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Research for Change: Transforming Policy, Scholarship, and the Classroom through Engaged Research with Communities of Color

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The past year of a five-year campus-community research project marked the release of a substantive report that details broad and deep racial disparities stretching across institutional practices and outcomes, service access, and economic and social conditions. The report has catalyzed an abundance of advocacy opportunities, as the release has opened doors for dialogue with promising signs of reforms appearing within the first year since the report's release. In this article, the principle investigator shares how this research experience has benefited her development as a publicly engaged scholar, including her path towards tenure, her experience in knowledge creation in collaboration with community partners, and her experience infusing this content into her classroom pedagogy and her relationships with students. Her experience affirms that public scholarship holds transformative possibilities for researchers, students, and community partners alike.

The Community-Engaged Research Project and Foundational Report

The partnership described in this article is mid-way through a five-year community-campus collaboration between researchers in the School of Social Work at Portland State University and the Coalition of Communities of Color, a 40-member gathering of culturally-specific service providers with an explicit mission to address institutional racism and disparities, and to promote wellness, justice and prosperity. In existence since 2001, the Coalition brings executive-level staff to the table from culturally-specific organizations such as the Urban League, Asian Family Services, the Native American Youth and Family Services Association, and El Programa Hispano.

The goal of the research project is to document the experiences of communities of color in the county, promoting their leadership role in interpreting institutional and system disparities in numerous arenas including health, education, income, housing, and engagement in human services such as child welfare and juvenile justice. The research has always held an advocacy objective, including that the research work would "arm" the community for advocacy practice by providing ammunition through documenting the difficulties facing communities of color. Such information would provide a definitive base for advocacy practice. The Coalition perceived that a partnership with a university would provide them this credibility.

The primacy of the advocacy objective, in terms of ensuring that research would inform policy practice, responds to Stoeker's (2009) critique of academics who limit their advocacy practice to presenting at conferences and in publications, even among community-engaged research scholars. Stoeker and other advocates of public scholarship assert the value of community-engaged research to move academics into advocacy and action. Such has been accomplished in this research project, as will be detailed below.

Researchers[1] engaged data from the American Community Survey, SAMSA, the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In addition, data was interpreted from an array of administrative databases such as the Oregon Department of Education and the Department of Human Services. We collected existing research reports on health equity, juvenile justice, home ownership lending practices, rental discrimination, and more. This data was synthesized into a major research report that documents the broad and deep disparities that exist between whites and communities of color, while also profiling troubling trends that reveal worsening disparities, worse disparities than a neighboring region (King County, home to Seattle), and experiences locally that are worse than national averages in every dimension studied. Service disparities (such as hiring in public service and juvenile detention rates) as well as systems-wide disparities (such as incomes, low birth rates, and poverty rates) reveal inequities facing communities of color. All the more troubling is that this is a region that prides itself on its "progressive" identity, with the dominant discourse suggesting that institutional racism simply could not exist here.

The report arising from university-community collaborative research has become the definitive document on the status of racial disparities across institutions in the region. It received wide media attention on its release, has catalyzed over 30 invitations to present the work to high-level governmental and institutional bodies, and is referenced time and again in hearings and gatherings where issues facing communities of color are discussed. Most important has been the work of defining policy objectives within the report. Working through consensus, the Coalition members determined the following key recommendations:

1. Reduce disparities with firm timelines, policy commitments, and resources.
2. Expand funding for culturally-specific services.
3. Implement needs-based funding for communities of color.
4. Emphasize poverty reduction strategies.
5. Count communities of color accurately and with concerted efforts to reduce pervasive undercounts.
6. Prioritize education and early childhood services.
7. Expand the role for the Coalition of Communities of Color.

8. Research practices that make racial disparities visible, transparent, easily accessible, and accurate in representing communities of color.
9. Fund community development.
10. Disclose race and ethnicity data for mainstream service providers.
11. Name racism.

