daily basis. While it may be normal to perceive this as normal, as with white privilege, once the veil is pulled back, we must ask, “Having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?” (McIntosh, 1988, p. 188). This project is an attempt to answer that question.

Mindfulness and Reflection

Jon Kabat-Zinn provides a very useful definition of mindfulness: paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. Thich Nhat Hanh (1992) says that mindfulness “shows us what is happening in our bodies, our emotions, our minds, and in the world”; he also sees it as a process that allows us to avoid harming ourselves and others. In concert, these two definitions summarize my understanding of mindfulness well. However, mindfulness has been overused colloquially, and is often understood as an exclusive practice available only to the privileged few. Mindfulness also often carries the implication of being grounded in Buddhist thought, and thus may not feel accessible to people of other faiths. Thus, throughout this paper I have chosen to focus on reflection, which Merriam-Webster defines as “intentional consideration of a subject matter, idea, or purpose.” It is my belief that, as we learn to reflect deeply on our values, and to move toward our own liberation, the purity of our true purpose will have room to emerge.

“We” and “Our”

Throughout this paper, I have at times chosen to use the term “we” so as to not remove my own responsibility in responding to the historical inequality and the legacy of white supremacy in higher education; a more analytical “one” or colloquial “you” removes me from those being implicated, and runs counter to the pedagogy and praxis of this project. Unfortunately, any time there is an “us” there is by definition a “them”; I have thus tried to use these terms lightly. Again, it is not my intention to be exclusionary to anyone who does not see themselves within the confines of the discussion, but rather to implicate myself as not merely a researcher but also a practitioner with white privilege.

It is my hope that creating a shared understanding through defining these terms will help the context of my research and my intentions with the larger project to be better understood by the reader.

The Story of Service Learning

Service learning, as a distinct field in higher education, traces its origins to community engagement work by historically white higher education institutions in the 1970s. Interest in higher education institutions had reached a critical mass by 1985, when Campus Compact was founded by the presidents of Brown, Georgetown, and Stanford Universities in partnership with the president of the Education Commission of the States. According to the Campus Compact website, these leaders “shared a concern about the ongoing health and strength of democracy in the United States and believed that higher education could be [a] more effective contributor to the sustainability of a democracy with more robust support structures for community engagement” (Campus Compact, n.d.). Since that time, both Brown and Georgetown have identified and taken steps to address their complicity in the slave trade and the continued legacy

of that historical injustice in educational and income inequality that impacts the Black community (Slavery & Justice, 2006; Georgetown University, 2015). Stanford was founded in 1885, 20 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, and thus escapes a direct link to the institution of slavery. However, University founder Amasa Leland Stanford, California Governor, US Senator, and railroad tycoon, supported the exploitation of Chinese workers, and enslavement and genocide of California's many Indian tribes (White, 2016; Briscoe, 2017).

Campus Compact continues to be a field leader in service learning, and continues to encourage deeper campus-community relationships to advance educational equity. As will be shown in the literature review, however, the story they and other field leaders tell about their own origins is itself a pedagogy of whiteness. Many historical educational and community leaders in various communities of color created approaches to community development and engagement that far predated service learning yet remain invisible in the literature of the field. Many contemporary scholars, activists, and practitioners in various communities of color have developed praxis that meets the definition of service learning but are not recognized in the field. This is the legacy of appropriating and obscuring the contributions of communities of color that upholds the normalization and privileging of whiteness in the United States today.

Literature Review

Within this literature review, I will examine the history of service learning and appropriation from and obfuscation of the role of communities of color in the field. I will look into the function of service learning and its pedagogies, including the pedagogy of whiteness. I will explore recent research into the power of mindfulness practices to reduce the impact of racial biases. I will summarize liberatory teaching pedagogies that build reflectivity by helping educators (faculty and staff) and students to articulate learning and make meaning of their

experiences in a colearning classroom environment. This will provide the foundation for the curriculum developed as the heart of this creative thesis project.

Service learning is a community engagement pedagogy that combines “learning goals and community service in ways that can enhance both student growth and the common good” (Bandy, n.d.). There is a robust body of literature on the history of service learning and its origins. As will be demonstrated below, this body largely negates the roles and contributions of people of color in the field, particularly those who directly challenge the power structures that lead to disparities of wealth, power, and access. The erasure of these roots in creating a responsive community education and engagement pedagogy to address social problems is itself a pedagogy of whiteness. In the history of Black education, segregation, and the legacy of slavery led to the development of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities created throughout the former confederacy by the 1890 Morrill Land Grant Expansion, the Freedom Schools during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and political education programming by the Black Panther Party in the 1970s. Chicano and Raza Studies began in the 1970s, an emergence of Mexican-American scholars seeking to connect their work and their lived experiences. The attribution of the emergence of the field of Service Learning to a group of elite college leaders in the 1980s is emblematic of the pedagogy of whiteness described below. Within this framework, educators download knowledge to the empty receptacles of students’ minds. In contrast, liberatory pedagogies described by Friere (1993) and hooks (1994) reposition the educator as a facilitator of colearning, in an environment that requires vulnerability from both the educator and the student. This vulnerability can be supported through practices of mindfulness, reflection, and meditation which help illuminate inner beliefs and encourage integrity between values and practice. Specifically, recent research suggests that the practice of metta meditation may result in

a reduction of racial bias. Ultimately the goal of this project is to provide a useful tool for educators to explore their/our own beliefs, values, and practices, to be able to work with them skillfully in shaping our own work. The literature offers some important guideposts on how to incorporate mediation, reflective writing, and consideration of identity into a liberatory, anti-racist pedagogy.

Historical Roots of Service Learning

Bocci (2015) conducted a historiography of service learning to “explore how these historical narratives represent people of color, what they include and exclude, and how these representations and inclusions/exclusions may reinforce or challenge [w]hite normativity in service-learning” (p. 5). In seeking documents that presented an overall history of the philosophical underpinnings and practices of service learning, and were widely cited and available to those looking to understand service learning, Bocci reviewed one scholarly book, three book chapters, and three web documents that met these criteria (p. 6). Bocci found that two of the documents had no explicit references to people of color; “only three of the seven historical narratives mention individuals of color by name, and they reference far fewer of them than they do [w]hite individuals” (2015, p. 7). In the texts which specifically identified individual leaders of the service learning field, one document identified 33 “pioneers”¹ of service learning, working in the field prior to the 1985 founding of Campus Compact, with only four identifying as people of color; another references 37 scholars, practitioners, and educators “whose work has influenced the development of service-learning’s philosophy and practice,” but only three are “people of color and non-Anglos” (Bocci, p. 7). In the web document chosen as the first Google search

¹ The language of pioneers is inherently a settler/colonial terminology, referring to the first people of Western European ancestry to explore a particular area, usually already populated by indigenous people. It is telling and troubling that the field of service learning chooses this linguistic convention.

result for “history of service learning,” ten of the eleven people named are white (Bocci, p. 6-7). Two additional documents identify 36 leaders in total, none of whom are people of color. The invisibility of contributors of color to the philosophy of pedagogy of service learning would be sufficiently problematic to raise alarms. But Bocci further found that when people of color are referenced, it is through vague allusions to the Civil Rights Movement; alternately, they “are relegated to the role of ‘served’ or ‘needy’ (or are ignored completely)” (p. 8). When this is done in the absence of counter-narratives about either structural inequality or historical (and continuing) systemic racism, it “may reinforce the perception that service-learning is designed and practiced by White people on or on behalf of people of color” (Bocci, 2015, p. 10).

Digging slightly deeper, a rich tradition of pedagogical methods that would meet the definition of service learning are present in communities of color. In the American south, the pedagogy of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities spoke directly to racial inequality, as did the Freedom Schools of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1960s and 1970s, the West Coast development of the field of Chicano/Raza Studies (later broadened to Ethnic Studies) emerged from community engaged scholarship and action research; the Black Panther Party also included community education. Stevens (2003) names several African American leaders who saw education of the Black community as having an imperative component of service and could be considered pioneers of early service learning. The African American Women’s Social Club Movement was organized by middle class, college educated women to “create a viable black community and to reform society” (Stevens, 2003, p. 26) through education, instruction in social values, and caring for the young and old in the lower classes. These Black female social reformers had been instructed while attending college “that

their formal education was an investment in their community as much as themselves” (Stevens, 2003, p. 26).

Anna Julia Cooper, an educational leader in the settlement house movement, “came to understand that to be effective in such a non-traditional educational milieu required learning to speak the language of the people they intend[ed] to teach and demonstrating respect for their social life” (Stevens, 2003, p. 28) as a core learning that precedes formal service learning models. George E. Haynes and W.E.B. DuBois, through their leadership of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, both pioneered early efforts to “form a partnership between [an institution of higher learning] and its surrounding environment to strengthen both systems” (Stevens, 2003, p. 30). Ida B. Wells-Barnett, best known for her advocacy against lynching, was also concerned about the adjustment of “black male migrants to Chicago who too quickly became entrenched in vices and social deviant circles,” as well as “ex-prisoners from Joliet State prison who had little assistance with their reentry into civilian life” (Stevens, 2003, p. 28). Wells-Barnett pioneered a form of action research that was conducted with and for community, gathering data and using it to inform action (Stevens, 2003, p. 28). These leaders are not cited in any of the works Bocci analyzed.

Oden and Casey bring a unique perspective to this analysis, as both were members of the Black Panther Party and both subsequently earned Ph.D.s and worked in service learning programs at Oakes College – U.C. Santa Cruz (2006, p. 3). Oden and Casey (2007) directly map the origins of modern-day service learning onto the consciousness raising and community organizing efforts of the civil rights period from 1954 to 1974. In particular, they identify the Black Panther Party as providing “a vision and praxis for challenging the racial and political order in the United States...by articulating Marxist-Leninist-Maoist approaches to revolutionary

theory and also by creating a community service apparatus that challenged the race, class, and gender oppression in the inner cities across the nation” (Oden & Casey, 2007, p. 5). It is easy to see why this radical foundation would be deeply threatening to powerful institutions including colleges and universities, and why it would be tempting to extract and depoliticize these actions. Oden and Casey (2007) note that “when political consciousness is combined with community service, it not only meets a need in the community, but it also helps the volunteers transform their ideas about their community and the world” (p.11). To truly embrace this political awakening is to turn a critical lens back on our own institutions.

Oden and Casey (2006) argue that the theoretical framework of service learning should include not just volunteerism, but critical thinking skills; the “approach should examine the multiplicity of elements that produce social injustice in the United States” (p. 13). The Black Panther Party required all new recruits and members to participate in political education classes which “introduced theoretical writings that embraced and articulated revolutionary social change,” helping to “frame the intellectual and theoretical basis for the organization’s ideology and programs...as a space for discussion and reflection upon the work of the organization as it related to improving the work with the community” (Oden & Casey, 2006, p. 6). This requirement that engagement with the Party’s community service work be undertaken in conjunction with exploration of text and reflection upon the concepts and connection to the work very closely resembles the framework of service learning in higher education today.

Oden and Casey (2006, 2007) identify the relationship between the Wingspread Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning (Appendix A), and the 1966 Black Panther Party Platform and Program (Appendix B). The Wingspread Principles were “developed in the idyllic setting of Wingspread in the rural Midwest, away from the inner-city

problems of the poor and people of color” (2006, p. 7), funded by the Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wisconsin in 1989 and considered the fundamentals of ethical service learning today. The revolutionary Black Panther Party Platform and Program directly implicates capitalism, colonialism, policing and the carceral state, and demands freedom, liberation, and universal access to basic needs for all Black people. Both documents emphasize the importance of community self-determination of needs, mutual commitment, increasing responsibility, and a commitment to the common good, yet the Wingspread Principles do not racialize their perspective or challenge practitioners to look at the source or root of social inequality or injustice.

In parallel to Bocci and Oden and Casey, Garcia (2007) calls attention to the “little known and largely unacknowledged early history of Chicano/Latino/Raza studies in community service learning” (p. 208). This field of study emerged from field work and action research by Chicano/Latino graduate students in the 1970s who felt the need to connect their personal experiences in community with their scholarship; finding no research on Mexican American women, Garcia had her students in a 1972 UC Berkeley course called *La Chicana* turn to the community to collect data on “labor, education, family life, gender relations, social activism, history of settlement, and Latin American revolutions from the perspectives and experiences of women” (2007, p. 209). This “activist research in service to the community” (Garcia, 2007, p. 209) was supplemented by class discussions, data analysis, and dialogue on findings and emerging issues. Importantly, Garcia notes the embedded reciprocity of contribution to community in return for their stories, reflections, and experiences. This focus on community not only linked the classroom to the community through service conducted by students, but also allowed grounded the research agenda of the classroom and the campus in community-identified

needs (Garcia, 2007, p. 209). Now a full professor teaching in the community service learning model, Garcia (2007) sees the importance of first-hand experience and “a critical bottom-up perspective [as] an effective device in helping students in ethnically mixed classes from various academic majors to see with different eyes from different vantage points” (p. 215).

