

## **Diversity, Critical Multiculturalism, and Oppression: Interaction and Transformation\*\***

The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity. . . . The pursuit of full humanity, however, cannot be carried out in isolation or individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity; therefore it cannot unfold in the antagonistic relations between oppressors and oppressed. No one can be authentically human while he [or she] prevents others from being so.

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Transformative cultural change engages a process at the crossroads of our social, political, and personal identities, while challenging historical narratives. The exploration of culture and diversity is an interactive, continually expanding and shifting process that requires the inclusion of multiple voices and lenses. Change is negotiated in the spaces between and across the personal and the social/political.

The complex, ever changing mosaic of people, places, and environments in the United States (U.S.) creates a rich environment for engaging, evaluating, and understanding the process of multicultural change from a critical perspective. The history is multifaceted, framed by the interaction between national and global politics, building from the riches of diversity while also steeped in issues of oppression (see Zinn, 2003 for a review of the history). The dynamics of diversity and marginalization in the U.S. are not frozen in time and consequently, the narrative is dynamic and living as change occurs at the local and the global levels. Reclaiming a collective past that includes significant junctures of violence and oppression is empowering and provides the base for moving forward through the strength of multiple identities.

Over the past two years a process was enjoined to explore issues of diversity, power, oppression, and social and economic justice under the umbrella of the *CSWE Sponsored Diversity Conversations*. Members of the Commission for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice (CDSEJ), the CSWE Diversity Councils (Council on Disabilities and Persons with Disabilities; Council on Racial, Ethnic and Cultural Diversity; Council on the Role and Status of Women in Social Work; Council on Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression), and the Affiliated diversity groups (American Indian Alaska Native Social Work Educators' Association; Asian and Pacific Asian and Pacific Islander Social Work Educators' Association; Association of Latino Social Work Educators; Black Social Work Educators; Korean American Social Work Educators Association) critically explored diversity and powered relationships, intersectionality, and the linkages with social and economic justice. (List of participants and description of process is attached.)

Each participant brought rich experience, the wisdom of multiple identities, and the voices of their communities and others with whom they have worked to the conversation. An inclusive space was created that engaged multi-dimensional learning. Underlying the work of the Committee was the focus on social justice, human rights, and transformation. Listening and respecting were core to the learning and the reflection on the convergence and divergence of both difference and inclusion provided a platform for analysis. As Bambara (1981) shared, "We have got to know each other better and teach each other our ways, our views, if we're to remove the scales . . . and get the work done" (p. vii). This was a process engaged by participants as they explored issues of diversity and power across overlapping dimensions.

Recognizing the complexity of intersecting dimensions of diversity created the framework for broad inclusion along with the space for maintaining the value of strong identities of diversity as the foundation for anti-oppression practice. Multiple forms of diversity, which cut across race/ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, nationality, religion, ability/disability, and class, were recognized as core dimensions along which social systems overlay structural mechanisms of oppression. Ultimately, the focus was on supporting social justice and human rights for all people. Diversity, when claimed, holds the potential to ignite creativity, which underlies the development of new change models. This framework supports the development and teaching of anti-oppression models and theories that are healing at multiple levels.

### **Diversity, Power, and Inclusivity**

We can legitimately say that in the process of oppression someone oppresses someone else; we cannot say that in the process of revolution someone liberates someone else, nor yet that someone liberates himself, but rather that human beings in communion liberate each other. ---Paulo Freire (1994, p. 114)

The goal of the *diversity conversation* process was to create a format for engaging the discussion of diversity and the dismantling of oppression within a context that invites participation and inclusion. As noted by Audre Lorde (1983), “There is no hierarchy of oppression” (p. 3) and Martin Luther King, Jr. (1990), “An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” (p. 172). As they observed, anti-oppression work that is not inclusive does not dismantle the mechanisms that create the power imbalances, which results in some groups having privilege at the expense of the *other*. Bernice Johnson Reagon (2000) is insightful in her observations,

“We’ve pretty much come to the end of a time when you can have a space that is ‘yours only’—just for the people you want to be there. . . To a large extent it’s because we have just finished with that kind of isolating. There is no hiding place. There is nowhere you can go and only be with people who are like you. It’s over. Give it up” (p. 1105).

