Barriers and Strategies by White Faculty Who Incorporate Anti-Racist Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the experiences of White faculty who incorporate an antiracist framework into their college classrooms. The participants shared about the challenges of incorporating anti-racist pedagogy into their classrooms due to both perceived personal and institutional barriers. These participants perceived personal barriers stemming from an internalized struggle of understanding their own White identity while also struggling to be viewed as anti-racist educators by colleagues of color. These faculty participants also shared about perceived professional barriers which included the pressure to obtain tenure, perceived loss of control in the classroom by the students, and anti-racist work being disregarded by individuals in positions of institutional power. Through the use of narrative inquiry, five researchers explored the personal and professional barriers faced by White faculty engaging in anti-racist educational practices in the college classroom. The study included17 faculty participants teaching at predominately White private and public colleges and universities throughout the United States who teach in various academic disciplines. Findings revealed the ongoing barriers in teaching antiracism ideals and the discussion provides strategies and an emerging model for incorporating intentional anti-racist pedagogy into the classroom.

Keywords: anti-racism, pedagogy, inclusion, diversity, privilege, Whiteness, Critical White Studies

Purpose

Many White faculty believe they lack the skills necessary to successfully discuss race-related topics in the classroom (Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera, & Lin, 2009).   Instead of addressing this topic, many White educators choose to respond with silence as a way to conceal their true thoughts and feelings (Sue, 2010). This silence is especially harmful for students of color in the classroom. In fact, studies have shown that the most difficult conversations in the classroom regarding race are caused by well-meaning White professors who lack awareness of their offensive actions in the classroom (Sue, Rivera, Capodilupo, Lin, & Torino, 2010). Positive results occur when dialogue revolving around race and racism in the classroom are facilitated well. According to Young, (2004), "racial dialogues have been shown to reduce prejudice, increase compassion, dispel stereotypes, and promote mutual respect and understanding" (p. 360).   Without knowing how to successfully implement an anti-racist framework into the classroom, many White educators will continue to unintentionally perpetuate racism in the classroom and students of color will continue to experience the consequences of their wrongdoings.

According to a study by Sue et al., (2009), many White faculty revealed that they often experience discomfort, defensiveness, and uncertainty as they navigated race-related dialogues in their classrooms. Some of this stemmed from fear of perceived incompetence by students, negative course evaluations, and perceived loss of control in their teaching (Sue et. al., 2009). This fear contributes to why White professors often struggle to initiate dialogue and teach about racism with their students (Johnson, 2011). In addition, many White faculty have not been taught to understand the struggles to explicitly see, feel, and understand racism (Weber, 2001). Since many White faculty have not needed to build the cognitive skill and stamina to naturally allow constructive engagement among different racial groups, engaging in these conversations and teaching about race in the classroom

setting requires intentional effort (DiAngelo, 2018). Without addressing this problem and ways to overcome challenges, this fear will continue to persist and many White faculty will continue to experience discomfort and uncertainty as they lead race-related dialogues in the college classroom setting.

 Research on White faculty as anti-racist educators has been understudied and infrequently explored (Smith, Kashubeck-West, Payton, & Adams, 2017). Our research team of five scholars focused on emerging strategies on how to incorporate successful pedagogical strategies in the classroom by White faculty who engage in anti-racism through ways that are not currently evident in the literature. The research question used to guide our study was, "What are the experiences of White college and university faculty in the United States who navigate institutional and internalized barriers as they engage in anti-racist educational practices?" The term "anti-racist" derives from Dei's (1996) anti-racism definition, which is explained as an "action-oriented strategy for institutional systemic change that addresses racism and other interlocking systems of social oppression. Anti-racism explicitly names the issues of race and social difference as issues of power and equity, rather than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety" (p. 252). The participants in this study were White faculty who shared personal and institutional barriers from incorporating anti-racist strategies in their classrooms at their respective universities. Based on the reflections from each participant regarding their experience, three main barriers and five suggested strategies were discussed on how to incorporate an anti-racist framework in the college and university classroom setting.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is Critical White Studies (CWS). Critical White Studies (CWS) is the intellectual lens which we employed for our research. An emerging field of scholarship, CWS scholars seek to identify and

critique the power and privileges associated with White hegemony and White normativity as it permeates institutions of higher learning. The aim is to expose invisible structures and systems that perpetuate and even strengthen White hegemony and privilege (Applebaum, 2016; Kennedy, Middleton, & Ratcliffe, 2005).