University-Community Partnership Roles and the Distribution of Authority

The partnership began with an invitation by the Coalition to Portland State University, an authorizing process that has been essential to creating, for the Coalition, authority in the relationship. The Coalition has initiated and led the research, determined areas of investigation, interpreted the research, developed policy recommendations, and led the development of advocacy priorities. The researchers have prepared the research report, presented findings, and supported advocacy efforts, particularly in the research arena. The allocation of these roles emerged organically, not prescriptively, in order to be responsive to the local context. While the researchers were aware of some conventions around role allocation (Ashkenazy et al., 2011; Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998; Nocolaidis et al., 2011; Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003), the local context dictated focus, methods and priorities, and the Coalition held the sole capacity to direct these throughout the development, implementation, and dissemination phases of the project.

Epistemological Dynamics and Knowledge Creation in Engaged Research

The community's leadership has led this project to generate useful and powerful research, strategic policy recommendations, and, key to the aims of public scholarship, new knowledge creation. The experience has supported my own transformative learning about racial justice, and, as a corollary, facilitated my extension of this work with students in the university. It is these achievements that form the base for this article, details that are sure to reinforce the value and necessity of the public scholarship throughout higher education. This research work is housed within Portland State University, where the legacy of public scholarship is strong and where the motto of the university, "let knowledge serve the city," is matched by the social justice mission of the Portland State University School of Social Work:

> The School of Social Work is committed to the enhancement of the individual and society. We are dedicated to social change and to the attainment of social justice for all people, the eradication of poverty, the empowerment of those who are oppressed, the rights of all individuals and groups to determine their destiny, and the opportunity to live in cooperation.

The combination of the two philosophies explicitly supports engaged practice and research that is more "political" in nature; moreover, the research has compelled me to adopt an "ally" stance with the Coalition (Bishop, 1994; Kivel, 2003) and to remain diligent in extending the work into the advocacy arena, thereby leading to an epistemological stance that is critical, that is transparent about power and influence, and that rejects the stance of objectivity (and thereby connects with the traditions of action research, as articulated by Small, 1995). The starting place for the research, and also for the relationship between myself and Coalition partners, is one that acknowledges racism and white privilege, and understands that it exists and is reproduced through discourse, structures, institutions, and behaviors (Burke, Geronimo, Martin, Thomas, & Wall, 2002; Fanon, 2001; Foucault, 1980; Mullaly, 2006). Simultaneously, dynamics of racism and white privilege have infused engagement with the Coalition and thus created an appropriate "troubling" of the ways the researchers have understood the Coalition and the issues faced by communities of color. In this space, the researchers are viewed as holding liability in terms of comprehension, lived experience, tacit knowledge, and durability of commitment. We have perceived our task as one that would be better navigated through an assumption of "not knowing" (as the opposite of expertise), deep humility (as opposed to competency), and expansive reflexivity throughout the experience.

In hindsight, the relationship with the Coalition would have been impossible with any other epistemological stance. Any cloaking of the researcher's identity with an ethos of expertise, or an assumption of "knowing" the realities and conditions facing communities of color, would have generated suspicion and would have compromised the Coalition's interest in partnering with the university. And, given that the Coalition initiated this relationship, they would have been free to end it. It is presumed that had there been any semblance of the researcher holding superior knowledge or expertise, the relationship would have imploded.

Additionally, as researchers became privy to a wide array of insights and sensibilities of the Coalition members, this lead to much knowledge creation. For example, when the City of Portland revealed that their hiring numbers were equitable for communities of color, Coalition members said, "that can't be true," causing us to dig deeper. If we had followed traditional patterns of objectivity, we would not have troubled these data (as they were data received from high level administrators), nor followed the path of critique of data obtained from the Census Bureau (as these databases are presumed to be accurate, or so conventions as to the "gold standard" of such information would lead us to be believe). Instead, the tacit knowledge of Coalition partners led us to dig deeper and led us to critique conventions that would have generally been unthinkable had we not positioned ourselves to align with the sensibilities of the Coalition members. Were it not for the epistemological supposition that

racism was alive and thriving throughout institutions, we would have accepted the data at face value.

