
Professor Michael S. Spencer (E-mail: spencerm@umich.edu)
Office: SSWB 2728 Phone: 764-7224
Fridays, 9:00-12:00 PM
Office hours: Fridays, 12-2, by appointment
Fall 2004

Course Description:

This course is designed to give students a foundation in the awareness, knowledge, understanding, and skills needed to effectively carry out multicultural social work practice with populations who are culturally diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, ability status, and national origin. In particular, students will gain skills in facilitating multicultural group interactions and in resolving conflicts or resistance that may emerge due to cultural misunderstandings or oppressive dynamics. The topics of this course include social identity group development; prejudice and stereotyping and their effects on groups; difference and dominance and the nature of social oppression; our personal and interpersonal connections to power, privilege, and oppression; understanding and resolving conflicts or resistance; methods of dialoguing and coalition building across differences; and basic group facilitation skills and their applications in multicultural settings.

Course Design:

Like the learning environment you will be expected to create for dialogue participants, this class will strive to foster a learning environment where each student can reflect critically on their beliefs and perspectives and where your multiple perspectives can be understood, respected, and critically examined.

Facilitation training in this course will involve participation in dialogue-like exercises during class and practice sessions in facilitation skills. In addition, readings, journal writing, self-reflection assignments, and consultations with the instructors will enhance your training and learning in this course. More critical than your learning of dialogue facilitation skills in this course, however, is your learning of the content on cultural diversity and social justice. This will provide you with some of the knowledge, awareness, and skills that social workers need to possess in order to work in a multicultural society. Before you can facilitate dialogues on issues of cultural diversity and social justice, you will need to examine these issues for yourself and reflect on your own identities, issues, and experiences around oppression. This course will provide a forum to critically examine how our multiple identities shape our beliefs, assumptions, behaviors, and life experiences. Special attention will also be given to assess how our multiple identities and different experiences with oppression enhance or hinder our work with diverse
populations. Application of this knowledge will then be used in the learning of dialogue facilitation skills.

**Course Objectives and Guidelines for Learning:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be better able to:

1. **Demonstrate personal dialoguing skills around issues of multiculturalism and oppression.** Students will learn how to engage in dialogue with others about cultural diversity and social justice across our differences, using respectful and inquisitive forms of active listening, self-reflection, and critical consciousness. Special attention will be given to learning how to discuss the difficult issues of stereotypes, prejudices, conflicts, and the pain we experience because of oppression when it is most difficult to engage in these discussions.

2. **Demonstrate dialogue group facilitation skills.** Students will learn how to create a space for respectful dialogue across differences, how to engage students in a process of multicultural learning and dialogue, and how to address group dynamics and processes that enhance or hinder dialogue.

3. **Demonstrate knowledge of multiple identities and the diversity within identities.** Students will develop a clear understanding of multiple social identities (i.e., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, ability status, age), as well as an understanding of the many ways that our multiple identities intersect to create remarkably diverse identity groups (e.g., being an able-bodied woman of color, a Christian Latino gay male, a disabled white man).

4. **Understand the interconnections between forms of oppression.** Students will recognize that there is no hierarchy of oppression that supports one form of oppression or serves to perpetuate other forms. Students will also understand how the cumulative effects of multiple forms of oppression can create additional burdens.

5. **Understand dynamics of difference and dominance.** Students will understand what the dynamics of difference and dominance/oppression are (e.g., systems of inequity and inequality, power and status differences, and relative differences in power/privilege or oppression), and how they impact human functioning and social relations within and across diverse groups. In addition, students will understand how structural differences in society are shaped by historical, psychological, social, and political factors.

6. **Demonstrate skills for multicultural social work practice,** including respect and validation of others’ experiences and perspectives, critical consciousness of oppressive socializations and awareness of one’s own biases, recognizing our personal role in oppression, and learning how to interrupt oppression and work for social justice through alliance and coalition building across differences.

7. **Develop critical consciousness and understand its implications for social work practice.** Awareness of how the beliefs, feelings, and behaviors that emerge from our multiple identities (and their corresponding experience with dominance or oppression) enhance or hinder our abilities to work with diverse and disenfranchised groups. Students will also become more aware of the oppressive assumptions, biases, and prejudices that they hold towards other groups or their own group (internalized oppression), and how these influence
their interactions with others, through conscious and unconscious beliefs, assumptions, emotions and behaviors.

8. **Recognize that this learning is continuous.** Develop methods for continuing this life long process of recognizing our biases, learning how to change our oppressive behaviors, and building a more socially just multicultural society.

