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**Enriching anti-racist social work curriculum:**

**Sensitizing concepts from New Brunswick.**

by

©Rosemary A. Clews

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes a process that aims to enrich anti-racist social work curriculum by contributing to the foundational/anti-foundational debate in anti-racist social work theory. Anti-racist social work theory is foundational because it is based on the clear notion that social work should confront racism. In contrast anti-foundational social work theories deny foundations, (including anti-racist foundations), but value diversity and call for unique responses to unique situations. Foundational and anti-foundational social work theories inform different social work curriculum content and teaching and learning methods. I claim that a foundational/anti-foundational dichotomy impoverishes anti-racist social work theory. My research explores the potential of “sensitizing concepts” to link foundational and anti-foundational theories and thereby enrich anti-racist social work curriculum. According to van den Hoonaard sensitizing concepts are constructs drawn from the perspectives of others that alert researchers to particular lines of thinking that may differ from their own thinking.

In this study I identified foundational ideas that formed the bedrock of my thinking about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work. I decided which of these foundational ideas I was willing to change and which were uncontested foundations of my thinking. Then I explored sensitizing concepts about appropriate anti-racist social work curriculum in New Brunswick with stakeholders in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St. Thomas University, Fredericton. Questionnaires and qualitative interviews were employed as research



methods. Participants reported that racism exists in New Brunswick and advised social workers to respond to local need rather than apply social work knowledge developed elsewhere.

This study has significance at three levels. At a curriculum level, teaching and learning methods to promote anti-racist social work practice is provided. Sensitizing concepts can directly become curriculum content and illuminate for students different local realities, as well as suggest ways to help students to learn about these realities. At a theoretical level a process is described for reconciling elements of foundational anti-racism with anti-foundational valuing of diversity. At a political level, a process for stakeholders in social work education to influence social work curriculum development is proposed.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION: ENRICHING ANTI-RACIST SOCIAL WORK THEORY AND CURRICULUM

#### INTRODUCTION

The ethnic and “racial” diversity<sup>1</sup> of the Canadian population is increasing and social workers need to be prepared to respond. This need is particularly acute in rural communities where social workers have less experience of diversity than their urban counterparts, and have fewer resources to help them with their work. Considerable literature demonstrates that Canadian social workers have not responded adequately to the challenge of diversity. Little Canadian literature has been available to rectify this inadequacy. A recognition of the need for more responsiveness has led the Canadian Association of the Schools of Social Work (CASSW) to develop Educational Policy Statements and Accreditation Standards that place issues of diversity more centrally in the social work curriculum.

As social work educators prepare students for social work with an increasingly diverse Canadian population, they face the dilemma of whether foundational or anti-foundational theories should inform curriculum. They may choose to rely upon

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<sup>1</sup> Drawing from the Crossroads report I define an “ethnic group” as people who consider themselves to have a common heritage with others. “Racial” is “some actual or assumed biologically determined characteristic which identifies people as being the same ‘race’ as some and different from others and which leads to world populations being placed in order with Europeans superior to others” (Task Force, 1991, Glossary). I place quotation marks round “racial” to indicate its social construction, but do not do so again in this chapter. The terms “race” and “racial” are used frequently in this dissertation and these punctuation marks are distracting. Major concepts contained in this chapter and throughout the dissertation are defined in its Glossary, Appendix 19. When I refer to “diversity” I mean “ethnic and racial diversity” unless otherwise indicated.

foundational theories that have as their bedrock a belief that social work with diverse people should confront racism reflected in individual interactions, cultural assumptions and social structures. Alternatively, they may choose to begin with an epistemology that challenges foundationalism and instead encourages a focus on curriculum that promotes attention to diversity and unique responses to unique difficulties. A forced choice between foundational anti-racism and its anti-foundational alternative, however, can impoverish social work theory because both offer insights with the potential to inform social work curriculum.