In summary, while the history of service learning as a formal discipline often leaves out the contributions of leaders of color, the underpinnings of the discipline have a long history in the self-organizing and serving of communities of color. Service learning often focuses on normalizing other communities into the dominant culture, without a critical reflection on the history of those whose points of view are incorporated actively into the pedagogy. This makes sense for white practitioners, who “are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow ‘them’ to be more like ‘us’” (McIntosh, 1988, p. 189). Ignoring this history while appropriating its praxis is part of what leads to the accusation of service learning as a pedagogy of whiteness.

Service Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness

Pedagogy is about valid transmission of knowledge, and evaluation is about valid realization of this knowledge by the recipient (Bernstein, as referenced in Davis, 2003, p. 249). Service learning can be seen through a traditional lens, which emphasizes direct service “without attention to systems of inequality, and a critical approach that is unapologetic in its aim to dismantle structures of injustice” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 50). Traditional programs emphasize direct service, with reflection primarily tied to the impact on the practitioner and recipient of service and not on the systems that impact them. This approach may reinforce a dichotomous view of students (often whiter and wealthier than the communities in which they work) as contributors,

and communities (often browner and less wealthy than college campus populations) as recipients of service. This binary thinking is a characteristic of white supremacy culture (Okun, 2016), and contributes to an othering of the community beyond the campus walls and students who come from it. In contrast, a critical approach draws on the historical roots of injustice and brings a systemic analysis to the work (Mitchell, 2018). A systems approach is critical to moving beyond diversity and into inclusion. Diversity alone does not rectify a systemic imbalance of power; in fact, it “often implies different but equal, while social justice education recognized that some social groups in our society have greater access to social power” (Warren, quoted in Mitchell, 2008, p. 56). This can be quite challenging to the systems in which higher education takes place. After all, as Mitchell asserts, a “critical service-learning pedagogy not only acknowledges the imbalance of power in the service relationship, but *seeks to challenge the imbalance and redistribute power* through the ways that service learning experiences are both planned and implemented” (2008, p. 57, emphasis mine).

Because service learning courses are being largely taught by white faculty and most students in them are “white, middle class, traditional age, college students who are not also juggling jobs, debt, and family responsibilities” (Green, 2003; Butin (2006), quoted in Mitchell, 2012, p. 512), there is a particular concern that service learning programming will continue to perpetuate this dichotomous view of “us” as privileged (racially and economically) college students and “them” as community members in need. This pedagogy of whiteness can be seen clearly in Marullo’s (1998) *Bringing Home Diversity*, where he describes the experience his Georgetown students have in his Race and Ethnic Relations service learning course: “Especially for the more affluent students at a private liberal arts college, but also for university students in general, awareness of the living conditions of the poor is quite an educational experience”

(Marullo, 1998, p. 263). As a white professor in the sociology department of an elite university, Marullo's othering of "the poor" makes invisible the experience of students who come from similar backgrounds to those being served by the program.

Further, in a footnote to this quotation, Marullo elaborates that service learning as a methodology "challenges students to move beyond the initial shock, anger, and guilt reactions they are likely to experience in observing such desperate conditions, which may contribute to sense of hopelessness and futility" (1998, p. 263). The deficit-based, pathologizing language about community and assumption that students will have never experienced a low-income community likely mirrors Marullo's own experience of first contact with community need. Marullo's perspective further erases the experience of those students for whom coming to Georgetown was the shocking border crossing, and who find themselves at home in the community. Mitchell (2008) hypothesized that these dynamics can lead to a lack of classroom participation from students of color and students who have been ostracized by the pedagogy of whiteness. She observes that "students of color...know that while expressing sadness falls within the boundaries of accepted classroom discourse, anger – and particularly anger from a person of color, does not," thus leaving "students of color...unable to express what they are thinking, feeling, and know in a class discussion, and instead, express nothing at all" (p. 623). hooks (1994) brings in an economic class dimension to this classroom dynamic of politeness, noting that students from middle- and upper-class backgrounds "equate loud talk or interruptions with rude and threatening behavior," while "those of us from working-class backgrounds may feel that discussion is deeper and richer if it arouses intense responses" (p. 187). (Note that hooks includes herself as an actor in the classroom with the word "us" – more on that below). Mitchell further identifies this as a pedagogical decision-making process for all students that is based on

“the perceived needs of white students” (2008, p. 619), and which assumes that “students do not always have knowledge from or experience working in communities of color” (2008, p. 619).

This again underscores a sense of not belonging or being othered for students of color and/or students from low income backgrounds.

It is worth noting here that indigenous scholarship is absent from my literature review on racial justice and bias in service learning. My literature review did not uncover any Indigenous/Indian/First Nations perspectives on service learning. This may be because continued existence of settler-colonial culture depends upon the invisibility of Indigenous peoples, as it is difficult for settlers to accept the ways they benefit from the processes of elimination and assimilation of these same people (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 9). Tuck and Yang (2012) identify the depth to which “the invisibilized dynamics of settler colonialism mark the organization, governance, curricula, and assessment of compulsory learning” in the United States (p. 2). For example, even the phrase “pioneers in the field,” used in this paper and throughout the literature on the history of service learning, has a genocidal/colonial underpinning recalling that “for the settler to make a place their home, they must destroy and disappear the Indigenous peoples that live there” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 6). Tuck and Yang assert that, while immigrants accept or agree to work within local epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies, settlers “become the law, supplanting indigenous laws and epistemologies” with their own cultural norms (2012, pp. 6-7). They differentiate between the role of settler, those who migrated of their own volition, and slave, those who were brought against their will – but ultimately the erasure of Indigenous peoples depends on complicity of all non-Indigenous people as colonizers. This invisibility means that even social justice activists using a liberation framework get caught up in the settler mindset: the language of the Occupy movement is understandably critiqued as Indigenous people

are currently living under a sustained occupation, and the idea of a redistribution of wealth is a reinforcement of a settler mindset that “camouflages how much of that wealth is *land*, Native land” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 23). Their call for decolonization of indigenous lands and all natural resources is not metaphorical; they are literally calling for a repatriation of “*all* of the land, and not just symbolically” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 7). This frames service learning as a continued occupation and erasure of Indigenous sovereignty. As Tuck and Yang note, decolonizing is always troubling.

Liberatory Pedagogies

Davis (2003) posits that an education which “lacks relevance to the students’ lives and to their experience outside the school...ultimately causes them to reject the education offered” (p. 246). Relevance includes not only the usefulness of the material taught, but also the spirit in which it is offered. Are students in the classroom considered to be subjects, or objects? Is their life experience considered a valid way of knowing, or is the dynamic that the instructor holds all knowledge and the students are merely receptacles? Freire (1993) terms the process wherein knowledge is “a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” as the banking concept of education (p. 53). This oppressive ideology undergirds the western education system, and is what most of us who work in higher education have ourselves been marinating in for many years. hooks (1994) recognizes that this has a deep impact on our own expectations and understanding of what it means to serve as an educator: “Professors cannot empower students to embrace diversities of experience, standpoint, behavior, or style if our training has disempowered us, socialized us to cope effectively only with a single mode of interaction based on middle class values” (hooks, 1994, p. 187). Liberatory pedagogies are a form of healing the wounds caused by the trauma of being

rendered invisible, having experiences negated, and being presented with objectivity as the highest aspiration of most disciplines when it is so obvious that each individual's experiences and cultural expectations shape our perspectives. These experiences, identities, and positionalities shape even the questions we ask and that which we accept as given.

It makes sense that there is resistance to liberatory, democratic pedagogies even in higher education institutions that are actively talking the talk of diversity and inclusion. Change is hard, and in a field where becoming tenured can take 10 years, after 10 years of postsecondary education, the demographics of students are changing far more rapidly than the demographics of tenured professors. And all this time in the academy leaves deep impressions upon us. As hooks (1994) states:

...most of us were taught in classrooms where styles of teachings reflected the notion of a single norm of thought and experience, which we were encouraged to believe was universal. This has been just as true for nonwhite teachers as for white teachers. Most of us learned to teach emulating this model. As a consequence, many teachers are disturbed by the political implications of a multicultural education because they fear losing control in a classroom where there is no one way to approach a subject – only multiple ways and multiple references. (pp. 35-36)

Additionally, for many instructors in higher education, the craft of teaching is secondary to our own research and career aspirations. Pedagogy and practice are an afterthought; at many colleges and universities teaching – especially undergraduate courses – is a burdensome task to be foisted off to graduate students and teaching assistants.

College instructors are provided remarkably little support on effective strategies for teaching and learning, and are “regrettably ignorant about the choice and use of pedagogical

methods which are suitable for an education that relies more and more on higher level cognition and interpersonal abilities” (Cowan (1988) as quoted in Davis, 2003, p. 249). hooks (1994) states that in her own educational experience, “it was rare – absolutely, astonishingly rare – to encounter professors who were deeply committed to progressive pedagogical practices” (p. 17), instead finding many professors more interested in wielding power over the fiefdom of their classroom. Calls for more diversity and inclusion in the choice of sources and authors can be seen as a challenge to the veracity of the Western canon, which currently heavily features what hooks (1994) terms “great white men” (p. 37). This can be very destabilizing for those who deeply identify with the material they have based their long careers upon. In attempting to bring a transformative pedagogy to Oberlin College, hooks (1994) found that not just educators but also administrators “were more disturbed by the overt recognition of the role our political perspectives play in shaping pedagogy than by their passive acceptance of ways of teaching and learning that reflect biases, particularly a white supremacist standpoint” (p. 37). Turning this lens onto our own practice can dramatically weaken our deepest epistemologies, calling the idea of objectivity itself into question and thereby implicating all that we assume. The opportunity that this subversion presents is a space for an alternative, more inclusive epistemology and pedagogy.

As an alternative, Freire and hooks propose a liberatory pedagogy that respects life experience, multiple ways of knowing and seeing, and the value of conflict. Freire (1993) defines liberation as “a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (p. 60). A liberatory classroom is a cocreative space shared by an instructor and the students, where both are bringing their own contributions and both are learning together. This is a far more vulnerable space than most educators are used to, and a far more responsible space than most students have been asked to step into. This practice of freedom can be a transformative

and healing experience for all who choose to take it on. hooks (1994) posits that “[a]ny classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process. *That empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks*” (p. 21, emphasis mine). It also requires more facilitation and coaching skills from instructors, as they are no longer simply all-knowing authorities downloading their knowledge to the empty vessels of their students. Additionally, when the illusion of objectivity is shed, it becomes obvious that educators are bringing their own conscious and unconscious identities, experiences, assumptions, and biases into the classroom. Fortunately, there are practices that can help educators to become more aware and explicit about their own positionalities and expectations, and to hold their beliefs more lightly.

Mindfulness and Bias Reduction

A bias or a prejudice is a form of a mental shortcut, where one thing is linked to, or “coupled” with, another. This process creates an automatic association between two things that allows the brain to process repeated information more quickly. In the case of racial bias, this is an association of particular racial and ethnic groups with negative traits or emotions. Burgess, Beach, and Saha (2017) describe unconscious biases as “‘habits of mind’, learned over time through repeated personal experiences and cultural socialization, which can be activated unintentionally, often outside one’s awareness, and are difficult to control” (p. 373). Importantly these unconscious or implicit biases can exist counter to espoused and meaningful values of diversity or multicultural inclusion, and regardless of individual background. I attended the National Civic League 2018 Conference on Local Governance on June 22, 2018 in Denver, Colorado, where in her welcoming remarks, Dr. Jandel Allen-Davis, a Black female OBGYN now working for Kaiser Permanente, unexpectedly went off script and shared a story about

working for Indian Health Services and making a bias-based judgment of a patient at the end of a long day. She disclosed that she noticed herself thinking, “don’t these people know how to take care of themselves any better?” She expressed horror at the realization that that inner verbalization, made in a moment of exhaustion, represented a belief framework that had been implicitly impacting her patient care all along. Becoming consciously aware of this group-based assumption, she began to engage in the work to consciously unravel this association. By definition, the practice of mindfulness, or what Jon Kabat-Zinn calls “paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally,” interrupts these automatic linkages. And indeed, a growing body of research demonstrates the effectiveness of a wide variety of mindfulness practices in reducing racial bias.