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:**

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be fundamental to this course. Students will develop a clear understanding of multiple social identities (i.e., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, ability status, age), as well as an understanding of the many ways that our multiple identities intersect to create diverse identity groups.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be central themes in the study of dialogue facilitation skills for multicultural social work practice. Special emphasis will be given to studying how dialogues can be used to interrupt oppression and work for social change and social justice through alliance and coalition building across differences.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be addressed through applications and discussions in this course. Students will learn how multicultural practice skills can be applied to their field of practice interests and how cultural competence enhances the capacity of diverse groups being able to access the services and programs they need in culturally relevant forms.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research** will comprise many of the course readings and will provide a foundation for learning the theories, frameworks and models of social identity development, intersections of multiple identities, intergroup relations, difference/dominance dynamics, cycles of oppression, and cultural competence methods.

**Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:**

This course will address the social work ethics and values from the NASW Code of Ethics, including the social work values of social justice, the importance of human relationships, and competence (in multicultural practice), as well as the ethics related to cultural competence and social diversity (1.05) and to social and political action (6.04). This course develops multicultural competency skills to work with disenfranchised and oppressed groups in culturally competent ways and to address social injustice due to discrimination and oppression. Training in dialogue facilitation promotes sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural diversity, as well as increases the personal and group capacity to work for social and economic equality and justice around differences in race/ethnicity, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation, and ability status. This course also addresses the social work value of the importance of human relationships through developing skills in dialogue and alliance building across differences, which both foster intergroup relations and support the belief that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for social change. Finally, this class supports social work ethics that social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression (1.05) and that social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of difference, while working for equity and social justice for all people (6.04).
Grading/Course Requirements:

This is a graded, 3-credit, course. Students will be graded on the assignments described below. The following guidelines and descriptions are intended to help you meet the expectations for the assignments.

A major part of your grade for written assignments is based on your clarity and thoroughness. All written assignments should be carefully proofread for typos and clarity of content. A paper with lots of errors is difficult to read and will be marked down. All assignments should be double-spaced, using 12-point font, no less than 1-inch margins.

You should turn in all written assignments on time. Having assignments in on time will assist me in reading and grading them in a timely manner. On time is defined as turned in at the start of class on the due date. In general, a paper will be marked down for each day it is late. Exceptions will only be made for extreme circumstances that require documentation. If you expect that you are going to be late turning in an assignment, let me know as soon as possible so I can plan accordingly.

Please try to anticipate your responsibilities and start your assignments well in advance of the due date. Be sure to have a back up copy on disk in case I misplace your work (which I hope is not the case!). Your grades will be distributed along the following scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>100-98</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-87</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>79-77</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>76-73</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>93-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82-80</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72-70</td>
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Assignment 1. Attendance and Participation (20%)

Attendance and participation in all class sessions are critical for the learning process in this course. For this reason, students are expected to attend all class sessions. One point out of a possible 10 will be deducted for each missed class. Exceptions will only be made for extreme circumstances that require documentation. Opportunities to make up for missed classes are possible, but must be completed promptly (within two weeks of the missed class), it is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor and arrange for appropriate make-up material within one week of the missed class.

Weekly Readings

Readings for each class session will be assigned from the course texts. Participation will be impacted by how extensively you are prepared to discuss the readings in class. As we find readings that are useful, we will either pass them out or make them available at the SW library. If you find good readings, pass them on and we can make them available to the class as well.

Required Texts:


Recommended Texts:
Assignment 2. **Bi-weekly Journal Entries (20%)**

In order to deepen your process of learning in this course, I want you to spend some time reflecting on the class discussions and the readings by writing in a bi-weekly journal. It should serve as a log of your own experiences and reactions to the class exercises, discussions, readings and assignments, with special attention and reflection given to how your identities and knowledge/experience around oppression may be shaping your reactions and learning process.

You will be required to turn in a 2 page, typed, double-spaced journal entry every other week. You are encouraged to write on your reflections over the past two weeks. The first journal is due the third week of class for a total of five entries this term. I will return your journal entries the week after you turn them in with comments and feedback on options for how you may address certain learning challenges or issues you discuss. These will not be graded for their descriptions of what you are learning (everyone will learn differently). Instead, they will be graded for completeness, for their depth of insight and reflection, and incorporation of readings and classroom activities/discussions. Journals will be given a score on a 10 point scale, and your grade for the journals will be the average score over the five journals, weighted 20%. Clarity and careful proofreading are necessary.