Therefore, this dissertation is about bridging the divide between foundationalism and anti-foundationalism when developing anti-racist social work curriculum. I explore whether such a bridge can be provided by positioning sensitizing concepts of diverse people with a stake in the anti-racist focus of a social work programme at the interface between a foundational anti-racism and an anti-foundational quest for diversity. These sensitizing concepts are those constructs drawn from the perspectives of others which alert researchers to particular lines of thinking that may differ from their own (van den Hoonaard, 1997, p. 1); they can be uncovered through a dialogue between a social work researcher and a stakeholder. I consider whether the sensitizing concepts of stakeholders can enrich the curriculum, contribute to thinking about the interface between foundational and anti-foundational social work theory, and provide a mechanism for the participation of stakeholders in curriculum developments.

For this to occur, social work educators need to become aware of, and then

acknowledge, the non-contestable foundations of their own thoughts. This awareness can free them to hear sensitizing concepts from others, and then allow these different ideas to challenge the remaining foundations of their thoughts. First, however, the concepts must be identified. Therefore, these sensitizing concepts become the units of analysis for research to answer the following question: “What sensitizing concepts inform the thinking of people who have a major stake in the anti-racist focus of the BSW programme at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick, in relation to curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work?”

Processes are important in this dissertation. Processes which enable stakeholders to participate in curriculum developments, and those which suggest a new relationship between foundational and anti-foundational thinking about anti-racist curriculum, may also be relevant outside of New Brunswick. Therefore, conceptual and empirical processes are outlined in more depth than is generally the case in work of this nature.

## OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION

This chapter outlines the research. Chapters 2 to 5 establish the theoretical foundations and describe the context where the work took place. Chapter 2 explores justifications for research about anti-racist curriculum development, providing professional, demographic, contextual, historical, biographical and pragmatic rationales. The professional justification is rooted in the history of the profession and reflected in the Canadian Association of Social Work Code of Ethics (CASW, 1994).

I explore the demographic changes in Canada, and New Brunswick in particular,

that highlight the need for anti-racist curriculum development; and explain how social workers in rural areas face different difficulties from those working in urban centres. The history of oppression faced by diverse people in Canada is carried painfully into contemporary autobiographical accounts providing further justification for the work. Federal and provincial human rights legislation, and accreditation requirements of CASSW all emphasize its importance.

Chapter 3 lays out the theoretical foundations for the work and contains sensitizing concepts that reflect my own thinking about diversity. I articulate a foundational anti-racist epistemology and “interrupt” my foundational thinking<sup>2</sup> to suggest that attention to diversity can help social work researchers avoid basing their research on a single standpoint that may differ greatly from the perspectives of research participants. This leads to a discussion of the value of postmodernisms that embrace diversity. Recognizing that both foundational and anti-foundational thought are valuable encourages me to consider how to maintain the benefits of both. I distinguish between the elements of my foundational thought that I am prepared to change (my contestable thought) and the foundations of my thinking that I am not prepared to change. I suggest that “sensitizing concepts” might construct a bridge between my contestable foundational thinking and the parts of my thinking that do not have these foundations.

Chapter 4 evaluates existing resource material for developing anti-racist social

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<sup>2</sup> The notion of interruptions to foundational thinking is suggested in Ristock and Pennell’s subtitle “Feminist links, postmodern interruptions.” (Ristock and Pennell, 1996).



work curriculum in rural New Brunswick. I explore different ways that the literature has been categorized and demonstrate that Barth's (1969, 1989) distinction between categorical and transactional perspectives, as elaborated by Green (1995), is most useful. I show that the transactional perspective which moves beyond surface differences between people and focuses on their interactions is most consistent with my theoretical base. I explore literature compatible with a transactional perspective under six groupings: cultural competence, anti-racist or anti-oppressive approaches to practice, social work in rural communities, curriculum for teaching and learning about anti-racist social work, biographies that highlight issues faced by diverse people, and finally, work that considers specifically the lives of people from diverse backgrounds in New Brunswick. An absence of literature describing formal stakeholder involvement in anti-racist social work curriculum development provides further justification for this research.

Chapters 5 and 6 outline the methodology and research design. Chapter 5 describes how the theoretical base described in chapter 4 informs principles that underpin the methodology for the study. I detail sample selection and data collection processes. The rationale for selecting participants and a brief overview of the data collection and analysis are provided. Key concepts in the research question are explored.