Multiple theories/perspectives shape and reshape how we build on the complexity that is diversity and expand our understanding about how it contributes to building social and economic justice. Iris Young’s (1990) five faces of oppression (exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, violence) provide a framework for assessing intersecting dimensions of oppression (see discussion in Sisneros, Stakeman, Joyner, & Schmitz, 2008). The oppression/anti-oppression continuum captures the spectrum of both material and non-material consequences that accrue to individuals or groups based on perceived or actual identity. Also related is the power/privilege continuum.

The mechanisms of oppression are both covertly and overtly implemented. Conscious and unconscious attitudes and behaviors contribute to the pervasiveness of oppression. The power/privilege continuum adds depth to the assessment and recognizes that individuals are differently located and situated, in part based upon constructions of their place in society and their described identity/identities. The power/privilege dynamic questions the supposition that we are all created equal and explicitly recognizes that race/ethnicity, gender, sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, national origin, ability/disability, and class provide a wide array of both advantages and disadvantages for group membership and access to resources and power. Anti-oppression work is the conscious enactment of personal and political strategies to confront

and eradicate the consequences of oppression along the dimensions of the power/privilege continuum.

Critical multiculturalism provides a framework for identifying and comprehending the intersecting mechanisms of oppression and the “power relations of difference” (Sisneros et al., 2008, p. 3). Class is recognized as central as it interacts with race and gender; the historical operation of power; and, the role of power relations in shaping consciousnesses. The fallacy of objectivity is surfaced and cultural construction of relationships is recognized. Emancipation, social construction, and a dedication to eliminating suffering create a model that links ending oppression with building social and economic justice.

Identity is an integral part of our core sense of self. It is the consistent yet potentially flexible way we negotiate who we are in the world and with others. Identity development is mediated by group memberships of various kinds—related to both physical characteristics and individual choices about where and how we fit with others on a wide continuum of preferences and abilities. Identity shapes what we see, think, feel, believe, and value; and, therefore contributes greatly to our own worldview as well as what we assume about the worldview of others *not like us*. Identity formation itself incorporates a sense of power and privilege depending on the cultural and social context in which it occurs. It also leads to an understanding of *intersectionality*, the recognition that our intersecting identities are neither one identity nor another. They are dynamically intertwined and reflect different levels of privilege and access to power.

Many models that explore identity are developmental in nature and based on the assumption of stages, which are progressed through in either linear or non-linear ways. Sisneros, et al. (2008) explore Helms’ model of black racial identity development and her model of white racial identity development. These are stage models, which are then adapted to explore identity development across gender and sexual orientation. There are other models that are more holistic and multi-dimensional. Some models are more inclusive in considering cultural and community contexts. Horse’s (2001) nonlinear identity development model for Native American’s incorporates storytelling, group context, language and culture, history, traditions, and spirituality. Rivera (2005) explores Puerto Rican identity development based on chaos theory, which supplies the platform for a liquid model that addresses the interchange between cultural complexity and identity.

The power of relationships is vital to social justice work. Relationships are key to our work with the people we serve and their families and communities, others professionals, and decision makers. Through relationship an environment can be created that cultivates social and economic justice, respect for human rights, and a context for healing on micro and macro levels.

The creation of critical consciousness—the perception of the historical, social, political, and economic contradictions, which form the impetus for oppression and maintain the status quo—through the reflection and action of Freire’s (1994) dialogic action are required to transform the situation. This is key to the process of humanization and liberation (Freire, 1994). Central to resolving the dehumanization-humanization contradiction in Freire’s (1994) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is love and dialogue (relationship). Dialogic action engages cooperation, unity, organization, and cultural synthesis.

Cultural synthesis and co-intentional education, the simultaneous education of both teachers and learners, are central to change that is liberating. Synthesis demands new knowledge to inform

new action—action that humanizes us all. The variety of perspectives built on the action implied by Freire’s (1994) lifelong emancipatory work includes privilege and power, oppression and anti-oppression, structured racism, and dynamic identities. A critical trans-cultural framework attempts to integrate the multiplicity of these perspectives. Unless the assumptions underlying institutional rules are questioned, the systems that maintain oppression retain their power (Young, 1990). “The dismantling of oppression is a mission for everyone” (Sisneros et al., 2008, p. 10). The challenge is in resisting oppressive forces, regaining humanity, and creating change that neither perpetuates current power hierarchies nor uses current tactics of oppression (Sisneros et al.).