As a result, new knowledge has been uncovered in what we are calling the "politics of data" and the pervasive patterns of white privilege in database creation, administration, analysis and representation. So, too, did our research work uncover more full truths about the nature of racial inequities facing communities of color. If the Coalition had not pushed us to be skeptical of the data, we would not have discovered that the baseline for assessments of hiring parity was outdated (2000 instead of 2009 numbers), overly narrow ("alone" instead of "alone or in combination with other races" figures), and that it held a disturbing convention that precluded many (using estimates of those who were looking for work, instead of measures of the population at large). When we set much more robust baselines for hiring parity, the City of Portland revealed deep disparities in hiring. When they set their own baselines, no disparities were deemed to exist.

As the lead researcher for this project, I did not suspect this pattern of implicit bias to appear in such conventional databases, and I did not know (at the start of this project) to look for it. It is important to note that I came to this work with six years of research experience in detailing the growing gap between rich and poor, two years as research director for the Centre for Social Justice, and another fifteen years in policy advocacy practice. These were not the faults of a new academic, but rather they indicate the depth of the wisdom of leaders of color in the region. Simultaneously, the advocacy stance heightened the likelihood that the research project would be led by the Coalition and that practices of those in mainstream institutions would be approached skeptically.

The Coalition's wisdom and knowledge served to deepen insights and to build important knowledge that is beginning to inform the next stage of advocacy practices. Were there any liabilities to such a stance? Did the advocacy objective hold the seeds for lesser academic stature or compromised quality? To date, no significant liability has emerged from the research. Some institutions have been uncomfortable with the rigor of our critique, but such a reaction is appropriate when the fullness of racism and racial bias is revealed. The findings of the research, coupled with the policy and advocacy practices of the Coalition (and supported by Portland State University researchers), have successfully catalyzed an important opening for reforms.

Research for Change: The Outcomes of Engaged Research

Generating Advocacy Priorities

Movement on disparity reduction efforts has been narrowed due to the deep recession that continues in the region. With unemployment at over 10% and budget deficits pronounced, now is not the time for expanded funding of human and economic services. Instead, the Coalition's advocacy efforts have centered on a cost-neutral approach to reforms – emphasizing the creation of infrastructure that will allow for disparities to be routinely conducted by state, county, city, and school board institutions, and accountability structures incorporated into these institutions.

Support for this agenda flows from several important works, with the first being an in-depth review of four U.S. community change examples (Potapchuk, 2007), and the second being a literature review of "promising practices" in institutional anti-racism change efforts (Curry-Stevens & Ware, 2010). These are named "promising practices" since they have not yet been sufficiently studied to achieve the stance of "best practices." Included in this literature review are those authors documenting successful sector-specific disparity reduction efforts (including Bell, Ridolfi, Finley, & Lacy, 2009; Chapin Hall Center for Children, 2009; Pope, Lowell, & Hsia, 2002). The third allows us to extend our learning into the international arena, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) International Coalition of Cities Against Racism, and their emerging set of five discussion papers that provide member case examples (Icart, Labelle, & Antonius, 2005) to discuss options for developing benchmarks of progress (European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 2006 & 2010).

Developing the infrastructure involved reflecting on the historic experience of the region, our interpretation of the current conjuncture of forces (referred to as "reading the moment" within popular education contained within the works of Barndt, 1989, and VeneClassen & Miller, 2002), and the literature noted above. The key shortcoming has been encapsulated as the need to move beyond the climate of good intentions – because good intentions widen, narrow, and close with the will of those who hold significant policy positions. We need a policy-entrenched infrastructure that grounds disparity identification, monitoring, and dissemination in the very institutions that are responsible for outcomes. In essence, we have determined that the strategy that will best serve communities of color is to reform the very fiber of our institutions: We need to write racial equity practices into the infrastructure of our major institutions, and, by doing so, rewire how our organizations do business. The following are the four key objectives for the coming two years of advocacy practice; these objectives were deeply informed by the engaged research partnership of Portland State University and the Coalition of Communities of Color.