This qualitative study had two samples. A main sample of 28 participants engaged in dialogue with me about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work after 24 had completed pre-interview questionnaires. A separate student sample of 31 completed only questionnaires. Chapter 6 explains the 6

stages of data organization and analysis, evaluates credibility of the work and explores attendant ethical issues.

Chapter 7 details demographics of the samples and outlines the themes that participants consider should be included in social work curriculum. I explore how these themes about New Brunswick racism and about social work can have direct and indirect effects on anti-racist social work curriculum development. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 illustrate how sensitizing concepts can enter a dialogue with thought foundations. In chapter 8, I show how sensitizing concepts confirmed my foundational thought about the need for anti-racist social work education. Learning and teaching methods compatible with principles of adult education and experiential learning also confirm thought foundations. Chapter 9 describes challenges to foundational thought. I describe challenges to the concept “anti-racist social work,” and provide reasons why I did not accept this challenge. The successful challenge to metaphors used to organize social work curriculum is explained. Chapter 9 also includes sensitizing concepts providing images of New Brunswick social workers, and details a successful challenge to my failure to include “images of social workers” in the foundational thought about curriculum content. In chapter 10 I show how the dialogue between sensitizing concepts and my thought foundations resulted in my modifying my foundational ideas about living and practicing social work in a rural community. I describe how advice from participants about how social workers could orient themselves to work with diverse people encouraged me to decide to include these ideas in my curriculum.

The dissertation concludes with Chapter 11, in which I briefly summarize, evaluate and consider the significance of the work. Changes in my contestable thought foundations, such as my understanding of racism in New Brunswick, are identified. I discuss further how sensitizing concepts can enable social work educators to retain the benefits of anti-foundational and contestable foundational thought. I consider how the sensitizing concepts about racism, social workers, knowledge, values, skills and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work can be introduced in the social work classroom and directly become curriculum content. These concepts can make the reality of life for diverse people come alive in the classroom, and contribute directly to the development of anti-racist social work curriculum, particularly in rural areas. I propose that the sensitizing concepts outlined in this dissertation can enable those who have stakes in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme to directly influence social work curriculum. I suggest how the study contributes to social work literature about anti-racist social work and the relationship between foundational and anti-foundational thinking. Finally I recommend further empirical and conceptual work that might emanate from the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NEED FOR SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM TO ADDRESS ETHNIC AND “RACIAL” DIVERSITY<sup>1</sup> IN RURAL NEW BRUNSWICK.

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter justifies the need for research designed to inform curriculum to prepare students for social work with diverse people in rural New Brunswick. It does so by first highlighting the need for this work in the Canadian context, then exploring justifications specific to rural communities, and particularly to New Brunswick. The philosophical base and the history of the social work profession are explored for evidence of the need for this work. A selective account of colonization and of struggles to decolonize in Canada also support the importance of this research. This account leads to a review of biographical accounts indicating suffering today. These accounts show very powerfully how much this work is needed. Changes in the demographic composition of the Canadian, and particularly the New Brunswick population, provide further justification. In addition I explore the pragmatic need for Schools of Social Work to respond to accreditation standards for social work programmes as well as federal and provincial legislation. The need for curriculum for social work with diverse people in rural contexts, and specifically at St. Thomas University, is also considered.

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, as in the previous one, I place the word “racial” in parenthesis to indicate the social construction of the term the first time I use it. I do not continue to do so in this dissertation because it can be distracting. When I refer to “diversity” I mean ethnic and racial diversity unless otherwise indicated.

## PROFESSIONAL JUSTIFICATIONS

Professional justifications for curriculum to address diversity can be traced to the profession's philosophical roots. Three philosophical themes; from distributive justice, social work's 'duty to aid,' and social work's polycentric perspective, all support this need. For Reamer (1993), distributive justice is key in social work's political philosophy. "For social workers gross inequality is a troubling phenomenon that exacerbates the chronic disadvantage experienced by many of the profession's clients" (p. 25). There is much evidence that Aboriginal<sup>2</sup> people and Canadian newcomers experience chronic disadvantage (Adams, 1995; Das Gupta, 1996). A second philosophical theme recognized by Reamer is social work's moral "duty to aid" (p. 74). This "duty to aid" extends beyond people who are from the same racial and ethnic background as their social workers. Delaney (1995) writes about a polycentric perspective within social work, "which supports pluralism by arguing that the common ground approach leaves out those features of a world view that differ, and therefore limits what could be considered truth" (p. 12). A polycentric perspective encourages us to challenge our world view by trying to understand different truths of people from diverse backgrounds.