Assignment 3. **Taping Exercise (15%)**

See attached assignment sheet. Final paper due December 10, 2004

Assignment 4. **In-Class Practice in Dialogue Facilitation (15%)**

Each student will have an opportunity to group facilitate an in-class exercise once during the semester. We will begin with group facilitation from about week 6 through week 12. Students will be assigned to 4-5 member groups in week 2 and will stay with this group throughout the term for most group activities. Groups will sign-up during the third week of class for the topic area they are interested in facilitating. Students will assume responsibility for one hour of class on the day that their issue topic is scheduled. Student will deliver an activity related to the issue (not more than 30 minutes, shorter activities are highly recommended) and facilitate dialogue following it (again, for not more than 30 minutes). Students will develop a plan with the instructors and are strongly encouraged to use the Adams, Bell & Griffin text as a resource. If special resources or space is necessary, you need to let me know asap. An additional 30 minutes will be allocated for classmates to provide students with feedback on their facilitation.

Students are expected to turn in a facilitation plan one week prior to the activity. The facilitation plan should be a minimum of two pages and include the goals and objectives of the activity and subsequent dialogue, details of what you plan to do and the steps you will be taking, how long you expect each activity to take, the logistics of your plan (who is doing what), key issues for the dialogue, and potential questions that might arise. Additionally, a 3-5 page self-assessment of your plan and your experience will be turned in the week following your facilitation. The self-assessment should include not only your own critical assessment of how you did, but should include what you thought you did that was useful, what was not so useful, what you might have
done differently, and areas you would like to grow. Grades will be based on the thoroughness and clarity of your group’s facilitation (e.g. attention to ground rules, conducting an effective debriefing of an exercise, and efforts to include all participants in the discussion) and your self-assessment.

Assignment 5. **Out-of-Class Observation Exercise (15%)**

Each student will observe at least one group that is facilitated outside of class. We will look out for opportunities for this, but you should be able to find plenty of opportunities on campus or in the community. You should attend/participate in the group and make note of the setting, the facilitation style, things you thought the facilitator did that was useful or not useful, your own experience as a member of the group, your observation of other group members, and of course the content of the group. The group should be related to one of the topics of the course, that is diversity and social justice. This does not include lectures, but could include anything from interactive forum to an actual dialogue or workshop on diversity and social justice. Following your observation, you should write up a 3-5 page summary of the things you noted in the group. Turn it in the week following your observation. Be prepared to share your experiences with the class.

Assignment 6. **Out-of-Class Facilitation Exercise (15%)**

In addition to an in-class facilitation exercise, students will practice their facilitation skills outside of class. I will inform you of opportunities as they arise or can help you find opportunities if you are having difficulty finding them. Facilitation exercises can be completed individually, in a pair or in small groups. They can be done here in the School of Social Work, at your field placement or place of employment, or in the larger community.

As with the in-class assignment, you will produce a facilitation plan and self-assessment. Your facilitation plan will also be due two weeks prior to the planned activity. Feedback will be provided one week prior to the group. A 3-5 page self-assessment of each group member’s experience and the final facilitation plan will be turned in the week following your exercise. The self-assessment should include your own critical assessment of how you thought you did, but also what you thought you did that was useful, what was not so useful, what you might have done differently, and areas you would like to grow. Grades will be based on the thoroughness, clarity, and creativity of your facilitation plan and your self-assessment.

**Weekly Schedule & Course Outline**

In order to prepare students to facilitate intergroup dialogues, attention must be given to both content and process issues. In addition to group facilitation skills, dialogue facilitation requires us to reflect on our own experiences with oppression and privilege and to be prepared for issues that often arise given the emotional and controversial nature of social justice issues. This course is structured to provide opportunities for us to engage with activities and readings designed to stimulate dialogue and increase our consciousness related to power issues. These shared activities will also serve as examples for us to illustrate and practice skills for facilitating intergroup dialogue.