Cultural synthesis affirms the worldview of actors who critically analyze the current reality and together “intervene as Subjects in the historical process” (Freire, 1994, p. 162). Language and narrative, which are socially constructed, are closely tied to culture and identity and serve as a medium for constructing our understanding of *reality*. The circular nature to this process means language and narrative are tools for conceptualizing and creating change. Because language is at the core of our identity, exploration without familiar language is frightening as people grapple to make sense of context and strive for continuity. It is in re-negotiating the existing definitions of words or phrases that a new meaning or social purpose can be found for greater benefits to humankind. For instance, including economics in the language of the conversation on social justice acknowledges the historical basis of poverty as fertile grounds for oppression and privilege as well as the opportunity it offers for anti-oppression work.

### **Social Work Practice for Justice**

Social workers, including social work educators, have always been at the forefront in fighting oppression and social injustice while embracing diversity and creating spaces for inclusivity. Further, since its inception, social work and social workers have been involved within the broader context of the local global interchange. The *battle* has not always been an easy one, sometimes filled with potholes, limited vision, and roadblocks (physical, social, cultural, and emotional).

First and foremost, context is both central and ever shifting. In part, this is a result of changing political, social, and economic conditions. Models of practice for this century require collaborations from both inside and outside the system; they are often interdisciplinary and engage methods at the micro and macro levels. Confronting and eradicating oppression is an ever changing and evolving process that includes continuous analysis of individual, group and social dynamics; collaboration and community building; and challenging the structures that maintain oppression.

The mission of the social work profession provides a framework for engagement.

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values that includes service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity and competence. (NASW web page, 2005).

To meet this mission, social workers must practice with a balanced awareness of self and others. This presumes a process of reflection about one’s own worldview and time spent learning the

practices and worldview of other individuals and communities. Among the most significant skills are the ability to listen and observe beyond one's own socially constructed cultural base. While there is much discussion in the literature about cultural competence and diversity, the language often appears contradictory and inadequate without a platform from which to build. What is needed is a context for understanding the dynamics underlying the issues and an exploration about why it is important to engage in learning about working across cultures (and practicing accordingly).

The ecosystems framework provides a conceptual model for social work practice that has the potential to embrace an understanding of oppression as a complex multi-layered concept. This framework assumes a multidimensional quality, all of which adds to the complexities of the issues with which we are dealing. The cross systems influences and factors are recognized. One's location occurs at the intersection of race, class, gender, sex, sexual orientation, ability, the sociopolitical climate of the community in which one resides, and one's educational background. This location changes with age, shifts in the socio-political and economic priorities, and improvement/deterioration of community and neighborhood. At this level, there are various ways to explain how and why individual, family, communal, and societal responses and experiences of different "isms" originated and were passed on. None, however, offers a complete explanation, or if it does, it does so for a particular context. There are multiple ways of being, and multiple ways of understanding the human condition.

A range of models exists that builds on the ecosystems framework. These include the model of intersectionality (Sisneros et al., 2008) and circles of healing. Circles of healing are prominent in native/indigenous models and also in the field of restorative justice (Pranis, 2005). Intersecting and circle models support inclusive practice with the potential to nest culture within culture. These models provide a framework for inclusive and expanded organizational practice that builds strength through creating models of practice that embrace multiple identities.

Indigeneity is a holistic, relational model, which embraces environmental sustainability while respecting and protecting first nations/indigenous cultural ways of being (Durie, 2002). It is an inclusive process model for empowerment at the family and community levels. The discussion of current efforts to "reclaim and reconstruct" cultures, especially those that have been totally annihilated is central. The work to reclaim and reconstruct includes everyone, oppressed and oppressor. The focus is on protecting the environment while improving living conditions for generations to come. It embraces the ideal of protecting the rights of indigenous people to define and decide their destinies. Strategic economic development, academic achievements, cultural and linguistic preservation and perpetuation, and relationship building and rebuilding are core to this movement.