Based on my review of the literature and my own experience as a learner, I have concluded that there are two different ways to go about reducing the impact of implicit bias. The first is to seek ways to unlink the associations that have formed as mental habits. This unlinking, termed decoupling, is “a process by which the normative relationships between an internal experience and another internal experience (e.g. between thoughts and feelings or between feelings and urges) or between an internal experience and overt behavior (e.g. negative affect and smoking) are reduced, eliminated, or altered through changes in the context in which they occur (Levin, Luoma & Haeger, 2015, p. 871). While Levin et al. (2015) found a number of promising indicators of the impact of mindfulness practices on decoupling, they offered several cautions: that the mechanism of decoupling is not identified by most studies; that the research in this emerging field lacks a common language and thus replication studies are few and far between; and that many studies could better be considered promising findings rather than statistically powerful results, due to small sample sizes and mild to moderate findings. A further research

challenge that Levin et al. don't identify is the conflation of multiple mechanisms of meditation and mindfulness practice under one large umbrella of "acceptance and mindfulness-based therapies" (Levin et al., 2015, p. 871). However, one fairly consistent finding, despite the methodological challenges, is that "the effect of internal experience on overt behavior is not fixed...but rather is governed by context" (p. 872). There are promising indicators that the practice of lovingkindness meditation, discussed below, also has an impact on implicit bias (Kang, Gray, & Dovidio, 2014 and 2015; Stell & Farsides, 2015).

The second way to reduce the impact of implicit bias is to "give providers strategies and skills to prevent unconscious attitudes and stereotypes from influencing the course and outcomes of clinical encounters in negative ways" (Burgess, van Ryn, Dovidio, & Saha, 2007, p. 882). Since bias is a group-based assumption not based on specific experience with the individual with whom one is interacting, the process involves both becoming aware of biases and assumptions, and cultivating curiosity about the individual. This process has been studied in medical and mental health providers, where the deleterious impact of implicit bias on care quality and patient outcomes has begun to be acknowledged (Burgess et al., 2007, 2017). Burgess et al. (2017) note that bias-based assumptions are more likely in situations that cognitively tax a provider, for instance stress, time pressure, fatigue, and competing demands; thus, mindfulness practices may help both to decouple formative biases and to help providers manage these taxing situations without the same cognitive impacts. In a therapeutic setting, Gatzambide (2012) proposes that mindfulness promotes an "epistemological humility regarding one's perspective" (p. 185) that helps to heal culture-related ruptures in the relationships between therapists and patients. In a 2011 meta-analysis, Safran et al. found evidence that "therapist training and supervision in rupture resolution had a statistically significant contribution to patient improvement" (as quoted

in Gatzambide, 2012, p. 185). From the research, Gatzambide (2012) concludes that when relationship-harming incidents arising from cultural misunderstandings occur, a well-trained therapist will be able to “disclose a lack of knowledge and invite the patient to provide corrective feedback” (p. 186). Questions that providers might ask themselves to bring themselves back to mindful attention are, “What is informing my decision? What am I feeling? Have I seen this before in myself? What assumptions am I making?” (Teal, Gill, Green & Crandall, 2012, p. 85).

Though the clinical relationship differs from the classroom relationship in several important ways, both have traditional power dynamics that inhibit a vulnerable interconnectedness; this sort of response to cultural rupture could be used to great effect in a classroom employing a liberatory colearning model. Attorney and Buddhist practitioner Rhonda Magee (2018) offers a series of “colorinsight practices” which, rather than striving for a falsely colorblind world, invites in an awareness of individual differences and curiosity about individual experiences. One of Magee’s practices is an eye-gazing technique that involves sustained eye contact while repeating silently, “just like me, this person has loved and been loved; just like me, this person has known pain and loss” (2018, sidebar). This practice is designed to break down the social distance between people as part of racialized group membership, and to bring two individuals of any background back into contact with one another as individuals. I have had an opportunity to engage in this practice in several diverse groups of colleagues and classmates who were not well known to each other, and each time the depth of emotion and compassion arising from this practice has been significant.

One widely used tool to test the impact of meditation on implicit bias is the Implicit Association Test (IAT), which is a computer-based measure of unconscious bias and negative association (Burgess et al, 2017; Levin et al, 2015; Kang, et al., 2014 & 2015; Lueke & Gibson,

2015). When I initially embarked upon this project, I did not expect to incorporate any meditation practice into my curriculum. However, my research uncovered a promising link between metta, or lovingkindness, meditation, and bias reduction as demonstrated in the IAT. Metta “aims to self-regulate an affective state of unconditional kindness toward the self and others” (Stell & Farsides, 2015, p. 141). This practice includes the repetition of phrases like “may I/you/all beings be happy and healthy” while visualizing a target of meditation (Salzberg, as quoted in Stell & Farsides, 2015, p. 141). Kang, Gray, and Dovidio (2014) found that after six weekly group practice sessions supported by home practice, participants had a meaningful increase in their positive attitudes toward themselves and others based on the Self-Other Four Immeasurables Scale as compared to a waitlist control who merely studied the concepts of lovingkindness but were instructed not to practice. Kang et al. followed this positive indicator with a study looking at the impact of a similar six-week practice group on stigmatized groups: Blacks and homeless people (2015, p. 1307). Interestingly the practice group “learned to extend lovingkindness to all beings without explicitly invoking specific social groups as target [sic] for the loving feelings” (Kang et al., 2015, p. 1308). This time using the IAT, the team found a significant impact on implicit biases toward the target groups. Interestingly, findings showed that lovingkindness practice had a more significant impact on implicit bias than on explicit attitudes, suggesting that indeed this meditation practice decreases automatic activation in the brain. Stell and Farsides (2016) found a similar impact on IAT results from only 7 minutes of loving-kindness meditation focused on a target racial group, though similar results were not found for a different racial group not targeted. None of the studies looked at the persistence of impact on implicit associations over time. Still, these are promising indicators for the inclusion of a

lovingkindness practice in any program designed to reduce the impact of bias on clients, patients, or students.

Reflection as Pedagogy

Reflection is a key component of any service learning or community engagement curriculum. Bolton (2010) suggests that reflexivity and reflection are “the pearl grit in the oyster of practice and education” (p. 9). In other words, the process of reflecting is what allows students and educators alike to make *meaning* from *information*. Freire (1993) insisted that reflection was a necessary precursor for systemic shifts, as deep reflection on injustice mandates action. Since service learning is a form of learning by doing, the philosophy that undergirds it traces its roots back to educational philosopher John Dewey, who at the turn of the last century noted that hands-on activities were an important part of keeping students “alert and active” while at school, and gave them a sense of self-efficacy that made them better contributors to society (1907, p. 26-27). This recognition of the importance of direct experience in making meaning led to the development of Kolb’s experiential learning cycle: (1) concrete experience, (2) reflective observation; (3) abstract conceptualization, and (4) active experimentation (Hatcher & Bringle, p 153; Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 194). Kolb argues that learning is “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (as cited in Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 194). Reflection is one mechanism within which this transformation may occur. However, rather than thinking of this process as a repetitive cycle, or a Möbius strip (Bolton, 2018, p. 57), I prefer to think of reflection like a spiral; each time one completes a cycle, one is on new ground with a different starting and ending point. In my personal experience, the process of incorporating reflection into my practice is a continuous process of learning and learning about my own learning.

Hatcher and Bringle (1997) define reflection as “the intentional consideration of an experience in light of particular learning objectives” (p. 153). This purposefulness differentiates reflection from rumination, and parallels Kabat-Zinn’s definition of mindfulness; in this regard, reflection and mindfulness go hand in hand. Effective reflection for learning is a distinct pedagogical tool, and many educators have neither received guidance in how to craft intentional reflective activities nor participated in them (Hatcher & Bringle, p. 154; hooks, 1994). Asking educators to incorporate reflective practice requires providing pedagogical support; and getting buy-in to both the learning and the incorporation. And to lead effective reflection, educators should practice it as well. Since higher education widely ascribes to an objectification of instructors as solely intellectual beings, “denigrat[ing] notions of wholeness and...encouraging teachers and students to see no connection between life practices, habits of being, and the roles of professors” (hooks, 1994, p. 16). Loughran (2002) asserts that many other professions have accepted that practitioners must deepen their own awareness about how they do their work to maintain an ethical practice (p. 34). Loughran further notes that reflection “is important in sustaining one’s professional health and competence and that the ability to exercise professional judgement is in fact informed through reflection on practice (Day, 1999)” (2002, p. 34).

As one of Bolton’s (2018) students noted, reflection “is not a cosy process of quiet contemplation. It is an active, dynamic, often threatening process which demands total involvement of self and a commitment to action. In reflective practice there is nowhere to hide” (p. 42). It is this discomfort and call to moral imperatives that creates such resistance to reflection; it is uncomfortable to be implicated in that which becomes visible upon reflection. Friere (1993) and hooks (1994) both assert that reflection is a critical process of deepening awareness of injustice and inequity, after which one feels a call to engage in addressing it. Bolton

(2010) further asserts that most of our cultural systems rely upon people behaving as unquestioning cogs in a machine, and that “reflective practice and reflexivity are transgressive of stable controlling orders; they lead cogs to decide to change shape, change place, even reconfigure whole systems” (p. 7). For all of their lofty values and ideals, higher education institutions (and we who exist within them) are quite dependent on the dominant paradigm. To encourage practices that challenge the structures of the systems, and perhaps even the systems themselves, is a frightening prospect. Bleakley (2000) expresses concern that reflection will turn practitioners into self-marveling narcissists, distracted from “noticing the world around us and the needs of others, which is an outward attention, not an introspective taxis” (p. 411). He asserts that self-reflection occurs naturally and cannot be fabricated in a meaningful way through self-inquiry (Bleakley, 2000). However, this argument does not differentiate between purpose-driven reflection and aimless rumination, and gives very little credence to the human capacity to entertain differing perspectives. There is a pedagogical framework to effective reflection that helps limit the potential for this slide into ineffective paralysis in the world of ideas.

To lead effective reflective activities, one must invest in one’s own learning as both a participant and a practitioner. Indeed, learning to teach something new is itself a form of experiential learning which is improved by engaging in reflection. With all of this evidence about its effectiveness and impact, it may seem surprising that reflection isn’t more widely used by educators. Cowan and Westwood (2006) found promising evidence that university educators using reflective journals similar to those they required of their students had improved capacity to organize and support the reflection of their students. Effective reflection exercises have (at least) five components: linkage between learning objectives and experience; guidance about expectations and methodology; regular scheduling; an invitation for feedback and assessment

(beyond mere grading); and opportunities to explore, clarify, and refine values (Hatcher & Bringle, 1997). Hatcher and Bringle (1997) hypothesize that effective reflection will not only deepen student learning, but will also help faculty find greater professional satisfaction and a more engaging and dynamic teaching style. While they don't expressly recommend that faculty engage in similar reflection themselves, they do note that when educators "thoughtfully ponder their teaching, they will become reflective practitioners (Schon 1982) and identify additional ways that their discipline and their expertise can address the needs of society (Boyer 1994)" (Hatcher & Bringle, 1997, p. 157). As educators deepen their/our own reflective practice, they/we will find that the positive impacts parallel those enjoyed by our students, who often incorporate reflective practices learned in service learning programs into their own professional work (Mitchell et al., 2015). A long-term practice of reflection allows people to know themselves and to understand their identity and positionality in the communities they inhabit; over time "they recognize the moral and ethical responsibility they have to use that capacity for the good of society (Colby & Damon, 2010; Hatcher, 1997; Sullivan, 1988, 2005)" (Mitchell et al., 2015). It is the purpose of effective reflection to illuminate the inner workings of one's mind, and thus to light the path toward effective, values-driven action.

In summary, while the story that the widely accepted leaders of the field of service learning attribute their origin to the growth of volunteerism at elite colleges and universities, this origin story excludes the contributions of many scholars and leaders of color. This is one aspect of a pedagogy of whiteness that pervades the fields of service learning and community scholarship, which often present students as contributors or subjects and community members as recipients or objects. This pedagogical approach further excludes those students who feel more resonance with the communities they are from than with those in which they find themselves in

the college environment, and fails to take the complexity of the lives of today's college students into account. Much of this pedagogical approach can be attributed to the academic experiences of today's educators, who were taught with a very rigid framework that did not invite vulnerability, curiosity, or critique. Research has demonstrated that many people carry implicit biases, and that mindfulness and lovingkindness meditation have some power to reduce these biases. Further, incorporating reflective practices into daily living helps educators to remain conscious of their/our own beliefs, experiences, and values, and to notice when their/our behavior is out of alignment with their/our values. In concert, these practices help bolster a liberatory approach to education that helps each participant work toward their best actualized self.