1. Public commitments to eliminate disparities. By making public declarations of commitment to advance racial equity through the elimination of disparities, a declaration of intention is voiced and this serves to notify both internal and external stakeholders that movement is expected. The importance of top leadership statements of commitment to advance racial equity has been well documented (Cross, 1991; Jayne & Dipboye, 2004; Lopes & Thomas, 2006; Potapchuk, 2007). Seattle's progress in this area is serving as a catalyst, as many in public office look to their example; their racial disparities resolution helps us believe that Multnomah County and our regional cities can be inspired to take the same path.

2. Implement research practices that uniformly make disparities visible and eliminate white privilege. Research practices and data collection are essential for tracking disparities (Bell, Ridolfi, Finley, & Lacy, 2009; Burns Institute, n.d.; Potapchuk, 2007). So, too, is the transparency of these data through institutions and to community members. We have identified key research problems that continue to obscure racial inequities facing communities of color, and we are developing a research protocol that will provide tools for assessing current research practices and that include prescriptions for accurate and transparent research practice.

Following the framing of related issues by Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva (2008), we have arrived at an analysis that highlights this pervasive pattern of marginalization, invisibility, and corresponding powerlessness (in not receiving the resources that correspond to numbers) as a feature of white privilege in institutionalized research practices. We define white privilege as the social construction of being white that coexists with privilege in all its forms, including being on the privileged end of history in regards to colonization, slavery, colonialism, and imperialism. White privilege also includes being the beneficiaries of institutionalized and systemic racism, dominant discourses, internalized racism, and individual acts of discrimination and micro-aggressions of racism in everyday life. Accordingly, a robust racial equity agenda must ensure that research practices are understood as one arena for reform. This contribution has been particularly relevant to me as an academic engaged in public scholarship, particularly when working with marginalized communities where dominant discourses prevail throughout all areas of life – including the measurement of the community and its experiences. It is also an advocacy arena where academics are well-equipped as experts and technical advisors.

3. Create accountability structures that ensure disparity reduction efforts are successful. The third pillar of our project is to work with the county, city, and school boards to develop and implement accountability structures that shift movement on disparities away from sporadic intentions and towards structural, entrenched measurement, and performance expectations

together with external accountability practices. Most advocacy work in this region has been built on the strength of relationships and the positive voluntary commitments from allies in public office who are committed to racial equity. Our experience is that such commitments are not durable or consistent and have not been enough to narrow disparities. While relationships and education open the door to moving the work forward, accountability structures will wedge these doors open and keep them open, allowing for efforts to be fortified through clear procedural measures. Current practices are full of promises and good intentions – but without any structures in place to ensure follow-through exists. As communities whose lives are imperiled by these shortcomings, we know we cannot rely simply on promises and good intentions. Monitoring achievements needs to occur "in house" and be subject to accountability by the external groups who are dependent on successful reforms.

4. Implement equity-based funding. The fourth objective arising from this engaged research is to advocate for improved funding for culturally-specific organizations through a mechanism of "set-aside" funding, meaning that in each contract and each funding stream, communities of color get their "fair share" of funds. Culturally-specific organizations hold the trust of their communities, are rooted more directly in local needs and sensibilities, are more likely to engage in advocacy and community development, will hold racism as a central experience of service user, will reject colorblind service approaches, will provide a respite from racism, and will serve people of color as insiders to the organization instead of outsiders. We have conducted a literature review to determine these benefits (Curry-Stevens, Cross-Hemmer, & Coalition of Communities of Color, 2010). We also know that the failure of mainstream service providers to remedy disparities in service delivery shakes our confidence in their capacity to address the needs of our communities – providing more impetus to strengthen culturally-specific services.

Outcomes for Policy: Research on the Community and the Policy Landscape

The wisdom contained within this infrastructure agenda is substantive, as, historically, change efforts in the region have occurred through relationship building among policy makers and community advocates. It has been the strength of relationships that has fostered initiatives in disparity reduction efforts, and the voluntary goodwill of highly positioned allies in taking the work forward. Unfortunately, this has been a vulnerable configuration of efforts to entrust the lives of our communities of color. Using the analogy of an open door, we have relied upon the swinging open of doors to move equity issues forward (with community groups ringing the bell loudly to catalyze attention to the issue), but then these doors have again closed shut. Communities of color have been through many periods of opening and shutting doors, with hopes and expectations raised, and subsequently dashed. We can assert that relying on

these types of change efforts to advance racial equity has failed.