Context surrounds global movement toward establishing an expectation of basic human rights. Horrified by the atrocities of World War II, the world's nations created a Universal Declaration of Human Rights that would express the sentiments of member countries. Historical models of unification and relationship building among nations were sought. Article 2 of the *Universal Declaration* focuses the discussion of equality and broader freedoms on the basic rights of people worldwide.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. (United Nations, 1948)

At the international level, a human rights framework around violence—slavery, torture, and terrorism—was established with political power and protocols supported by governments, but it did not include women’s experience for many years. In worldwide conferences since the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985) however, women have talked, formed relationships, and constructed strategies to make their own governments more accountable (Freidman, 1995). Globally, women’s groups have worked to mainstream as human rights concerns issues of violence against women—from domestic violence to sexual exploitation and the consequences of war and occupation. With the inclusion women, agendas have been transformed, the hierarchy of rights challenged, and civil and political rights have claimed a prominent location (Friedman). Then in July 2010 that the United Nations created UN Women as a united entity to bring together United Nations offices working gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women becomes operational January 2011 (UN News Centre, 2010).

Both historical factors and contemporary social arrangements complicate local and global relationships. Racism, sexism, ageism, nationalism, classism, ableism, and heterosexism connote a discriminatory intention on the part of the dominant power group, which often positions itself superior by subjugating others as being inferior, thus gaining privileges and benefits across many institutions of our society. The resource imbalance between the privileged and the underprivileged is structurally based. Consequently, social work advocates for positive change are upholding the professional values of change toward social justice and respect for human dignity. Focusing on justice, democratic action, and moving beyond the violence of oppression creates positive change.

Although individuals may experience and endure serious disapproval, discrimination, and denial that are enacted in a thousand small ways on a daily basis, it is state sanctioned (genocide and slavery at its most extreme) and structured oppression that have disastrous consequences as expressed through patterns of economic exploitation and lack of accessibility to the social contract. Patterns of racism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, and sexism lead to exclusion from neighborhoods/communities, jobs, schools, politics, and health and mental health care that lead to greater risk of arrest and incarceration, greater exposure to environmental hazards, and lower life expectancies.

Models of rebuilding, empowering, and healing recognize, respect, and center cultural context and the transformative power of relationship. Many human and ecological problems facing us continuously stem from relational injustice as we interact with one another based on ill-defined notions, unfound biases, inadequate knowledge, and lack of empathy. Thus, relational justice, a model congruent with the core value domain of social work, supports a re-conceptualization of diversity relationships and power. Labeling humans according to a preconceived notion can be a tremendous force in connecting or dividing people and nations.

Restorative justice is a relationship based approach to justice. It is a transformative model of practice focusing on repairing the harm and meeting the needs of all stakeholders. Energy is concentrated on creating bridges to healing. Processes of listening, sharing, repairing, and healing are engaged. This model cuts across the micro to macro levels, used locally and globally. The truth and reconciliation work coming out of multiple countries, including South Africa exemplifies this model of relational justice. It is also a model used within criminal justice systems in the U.S..

## **The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Social Worker: Shifting Environments and Expanding Knowledge**

The social work profession has a commitment to social justice and the protection of human rights and dignity of all people. Students graduating and practicing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are entering an environment that is increasingly complex for them and for the people with whom they work. Our students can no longer avoid operating within a global context in which they can become leaders for positive change. To succeed in this global environment, learning must be an ongoing process and knowledge development never-ending. The complexity of the world our students are graduating into also requires an ongoing process of learning for faculty as teachers and scholars.

It is no longer adequate to focus on the local or even the national. Our graduates are part of a global environment in which they will grapple with complex issues. Their world is one of global conflict requiring creative models of peace building, global migration resulting from increasing poverty, environmental degradation, and war/conflict. The issues are interconnected and will continue to impact traditionally marginalized individuals and communities disproportionately. Social work faculty are at the forefront of creating responsive intervention models and knowledge about dismantling the oppressions that keep the system in place.