CWS is rooted in Critical Race Theory (CRT). Described as a movement by Delgado and Stefancic (2012), CRT seeks to reveal how White supremacy has established and perpetuated the oppression of people of color. As a critical theory, CRT begins with the notion that race is socially constructed by the context of an individual and society (McLaren, 2009). It follows that racism is endemic in American society and thus is prevalent and imbedded in all aspects of the culture (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT scholars illuminate the issue of racism through centering the narratives of people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The theory of interest convergence first posited by Bell (1980) is important for this study and the connection to CWS. Interest convergence is the notion that Whites will only support racial justice to the extent that there is a positive impact for Whites as well as non-Whites. Where CRT focuses on talking about race, CWS shifts the focus toward a critical look at whiteness (Kennedy, Middleton & Ratcliffe, 2005).

The main focus of CWS is to understand what it means to be White, and with that, understand that whiteness affords Whites particular privileges and power that maintain a racialized systemic dominance in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Collins & Jun, 2017). There are several key tenets of CWS. First, whiteness is understood as the constructed norm by which all of society is judged or compared. As such, White people have benefited historically from this construct as the dominant race at the expense of other races (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Johnson, 2012). Second, CWS acknowledges the existence of White privilege and

supremacy. CWS allows Whites to begin to understand the complexity and paradoxical nature of privilege and supremacy, that in order for the dominant group to afford privilege it must do so by oppressing other groups (Johnson, 2012). As White educators in dominantly White institutions, each of our participants engaged in anti-racist work from a place of privilege. Peggy McIntosh's (2012) seminal reflection described White privilege as "an invisible knapsack of unearned assets" which White individuals can count on cashing in each day. Even when White individuals progress in their anti-racist development, they cannot separate themselves from an identity of privilege since they will still continue to benefit from this system therefore making it impossible to disassociate (Smith et al., 2017). Although one can never fully step out of a system of privilege, one can still learn to oppose it (Smith et. al., 2017).

Third, CWS scholarship is interested in exploring a better understanding of what it means to be White. For White people, a healthier understanding of their own White identity can lead to more effective work in the arena of racial justice, allyship, and equity for people of color (Boutte & Jackson, 2014). One of the ways in which Whites actively participate in the act of dismantling racism is through the act of allyship to people of color. It enables Whites to move beyond being good White people into actively participating in the dismantling of a system that unfairly privileges them at the expense of others. (Sullivan, 2014).

Utilizing whiteness as a critical lens is particularly important to this study because through participant narratives, the anti-racist pedagogy, discourse, and dismantling of participant's White privilege were explored. The CWS framework provided an important lens through which we can critically examine their understanding of whiteness, intersectionality, and the participants' White identity development.

Methods

Based on our research question, we employed narrative inquiry as our method. Narrative inquiry is characterized by its primary interest in the autobiographical, life history stories of an individual in a study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Chase, 2010; Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). In narrative inquiry, it is critical that the story be primarily shaped and led by the participant, not the researcher. To that end, our open-ended semi-structured interview protocol allowed for the stories of our participants to evolve and emerge. Reflection of critical moments in the life histories of participants was of utmost importance as researchers, and we recognize the significance of the stories naturally unfolding from the participants' memories, and meanings made from their experiences.

Narrative inquiries provide the opportunity for a participant to reflect, giving them time to look back at particular moments in their lives, making connections and thus situating their story in a place of meaning. This can provide a researcher the opportunity to discover beliefs and biases that at first hearing might be missed, but through analysis can be revealed (Grumet, 1976). The three dimensions present in most narrative inquiry research are: a) temporality – acknowledging that the study takes place in a unique time in history, b) personal and social interaction – exploration of the inner life of the participants, the environment in which they work and exist, their experience and reflections on this environment, and how they make meaning of their past, present, and projected future, and c) the role of place – the setting can include geography, milieus, and surrounding community (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).