In order to ensure that our classroom experience both facilitates our critical consciousness and develops our facilitation skills, we will observe the following weekly routine, designed to incorporate intentional spaces to practice and reflect on each:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:10 – 9:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Opening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15 – 10:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Activity &amp; Dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 – 11:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Application to Facilitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:50 – 12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Closing Reflection</td>
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**Week 1  September 10, 2004**

- **Opening**: Announcements, Introductions
- **Activity & Dialogue**: Concentric Circles
- **Break**
- **Application**: Syllabus, Assignments, Texts & Readings, Weekly Agenda, Groups & Logistics

**Week 2  September 17, 2004**

- **Readings**: Adams, Bell, & Griffin – Chapters 1 & 2  
  Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 1-3
- **Opening**: Announcements
- **Activity & Dialogue**: Ground Rules  
  Hopes and Fears
- **Break**
- **Application**: Social Justice Education/Dialogues, Discussions, & Debates

**Week 3  September 24, 2004**

- **Readings**: Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 14  
  Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 4-6
- **Opening**: Announcements, Turn in Journal #1
- **Activity & Dialogue**: Self- and Identity-based Assessment
- **Break**
- **Application**: Conflict and Resistance

**Week 4  October 1, 2004**

- **Readings**: Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 3 & 13  
  Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 7-10
- **Opening**: Announcements
- **Activity & Dialogue**: Color of Fear
- **Break**
- **Application**: Process reactions to film
Week 5  October 8, 2004
Readings:  Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 6
Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 11-20
Opening:  Announcements, Turn in Journal #2
Activity & Dialogue:  Issues Of Privilege And Oppression
Break
Application:  Facilitation tips

Week 6  October 15, 2004
Readings:  Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 5 and 12
Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 32-37
Opening:  Announcements
Activity & Dialogue:  Student In-class Facilitation on Race/Ethnicity/Culture

Week 7  October 17, 2004
Readings:  Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 7
Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 38-45
Opening:  Announcements, Turn in Journal #3
Activity & Dialogue:  Student In-class Facilitation on Gender

Week 8  October 22, 2004
Readings:  Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 8
Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 46-59
Opening:  Announcements
Activity & Dialogue:  Student In-class Facilitation on Sexual Orientation

Week 9  October 29, 2004
Readings:  Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 21-31
Opening:  Announcements, Turn in Journal #4
Activity & Dialogue:  Student In-class Facilitation on Religious/Spiritual Identification

Week 10  November 5, 2004
Readings:  Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 9
Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 60-72
Opening:  Announcements
Activity & Dialogue:  Student In-class Facilitation on Ability Status

Week 11  November 12, 2004
Readings:  Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 10
Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 73-85
Opening:  Announcements, Turn in Journal #5
Activity & Dialogue:  Student In-class Facilitation on Social/Economic Class
Week 12  November 19, 2004

Readings:   Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 11
Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 86-95
Process facilitation and Action Planning

[November 26, 2004  THANKSGIVING RECESS – NO CLASS AFTER 5 P.M.]

Week 13  December 3, 2004

Readings:   Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 15
TBA

Week 14  December 10, 2004

Opening:   Announcements, Turn in final paper/taping assignment.
Activity & Dialogue:  Speak out & Celebration
Break
Application:  Potluck

Happy Holiday Break!!!

Suggested Readings


Porter, L.  Giving and receiving feedback; It will never be easy, but it can be better. Reading book for human relations training (pp. 42-45).


*The syllabus and course outline for Training in the Methods and Process of Dialogue Facilitation were developed by Mike Spencer, David Martinuea, Anna Yeakley, and Julica Herman, based on examples and models from similar courses offered through the Program on Intergroup Relations, Conflict and Community (IGRCC) at the University of Michigan (developed by Ximena Zuniga, Todd Sevig, Ratnesh Nagda, Monita Thompson, Teresa Graham-Brett and Charles Behling, Ruby Beale, Jackie Simpson) and through the University of Washington School of Social Work (developed by Ratnesh Nagda).*
TAPING PROJECT

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is for you to conduct an initial assessment of your own ideas, experiences and expectations about dialogue work. In order to do this project, you will need the interview guide that follows, a tape recorder, and a blank tape of at least 90 minutes length.

Rationale: The taping project builds on several elements that are important in dialogue. One, it allows you to tell your own story in relation to the questions provided. You can, therefore, keep a recorded entry of your thoughts and feelings at a particular moment in time. Two, it embraces the idea of praxis, that is continuous action and reflection. We are continually in the process of weaving more threads into our stories with different interactions, experiences and reflections. Thus, a taped story at one moment in time allows for reflecting back and charting your knowledge, skills and awareness development at another point in time. We will, therefore, have another assignment that will require you to reflect on your initial taping and allows you to chart your learning process with particular attention to growth and development factors in doing social justice-oriented work.

Instructions

1. Answer each of the questions in the attached interview guide as though you were being interviewed by someone else. Try to make your answers as complete as possible so that if someone else were listening, s/he would understand what you meant by your response.