Brown as Case Study

While the entire democratic and capitalist experiment of the United States is deeply tied to the slave trade, that tie is heightened in Rhode Island. Brown University's 2006 Slavery and Justice Report helped reveal the depth of these roots, as well as the University's specific responsibility. Rhode Island traded directly with the Caribbean slave colonies, "operating, in essence, as the commissary of the Atlantic plantation complex" (Slavery and Justice Report, 2006, p. 11). The report looks at the early objections to the taxation of sugar and molasses in the colonies. The Rhode Island Remonstrance, a rejection of taxation without representation, was delivered to the King personally by Rhode Island's governor Stephen Hopkins. This document "encapsulated the great paradox of American history, avowing principles of liberty and self-government while simultaneously defending Americans' right to profit from slavery and the slave trade" (Report, p. 12). This paradox carried forward to Brown's founding as the College of Rhode Island in 1764. University Hall, the oldest building on the campus, was built with slave

labor; the Brown brothers, for whom the University is named, “were not major slave traders, but they were not strangers to the business either” (Report, p. 15). They undertook multiple African voyages for the purpose of slave trading, including a disastrous and deadly voyage of the *Sally* which led three of the Brown brothers to withdraw from the direct slave trade for economic, rather than moral, reasons. As an institution founded to educate the elite, the early leaders of the University were slave owners; much of the funding that endowed the University can be directly or indirectly traced to the slave trade (Report, p. 14).

Following the 2006 Slavery and Justice Report, the University has taken on a greater commitment to diffusing diversity and inclusion practices throughout all its divisions. These are measured through Departmental Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans (DDIAPs), documents developed by each department to outline its individual work toward a more equitable and inclusive environment. Brown University’s Swearer Center for Public Service is named for former University President Howard R. Swearer, who was one of the founders of Campus Compact and who envisioned service learning at the heart of the University’s approach to liberal learning. Unusual in campus structure, the Swearer Center is located under the Dean of the College, the academic side of the organization, rather than in Student Life or Student Affairs, the support and activity side of the organization. Accordingly, the Swearer Center has its own DDIAP and has taken the process of diversity in staff hiring and incorporating of student voice as key factors in creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

While Brown and other colonial colleges have taken steps to acknowledge their complicity in the slave trade, these approaches have been administrative and relate directly to organizational responsibility. In Brown’s case, the implementation of the DDIAPs guide such activities as equity and inclusion in hiring and promotion. But these activities leave a tremendous

hole in the institutional pedagogy. Though the student demographics have diversified, the faculty and staff demographics have not kept up; they don't have the natural turnover of the students. This means that the faculty are whiter and more class privileged than the students they are teaching. Thus, the assumptions they make about what is "normal," what is "safe," and what is "transgressive" or "different" are shaped by their personal experiences. This project is the result of a specific intention to resist the "pedagogy of whiteness" I recognized within my own center and experiences within the University, but which can be extended beyond its walls. It is an attempt to harness the various facets of identity held by the instructor and to surface the ontologies that underlie pedagogy. What do we believe about where knowledge originates and how it flows? What constitutes expertise? Who best knows what a community needs? What expectations do we have for thriving, or successful, communities?

The Learning Community Curriculum

In asking myself these questions, I began to explore the idea of developing a learning community of self-reflection and collective practice to make these invisible assumptions visible. I found a deep desire among my colleagues to learn more; I found a hunger with colleagues at other colleges and universities to address these complex questions. I believe there is a power in reflectivity that can support pedagogical practice in resistance to the organizational norm. And I know from personal experience that learning communities provide both accountability and solidarity in learning and practicing new skills. This project is a resistance to the pervasiveness of white supremacy culture, which can be upheld even by well-meaning people without intentional prejudice. It is a resistance to the normalization of an oppressive, dominating relationship between instructors and students. It is a hopeful aspiration that intentional incorporation of reading, discussion, meditation, and reflective writing practice can help shift the

internal dynamics that support privilege and bias and help build the skills for the uncomfortable work of learning. Finally, it is a wish for liberation, manifested through learning in community.

In conclusion, the attached curriculum was deeply influenced by the literature in its approach to encouraging reflection and reflectivity about identity, privilege, oppression, culture, and how that influences our pedagogy. This curriculum has also been influenced in both structure and content by a generous team of multiethnic scholars and colleagues who have generously provided feedback and helped me to consider both the ambitious and the practical, and have helped to limit the blind spots and harm caused by my own experience of white privilege. The curriculum takes the form of a facilitator's guide for a year-long learning community that includes an orientation, a series of six workshops and a self-study module for the winter break. It is designed to be useful for a diverse group, but also to be flexible enough to be tailored. Obviously 10 hours of in-person learning is not enough to counter a lifetime of messaging, so this curriculum is more of a buffet sampler on strategies and perspectives that could be brought into the classroom, as well as an opportunity to build relationships with colleagues with similar interests.

The curriculum does not go into theoretical background about service learning or attempt to correct the knowledge base underlying assumptions about the field. Rather it is designed to be an experiential process of incorporating meditation, reflective writing, and activities that help highlight the complexities of intersecting identities and experiences within each of us. The activities and practices modeled by the curriculum could be incorporated into a classroom within any discipline or subject matter. They set the foundation for developing a liberatory classroom where the instructor role shifts from educator as information downloader to facilitator as colearner. It also aspires to build skills for directly addressing other students' microaggressions

by incorporating an anti-oppression framework. While we are all learning and growing throughout our lifetimes, sometimes in our professional roles we allow our practice to become calcified. This curriculum tries to remind us to bring curiosity and care to every moment, and to provide some tools for using that awareness to support total liberation.

Interrupting Privilege in the Service Learning and Engaged Scholarship Classroom:**A facilitator's guide for a reflective learning community to undermine white supremacy**

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This curriculum owes a particular debt of gratitude to the scholarship of Tania Mitchell, David Donohue, and Courtney Young-Law, whose article "Service Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness" inspired this thesis project. It also draws heavily on the liberatory pedagogy of bell hooks, and the reflective practices of Gillie Bolton.

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Introduction to the Facilitator's Guide [\[top\]](#)

This facilitator's guide will provide the material to help recruit and guide a learning community of higher education professionals through an academic year of workshops, self-study, and small group activities, designed to recognize and interrupt white supremacy in the field of higher education service learning. This curriculum was designed to fill a gap in the literature: an understanding of how the identities, ontologies, and epistemologies of the educator impacts the implicit pedagogy of the classroom.

The foundation of this work is reflective practice by the educators, in community, to more deeply recognize the relationship between identity and pedagogy and to build liberatory co-learning practices into the engaged service learning classroom.

The learning community will participate in an 8-part workshop series, designed with an orientation and three workshops in the fall semester, a self-study module over the winter break, and three workshops and a celebration in the spring semester. This calendar may be tailored or adapted as needed, particularly for those working outside an academic environment. Ideally the community will have at least 8 and no more than 14 participants, to allow for the development of trust and vulnerability. It is designed to be flexible in its makeup but targeted toward use with a multiethnic group that has different experiences around race and racism. It could easily be tailored to a group that shares a facet of racial or ethnic identity. Because the focus of this learning community is on interrupting white supremacy within higher education, particular attention should be paid to the racial dynamics, identities, and experiences of the group. The facilitator(s) should have experience working with racially diverse groups in race-conscious ways, and with addressing privilege, especially white privilege, in group dynamics. They should have specific experience addressing resistance by white-identified people to making white privilege and white supremacy visible. The facilitator(s) should read through the full curriculum, and should engage with the activities themselves (either with the group or on their own) to be able to represent the pedagogical intent of a colearning environment.

This curriculum was developed by a person who, among other things, experiences privilege as a white, highly educated, and middle-class person, and experiences oppression as a queer, female, anti-Zionist Jew. These perspectives may leave blind spots, which a team of advisors and readers have helped to minimize. There may be other activities or readings that you know that would enhance the curriculum; you may find that some of the activities fall flat, or that tweaks help them to go better. If you have feedback upon implementation, please send it to jfsteinfeld@gmail.com.

Consider setting up a virtual space for the learning community where resources and discussions can be shared; many campuses have systems like Canvas or Blackboard that can be used to organize materials and share digital resources. The learning community is an introduction to many different types of resources and practices that incorporate mindfulness, self-reflection, and learning; participants may also have resources to share that may help deepen the learning of the group. This is also a good way to continue the discussion beyond the workshops, and to level the dynamics between the facilitator and the participants.

Notes on Language [\[top\]](#)

Language and terminology are important foundations for shared understanding, and therefore it is useful to begin with some definitions. This curriculum uses several terms that bear further clarification. I have done my best to incorporate terms that were unclear to me when I began this project; terms which my literature review revealed had multiple or conflicting definitions; terms which might be further broken down; terms which have a colloquial definition which may not align to the technical use herein; or terms for which a foundational shared understanding is critical for further understanding of the ideas described below. This is not intended to shut down further dialogue on the meanings of the terms included below, but rather to help provide clarity about my thinking as I developed this curriculum. Users are invited to disagree or respond to these definitions at will.

Service Learning, Community Engagement, and Engaged Scholarship

Hatcher and Bringle (1997) define service learning as “a type of experiential education in which students participate in service in the community and reflect on their involvement in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content and of the discipline and its relationship to social needs and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (p. 153). While the terms “service learning”, “community engagement” and “engaged scholarship” all have nuanced differences and specific importance, in this curriculum they will be used interchangeably to mean a *transdisciplinary learning environment in which academic work and community-based volunteering are combined with intentional reflection for the primary purpose of deepening a student’s understanding of the academic material and community dynamics.*

White Supremacy and White Privilege

White supremacy has traditionally been understood as active racism, or the conscious belief that white people are superior to those of other races, especially Black people, and should therefore (continue to) dominate society. Okun (2016) posits that White Supremacy Culture is a system of cultural characteristics “used as norms and standards without being pro-actively named or chosen by the group” and, as pervasive cultural touchstones, can be exhibited by people of any background in ways that unintentionally privilege the dominant culture over other cultural understandings. White privilege, then, is the result of the unearned benefits bestowed upon those who are phenotypically white. As a white feminist scholar, McIntosh (1988) defines white privilege as “an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks” (p. 188). In fact, the power structures that uphold and privilege whiteness demand that white people not see them/ourselves as “an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture”, but rather that they/we see only “an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will” (McIntosh, 1988, p. 189). In other words, white supremacy culture no longer relies upon actively racist white supremacists to exist; the passive

acceptance of white privilege and attribution of these benefits to individualism rather than structural inequality is sufficient to perpetuate it.

Pedagogy of Whiteness

Many of the cultural characteristics Okun (2016) identifies in White Supremacy Culture relate directly to the classroom, including perfectionism and either/or thinking; fear of conflict/politeness; individualism; a right to comfort; and objectivity, and power hoarding. These characteristics, when practiced within the academic environment of higher education, contribute to what Mitchell, Donahue, and Young-Law (2012) term a “pedagogy of whiteness.” In particular, this pedagogy entails discomfort with strong feelings, especially anger, demonstrated by students of color; an expectation that discussions of race are loaded and should thus be put off until the end of a semester; and a lack of interruption of obliviousness to structural inequality and other microaggressions within the classroom. I will be primarily using the term “pedagogy of whiteness,” as it gets most closely to the system of normalizing whiteness/dominant culture in the context of community engaged and service learning classrooms. *It is important to note that neither White Supremacy Culture nor the pedagogy of whiteness require white people or any overt racial bias to persist; they can be upheld by people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds who value diversity, equity, and inclusion but who have not yet done the inner work to recognize how the dominant culture has seeped into their praxis.*

Educator, Instructor, Professor, Facilitator

Though there are very real differences between the educational roles of faculty and staff in higher education, and in the pedagogical expectations and supports that each receives, I will be using the term “educator” to refer to anyone who has a curricular or co-curricular role facilitating classroom-based student learning in service learning or community engaged higher education programming. The majority of those holding educator roles within US-based institutions of higher education have themselves been taught in classrooms that uphold the pedagogy of whiteness and mimic the values of the heteropatriarchal white supremacy culture in which we are all marinating on a daily basis. While it may be normal to perceive this as normal, as with white privilege, once the veil is pulled back, we must ask, “‘Having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?’” (McIntosh, 1988, p. 188). This project is an attempt to answer that question.