Participants. Our study employed purposeful sampling to identify and recruit participants. The faculty chosen for this study taught in various academic disciplines at four-year colleges and universities and at one graduate campus. These institutions were located in the Midwest, Pacific Northwest, Southern California

and included public, private non-religious, and private and religious, small to medium-sized student body populations. Of the 17 total participants, eleven women and six men agreed to participate in the study. All of our participants had doctoral degrees and during the time of our interview, many had tenure status except for a small number of faculty because their institutions offered year-long or multi-year long contracts rather than a traditional tenure-track system. Follow-up interviews occurred with 12 of the 17 original participants. We identified a group with the following homogeneous elements: a) they identified as White, b) they held a faculty position in a higher education institution, and c) they had been identified by colleagues as "anti-racist allies" (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003). For the purposes of this study, we define an anti-racist ally as a member of a dominant culture who is working to end the systemic privilege they benefit from as the dominant culture (Aveling, 2004; Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006). This definition aligns with Dei's anti-racism framework referenced earlier. In the United States higher education system, that dominant culture is White culture (Broido, 2000; Gusa, 2010; Collins & Jun, 2017; Reason, Scales, & Roosa Millar, 2005). Additionally, we employed snowball sampling as our participants helped to identify other faculty who had incorporated anti-racist pedagogy into the classroom. What constitutes as pedagogy included classroom assignments, literature, and intentional discussion or group work focused on anti-racism or racial awareness.

Data collection occurred over a four-month period and interviews were 6090 minutes long utilizing an open-ended semi-structured protocol. Co-investigators organized, reviewed, coded, analyzed transcripts, conducted follow-up interviews with participants and submitted the study for peer-review. We ensured trustworthiness and veracity via triangulation and inter-rater analyses (Richards & Morse, 2013, p. 103).

Barriers and Strategies Toward Anti-Racism

Our research revealed three main personal and professional barriers faced by White anti-racist faculty in academia as they engaged in anti-racist educational practices. The participants also provided five main strategies to overcoming barriers that allowed them to participate more fully in anti-racist educational practices both inside and outside of the classroom.

First, our participants described a consistent lack of commitment from their institutions toward anti-racism policies, practices, and pedagogy. Additionally, our participants described how such a lack of commitment produced systemic challenges to tenure and scholarship as they attempted to utilize anti-racist educational practices in their classrooms. Finally, participants shared their internalized struggles with their White racial identity as a barrier to ally work.

Lack of institutional commitment. Several participants described their institutions showing either a lack of commitment or mixed messages toward recommendations of anti-racist policies, practices, and pedagogy through personal pressure on the teacher. As one participant described it, "I'm sort of perceived by the administration as too outspoken on [anti-racism] issues and therefore somewhat dangerous." Another participant described the pressure to be "collegial" and to avoid controversy. "There's a high value placed on a certain kind of collegiality, which often translates to conformity." Many participants felt pressured and isolated, while some reported even being passed over for promotions due to their outspokenness as anti-racist allies. Such perceptions and repercussions posed challenges to our participant's professions.

Challenges of tenure and scholarship. Participants also described their experiences of systemic challenges to tenure and scholarship within the teaching profession. One participant described the faculty committee's responsibility for tenure decisions at his institution as being, "still an old guard of … predominantly

White males who play an important role in tenure decisions… [I am] going to be perceived as 'rocking the boat.'" The participant described how these committees informed him that a candidate for tenure whose focus was on racism or multiculturalism was told that, "We don't really like your focus on racism and multiculturalism. It makes us uncomfortable. It doesn't feel academic, it feels like you're too political." With such barriers in place, many White faculty felt pressure early in their careers to either conform or pay the price professionally in their quest for tenure.

Many described being passed over for either promotions or serving on committees because of their outspokenness. Still early in their careers, participants struggled with these perceptions and expressed concern that it would affect tenure approval. One participant described this resistance to speak out due to fear of professional repercussions, "by the time [faculty] get tenure, which is seven or eight years later, they have this pattern of silence. Some of them never come out of it." It is this culture of fear, or need for self-preservation that is set within a hierarchical system that produces faculty that will not speak out as anti-racist allies, even if they desire to do so. Another participant in our study described why this is problematic for faculty and their students, "You put these folks in the classroom and they probably aren't their authentic self because they're afraid." Thus, the cycle of silence is perpetuated and racism is not fully addressed in the classroom.