These philosophical themes are reflected in the Canadian Social Work Code of Ethics (CASW, 1994). The "Preamble" to the Code articulates humanitarian and egalitarian ideals of Canadian social work:

---

<sup>2</sup> I use the term "Aboriginal" to refer to New Brunswick indigenous people, and "First Nations Community" to refer to the communities where they live. These are the most preferred terms by most participants in this study, although not always used by them.

The profession of social work is founded on humanitarian and egalitarian ideals. Social workers believe in the intrinsic worth and dignity of every human being . . . the culture of individuals, families, groups and nations has to be respected without prejudice (p. 7).

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary defines a *humanitarian* as a person who “seeks to promote human welfare,” and is concerned with “improving the lives of humanity and reducing suffering” (Barber, 1998, p. 689). *Egalitarian* is defined as “relating to the principle of equal rights and opportunities for all” (p. 446). Section 1.2 of the CASW Code requires the pursuit of egalitarian goals: “a social worker in the practice of social work shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, ethnic background, language [and] national ancestry” (CASW, p. 10). If social workers are to promote equal rights and opportunities and pursue human welfare they must attend to the needs of diverse people.

The egalitarian and humanitarian ideals of the profession require social workers to understand the ethnicity of their clients and apply this understanding in a non-discriminatory manner, offering relevant services for all. Social workers must confront their own personal prejudice, as well as racism reflected in actions of others and embedded in cultural beliefs, social structures and systems. Social work educators have a responsibility to develop curriculum to enable students to develop knowledge, skills and commitment so that their practice reflects the humanitarian and egalitarian ideals that underpin the Code of Ethics.

The profession’s pioneers carried out humanitarian and egalitarian work in

contexts of diversity. For example, Blessed Marguerite Bourgeoys, reported to be Canada's first social worker, arrived in 1653 and worked with Aboriginal people as well as colonists (Bellamy & Irving, 1995, p. 90). In the United States Jane Addams' Settlement House work was in diverse inner city neighbourhoods.

Diverse people have contributed to the development of the profession in the past, and social workers today have much to learn from them. I provide just two examples. We can enhance our understanding of humanitarianism by attending to traditional Aboriginal holistic healing as communicated orally from generation to generation. White social workers expand their understanding about egalitarianism by studying Maria Stewart's actions in the 1830s when she called upon Black women to "reject the negative image of Black womanhood so prominent in her times" (Collins 1991, p. 3). The contribution of Black people to the development of social work is often ignored (Williams 1989, p. xii).

#### CANADIAN RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COLONIZERS AND COLONIZED

The troublesome history of relationships between colonizers and colonized in Canada is well documented and provides a powerful justification for the development of curriculum for working with diverse people. It is clear from the social work literature that the profession has not provided humanitarian and egalitarian responses needed by diverse people.

Christensen (1995), argues that erroneous assumptions are made that diverse people only recently arrived in Canada. She provides evidence to correct this error

through her graphic portrayal of the history of oppression of four ethnic groups in Canada: Italians, Jewish people, Black people and Chinese people.

There are many written accounts of experiences of immigrants from countries of origin other than Western Europe (Cannon, 1995; Charon, 1989; Das Gupta, 1996; Isajiw, 1999; Li, 1993; McKague, 1991; Satzewich, 1992; Satzewich, 1998). Newcomers whose skin colour identifies them as “different” from people from Western Europe have told of their problems on arrival in Canada. Even after generations of domicile in Canada people of colour experience similar problems. Social workers have not always recognized the problems of diverse populations and their responses are often unhelpful and sometimes make the situation worse (Etter-Lewis & Foster 1996; James & Shadd, 1994; Maiter, Trocme & Shakir, 1999; Ruggles & Rovinescu, 1996). Social work educators must hear and understand these stories and must continue to identify cultural bias in their theories, models and practice methods so that social workers respond appropriately to Canadian newcomers and people of colour. The curriculum in Schools of Social Work should address issues that graduates will experience when working with immigrants and refugees as well as develop knowledge and skills to work with people of colour who have lived in Canada for generations (Christensen, 1999).