Mindfulness and Reflection

Jon Kabat-Zinn provides a very useful definition of mindfulness: paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. Thich Nhat Hanh (1992) says that mindfulness “shows us what is happening in our bodies, our emotions, our minds, and in the world”; he also sees it as a process that allows us to avoid harming ourselves and others. In concert, these two definitions summarize my understanding of mindfulness well. However, mindfulness has been overused colloquially, and is often understood as an exclusive practice

available only to the privileged few. Mindfulness also often carries the implication of being grounded in Buddhist thought, and thus may not feel accessible to people of other faiths. Thus, throughout this paper I have chosen to focus on reflection, which Merriam-Webster defines as “intentional consideration of a subject matter, idea, or purpose.” As I believe in the potential for the liberation of all beings, I believe that the journey of mindful reflection will bring all of us closer to our core and into deeper alignment with life-affirmation.

“We” and “Our”

Throughout this paper, I have at times chosen to use the term “we” to recognize my own responsibility in responding to the historical inequality and the legacy of white supremacy in higher education. Unfortunately, any time there is an “us” there is by definition a “them”; I have thus tried to use these terms lightly. Again, it is not my intention to be exclusionary to anyone who does not see themselves within the confines of the discussion, but rather to implicate myself as not merely a researcher but also a practitioner with white privilege, and to position the facilitator as a colearner within the classroom.

Complete List of Post-Workshop Assignments [\[top\]](#)

All readings not hyperlinked to an internet source can be found [here](#).

After Orientation:

Read: Bolton, “Reflection and Reflexivity: What and Why”

Read: Arao & Clemens, [From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces](#)

Read: Zheng, [Why Your Brave Space Sucks](#)

Read: [Anti-Oppression Principles and Practices](#), compiled by Lisa Fithian

After Workshop 1:

Read: Okun, “[White Supremacy Culture](#)”

Read: McIntosh, “[Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)”

Watch: [Mellody Hobson: Color Blind or Color Brave?](#) (15 minutes)

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week. Listen to audio for metta meditation used in Kang’s studies by double-clicking the icon below.



After Workshop 2:

Read: Mitchell, Donohue, and Young-Law: *Service Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness*

Explore: Spend some time with the group identity cards. What aspects are you most familiar with? Are there any you’d not considered before? Any you think are missing?

Write: How has metta meditation been for you? What are you noticing? Experiencing?

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week.

After Workshop 3:

Read: bell hooks *Teaching to Transgress* excerpt

Read: Tustin, “[I stopped being a perfectionist teacher and so can you](#)”

Read: Rockquemore, “[The costs of perfectionism](#)”

Invitation: Share a meal with at least one other member of the learning community over the break, and discuss your (individual or cultural) traditions for any end-of-year holiday, and/or the experience of not having holidays at this time of year in a society that is very focused on Christmas and New Year’s.

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week

January Self Study Module

Read: Lama Rod Owens, “*Remembering Love: An Informal Contemplation on Healing*”. From [Radical Dharma: talking race, love, and liberation](#).

Share your map with someone who knows you well. Explain what you drew and why you drew it like you drew it. Ask them what they see. Have a dialogue about how your identity shapes your perspective in intersecting ways.

Listen: *Healing Justice Podcast*: Select an episode that resonates with your needs, identities, and place on the learning journey

Recommended:

- [*Blackness and Belonging with Prentis Hemphill*](#)
- [*Vomiting Rage: Self-responsibility and Self-Care in the Movement, with Rusia Mohiuddin*](#)
- [*Ancestral Healing for Anti-Racist White Folks*](#) with Kelly Germaine-Strickland and Jardana Peacock
- [*The Art of Allyship: Coming Alongside*](#), with Jacoby Ballard

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week

After Workshop 4:

Re-Read: Mitchell, Donohue, and Young-Law: Service Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness

Read: Magee, [How Mindfulness can Defeat Racial Bias](#)

Read: Oden & Casey, [Advancing service learning as a transformative method for social justice work](#)

Write: Where does your approach to teaching support liberation? How can you feed this?

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week

After Workshop 5:

Read: Excerpt from Ruth King's [Mindful of Race](#)

Read: Mueller, [Producing Colorblindness: Everyday Mechanisms of White Ignorance](#)

*Listen: [How Race was Made](#), from the Scene on Radio series *Seeing White**

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week

After Workshop 6:

Read: LeFavour, ["Challenging homophobia, racism, and other oppressive moments"](#)

Orientation Session (60 minutes) [\[top\]](#)

Notes:

- This workshop is an introduction to the practices and rituals that will be used. This is a last opportunity for someone to decide this series isn't for them; that's ok.
- Keep a waiting list if possible, and select the maximum number of applicants in case people need to pull out.
- Dates for all workshops should be selected before the sessions begin, and should be on the application and distributed as a hard copy handout.
- Arrange the chairs in a circle if possible; it helps participants to feel that they are in a learning community together, and to shift the dynamic from knower/learners to facilitator/colearners.
- Leave ample time in your calendar after the session for questions, concerns and conversation.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants understand the commitments of being a participant in this learning community
- Participants are introduced to the writing-to-learn process
- Participants have an experience of the workshop format in a low-risk introduction

Materials:

- Participant list
- Handout with all workshop titles, dates, times, and locations
- Hard copies of the Invitation to Brave Space
- Hard copies of the Bolton article
- Flip chart paper and markers
- Blank paper and extra pens

Brief Agenda:

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (5 minutes)

Introductions (15 minutes)

Reading: [Invitation to Brave Space](#) by Micky Scott-Bey Jones (5 minutes)

Learning Community Commitments (10 minutes)

Writing to Learn/Learning Agreements (15 minutes)

Questions/Announcements (5 minutes)

Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Post-Workshop Assignment:

Read: Bolton: "Reflection and Reflexivity: What and Why"

Read: Arao & Clemens, [From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces](#)

Read: Zheng, [Why Your Brave Space Sucks](#)

Read: [Anti-Oppression Principles and Practices](#), compiled by Lisa Fithian

Detailed Agenda:

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (5 minutes)

Welcome everyone to the space. Give them your name, and let them know that there will be more detailed introductions forthcoming, but that in this moment you want them to take a comfortable seat. Because everyone is coming from somewhere else, and may have somewhere else to do after this, it is valuable to take a few minutes to arrive. To start, this is an offering of a practice to help us settle in here, in this room, with one another. Invite participants to close their eyes or to take a soft gaze.

Facilitator's note: This short breathing exercise can be used any time discussion get tense and heated, or if the energy of disconnection (to self or others) arises. Introducing it here lets it become a touchstone. I have used it successfully as a three-breath break, with the prompt, "Ok, I'm feeling the tension here, how about we all practice Three Breaths together." My script for guiding this exercise is below; you may adapt it to feel natural for you.

"We are going to begin by taking a few deep breaths together.

First, bring your attention to your body: your back in the chair, your feet on the floor. Let it settle into this room.

Now, concentrate on the air moving through your body, oxygenating your brain, sustaining your life.

Finally, bring your attention to the other breathing bodies in the room. Just carry a gentle awareness that these other humans also need to breathe to live. No matter our differences, we share this basic biological driver."

When it feels right, invite the group to open their eyes and bring their full attention to the group.

Introductions (15 minutes)

Invite participants to take 1-2 minutes to share their name, their department or location within the campus, one thing that is exciting to them about being a part of this learning community, or one thing they are apprehensive about.

Facilitators note: This is the first time you have an opportunity to see the full group together. Pay attention to the conversational dynamics. Who gives one-word answers? Who won't shut up? Who is emphatically responding to others? Who looks disengaged? What about your own biases? Who do you have strong reactions to, and why?

Thank them for their participation and for sharing their perspectives, aspirations, and concerns. This group will challenge everyone to be vulnerable, and to be forthcoming – it may be uncomfortable at times.

Reading: [Invitation to Brave Space](#) by Micky Scott-Bey Jones (5 minutes)

Facilitator's note: This short poem has been a useful tool for articulating a willingness to work beyond safety – because we cannot grow and learn in a safe space, yet we need a strong foundation to feel safe enough to be vulnerable and to hold the vulnerability of others, to be accountable and to call for accountability of others, and to try out ideas and bear witness while

others do the same. The author, Micky Scott-Bey Jones, identifies as a “creative extremist for love, and justice doula”. She is a Black woman rooted in a Christian faith tradition that supports liberation and freedom. You may want to address any of this or none of this before sharing the poem. I have had good success with inviting the group to read line-by-line, popcorn style, which also gives me another opportunity to observe the group dynamics.

Invitation to Brave Space

Together we will create *brave space*

Because there is no such thing as a “safe space”

We exist in the real world

We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.

In this space

We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world,

We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,

We call each other to more truth and love

We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow.

We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know.

We will not be perfect.

This space will not be perfect.

It will not always be what we wish it to be

But

It will be *our brave space together,*

and

We will work on it side by side

Ask the group to share any observations about the poem. What stood out for them? What resonated? What did they react negatively to?

Ask participants: Can we all agree to create a brave space in this learning community? If not, discuss what might need to change.

Learning Community Commitments (10 minutes)

While an agreement to create brave space is an important starting place for our shared commitments, and while we can't promise safety to each other, we can help create some shared agreements about how we will work together. Learning community commitments are an important part of the process.

As a facilitator, share your commitments.

Facilitator's note: I offer to show up on time, prepared, and to the best of my ability, attentive. I offer to model being vulnerable, and to make my praxis transparent. I offer to be a co-learner in the process – to invite the expertise and experiences of other participants. I also offer that, while I cannot promise to take it with grace in the moment, that I want to be learning and improving my praxis, so I invite overall feedback about what's working and what's not.

And in exchange, I ask for participants to prioritize the full workshop series; to recognize that we will be developing some intimacy together and that that requires us to be physically, mentally, and emotionally present. I ask for participants to commit to do the reading between sessions, and to come in with their thoughts and reactions. I ask them to be forthcoming with their imperfect, half resolved ideas; to experiment publicly; to try out all the activities. I ask them to care for themselves and for one another – and offer than anyone can call for a break/time out when needed; anyone can invite the three-breaths activity we did at the start of the session.

What do you want to offer? What do you want to request? Try to keep your list concise. You might want to already have things like “attend all sessions”, “be on time” and “try all the activities” “respect confidentiality of personal stories, share what you learn” written on a flip-chart page.

Now open the floor to the participants. What commitments do they want to make? What requests do they have of one another? Record these on a flip chart.

Ask how people feel about these agreements. I usually start with the prompt, “Can we all agree that...” and ask for a “show of thumbs” (up, side, down) on how people are feeling. It is well worth the time to make sure you have a learning agreement that works for everyone.

This is also a good time to distribute the handout with the full workshop series. The first three workshops/fall semester will be focusing on developing a deeper awareness of identities, expectations, and ontologies, epistemologies, and beliefs around education and learning; teaching; race and ethnicity; and systems of oppression. These sessions will also introduce a compassion practice that has been shown in several research studies to break down racial bias.

The winter-break self-study session will focus more deeply on individual identities and intersectionality.

The spring workshops will focus on techniques that we can use (and may already be using) to create a liberatory classroom that invites curiosity and vulnerability for all members.

Does anyone have date conflicts? Can the group reschedule a week earlier or later to accommodate those?

Writing to Learn/Learning Agreements (15 minutes)

In this workshop series, participants will be using a free writing technique called Writing to Learn, used by Gillie Bolton – one of the post-workshop readings will give more background on the purpose behind it. *This is a touchstone reflective practice that will be used throughout the workshop series.*

Facilitator's Note: To start the creative juices flowing, this is a short writing exercise; it's an abbreviation of a practice this curriculum will come back to regularly. I highly suggest hand-writing, which engages more parts of the brain than typing alone. I recommend you do it with the group, and that you set two timers. I prefer to give the full explanation up front.

The first 3 minutes will be free-writing; usually the exercise will start with a six-minute free write but this is a sampler. The guidelines are just to keep the pen moving continuously; if nothing comes to mind, just write "I don't know what to write" or even "this is silly" repeatedly; the process alone jogs things loose. This might be where you make a grocery list or jot down some ideas that have popped up.

The last 5 minutes will be a free write on the topic of brave space. What does a brave space look like to you? Have you felt yourself in a brave space before? What do you need to feel brave enough and safe enough to challenge yourself, to try something uncomfortable, and to practice being vulnerable?

At the end will be a few minutes where people will be invited to share either short excerpts of what they wrote, or thoughts they are having about the exercise.

Questions/Announcements/Post-Workshop Assignments (5 minutes)

Today's session was an abbreviated session of many of the activities and methodologies that this curriculum will use. Remind people that they are committing to the series of six workshops, so if these activities did not work for them, this might not be the right place for them. Invite any questions, observations, or concerns.