Internalized Struggles with White Identity. Generally, faculty felt that they had a great deal of freedom in their classrooms to introduce anti-racist pedagogy, yet may described an internalized struggle with being perceived as nonexperts in anti-racism and equity discourse. Some participants described struggling with the desire for recognition from colleagues of color. As one participant described it, "I think one of the issues for me as a White person is not being acknowledged primarily by African-American faculty members for the work

that I'm doing…it's not even a loss of privilege, it's more a loss of opportunities to work with those faculty members around the same goal…in most instances, I'm not welcome." She went on to describe that she still struggles with this feeling of being left out, but that it has not dissuaded her from continuing the work in her classroom. The struggle that many White allies face with the need for affirmation from people of color can be referred to as the *Black pat*. This need for affirmation for doing "good work" can put undue pressure on a colleague of color to constantly affirm allyship. Seeking a *Black pat* epitomizes White privilege, in which White allies hope people of color will show gratitude for helping (Collins & Jun, 2017). Additionally, when White allies feel hurt, isolated, lonely, or threatened when not affirmed for their allyship work, this is a type of *White 22*. *White 22* is "the feeling of futility that White people feel when they are criticized or challenged while engaged in racial justice" (Collins & Jun, 2017, p. 47). This feeling of futility often results in White allies responding in anger or withdrawing from allyship work. Part of the solution for White allies struggling with the *Black pat* or *White 22* is to have very intentional and private conservations with colleagues of color and ask, "How can I help?" and "How have I *not* helped?" These conversations can assist White allies in the ongoing development of their critical consciousness in regards to racism (Boutte & Jackson, 2014; Collins & Jun, 2017). We discuss this further in our strategies section below.

Another participant focused on her work with students and her perceptions of connections or lack thereof with students. "Even though I'm good at talking about the issues in general, I don't know that I'm really skilled at connecting with students of color in the classroom." It was something she realized that she needed to put extra effort into as a White faculty member in order for a certain level of trust to be established. Many participants described the struggle of upsetting the White students in the classroom and the often-resulting negative course evaluations, but

such barriers typically were overcome because of their belief in the importance of anti-racist pedagogy. Still, early in their careers, participants did struggle with these perceptions, concerned that it would affect tenure approval. Though these barriers exist, many of our participants also described effective strategies for addressing racism within the classroom and at their institution. Though these barriers remain, many of our participants also described effective strategies for addressing racism within the classroom and at their institution.

Strategies

Faculty described five strategies for overcoming personal and institutional barriers to their engagement in anti-racist educational practices. These strategies included challenging current pedagogical traditions, co-constructing knowledge with students, recognizing White privilege as an educator, avoiding the desire to be an "Ally Performer," and taking greater risks in the classroom.

Embrace Critical Pedagogy. In order to effectively teach from an antiracist framework, it is essential to first understand how and why the classroom and curriculum are racist in its construction. One faculty member mentioned the need to gain a "greater awareness of existing systems" within the classroom curriculum in order to know how to "dismantle the way things are currently done in the classroom. Another female faculty member stated that educating ourselves is "crucial." She suggested for White faculty who want to engage in anti-racist teachings and change their curriculum to, "read, read, read about the history of the treatment of African-Americans not just during slavery but during Jim Crow. Read about the history of indigenous First Nations people in the Americas and in Latin America. Read about the treatment of Asians both during the Gold Rush era in California for instance as well as the treatment of Japanese, the internment of Japanese during World War II. Educate yourself about women, about gender, and about the ways that the church has constructed gender often in real violation of the

original languages in Greek and Hebrew." Both of these participants' experiences connect directly with previous research on White faculty that encourages allies to understand that racism exists within institutional structures, to make changes to their courses, and to not remain silent on issues of racism (Boutte & Jackson, 2014).

After faculty gain a better understanding of what the construction of racism looks like in the classroom, faculty should modify their lessons to fit an anti-racist curriculum. The traditional classroom curriculum in the United States was created primarily for White audiences. Throughout a students' academic career, they are exposed to and taught from a mostly westernized curriculum. One faculty member recalled that by "consciously and intentionally decentering whiteness in the curricular choices" and through the delivery of the information, her students become better critical thinkers. Another professor suggested introducing an antiracist framework into the classroom through professional literature. This participant shared "that a solution is to throw enough information at them until they eventually think and begin to arrive at their own conclusions." The intent of antiracist pedagogy is to encourage students to take the literature and the discussions in order to come up with their own conclusions. It takes extra time to allow learners to process the information and arrive at their own conclusion at their own time which is why it is also important to be patient and set realistic expectations. One faculty member mentioned, "Well, I think I expected early on in my career that by presenting some facts, and history people would have an ah-ha experience. It's much more complicated. It's takes much longer, and so that's where I had to develop some sort of patience and think about, 'Okay, the long run.' And not get impatient with myself, and with learners." Another faculty member shared, "It is a labor in the sense of having to be patient to go through this, to know being in the long haul and the curriculum. One book, one film is not going to change things." It is important to realize early in the process that teaching from an anti-

racist curriculum may take a long time for many students to accept and process. Challenging classroom management and curriculum that has been in place for so long will be an arduous task, but a necessary one for progress of anti-racist pedagogy in the classroom to take place.