To be proactive it is imperative that stakeholders have easy and quick access to this information. Curriculum development is another vehicle for transmitting necessary information to future social workers. Courses, exchanges, and field education that feature or integrate diversity, critical multiculturalism, and anti-oppressive issues offer opportunities for expanding conceptualizations and practices. The CDSEJ website will serve as a clearinghouse for providing information and also linkages to related sites. It is essential for social work faculty and students to have access to information about the changing landscape and local global interface. With these tools, social work faculty, students, and graduates can find the knowledge and support to bring about change. Some of the issues that social workers will face within the communities we serve include:

- Environmental Sustainability
  - Unpredictable and extreme weather conditions
  - Pollution and environmental disasters created by human behavior
  - Forced occupation of indigenous lands and creation of policies that prohibit indigenous people from accessing their natural resources
  - The disproportional impact, trauma, and recovery needs of marginalized/oppressed communities
  - The increased pressure on populations marginalized by race, gender, and class
  - The connection between environmental justice and anti-oppression work
- Economic Unpredictability
  - Increases in extreme poverty and the impact on already marginalized populations
  - New economic parameters that cut across economic groups and impact on the lives of people/families who will not recover from the economic downturn
  - Poverty maintained institutionally and systemically
- Global Migration

Economic, political, environmental, and religious refugees

Global poverty and the increase in hate and targeted violence aimed at communities of color

- War and Global Violence

Practice (individual, community, and political) focused on recovery and healing

Learn from global peace models including truth and reconciliation models

Create models of peace building

- Community building

Strategies for developing future generations (importance of higher education)

Representation of voices in leadership and decision-making

- Organizational violence and decreasing civility

Respect for diversity and presence of empathy

Recruitment and retention from diverse communities

Development of mentoring cultures that move toward change

Identify unspoken narratives and organizational abuse

Develop empathetic organizations and narratives of justice

The changes are rapid and multi-faceted; and, the issues and players are interconnected and interrelated. Communities that have been marginalized bring the knowledge and resources for exploring the issues and creating systems of change. The overarching paradigm of oppression, power, and privilege offer a framework for transformative practice and research. Educational ventures and knowledge building activities are part of the dynamic interchange of building relationships and creating bridges. As Martin Luther King, Jr. (1990) noted “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly” (p. 172). Just as our histories are not separate, neither is our future. This context engages the local, national, and global and provides the basis for anti-oppression work, peace-building, and social justice.



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## **CSWE Sponsored Diversity Conversations**

### **Participating Groups**

Commission for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice (CDSEJ); and the CSWE Diversity Councils and Affiliated Diversity groups, through their representation in the CSWE Sponsored Diversity Conversations and on CDSEJ.

#### Diversity Councils:

- Council on Disabilities and Persons with Disabilities
- Council on Racial, Ethnic and Cultural Diversity
- Council on the Role and Status of Women in Social Work
- Council on Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression

#### Affiliated Groups:

- American Indian Alaska Native Social Work Educators' Association
- Asian and Pacific Asian and Pacific Islander Social Work Educators' Association
- Association of Latino Social Work Educators
- Black Social Work Educators
- Korean American Social Work Educators Association

### **Process**

The first meeting for this project took place in Alexandria, VA April 22-23, 2008 with follow up meetings in October 2008 and March and November 2009. The group was charged with exploring issues of diversity, intersectionality, and social and economic justice. Members from this group also worked in subgroups\* to further process the issues, frame an overarching context, and develop a format for presentation. The subgroups were active in the formation of both process and framework. Participants did not want to produce a document locked in time and therefore, created a structure that is web-based. Members of CDSEJ, the Diversity Councils, and the *CSWE Diversity Conversation* group approved this format during the November 2009 meetings. Finally, the members of CDSEJ along with representatives of the Diversity Councils and Affiliated Groups met in March 2010 to work on the website and the final report.

The participants brought a wealth of experience and were diverse on multiple levels. They were leaders in the field of social work who have committed their lives to dismantling oppressing, building knowledge, and bridging gaps. The process was fruitful and participants recommended a structure that will maintain flexibility and responsiveness and establish and maintain an ongoing feedback loop responsive to changing conditions and knowledge. The goal is to create and maintain an interactive, multi-dimensional, and dynamic website that addresses social and economic justice issues as applied to social work education, including research and practice issues. This structure will link the Center for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice, CDSEJ, the CSWE Diversity Councils, and the Affiliated Groups. These groups will have responsibility for quality control, critical development, and maintenance of the website. The Center for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice will provide oversight and coordination of this effort.