There are three articles to read before the first workshop. The first is about the purpose behind reflective practice. The next two respond to the idea of brave spaces. The last gives an overview of what it means to work in resistance to oppression, and how to do so. You may agree with any or all or none of the readings; they do not all reflect the same viewpoint, but they all have clear positions and are included to help each of us examine our own viewpoints more deeply.

Read: Bolton: “Reflection and Reflexivity: What and Why”

Read: Arao & Clemens, [From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces](#)

Read: Zheng, [Why Your Brave Space Sucks](#)

Read: [Anti-Oppression Principles and Practices](#), compiled by Lisa Fithian

Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Facilitator’s notes: The closing ritual will also be a part of every session. This is an opportunity to note the energetic shift as we end our time together and head back out into the world at large. The ritual is a place to gain a fuller picture of one another, and is a place to bear witness but not to respond directly.

I have two to recommend. The first is a simple “thorn, rose and bud” – each person shares something they’re struggling with or that hasn’t gone well, something that has blossomed or come to fruition, and something they are looking forward to. This can be a way to learn more about everyone’s life outside the workshop.

The second is more focused on the workshop itself, with a series of questions on the head, heart, and hands:

Head: What are you still thinking about? Heart: How are you feeling? Is there anything you’re struggling with? Hands: How do you see yourself using that material we discussed today? What do you think will be most useful?

Either of these can be specifically adapted or tailored to any particular topics or issues you want to surface, or left as a uniform touchstone between sessions. Other closing rituals would work as well.

Key things to remember:

- Closings should not just be a report-out or a list of next steps, but are instead a “closing of the parenthesis” we created in this space together. They should acknowledge the energetic shift in the time.
- Closings do not need to wrap things up tightly, and in fact can be a place to surface things that are yet to be discussed.
- Closings are an opportunity to acknowledge the “punctuation mark” at the end of the session. Is it a period? A question mark? An ellipsis?

Workshop 1: Understanding Our Epistemologies (90 minutes) [\[top\]](#)

Notes:

- This workshop, and the previous and subsequent readings, will help introduce some concepts about how we form knowledge.
- This workshop will also introduce metta, or lovingkindness, meditation as a tool for reducing implicit bias.
- This workshop will introduce the expectation of incorporating mindfulness/reflective practice into daily life, at least for the duration of participation in the learning community.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants begin to get to know each other
- Participants begin to build group trust and capacity for vulnerability
- Participants are introduced to reflective practice

Materials:

A/V to play the audio metta recording

Flip-chart paper with the community agreements

Brief Agenda:

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)

Review of Community Commitments (5 minutes)

Pair Introductions – values and drivers (25 minutes)

Introducing Reflection, Mindful Attention and Metta Meditation (20 minutes)

Metta Practice (15 minutes)

Q&A (10 minutes)

Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Post-Workshop Assignment:

Read: Okun, “[White Supremacy Culture](#)”

Read: McIntosh, “[Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)”

Watch: [Mellody Hobson: Color Blind or Color Brave?](#) (15 minutes)

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week. Listen to audio for metta meditation used in Kang’s studies by double-clicking the icon below.



Detailed Agenda:

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)

Welcome everyone back to the space together. Invite people to take a comfortable seat, and to close their eyes or softly gaze in front of them.

“We are going to begin like we did last time, by taking a few deep breaths together to arrive in this space together.

First, bring your attention to your body: your back in the chair, your feet on the floor. Let it settle into this room.

Now, concentrate on the air moving through your body, oxygenating your brain, sustaining your life.

Finally, bring your attention to the other breathing bodies in the room. Just carry a gentle awareness that these other humans also need to breathe to live. No matter our differences, we share this basic biological driver.”

When it feels right, invite the group to open their eyes and bring their full attention to the group.

Ask everyone to quickly go around and say their name, the pronoun(s) they would like the group to use for them, and one adjective that describes them. We will do more significant introductions later in the session.

Note that this, and all subsequent, sessions, have a lot of material on the agenda. The workshops are like samplers, with the real work coming between.

Review of Community Commitments (5 minutes)

Post the community agreements. Remind the group that this is what they agreed to last week. Check in about them. Is everyone still feeling good about the list? Does anyone have anything they want to add, change, or reword?

If not, have the whole group sign their names to the paper – this is the shared agreement we make, to be accountable to ourselves and to each other. If anything emerges that needs to be added or changed, the agreement can be reopened at any time. It is a living guideline during our work together.

Pair Introductions – values and drivers (25 minutes)

To get to know each other a little better, this next activity is a pair introduction. Each pair should interview each other, and will introduce each other to the group. (If there is an uneven number of participants, I recommend having the facilitator participate rather than having a group of three).

Acknowledge that the learning community meeting times may not give enough time for people to feel like they know everyone in the group; encourage them to get together outside the workshops to continue building their relationships.

Some guiding questions:

What motivates you to incorporate service learning or engaged scholarship into your course(s)?

What beliefs and values brought you to this learning community?

How are you hoping to use what you learn?

What do you want to contribute to this learning community?

Facilitator's note: set a timer for 3 minutes, then have the participants switch for 3 more minutes. Then move right into pair-sharing; have each person introduce their partner.

Close by acknowledging the overlaps and divergences in what brings us together in this space. These are both assets that help strengthen any group.

Introducing Reflection, Mindful Attention and Metta Meditation (20 minutes)

In the Bolton reading the idea of reflection was introduced. How do you define reflection? How do you use it in your daily life? Where does self-reflection show up in your life? Do you pray, meditate, journal, etc.?

A lot of what we know to be true has the pattern of a habit of mind. Bolton states boldly that reflection “challenges assumptions, ideological illusions, damaging social and cultural biases, inequalities, and questions personal behaviours which perhaps silence the voices of others or otherwise marginalize them” (p. 3). Does that statement resonate?

Bolton also asserts that reflective practice is a pedagogical approach that should be woven through the curriculum; “the pearl grit in the oyster of practice and education”. We will be modeling that in this group, beginning today, with a formal mindfulness meditation practice.

Ruth King reassures us that “mindfulness mediation is not a religious code as much as it is a social psychology that supports experiences of wellbeing” (p. 5). She states its value as placing “a crucial pause between our instinctive and often overwhelming feelings of being wronged or harmed or in danger and our responses to those feelings. In that pause, we gain perspective – we find our breath, our heartbeat, and the ground beneath our feet. This, in time, supports us in seeing our choices more clearly and responding more wisely” (p. 6).

Today, we will be exploring a particular meditation practice: metta, or loving kindness, a practice to build compassion. Metta meditation has been shown in several studies (Kang, Gray, and Dovidio, 2014 and 2015) to reduce racial bias and bias against several other “stigmatized outgroups”, as measured by the Implicit Association Test. This research is young, and the sample sizes are small, yet this practice has been used for millennia by millions of people within Buddhist circles to cultivate compassion for self and others.

If you think about group-based biases as habitual or routine patterns of thought, then it makes sense that using practices, like mindfulness-based meditation, that help us question our habits and assumptions might also interrupt our biases and help us become aware of places where our values and our behaviors are not aligned.

We will be using the same guided audio practice that Kang et. al. studied, and will be sitting for 10 minutes, which is the time we studied. Please take a comfortable seat and try our three deep breaths as we get settled.

Metta Practice (15 minutes)

Set a timer for 10 minutes. Play the audio guidance. Then stay in silence until the time runs out.

What was that like? What emerged? How do you feel?

Validate any discomfort; if this practice was new, it makes sense for it to feel weird – it is not yet something that feels familiar. Regular practice is necessary to make it feel more normal.

Note that this recording is not the only or best way to practice metta meditation; it is just an audio prompt that has been shown to have a positive impact on implicit racial bias.

Q&A/Homework Introduction (10 minutes)

There is a request that everyone try a metta meditation or another quiet centering practice for 10-15 minutes each day. There is a strong encouragement to try metta daily until the next meeting. If participants have a very strong negative reaction to metta, they can try free writing, silent meditation, prayer, drawing, or coloring. This should be a space of intentional reflectivity that they carve out of their daily lives.

There are also three articles and a 15-minute video to watch.

Read: Salzberg, "[Why Loving-Kindness Takes Time](#)"

Read: Okun, "[White Supremacy Culture](#)"

Read: McIntosh, "[Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)"

Watch: [Mellody Hobson: Color Blind or Color Brave?](#) (15 minutes)

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week. Listen to audio for metta meditation used in Kang's studies by double-clicking the icon below.



Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Rose, bud, and thorn, or closing questions, or whatever you've decided upon as your closing ritual.

Facilitator's Note: You may want to invite a participant to lead the opening and closing rituals going forward, as part of the practice of a liberatory classroom.

Workshop 2: Identities In Community (90 minutes) [\[top\]](#)

Notes:

Learning Objectives:

- To experience community dynamics of privilege and oppression, particularly around race
- To discuss the reading and surface areas of concern or awareness
- To build capacity for vulnerability

Materials:

Group Agreement Document
 Deck of playing cards
 Set of Group Identity Cards for each participant
 Hard copies of the Anti-Oppression reading

Brief Agenda:

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)
 Playing Card Group Rank Activity (20 minutes)
 Group Identity Cards: Select an area of privilege and an area of oppression (20 minutes)
 Pair to Large Group Discussion: Working with Race in an Anti-Oppression Framework (30 minutes)
 Q&A (5 minutes)
 Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Post-Workshop Assignment:

Read: Mitchell, Donohue, and Young-Law: *Service Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness*

Explore: Spend some time with the group identity cards. What aspects are you most familiar with? Are there any you'd not considered before? Any you think are missing?

Write: How has metta meditation been for you? What are you noticing? Experiencing?

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week. Listen to audio for metta meditation used in Kang's studies by clicking the icon below.



Detailed Agenda:

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)

Welcome everyone back to the space together. Invite people to take a comfortable seat, and to close their eyes or softly gaze in front of them.

“We are going to begin with our three breath arrival. First breath, noticing your body and arriving in this space. Second breath, feeling the breath moving through you. Third breath, becoming aware of the other breathing bodies in the room.”

When it feels right, invite the group to open their eyes and bring their full attention to the group.

One-word check-in: what's something you feel when you think about a discussion of race?

Playing Card Group Rank Activity (20 minutes)

Shuffle a deck of playing cards. Let everyone know we are going to do an activity, and that you are going to give them each a card, and that they should NOT look at their card.

When everyone has a card, everyone is going to hold their card in front of them facing out, so everyone else can see it but the person holding it cannot.

The value of the cards indicates the rank of the person in our group; aces are low, kings are high. When you see someone's card, interact with them according to their rank. So, if you see an Ace or a two, you might not make eye contact, and rush on by to get to the queen or king and let them know how nice they look today.

Facilitator's note: be conscious of card assignments; don't let the mingling happen for more than 5 minutes; it might be shorter with a very small group. If you have fewer than 10 you might need a different activity.

At the end of the mingling, return to seats for a debrief WITHOUT looking at your card.

Some discussion prompts:

What was this experience like? What was hard? What was fun?

What card do you think you have?

How was this experience similar to and different from your daily lived experience?

Can you think of times where you were treated especially well, or especially poorly, because of your perceived value?

What are the attributes that we tend to value in this society?

Facilitator's note: International participants or those who have lived within non-dominant cultures often have good observations about this

Group Identity Cards: Select an area of privilege and an area of oppression (20 minutes)

To get participants thinking more specifically about areas of their own identities where they may receive an unearned privilege, and those where they may experience an unfair oppression, the Group Identity Cards help name facets of identity and invite each person to locate themselves within that facet. Distribute a deck of Group Identity Cards to each participant, and encourage them to look through them. There may be facets of identity that the participants have not previously considered.

Break into groups of 2-3. Have each participant select an aspect of identity where they experience privilege, and one where they experience oppression – remind them to select facets they feel comfortable discussing with the group.

Within the small group, each participant should share the aspects they selected.

Discussion prompts:

How does privilege and oppression show up in your life? How do they relate, or not? Are the identities you chose to share as visible as the playing card? If not, how does your experience differ?

Facilitator's note: on very rare occasions I've had a participant who did not identify any areas of oppression. This then created an interesting dynamic, where the person with the most social privilege was the person excluded from half the conversation. That is something fruitful to work with!

Save a few minutes for a popcorn-style share. Normalize that areas of privilege and oppression do not cancel out (this will be referenced again in the January self-study module, where participants will be mapping their identity intersections).

Varied identities and their various interactions are one reason that these discussions can be advanced by using an anti-oppression framework.