Co-construct knowledge students. In order to co-construct with the students in our classrooms, one faculty member suggested that we should first share our own stories and mishaps with our students. By sharing personal testimonies, this can help students to trust and open up about their own struggles. This faculty member believed in the significance of, "sharing my own story of being racist or ablest or classist or whatever. I hope and invite students to engage in those conversations themselves, and really just sit in it." She explained how sharing her own stories of unintentional racism had helped to invite students to feel more comfortable with engaging those conversations inside the classroom.

A deterrent for faculty in co-constructing knowledge with students is the fear of relinquishing control in the classroom and making mistakes. As a response to this, one faculty member suggested that educators should not be afraid to fail in this work. This perspective allows more opportunities for the teacher and the students to learn from one another. Another faculty member shared, "I think it is humbling and it's necessary to embrace that part in yourself so that you know you're going to make mistakes." She suggested that when one acknowledges that mistakes are inevitable, it is easier to release the need to be perfect. According to one participant, it seemed as though newer faculty especially felt like they needed to know all of the answers when they are in the classroom. She shared, "We're not a fountain of knowledge." In fact, "I hope they didn't hire me to be that. I can be a facilitator of knowledge. Help me figure out how I can best facilitate your learning as well because again, I'm never going to figure it out in my lifetime." She also shared that any faculty member "who thinks they have all the answers is the worst

faculty member on campus." Part of teaching anti-racism with a co-constructivist lens is to recognize early on in one's teaching career that faculty are learning alongside their students and should embrace humility by recognizing they may not always have the perfect answers.

A few professors shared how much they learned from their students whenever they took risks by allowing their students to influence their lessons. One professor noted that she often felt that she learned more from her students than the other way around when engaging in conversations surrounding race. As an example of co-constructing knowledge, one faculty member shared about a new assignment suggested by her students. She shared, "The best assignment I ever came up with was when a student in class said, 'I hate this assignment you gave us.' I'm like, 'okay, you come up with something better.'" She shared that the student did end up proposing a better assignment and that the students in her class preferred it over her original one. Through that experience, the professor admits that it really was one of the best assignments because of the feedback and suggestions she received from her class. By co-constructing with her students, this professor came up with an engaging assignment the group felt more invested to further pursue.

Although learning with and from students can be beneficial, White faculty should be cautious about relying on students of color to teach the course surrounding race-related topics. It is problematic when faculty look to students of color to be the experts when they are the ones paying tuition to learn from them. Discussions surrounding race-related topics are often presented as lessons primarily for White students. The classroom curriculum is currently set-up for students of color to give information and for White students to be recipients of that information. For both groups to benefit from discussions surrounding race, faculty need to create an environment where everyone can contribute and have equal opportunities as both recipients of the teachings and participants in the overall discussion.

One professor suggested listening to the questions students are asking in the classroom since this can help the professor to best assess the effectiveness of the lessons. The professor shared that the students' questions help her determine, "Are they investigating whiteness and race in general as a socially constructed identity category? Are they understanding that identity is reflective of power and not reflective of an essential state being connected to our biology?" These questions help to determine how to structure her curriculum based on the students' feedback. By relinquishing control in the classroom and co-constructing with students in the classroom while being mindful of the expectations of giving and receiving information for both White students and students of color, the outcome can be far more beneficial for both students and their professors.