The most important impact of the engaged research project is that it has increased visibility and credibility of the Coalition and its members. In essence, the influence of the Coalition has risen dramatically. In the words of one Coalition member: "The report has put us on the map. And now they [policy makers] have to deal with us differently." Overwhelming numbers of invitations to consult, to sit on advisory boards, to join boards of directors, and to represent the needs of communities of color have emerged from this work. While this is causing its own problems (with the Coalition working on a shoestring budget with only one full-time staff), it is a desirable problem to have. At present, the Coalition is refining its priorities and narrowing advocacy efforts to a few institutions where the prognosis for real reform is positive.

The clarity of the above-described advocacy agenda is a significant achievement and is having an impact on the local policy context. Initiatives have begun such as a department-wide initiative in county human services on a "Visibility Initiative" that aims to standardize research practices across all units and contracted services in ways that reflect the goals and priorities of the Coalition. So, too, has the City of Portland committed itself to implementing our standardized research practices.

In addition, we are having an impact on numerous "request for proposal" funding streams to ensure that communities of color are given recognition in the decision-making process and that commitments to serve communities of color are upheld. This involvement will reverse a pervasive problem whereby mainstream organizations promise to serve communities of color, hire one or two bilingual staff, fail to serve communities of color in a culturally-appropriate manner, and then fail to report results disaggregated by race or ethnicity, rendering this failure invisible.

The work of this project ebbs and flows in response to the conjuncture of doors opening by policy makers, energies and priorities of the Coalition, the status of the political moment, and all that is moving in the legislature and the funding landscape. These are long term struggles and dependent on the invitations that both emerge and those that can be leveraged by the Coalition. It has been important to be engaged in ongoing dialogue about "naming the moment" (Barndt, 1989) and ascertaining the shifting sands of opportunities.

As the lead researcher, my role has changed considerably, and it has been an honor to be viewed as a valuable contributor to the advocacy efforts of the Coalition. My role has been to assist with dissemination activities and to strengthen the advocacy efforts in the research practices arena, which has included the development of a research protocol that guides this process across institutions.

Outcomes for Scholarship: The Researcher as Public Scholar

I am deeply indebted to the Coalition for helping me to learn, and for helping me to be a conduit for bringing these issues to light in the arenas of policy and academia. I am in my final pre-tenure year, and the importance of contributing to new knowledge is a significant asset in this process. To date, new disciplinary knowledge has been generated in two significant areas: white privilege in conventional policy database practices and innovations in policy reforms needed to address racial disparities at the institutional level. Furthermore, the research partnership itself is receiving both support and recognition within Portland State University as an important illustration of civic engagement. There are opportunities to reflect upon the features of the partnership and to consider the possibilities of research work that can truly influence public policy. It is an exciting locale within which to be an academic.

And, yet, as the tenure review approaches, there are pressures to turn this work into more "legitimate" forms. The research report that was published a year ago (Curry-Stevens, Cross-Hemmer, & Coalition of Communities of Color, 2010) may not receive equivalent recognition to even one journal publication. At 150 pages, with approximately 60 external community reviewers (some with Ph.D.s), and with the impact of being accepted as an official document within the Portland Plan, the Portland Public School's Racial Equity Policy, Multnomah County's Diversity and Equity Initiative, and the Portland Development Commission's strategic plan, the report does not hold comparable recognition as conventional scholarship that is written to be published in scholarly journals; this predicament is a strong example of the tensions referenced by Ellison & Eatman (2008) for those involved in public scholarship. Despite our tenure policies recognizing that "high quality and significance are the essential criteria for evaluation" (Graduate School of Social Work, 1997, p.7), I am typically urged to comply with traditional conventions of scholarship and to follow entrenched pathways to tenure. Commentary within our department frequently takes the form of, "Can't you just turn it into a couple of journal articles?" And so, I have capitulated. Sometimes this endeavor is with enthusiasm (such as this article) and sometimes I have done this begrudgingly.