Pair to Large Group Discussion: Working with Race in an Anti-Oppression Framework (30 minutes)

Have the pairs discuss the readings from last week about the structure of privilege and the attributes of White Supremacy Culture, and reflect back on the anti-oppression framework they read before the first workshop.

Some discussion prompts:

What were your reactions to the readings? Do you agree with the definitions they offer? Are there things you would add or remove?

How do White Supremacy Culture and an anti-oppression framework come into conflict?

How do your various identities shape your perceptions?

[Where] do you see White Supremacy Culture within your life and work?

What aspects do you feel prepared to take on personally?

What antidotes might help you with that aspect? Are there areas you can use help with?

This will not be a conversation that has an easy closing, but acknowledging that this is just an opening to lifelong conversation can be helpful, as can normalizing the absorption of white supremacy culture since we are all marinating in a racist, classist, ableist, heteropatriarchy all the time. No one is that waterproof.

Q&A (5 minutes)

Reading assignments for next session are a bit more brief, to give some time for deeper reflection. The Mitchell article is the article that inspired the creation of this curriculum, so ask participants to read it at least twice, and think about where they may see themselves, or their departments, or even the university, in that article. If they don't see their practice or that of their colleagues within the article, what practices and pedagogical approaches are they using instead; how can they share these with their colleagues?

Read: Mitchell, Donohue, and Young-Law: *Service Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness*

Explore: Spend some time with the group identity cards. What aspects are you most familiar with? Are there any you'd not considered before? Any you think are missing?

Write: How has metta meditation been for you? What are you noticing? Experiencing?

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week. Keep up the metta if it feels good, or experiment with something new!

Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Rose, bud, and thorn, or closing questions, or whatever you've decided upon as your closing ritual.

Workshop 3: When We Stumble (90 minutes) [\[top\]](#)**Notes:**

- This is the last workshop of the semester; take any time you need to address anything outstanding.
- There may not be “resolution” because these are all complicated ideas, and that’s ok. There is no final place of woke-ness to get to, we are all imperfect works in progress.
- The spring semester will focus far more on pedagogy so the readings are beginning to prime that shift.
- The January self-study material is designed to take about 5 hours to complete, since there is no group meeting during that time; don’t lose track of it.

Learning Objectives:

- To surface our own imperfections and areas of error
- To build compassion and empathy for self and others
- To identify strategies for recovering from errors and healing ruptured trust

Materials:

Group agreement document

Paper and Pens

Hard copies of January workshop agenda (may also be posted to the group learning site)

Brief Agenda:

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)

Reading Discussion/Reflections on metta practice (25 minutes)

Writing to Learn: What We Do When We Fail (35 minutes)

Q&A (10 minutes)

Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Post-Workshop Assignment:

Read: bell hooks Teaching to Transgress excerpt

Read: Tustin, “[I stopped being a perfectionist teacher and so can you](#)”

Read: Rockquemore, “[The costs of perfectionism](#)”

Invitation: Share a meal with at least one other member of the learning community over the break, and discuss your (individual or cultural) traditions for any end-of-year holiday, and/or the experience of not having holidays at this time of year in a society that is very focused on Christmas and New Year’s.

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week

Detailed Agenda:

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)

Begin with a three-breath arrival practice.

Go around the room and each answer the questions: What’s bringing you into the room? What’s taking you out of it?

Reading Discussion/Reflections on metta practice (25 minutes)

What reactions are there to Service Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness?

How has metta meditation going? What other practices are people using?
Have you noticed any shifts from the practice? Are you feeling more compassionate toward yourself?

Writing to Learn: What We Do When We Fail (35 minutes)

Sometimes as educators we forget that we are also learners, imperfect works in progress ourselves. This next exercise is using writing to learn about what we think; it's a methodology of Gillie Bolton's that will also be in the January self-study module. So, trying it once together is an opportunity to practice with some support.

Begin with a six-minute free write – just getting everything out of your head. Grocery list, weekend chores, replaying a conversation in your head, whatever.

Then. A 10 minute write on topic. Think about a time that you tried something as an educator that didn't work.

How did you respond to it in the moment?

How does it feel to think back on it?

What, if any, impacts does it have on your teaching now?

See where it takes you; as with the free write, just keep your pen moving.

Facilitators note: set timers for these, and do them with the participants!

Take a few minutes to re-read what you've written. Are there sections you want to expand on? Up to 5 minutes for additional writing.

Popcorn share – any observations, short passages people want to read. Are there similarities in how people responded/reacted? Solidarity? Places we can learn?

Take a moment to offer yourself, and each other, a little metta.

Q&A (10 minutes)

Make sure that participants understand that there are some homework assignments attached to this module AND a self-study workshop with its own associated readings. Everyone should plan to spend 8-10 hours between this workshop and the next on the homework and self-study modules.

Invite volunteers to lead the opening ritual in the new year – begin with the breathing, and any opening questions they like.

Read: bell hooks *Teaching to Transgress* excerpt

Read: Tustin, "[I stopped being a perfectionist teacher and so can you](#)"

Read: Rockquemore, "[The costs of perfectionism](#)"

Invitation: Share a meal with at least one other member of the learning community over the break, and discuss your (individual or cultural) traditions for any end-of-year holiday, and/or the experience of not having holidays at this time of year in a society that is very focused on Christmas and New Year's.

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week

Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Rose, bud, and thorn, or closing questions, or whatever you've decided upon as your closing ritual.

January Self Study Module: Intersections and Identities [\[top\]](#)

NOTE:

This is essentially a 90-minute workshop on your own. You can break up the pieces if you need to, but it is better to do them in one sitting, or at least very close together, as the material is cumulative.

Learning Objectives:

- To deepen an understanding of the many facets of identity and how they interact
- To commit to a practice of intersectionality in our own lives and work
- To identify areas for growth within the teaching practice

Materials Needed:

Paper and pen
Pencil and eraser
Device with internet access and sound
Group Identity Cards
Timer (phone timer ok)

Detailed Agenda:

Arrival ritual on your own (5 minutes)

Take a few deep breaths to arrive in the physical and mental space of learning.

Watch [Kimberle Crenshaw on The Urgency of Intersectionality](#) (20 minutes)

Using the group identity cards, make an inventory of your own identities (10 minutes)

Write them out on paper -both what they are and how they are relatively valued by society as a whole and within your community/ies

- Where do you experience privilege?
- Where do you experience oppression?
- Are there any aspects where you experience both?

Mapping the Intersections (20 minutes)

Based on Crenshaw's explanation of intersectionality, draw your identity intersections. How do your identities interact and intersect?

- This should take between 15 and 30 minutes; more if you get really into it!
- If it's uncomfortable you're doing it exactly right.
- Your map does not need to be perfect or beautiful; it is just a different way of exploring these relationships.
- You will be sharing your drawing/map with the rest of the group, so feel free to edit if there are things you don't want to include.

Writing to Learn: Identity in Pedagogy (25 minutes)

- As we've practiced together, start with a six minute free write (set a timer!), followed by at least 15 minutes on the relationships between your identities and your pedagogy. Let your writing take you wherever it goes; some prompts are:
 - What do you like about your classroom environment and pedagogical style?
 - How do your identities show up in your classroom? What is good about that? What is challenging? Is there anything you would like to shift?
 - Pick an aspect of your identity that influences your teaching; how do you think your teaching would be different if your identity were different?
 - What might you experiment with changing/adding in your own classroom?
- Take a few minutes to reread your writing and flesh out any areas that need additional attention. Did you find anything that surprised you?
- Select an excerpt from your writing that you would like to share with the learning community in our next meeting.
- Write down a list of questions you have, topics you'd like to see addressed, or resources you would like to share. How can the second half of the learning community help you create a more liberatory, healing space?

Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Take a few minutes to transition intentionally from this learning space back to whatever comes next. You may want to do a variation of the closing ritual you have been using in the group.

Post-Workshop Assignment:

Read: *Lama Rod Owens, "Remembering Love: An Informal Contemplation on Healing". From Radical Dharma: talking race, love, and liberation.*

Share your map with someone who knows you well. Explain what you drew and why you drew it like you drew it. Ask them what they see. Have a dialogue about how your identity shapes your perspective in intersecting ways.

Listen: *Healing Justice Podcast: Select an episode that resonates with your needs, identities, and place on the learning journey*

Recommended:

- [*Blackness and Belonging with Prentis Hemphill*](#)
- [*Vomiting Rage: Self-responsibility and Self-Care in the Movement, with Rusia Mohiuddin*](#)
- [*Ancestral Healing for Anti-Racist White Folks*](#) with Kelly Germaine-Strickland and Jardana Peacock
- [*The Art of Allyship: Coming Alongside*](#), with Jacoby Ballard

Practice: *Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week*

Workshop 4: Building a Liberatory Classroom, Part 1: [\[top\]](#)
Identity and Pedagogy (90 minutes)

Notes:

- *Remind participants to bring their intersection maps and their writing excerpt; bring your own!*
- *Email opening ritual leaders to remind them.*

Learning Objectives

- To share the relationship between identity and pedagogy
- To explore areas of growth and learning identified by the group
- To begin to deepen self-reflective practices to build liberatory classrooms

Materials:

Community Agreements

Intersection maps

Writing excerpts

Brief Agenda:

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)

Reading Discussion: Recap of the Break. bell hooks' Teaching to Transgress, Lama Rod's Remembering Love, Kimberle Crenshaw's Intersectionality. (20 minutes)

Pair/Small Group Share: Intersection Identity Maps and Writing Excerpt (25 minutes)

Group Discussion: (20 minutes)

How do we want to use the rest of our time together? What do we want to be able to do differently as a result of working together?

Q&A (10 minutes)

Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Post-Workshop Assignment:*Re-Read: Mitchell, Donohue, and Young-Law: Service Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness**Read: Magee, [How Mindfulness can Defeat Racial Bias](#)**Read: Oden & Casey, Advancing service learning as a transformative method for social justice work**Write: Where does your approach to teaching support liberation? How can you feed this?**Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week***Detailed Agenda:**Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)

Invite ritual leaders to begin with a centering breathing exercise, taking three breaths to arrive in the space, then introduce us to their opening.

Reading Discussion: Recap of the Break. bell hooks' Teaching to Transgress, Lama Rod's Remembering Love, Kimberle Crenshaw's Intersectionality. (20 minutes)

This is an unstructured conversation and check in. Some discussion prompts:
 What are people thinking about this series so far? How did the self-study modules? What are responses/reactions to the readings? Were folks familiar with intersectionality as a concept? Remind folks of all that they've read and watched since you've last seen each other. How do you think your varied identities impact your responses to the material?

Pair/Small Group Share: Intersection Identity Maps and Writing Excerpt (25 minutes)

One thing everyone did over the break was map out your own identity intersections, and do some free writing.

Pair up with someone you would like to know better, and introduce each other to your identity intersections. What was the process of drawing them like? Did anything surprising, confusing, or illuminating emerge?

Now share your writing excerpts with each other. You can choose to read them aloud to each other, or to hand the document to your partner. Provide witness to what you hear before responding to it.

Take a few comments popcorn-style to debrief before moving on.

Small Group Discussion: (20 minutes)

Get together with another pair. We have two workshops left together. How do we want to use the rest of our time together? What do we want to be able to do differently as a result of working together? What supports do you need to be able to do so? This is a very open conversation about how best to use the remaining time together. There is more flexibility in the design of the last two workshops to be able to embrace the needs of learners.

Remind everyone that this formal learning community comes to an end, but learning about ourselves, oppression and privilege, and the craft of teaching is a lifelong journey. This process is designed to introduce some reflective practices and frameworks we can all use to support this ongoing learning.

Q&A (10 minutes)

Clarify any questions, receive any additional feedback or suggestions. Invite thoughts on the next two workshops via email if you are comfortable doing so.

This session's readings will look again at racial dynamics in a service learning context. There is also a free-writing assignment to explore how your approach to teaching supports liberation.

Re-Read: Mitchell, Donohue, and Young-Law: *Service Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness*

Read: Magee, [How Mindfulness can Defeat Racial Bias](#)

Read: Oden & Casey, *Advancing service learning as a transformative method for social justice work*

Write: *Where does your approach to teaching support liberation? How can you feed this? (At least 10-minute write)*

Practice: *Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week*

Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Invite your volunteer to lead you through rose, bud and thorn, closing questions, or whatever you've chosen as your closing ritual.