Recognize White Privilege. Although multiple faculty members mentioned perceived risks in changing their classroom curriculum, many participants also shared how their involvement in anti-racist practices had actually elevated their reputation around their respective campuses. This is a reminder of why White faculty still need to be aware of the benefit they receive from their racial identity regardless of the progress they make in their own anti-racist development. Even as anti-racist educators, they are still susceptible to *Whitefluenza,* a concept to explain how White privilege is an illness that cannot be fully cured (Collins & Jun, 2017). As an example, one faculty member shared that other members of the university recognized the work he had done and that this recognition had increased people's interests in working with him. In comparison to faculty of color, the results are often not the same. One participant stated that faculty of color who also advocated for anti-racist teachings around the institution and in their classrooms "often become marginalized and seen as a problem in some way." Instead they are seen as "troublemakers." In fact, another professor shared that as a White professor, he does not receive the same backlash because of his privilege as a White male. He

stated that, "Alright, so I would get all of the respect that is possible for a professor. Folks don't confront me much. Like my shorter female colleagues, for example, or my colleagues who aren't White. Man, they get all kinds of crap from their students that I would never get."

Within the classroom setting, another faculty member shared how as a White man, he has an advantage of coming across as trustworthy [to other White students]. Even in anti-racist work, White faculty can still benefit from unearned privileges their colleagues of color may not experience when teaching the same curriculum. There is a double-standard unfairly set for faculty of color when pursuing this work that still allows a more beneficial outcome for White faculty. Though there is perceived risk by White faculty members, they are likely to receive more positive feedback overall for their pursuit of anti-racist pedagogy in comparison to faculty of color, therefore, White faculty must always remain cognizant of their privilege even when pursuing racial justice work.

Resist Ally Performance. Finding allies has often been documented in the literature as an important aspect to consider when pursuing anti-racist work. However, one White faculty member in our study described how some individuals are not allies, rather they become "Ally Performer[s]." Being an ally performer primarily focuses on talking about the work, but not doing the work. It is more reliant on verbal rather than action-oriented methods of involvement in racial justice work. To reference a quote by James Baldwin, originally from his 1966 essay, *A Report from Occupied Territory*, "I can't believe what you say, because I see what you do" (1998). Mere words to convey a public persona of performing allyship does more harm than good. It is important to not simply join conversations brought up in meetings, but to make and be part of decisions that will ultimately head towards progress and not undermine racial equity work. As one of our participants stated, "Thinking of ally-ship is still a productive way of thinking about what it

means, especially as a White person, to listen to, learn from, but also act with, and at times even act on behalf of, but that of course is a tricky one because you don't want to be co-opting some of the story or be putting yourself in a patronizing position of the White savior. I do think that there are times when in conversations with others, White people can step out and speak to their own community in ways that I think could be productive. I think the ally-ship is how I help most students to think about anti-racism."

One participant shared how a colleague once posted on social media about their ally performance in order to gain credit as an ally. The participant shared that ally performance is focused on proving that, "I'm a good White person." Instead, the participant suggested to, "Forget that. That's all about ego, and we need to check our egos at the door when we're going into anti-racist work." This form of allyship is an example of the need for White individuals to again receive the *Black pat* of approval, referenced earlier in this study, for the racial advocacy work that they do (Collins & Jun, 2017). Rather than seeking approval, allyship requires honest and reflective conversations with people of color and understanding how one has both contributed and hindered their success in pursuing anti-racist work.

 In addition, it is also necessary to find allies for those who do not have tenure status. When anti-racist work does not feel valued at the institution, it is especially important for junior White faculty to seek allies who are also doing the work. This is why senior White faculty, or those who have attained tenure must support junior tenure-track faculty who may feel especially reluctant to pursue antiracist work. One participant shared that junior faculty get the advice to primarily focus on your teaching and your research. "I think a lot of anti-racist work, to do it well, even when it's mostly about shaping one's own teaching, that works better if you are connected with other colleagues and peers who are doing the work also." This is especially important when individuals find it challenging to publish because anti-

racism work can take up so much time. One participant made the decision to not publish because the work takes away a lot of time from his pursuit of anti-racist pedagogy.

Non-tenured faculty are in a vulnerable position and therefore allies are also essential to defend you, if and when necessary. As role models in ally work for the junior faculty, senior faculty need to be consistent in what they say publicly and what they do privately. If not, they may continue to perpetuate the challenges and problems White faculty and faculty of color encounter in their pursuit of antiracist scholarship work. According to one faculty member, "When people start gossiping about you because you've done something that annoys them or offends them or upsets them, you need those allies in those other places who are going to say, no, no, I know this person and what you're saying just doesn't make sense…You have to have those allies in place, otherwise you're vulnerable." Having supportive allies rather than "ally performers" is essential when pursuing anti-racist pedagogy and scholarship.