Participants noted the multi-dimensional complexity of exploring the broad range of topics folded under the umbrella of diversity. After an exploration of the inadequacy of the word diversity, it was decided to move beyond this discussion to focus on the underlying dimensions of diversity that are subject to institutionalized mechanisms of oppression. This shift is noted in the report, “Rethinking Diversity in Social Work: Changing Complexities”, produced summer 2008. Much of the underlying framework from this document is incorporated into this report.

Underlying the work of the *Committee* is the focus on social justice, human rights, and transformation. Diversity reflects the convergence and divergence of both difference and inclusion. Diversity, when claimed, holds the potential to ignite creativity, which underlies the development of new change models. Multiple forms of diversity, which cut across race/ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, class, nationality, religion, and class, are core dimensions along which social systems overlay structural mechanisms of oppression.

The goal is to create a format for engaging the discussion of diversity and the dismantling of oppression within a context that invites participation and inclusion. Building from Young’s (1990) five faces of oppression model, a framework emerges that allows for the intersection across the dimensions of oppression (Sisneros, Stakeman, Joyner, & Schmitz, 2008). Recognizing the complexity of intersecting dimensions of diversity creates a model for broad inclusion that maintains the value of diversity as a base for anti-oppression practice.

A framework was established that supports the development and teaching of anti-oppression models and theories that support practice models that are healing at the multiple levels. Ultimately the focus is on supporting social justice and human rights for all people. Because learning is an ongoing process and knowledge development is never ending, publishing this information needs to engage a process that has the potential to shift with changing conditions and needs. Consequently, the primary product will be an interactive website.

### **Outcome [See the CDSEJ Website]**

As the *CSWE Sponsored Diversity Conversations* met across a two-year period from 2008-2010 in large and small groups, on site and virtually, they came to recognize the changing nature of diversity relationships. Consequently, members did not want to produce a document locked in time and therefore created a structure that is web-based and will maintain flexibility and responsiveness with the potential for maintaining an ongoing feedback loop responsive to shifting conditions and knowledge. The goal was to create and maintain an interactive, multi-dimensional, and dynamic website that addresses social and economic justice issues as applied to social work education, including research, knowledge building, theory development, and practice issues.

The issues are complex, dynamic, interconnected, and ever changing and social work faculty easy and quick access to emerging issues, knowledge, and resources. Rather than create a written document that is locked in time interconnected websites will provide the opportunity to create a *living* resource. The websites will provide a platform for making the most current knowledge accessible through multiple formats, including a clearinghouse for media, web, and print resources; curriculum models and educational material; change narratives and narratives of change agents. Further, the goal also includes the development of learning opportunities and models so that social work faculty will have easy access to new information and the knowledge needed to fulfill their role as educators.

Interactive websites will allow easy access to current resources and engage a process of creation, training, networking, and facilitating change. The Overarching Framework (below) and The Building Blocks for Change (in development) will be posted on the CDSEJ website with links to the Diversity Councils and Affiliated Groups. As noted above, the CDSEJ will provide oversight, stressing the dynamic potential at the intersections of diversity. The diversity councils will serve as a clearinghouse to maintain relevant information specific to their respective communities. Information will be posted, books reviewed, and resources such as interactional games will be highlighted for use in the classroom. The website will provide a proactive and cutting edge way to disseminate relevant updated information on oppressed groups

*Future Plans: Creating and Linking Dynamic Opportunities for Learning*

1. Immersion trips for social work faculty to learn about other cultures as a way to support the development of mastery/knowledge building that could be translated back to the classroom and overall learning environment. This would include not only trips that are international but also work on going in the reservations, urban areas, barrios, and isolated rural communities suffering with poverty and marginalization.
2. Training for faculty and graduate assistants who want to teach the content and feel a need to expand their knowledge base. Regional trainings and/or a certificate program are being discussed.
3. Creating virtual sites with diverse “clients” for interactive practice.
4. Dialogues on diversity and sites for learning about new cultures, domestic and international, including immigrants and refugee.
5. Updated information on global issues of marginalization and safety.
6. Site for posting of current issues and facilitating discussion of those issues.

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Final Report on Activity Connected to the CSWE Sponsored Diversity Conversations

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