Workshop 5: Building a Liberatory Classroom, Part 2: [\[top\]](#)
Supporting Race-Conscious Community Engagement (90 minutes)

Learning Objectives

- To explore personal motivations for doing engaged scholarship/service learning
- To identify alternatives to the pedagogy of whiteness
- To intentionally incorporate reflectivity as a tool for confronting systems of oppression

Materials:

Community Agreements
 Blank paper/index cards for feedback
 Copies of Tema Okun's White Supremacy Culture
 Flip chart and markers

Brief Agenda

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)
 Small Group Discussion: Why do you do service learning/engaged scholarship? (25 minutes)
 Building a Race Conscious Classroom (35 minutes)
 Q&A (10 minutes)
 Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Post-Workshop Assignment:

Read: Excerpt from Ruth King's Mindful of Race

Read: Mueller, Producing Colorblindness: Everyday Mechanisms of White Ignorance

Listen: How Race was Made, from the Scene on Radio series Seeing White

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week

Detailed Agenda

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)

Invite your volunteer to begin with three deep breaths, then move into their arrival ritual.

Small Group Discussion: Why do you do service learning/engaged scholarship? (25 minutes)

Invite the group to consider silently, individually, what drew them to service learning and/or engaged scholarship. They may want to write a little about it, or to consider silently.

Get into pairs, and discuss for about 8 minutes.

Then, have groups of 4 (2 pairs) discuss for another 8 minutes.

Then, have each group offer a short report out.

Some discussion prompts:

- What brought you to it, and is that why you continue now?
- How long have you been practicing service learning?
- What is your relationship to the communities you work with? How did you become introduced to them?

- Have you ever seen/experienced/created the pedagogy of whiteness?
- How might you do your work differently to interrupt this pedagogy?
- What can we learn from each other?

We will be spending the remainder of our time together discussing more concretely how we might incorporate race consciousness into a liberatory classroom environment, and how to break down the challenges that get in our way.

Building a Race Conscious Classroom (35 minutes)

Tema Okun identified many characteristics of White Supremacy Culture, and offered us antidotes to resist their practice. Mitchell, Donohue, and Young-Law offered us a window into some of the pitfalls of reinforcing white supremacy through common approaches to service learning which normalize whiteness and class privilege and further marginalize other experiences. Oden and Casey then provide some ideas about transformation through service learning.

How can we incorporate racial awareness into our classrooms? What are you doing already? What might you like to try?

Some ideas:

- Diversifying the authors whose works are read – incorporating more folks beyond the canon of the old white man
- Stepping in to challenge oppressive comments – more discussion on this next week
- Examining relationships to communities served and who is making the decisions – is the service desired, useful, equitable?
- Asking more questions about impact
- Distributing information about an anti-oppression framework and sharing that expectation that every member of the classroom – including the instructor – is sharing accountability to that way of working
- Actively naming and inquiring into racialized dynamics when they emerge
- Adding metta practice to the classroom
- Practicing talking more about race outside the classroom to be more comfortable with it inside the classroom.

Facilitator's note: it may be useful to begin this section as a brainstorm, and to capture all the ideas on a board or flip chart. You may want to keep track of barriers people identify as well, since that will be the heart of next week's discussion.

Q&A (10 minutes)

Next workshop is the last of the series, and we will be discussing overcoming barriers to trying these things out. Please use blank notecards to offer any hopes, aspirations, or ideas you have for the last workshop.

Read: Excerpt from Ruth King's Mindful of Race

Read: Mueller, Producing Colorblindness: Everyday Mechanisms of White Ignorance

Listen: How Race was Made, from the Scene on Radio series Seeing White

Practice: Quiet centering practice on your own, 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week

Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

Invite your volunteer to lead you through rose, bud and thorn, closing questions, or whatever you've chosen as your closing ritual.

Workshop 6: Building a Liberatory Classroom, Part 3: [\[top\]](#) **Identifying and Overcoming Barriers (90 minutes)**

Learning Objectives

- To identify specific roadblocks (internal and external) to implementing liberatory pedagogies
- To identify strategies for overcoming these roadblocks
- To close the series, but not the learning. Would the group like to continue to learn together? How?

Materials:

Community Agreements

Blank paper/index cards for feedback

[River rocks](#), note cards, or other tangible objects that can be written upon

Fine point permanent markers

Copies of LeFavour's "[Challenging homophobia, racism, and other oppressive moments](#)"

Brief Agenda

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)

Activity: Give and Take (15 minutes)

Writing to Learn: What Gets In our Way? (20 minutes)

Group Brainstorm: Overcoming Barriers (20 minutes)

Tangible Commitments: Between now and the end of the school year I will try... (10 minutes)

Q&A (5 minutes)

Closing Ritual (10 minutes)

Post-Workshop Assignment:

Read: LeFavour, "[Challenging homophobia, racism, and other oppressive moments](#)"

Detailed Agenda

Welcome and Arrival Ritual (10 minutes)

Invite your volunteer to begin with three deep breaths, then move into their arrival ritual.

Activity: Give and Take (15 minutes)

An organizing principle that SURJ: Showing up for Racial Justice uses is that none of us knows everything, but together we know a lot.

We already have so much to offer to each other, and we also have so much to learn.

Have each person take a rock (or note card) and write their name on one side. Have them take a minute to reflect on the work they have done together over the last few months, and what they think they offer to this community. Have them write something they have to offer to the community: patience, righteous rage, compassion, tenacity... the list is endless. Then have them place the object in the center of the room name side down.

Then, have each person identify something they need or could use help with and remove it from the center of the room. Have them flip over the stone/card and see whose attribute they have removed; offer gratitude to each other for having so much to share! This is something they can take with the beyond this time together, to remind them of this time together and also of the importance of learning in community.

Writing to Learn: What Gets In our Way? (20 minutes)

Start with a six minute free write, then write for 10 minutes about what gets in the way of interrupting white supremacy and oppressive behavior when it emerges. Think about the times something doesn't quite sit right, but you hold your tongue. Why? What could help you build the strength to step into that space more often? This is not meant to be critical – there are many reasons for not speaking up – but just to move our growing edge outward. Think beyond the head – what relationships do you need to strengthen? What community ties? What coconspirators do you need to find?

Facilitator's note: "Coconspirator" comes from the Latin "to breathe together", and is my preferred language to ally or accomplice. Though in the modern usage it may have acquired an air of criminality, I always aspire to breathe with the liberation of my coconspirators.

Group Brainstorm: Overcoming Barriers (20 minutes)

This exercise not meant to be critical – there are many reasons for not speaking up – but just to move our growing edge outward. Think beyond the head – what relationships do you need to strengthen? What community ties? What coconspirators do you need to find? What skills do you need to practice? What discomfort do you need to get used to?

If any participants have specific barriers that are stopping them and would like assistance, the group can brainstorm ideas so address this challenge.

Distribute LeFavour's article as one set of helpful ideas on how to step up and step in to oppressive speech.

Tangible Commitments: Between now and the end of the school year I will try... (10 minutes)

Sometimes when we end workshops like this, we have every intention of continuing the work but the rest of our lives – and frankly, the systems that are hard to change and have a vested interest in our silence – get in the way. One antidote to that is to make a concrete, manageable, time-bound commitment and support each in staying accountable to that commitment.

Take a minute to write out what you want to try out in your classroom between now and the end of the school year.

Now turn to the person next to you and share your commitment and listen to theirs. Exchange contact information and make a further commitment to contact each other to check in about your progress.

Q&A (5 minutes)

Quick check-in about closing celebration – who is interested in helping to plan? What would feel good?

Read: *LeFavour*, “[Challenging homophobia, racism, and other oppressive moments](#)”

Closing Ritual (10 minutes)

As this is the last closing ritual, it is an opportunity to close with something a little different – this is an eye-gazing compassion practice.

Break into two groups and line up facing each other.

You are going to hold eye contact for a full minute; then at the tone everyone will take the position of the person to their right (if you are at the end of one row, you will join the start of the next row). Just look into each others’ eyes and offer each other compassion. This is a simple and intimate practice, so best to use with a group like this where a lot of trust is already present.

Facilitator’s note: depending on time you may not be able to have each person gaze at each person; that’s ok. The feel of the activity will be the same as long as you have at least 6-7 eye gazing sessions.

Thank everyone for their work and for collaborating to create such a robust learning community.

Facilitator’s note: leave extra time in your calendar for this workshop, as the ending may feel quite challenging and people may not leave quickly. They may also have thoughts, feedback, or questions.

Closing Celebration (Optional, but highly recommended) [\[top\]](#)

This is an opportunity to celebrate your work together in a relaxed way – and may be a good time to invite friends, colleagues, family members. It is not an end of the work of learning, but an end to this group’s formal collaboration as a learning community. It might be after the end of the school year, to check back in about how things are going; it might be just after the conclusion of the series while everything is still fresh.

The group can decide what form of recognition and celebration will feel good.

Some ideas:

- Hold a potluck at someone’s home, where each person brings a food celebrating their accomplishment. Consider making a recipe book.
- Meet up for a brown-bag lunch, and talk about if/how you are using what you learned
- Design an activity together that signifies this milestone and do it!
- Share a reading/learning list
- Create a special award category for each person and host an award ceremony

Sources for Further Reading [\[top\]](#)

In addition to the works cited below and used throughout the curriculum, there are many other books and articles that helped formulate the conceptual framework from which this project emerged. Some of these are:

A Simpler Way, by Margaret J. Wheatley and Myron Kellner-Rogers

“Accomplices not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex, An Indigenous perspective and provocation.” Available at <http://www.indigenouaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/>

All About Love, by bell hooks

The Art of Effective Facilitation: Reflections from Social Justice Educators, edited by Lisa M. Landreman

Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging, and the Courage to Stand Alone, by Brené Brown

"Decolonization is not a metaphor", by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, education & society* 1.1 (2012). Available at <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630/15554>

Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds, by Adrienne Maree Brown

Joyful Militancy: Building Thriving Resistance in Toxic Times, by Nick Montgomery and carla bergman

On Intersectionality: Essential Writings, by Kimberlé Crenshaw

Real Love, by Sharon Salzberg

Reinventing Organizations, by Frédéric Laloux

Taming the Ox: Buddhist Stories and Reflections on Politics, Race, Culture, and Spiritual Practice, by Charles R. Johnson

The Way of Tenderness: Awakening through Race, Sexuality, and Gender, by Zenju Earthlynn Manuel

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Appendix A

Wingspread Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning

Ellen Porter Honnet and Susan J. Poulsen, The Johnson Foundation, May 1989

1. An effective program engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.
2. An effective program provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience.
3. An effective program articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved.
4. An effective program allows for those with needs to define those needs.
5. An effective program clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved.
6. An effective program matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances.
7. An effective program expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment.
8. An effective program includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.
9. An effective program insures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved.
10. An effective program is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.

Appendix B

Black Panther Party Platform and Program

What We Want

What We Believe

October 1966

1. We Want Freedom. We Want Power To Determine The Destiny Of Our Black Community.

We believe that Black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny.

2. We Want Full Employment For Our People.

We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every man employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the White American businessmen will not give full employment, then the [means of production](#) should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.

3. We Want An End To The Robbery By The Capitalists Of Our Black Community.

We believe that this racist government has robbed us, and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency which will be distributed to our many communities. The Germans are now aiding the Jews in Israel for the genocide of the Jewish people. The Germans murdered six million Jews. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people; therefore, we feel that this is a modest demand that we make.

4. We Want Decent Housing Fit For The Shelter Of Human Beings.

We believe that if the White Landlords will not give decent housing to our Black community, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that our community, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for its people.

5. We Want Education For Our People That Exposes The True Nature Of This Decadent American Society. We Want Education That Teaches Us Our True History And Our Role In The Present-Day Society.

We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else.

6. We Want All Black Men To Be Exempt From Military Service.

We believe that Black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like Black people, are being victimized by the White racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military, by whatever means necessary.

7. We Want An Immediate End To Police Brutality And Murder Of Black People.

We believe we can end police brutality in our Black community by organizing Black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our Black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all Black people should arm themselves for self-defense.

8. We Want Freedom For All Black Men Held In Federal, State, County And City Prisons And Jails.

We believe that all Black people should be released from the many jails and prisons because they have not received a fair and impartial trial.

9. We Want All Black People When Brought To Trial To Be Tried In Court By A Jury Of Their Peer Group Or People From Their Black Communities, As Defined By The Constitution Of The United States.

We believe that the courts should follow the United States Constitution so that Black people will receive fair trials. The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution gives a man a right to be tried by his peer group. A peer is a person from a similar economic, social, religious, geographical, environmental, historical and racial background. To do this the court will be forced to select a jury from the Black community from which the Black defendant came. We have been, and are being, tried by all-White juries that have no understanding of the "average reasoning man" of the Black community.

10. We Want Land, Bread, Housing, Education, Clothing, Justice And Peace.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect of the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new

government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.