Take Greater Risks in the Classroom. Although levels of freedom can vary depending on faculty status, many of the participants shared that they believe there is more autonomy inside the classroom compared to outside the classroom setting. According to one faculty member, "I really do think that the hard part of being a faculty member, at least at my institution and I suspect this is true in lots of places, it's really the outside of class politics and the outside of class relationships, that's one of the things that's great about being a university professor, you have a lot of autonomy inside your classroom, and as long as you're not steamrolling over students or being a bad teacher, then you can take students to some pretty dangerous places." In fact, "It's not the classroom stuff that gets us in trouble, it's when we speak in faculty meetings, in public settings, at panels that students might invite us to sit on, public forums. That's where it gets more problematic."

The classroom allows for much greater freedom for White faculty to pursue anti-racist pedagogy, especially for those who have achieved tenure status. One participant stated, "If you're a tenured full professor you can kind of do whatever you want. But nobody would ever come to me and say 'Hey, you can't ... you're doing too much of this, back off.' That would just never happen. But what does happen is you don't get invited to be on committees, you don't get advised to be in places where folks who run the university are going to be deciding things. I believe that." Senior faculty with full tenure status should feel especially courageous in pursuing anti-racist work. One participant shared that faculty should not worry too much about the reactions of others to a certain extent, because it is not clear that the reactions are necessarily going to be all bad and what is at stake could be much more positive. White faculty have more freedom to take risks in the classroom than they often realize and therefore should pursue anti-racist pedagogy with less reluctance. As mentioned earlier, finding allies to support White faculty pursuing this work while also recognizing their privilege as White educators will also help them as they implement an anti-racist pedagogical framework in their classrooms.

Discussion: An Inclusive Estuary of Learning

Conversations surrounding diversity education among a dominant White majority population continues to omit the dominant whiteness and anti-racism work that ultimately addresses the challenges of inequity in higher education. Perhaps it is an ever-revolving cycle of privilege that benefits White educators who engage in diversity work and earn greater credibility as they evolve into becoming "woke educators" in their disciplines.   At the same time, we acknowledge the burden of feeling futile, referred to earlier as *White 22*, and that White allies face unique challenges as a result of being in the dominant majority culture. In other words, White faculty will out of necessity, be challenged by people of color for "still not getting it, failing to recognize or re-centering their whiteness, and continue to use

the painful stories of people of color to educate others. Overall, it is not enough to recognize racism in society and the educational system. Educators must become purposefully anti-racist in their pedagogy and scholarship. It is not enough to recognize and address diversity, as diversity is neither the problem, nor the solution. White educators ought to embrace a paradigm of equity and justice.

It is important to acknowledge that some White faculty in higher education have moved toward anti-racist pedagogy. We can point to the participants in our study who were nominated because of their work to dismantle racism and white privilege in the classroom and at their institution. In doing this work, the participants faced significant institutional barriers, including a lack of commitment on behalf of the institution to the dismantling of privilege that threatened younger tenure-track faculty participation in anti-racists efforts. Participants also faced personal barriers, such as their own internalized struggles with White identity, describing their felt and perceived lack of expertise in anti-racist and equity discourse. In what follows, we offer an explanation of whiteness as an estuary, which then leads to a reconceptualization in understanding the role of white educators.

We acknowledge the resistance they experience on an institutional and personal level. However, by unveiling the White faculty members' experiences through implementing anti-racist pedagogy, we offer an emerging model for inclusive excellence in the classroom. The emerging model we submit, the Inclusive Estuary of Learning, consists of the following elements: a utilization of critical pedagogy, an awareness, specifically for White instructors, of whiteness, privilege, critical self-awareness, and the implications of each for the classroom and pedagogy, and the importance of creating an estuary in which co-construction of knowledge is supported.

Estuaries are the unique coastal body of water where one or more rivers or streams meet the ocean. Typically, an estuary is a partially enclosed body of water, or in the case of the Puget Sound, a series of enclosed bodies of water, in which the numerous elements in the salt water from the sea and the fresh water from rivers and streams mix to create a unique and complex environment in which living creatures from seemingly disparate worlds adapt and thrive. For certain marine life, the brackish water created by the mix of sea and fresh water pushes these creatures to adapt in order to thrive in a new environment. For example, salmon spend considerable time in estuaries in order to change their physiology to survive the transition from saltwater to freshwater, and vice versa. Estuaries, with its complex and interdependent systems, create a system of learning and adaptation resulting in life-long changes to the life within it (Pritchard, 1967; Able, 2005).