I aspire for the conventions of academic scholarship to be stretched to capture the innovations and impact of this project. Full inclusion would result in this research work (and its equivalents) to be given "full and equal standing" (Ellison & Eatman, 2008, p.iv) and for the knowledge of community partners to be afforded recognition equivalent to those of Ph.D. scholars, thereby democratizing knowledge (ibid).

The rationale for my conviction stretches far beyond my self-interest towards tenure. The importance of research work like this and its outcomes on

disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge needs to be documented. Through the details that follow, such outcomes will be shared. Note that these outcomes are initial and will likely be expanded upon in the coming years of the project.

Outcomes for the Classroom: The Teacher as Public Scholar

At Portland State University, our motto, "Let knowledge serve the city," provides a clear directive in support of such partnerships. Yet, we continue to underestimate the contributions of such work to the university. Fontaine (2006) framed the contributions in conventional forms, emphasizing dissemination through a combination of paths and advocating divergence from peer-reviewed journal submissions and opportunities for students to participate in research. Flicker's (2008) work also emphasized conventional forms in which the university can benefit from community-engaged scholarship, such as grants, publications, improved cultural competence, new dissemination options, and improved data on social issues. She also stretched beyond these elements, asserting the value of new knowledge creation and a commitment to hearing directly from marginalized communities rather than relying on representations of such perspectives.

Fitch and Kirby (2000) recommended educational practices that build passionate learners, reminiscent of bell hooks' (1994) call for education that resists conventions, and connects with students through intellect, emotion, and passion. hooks' work has long inspired me to consider the fullness of avenues to improve the classroom experience – and to remain deeply rooted in the transformative potential of the classroom experience. This research project has provided me with rich insights into how I can build more engaged, responsive and efficacy-enhancing experiences for students. I understand efficacy to be the intersection of skills and confidence – where meaningful content is coupled with effective practice, and the consequence for students being belief in their capacity to engage effectively with communities and their members.

As I articulate these developments, I revisit Boyer's (1990) work to deconstruct the boundaries between research and teaching. The artificial divide between teaching and research, coupled with the academy's tendency to devalue teaching, limits our imagination for how research outcomes can infuse the classroom. Classroom education can be strengthened by public scholarship. Building capable social work practitioners is but one example of the academic outcomes of this publically engaged research project. While I have not intentionally studied teaching through this project, I perceive that this experience is an example of how we need to remain awake to the possibilities of strengthening the student learning experience throughout all our academic responsibilities. I have been afforded such an opportunity this past year with the assistance of Portland State University's "Community-Engaged Research Scholars" program (or CERS), and I have uncovered a substantive shift in my pedagogy,

including the way in which I regard students and the classroom itself.

Previously, students have been understood to benefit from public scholarship by being hired by the project, by having community members deliver guest lectures, and, for Ph.D. students, through the opportunity to become involved in research partnerships. My work has stretched beyond these impacts to consider the complexities of advocacy, efficacy, positional privilege (as academic and as instructor), and complicity in relations of domination. Within CERS, I gathered on five occasions with other such scholars and etched aside time to explore more deeply the complexities of this process and how it affected me. This venue allowed me to consider the tensions within the work, the contradictions in how I viewed myself and the complexities I have faced in navigating my own positional privilege as an academic, and my white identity. While the bulk of this attention was focused on my participation in the research project and lessons learned in the process, I now consider these same dynamics within the classroom. The lessons learned about myself as instructor and the elements I learned about classroom pedagogy, catalyzed by public scholarship, influence my ability to connect with my students as a co-learner.