2. Be sure to tape all of your answers. If you need to go beyond 90 minutes, please use an additional tape.

3. Turn in the tape to the instructor by the first class session. Label your tape clearly with your name.

4. Although the tape will be collected, you will be the only person who will listen to the tape. Your confidentiality is assured. Feel free to be as candid in your responses as possible. The first taping assignment will set the stage for the final assignment. The tapes will be returned to you toward the end of the term. At that time, you will be asked to listen to your own tape and do a written reflection and analysis of it according to guidelines provided at that time.
INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. **Background**

   Please elaborate on your identities in relation to the:
   
a) Age  
b) Birthplace  
c) Racial identity  
d) Ethnicity  
e) Gender  
f) Sexual Orientation  
g) Religion

2. **Identity and Awareness**

   a) What does it mean to you to be a person from these social identity groups? Is this a source of pride for you? Do you think it has made any difference in your life? What are the positive aspects about your social identities? What are negative aspects?
   
b) What has been your personal journey in learning about issues of oppression and privilege? What were key formative experiences in your learning? What are continuing issues you want to address or work through in regards to social identities, oppression and privilege?
   
c) What impact does your social identity have on your:
      i. communication styles?  
      ii. conflict styles?

3. **Knowledge and Attitudes about Contemporary Issues**

   a) Select a targeted/oppressed social identity group to talk about more. In general, what do you think about the experience of people from this group in this society, that is, how they are perceived and treated?
   
b) Select a privileged/agent identity group. In general, what do you think about the experience of members of this group in this society, that is, how they are perceived and treated?
   
e) What are the most pertinent issues facing us--society and the US--in regards to diversity in this country?
   
f) Do you think there has been much progress on issues of social justice? If yes, what are some examples of this progress? If no, what are some examples?

4. **Learning from previous experiences and intergroup dialogues**

   **Intergroup interactions**
   
a) Describe three experiences with people from different social identity backgrounds--one that was positive, one that was negative, and one that was ambiguous.
      
      What made these positive, negative, ambiguous? Please describe the dynamics in these interactions. How are these representative of the dynamics of intergroup relations in the US presently? What lessons did you take from these?
      
   **Talking about intergroup issues**
   
b) What have your experiences been in discussing intergroup issues, in the classroom? What made these experiences positive? negative?
c) What have your experiences been in discussing intergroup issues, outside the classroom? What made these experiences positive? negative?

**Intergroup dialogue experiences**

a) Have you ever been involved in an intergroup dialogue experience? (If you’ve never been involved in dialogue, think about an experience where some form of discussion was facilitated around diversity or social justice and answer these questions.) If so, what conditions facilitated effective dialogue (e.g., diverse group of students, students’ willingness to share, students asking clarification questions, and so on)? What conditions hindered dialogue (such as, time, and so on)?

b) What did facilitators do that was effective? In instances when facilitators was not effective, what could the facilitators have done to be more effective?

**Facilitation experiences**

a) What have been your previous experiences of facilitation or leading small groups?

b) What knowledge do you have of facilitation skills? What do you think it takes to be a good facilitator? How comfortable do you feel in facilitating learning in small and diverse groups?

c) What are the strengths that you bring to facilitating dialogues?

d) What challenges can you identify in becoming an effective dialogue facilitator?

e) How comfortable are you with:

   i. students expressing a variety of conflicting beliefs during dialogue sessions?

   ii. disclosing some of your own fears and uncertainties as a way to model this behavior for students in your group?

5. **Social Justice and Social Change**

a) How comfortable are you discussing social justice issues?

b) What would be the consequences (i.e., costs) of acting against oppression of a particular target group that you do not belong to? With family? Friends? At school? At work?

c) Do you currently challenge or reinforce oppression? What else can you do? What holds you back from action?

d) In your opinion, what does it take to be a good ally in social justice work? What do you bring in terms of being an ally? What do you need from others to form alliances?

6. **Reflecting on the interview**

a) What was it like for you to answer these questions in taped interview format?

b) Any other comments?

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1 The idea for this assignment comes from an exercise developed by Beverly Daniel Tatum and is described in Tatum, B.D. (1992). Talking about race, learning about racism: The application of racial identity development theory in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review, 62*(1), 1-24. The assignment was adapted by Dorothy Van Soest, University of Texas at Austin, and described in Garcia, B., & Van Soest, D. (1997). Changing perceptions of diversity and oppression: MSW students discuss the effects of a required course. *Journal of Social Work Education, 33*(1), 119-129. This specific interview protocol has been heavily modified for our purpose, but includes some questions from Van Soest’s adaptation.