Utilization of critical pedagogy. An estuary is a fitting metaphor for our conceptual model. White diversity instructors hoping to engage in inclusive, critical pedagogy within their classroom must create a climate in which interdependence is apparent and supported. Co-construction that is inclusive of all of the students is critical, but will only succeed if the instructor has reached a level of self-awareness in regards to their own privilege and the power dynamics associated with it.

Be aware of whiteness. The regular engagement in the exercise of reflection and self-awareness is the recognition that until whiteness is dismantled at their institution, White faculty must remain hyper-vigilant as to the implications of a ubiquitous whiteness on themselves, their classroom, their pedagogy, the larger institution, and the students that come through their doors. The attention given to one's own complicity or potential for complicity, can pave the way toward an environment in the classroom in which co-construction moves beyond a pedagogical experiment and into a necessary, regularly employed practice.

Create an estuary of knowledge. Finally, like all estuaries, there is a recognition of the cyclical nature of a learning environment. An inclusive learning estuary can only survive when the instructor understands the cyclical nature of the educational environment and their full participation it. Healthy co-construction recognizes and celebrates the layered intersections of identity in the students and in the instructor. What can follow is a learning environment in which critical pedagogy is innately and intuitively a part of instruction, regardless of the subject or discipline.

In any estuary, if one critical element is removed, even partially, the result can be its slow death. Instructors need to take into consideration all of the suggestions listed above for a healthy and thriving inclusive estuary of learning with the understanding that as long as they choose to teach, they will engage in the learning process along with their students throughout their careers. Instructors, along with the students, must adapt to the estuary for all to thrive. A classroom in which the instructor is not engaged in the ongoing learning in their discipline threatens to cut off a vital supply to the learning environment that will have a negative effect on their students.

Conclusion

Our participants offered strategies and personal examples that can be foundational to developing content and pedagogical practices in the classroom that serve to foster healthy and effective anti-racist discourse. It begins with an openness to challenging current pedagogical traditions – to deconstruct current practices in the classroom that foster racism. This is an important first step for faculty as they work to construct new pedagogy that is inclusive and learnercentered. Our participants championed the practices of co-constructing knowledge with the students where the teacher serves as an expert guide and facilitator. This requires faculty to be willing to take greater risks in the classroom,

while always being mindful to not over burden students of color or alienate White students. On a personal level, White faculty that participated in our study noted the importance of recognizing their own privileges as critical to their work as anti-racist allies. They also warned us against the proclivity of becoming an *ally performer*, who can cause more harm than good due to an inconsistent commitment to allyship. Dismantling racism and privilege in higher education institutions requires the collective efforts of faculty, staff, administration, the board, and students. It is the intentional intermingling and interdependence of the above, sometimes disparate elements, that are foundational for an *Inclusive Estuary of Learning* that supports both student and teacher to be challenged, to learn to adapt, to grow, and to thrive.

Suggestions for Future Research. While we feel that we found important implications for anti-racist pedagogical practices, we acknowledge that there is still more to be studied. First, we believe that a future study could address the need for White faculty to not unduly burden students of color in the classroom. What would a pedagogical approach that acknowledges prior knowledge of students of color look like without forcing said students to feel as if they were representing their raceethnicity? This study could focus on effective pedagogical practices for faculty teaching across race and other intersecting identities present in their classrooms. We suggest a future study focused on the stories of faculty and administrators of color and their interactions with so-called allies. What have their experiences been with effective White allies or "ally performers?" Finally, we believe a future study could explore the experiences of former White allies, who were once considered "woke" but due to the challenges they encountered, went back to "sleep." Such a study, in which these former allies reflected on their journey, could be helpful in preventing burnout for future White allies.

This study focused on the classroom and the faculty who interact with students in it, and as such, it was an important contribution to this larger discussion

about the dismantling of racial inequity and inequality that persists in higher education. The classroom is a sacred space in that it plays a critical role in the ongoing development of students. For all faculty who are concerned about the students who enter our classrooms, we must work towards making our learning environments a safe space for those students we have been entrusted to teach and look after in their educational journey.

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