My status as instructor (and as tenure-stream instructor) is one of deep privilege. Within this framework, I have traditionally sustained a belief about myself as an "exceptional" instructor – meaning that because I am deeply aware of power dynamics in the classroom and one of the "good instructors" who is responsive to the needs of students, I tended towards being "blind" to the ways in which I reproduced dominant power relations within the classroom. This dynamic of "exceptionality" has been described by Thompson (2008) in terms of the the ways that white students tend to distinguish themselves from other whites and become judgmental about the deficiencies of their peers. I began to have the courage to cast a critical eye on how my classroom pedagogy revealed my own inadequacies. I have consistently received excellent student evaluations, and I have held an untroubled stance regarding my pedagogy, with a dose of self-satisfaction when I compared myself with my instructional colleagues – and this is where I got into trouble. In essence, my stance of exceptionality resulted in tolerance for my own shortcomings. In these reflections, I noticed that I had not been paying sufficient attention to the importance of building student confidence and efficacy for practice. Students had occasionally delivered this feedback and suggested I did not sufficiently build their confidence for practice. In hindsight, I think I wanted to retain too much control in the classroom, and believed (in detrimental ways) that I had so much content to provide them, that I let this overshadow building their confidence to practice. What then are my solutions? There are three to profile.

Modeling Critical Self-Reflection. I use my community-engaged research scholarship to generate case studies for various lectures. One example is the profile of a conflict which emerged with the Coalition when I assumed I

understood their advocacy needs but, in fact, did not. In my work with students, I share the details of this experience, how we navigated the conflict and what I now understand to be the roots of this conflict (which was a stance of exceptionality as an advocacy-rooted scholar, which led me to presume I knew what research would best support their advocacy practice). Students have repeatedly given voice to the importance of not just learning from the materials I bring to them but also from my sharing my own mistakes and lessons learned as a public scholar; this disclosure has rendered me more fallible and, simultaneously, more accessible in the classroom. A student's comment encapsulates the benefits of this approach: "I think it's really valuable to hear about the work you are doing and, too, the mistakes you have made. It lets me be free to make mistakes too." I now believe that this is at the root of successful pedagogy – that showing one's mistakes is likely to be more important than showing one how to practice. Since a core goal in our academic program is to advance critical self-reflection, it is essential that this be modeled in the classroom. There is abundant material in my work to illuminate in this way – from how we came close to losing the trust of the Coalition, to how I have failed to share power with Coalition partners, to lost opportunities to make direct "asks" of institutions where we were invited to present, to the ways I failed to understand the political realities of communities of color, to the lack of courage I have shown in pressing institutions towards reforms.

This reflection has renewed my conviction about the importance of self-disclosure in the classroom and its direct links to modeling critical self-reflection (a lifelong skill we need our graduating students to embrace) and to the implicit idea that mistakes are a natural part of practice and what matters more is how we learn from them. As an instructor who prepares students for community social work practice, I know how essential it is that students be able to understand their own power as professional social workers and reject the "expert" stance as one that distances their ability to empathize and stand in solidarity with service users and community members. I now see how revealing my own shortcomings, sharing my process of critical self-appraisal, and tying these to practice in the community serves to promote efficacy among students.

Modeling Lifelong Advocacy. The second learning outcome is that my teaching also benefits from being able to illustrate to students that I aim to "walk my talk" in my work outside the university. Numerous course evaluations and classroom reflections show the value that students place on engaged scholarship and efforts to work against discrimination in the local region. They see me committed in more of a lifelong way to the principles I help develop among my students. One phrase stated by a student remains with me: "The things you talk about in class. . . you don't just go back to your desk job – you live them in the community." Cochrane-Smith (2000) wrote about this dynamic that students will measure our reliability and authenticity not by what we say, but by how we work to advance equity both inside our institution and more broadly in the community.

Her perspective is that this is most acute among students of color – that our credibility is contingent on how well we are willing to advocate for communities of color in other walks of their lives.

One caution needs to be expressed in using community-engagement practice in the classroom. Students can be dissatisfied with the ways in which instructors are less frequently available to them outside of the classroom. I have recently experienced about 5% of students saying in their course evaluations that I am "overly consumed" with community research and that perhaps I need to reconsider the balance of my research and teaching responsibilities. While community-rooted research work does tend to fluctuate in terms of roles and hours of work, we do need to defend against efforts to curtail public scholarship.

Using a Case-Study Based Curriculum. Third, students benefit from my research through my emphasis on case study-based teaching. Given how engaged students are when we use my own case studies for teaching, I have begun to experiment with and expand this teaching modality over the last two years. I had been disillusioned with conventional measures of student practice, with our over-reliance on essays to assess students' grasp of material and considerations of how to apply concepts to practice. A few years ago I began experimenting with various pedagogical approaches in the classroom that allowed for me to gain a window into how students actually practice social work – rather than how they write essays about their intentions to practice social work. I find that case studies fill this need, as they:

> . . . offer a powerful means of helping social workers acquire problem-identification and problem-solving skills. . . [students] come up with differing positions even thought they all start with the same case. . . . Continued encounters with ambiguity and learning to tolerate it, while avoiding a rush to judgment, can build confidence in meeting similar problems in professional practice. (Fauri, Wernet, & Netting, 2004, p.6)

While such skills are developed through student practicum experiences (they are in practicum settings throughout their two-year MSW program for between two-to-three days per week), our community practice students typically work with just one community per year. Their exposure to the breadth of communities is thus limited, although deep in practice with one community. Case studies fill this gap and provide additional benefits. While I have used a combination of my own cases as well as those provided in other texts (Fauri, Wernet & Netting, 2004; Rivas & Hull, 2004), I have begun to ask students to prepare their own case study reviews for presentations to the class. Through these four-to-five page case studies, I am able to design assignments and classroom activities that flow from the real-world experiences of social workers. Inspired

partially by the growing literature on the use of case studies in business (with Harvard University Business school configuring all student classrooms around this concept), I have used case studies to guide practice preparation in the following ways: assessment of what the social worker did during the case, what practice theories s/he seemed to draw from, what alternative theories might better inform practice, and to map out intervention plans, including a transcript of an imagined engagement in the case. The strengths of this approach are many: To begin, the case studies allow for a leveling of case information between teacher and the student, which makes assessment of student practice much more appropriate as we have the same information to draw upon (rather than, as has happened in the past, my guesswork at what they accurately interpreted and what they interpreted erroneously). I have also found case studies to be particularly promising as a practice in online teaching. Students can read the case study and engage with practice dimensions very well in online discussion forums.

Grading case study papers is interesting and gratifying, as I can observe student achievements much more specifically, and I also can identify shortcomings in student assessments and practices, and provide concrete recommendations about what students missed and can improve upon. Without my own case assessment (as is only possible with case studies that I have read at depth), I am hindered in both accurately grading student learning and in providing useful feedback.

Moving Forward with Public Scholarship

These last three years have been significant in terms of influencing the community, the policy landscape, my scholarship and pathway towards tenure, and my classroom practice. The influence of this public scholarship has stretched broadly across these arenas.

Public scholarship has also truly influenced an array of reforms in public policy, and in building the legitimacy of the Coalition of Communities of Color – without which the good intentions of policy makers would wane. So, too, has it firmly moved me towards tenure, while also benefitting the university: In the words of one of our administrators, it has "put us on the map" in terms of community-relevance on issues of racial justice. So, too, has it catalyzed new energy and invigorated a sense of possibility to examine possibilities for increasing student efficacy for practice. The learning I experienced in reviewing how notions of exceptionality played out in my role as principle investigator was also repeated in the classroom, and, once shattered, I was able to define improved avenues for increasing student preparation for practice. These were unexpected benefits of this project. I believe that there will be many more ways in which public scholarship transforms the academy, and I commit myself to maintaining vigilance over openings as they might appear.

[1]A word about language: The author of this article is the principle investigator for this research. The research team at the early stages of the project was as large as five members, but over the last year has been just one member – the principle investigator. As such, in the initial stages of the research, the research is framed as "we" and a "team" for the work. In the latter stages, the language is singular, and in the reflections on the impact on the researcher, the language used is "I" in order to be transparent in to whom the benefits of this work accrued. "I" am white, 50 years of age, and more recently an academic after 25 years of work in community-based organizations, some of which were research-based advocacy organizations. The research team, in its early configurations, was multi-racial.

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