The history of oppression of Aboriginal people has been reported in literature more often in recent years. The history is reflected in their stories. The authors of a history of Aboriginal “child welfare” narrate a story:

I remember my grandmother Dolly would tell us kids, ‘you older ones



watch out for the little ones. When it gets to be dark, you go inside and don't leave the little ones behind, because Th'owxya, she will come and steal them away.' [The authors reported that] as a child [she] shivered at the notion of a wild crone who could spirit away babies or her little brothers and sisters. Today she sees the legend as a metaphor: the cannibal woman represents the predatory European society that swept into long-held First Nations territory to steal land, culture, souls and children. Ever since the Europeans first came, our children were stolen from our embrace (Fournier & Grey, 1997, p. 7).

Authors provide many other graphic accounts of the oppression of Aboriginal people by white colonists. Chrisjohn, Young and Maraun (1997) document the residential school experience for Aboriginal people. York (1990) writes about the oppression of Aboriginal people. Adams (1995) gives a history of colonization of Metis people. Buckley (1993) shows how prairie policies took Aboriginal people away from the self-sufficiency afforded by their wooden ploughs into a reliance on welfare.

Over the last two decades the voices of Aboriginal people have grown louder. Their written accounts tell how Eurocentric notions about "normality" led to them being labelled as problem people and blamed when they were victims. Stories tell of attempts to silence Aboriginal voices; through imported disease, enforced attendance at residential schools where children were taught to be ashamed of their cultural heritage, and through treaties, legislation, and the establishment of European-style decision making systems in Aboriginal communities. The suffering experienced by Aboriginal people who were forced to respond to alien definitions of normality is clear. Even the titles of books contain words like "dispossessed" (York, 1990), "thunder" (Monture Angus, 1995; Timmins, 1995) and "torture" (Adams, 1995), or refer to children who have been "stolen

from our embrace” (Fournier & Grey, 1997). If social workers are to reflect the humanitarian and egalitarian ideals of the profession they must attend to these voices.

### DEMOGRAPHIC JUSTIFICATIONS

Recent demographic trends relating to Aboriginal people, immigrants, refugees, and people of colour challenge social workers to address issues of diversity. Because demographic projections suggest a continued increase in the heterogeneity of the Canadian population, social work theory and methods based on assumptions of a more homogeneous context will become increasingly inadequate.

#### Aboriginal people in Canada

Aboriginal people in Canada have increased in number and this increase is likely to continue. The 1996 Census indicates that 1,101,955 Canadian people reported Aboriginal ancestry either as a single response (477,630) or as part of a multiple response (624,330), (Statistics Canada 1998, 1).<sup>3</sup> The 1991 figure was 1,002,675 Aboriginal people suggesting an increase of more than 9% between 1991 and 1996.<sup>4</sup>

The Canadian Aboriginal population has an average age of 25.5. This is 9.9 years younger than the average age of all Canadian residents. Thirty five percent of the

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<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise indicated demographic data on Aboriginal peoples is drawn from 1996 Census figures. This was the number of people who reported North American Indian, Metis or Inuit origins as either a single or part response.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada advises caution in comparing these figures with reports from previous censuses because of changes in methods of enumeration. Nevertheless these figures are likely to underestimate the actual increase. Statistics Canada reported that in 1996, an estimated 44,000 people were living on reserves and settlements that were incompletely enumerated.

Canadian Aboriginal population, and 38% of Aboriginal people living in rural First Nations Communities, are under 15. This compares with 20% of Canada's total population. Eighteen percent of Aboriginal people but only 13% of all Canadians are in the age groups 15-24. Therefore, for some years the Aboriginal proportion of the Canadian population will have higher proportions of women of childbearing age than will be the case in the total population. Given this demographic projection it is likely that social workers will have increasing contact with Aboriginal families.<sup>5</sup>

Aboriginal people in outside First Nations Communities live in "difficult and impoverished conditions that are unimaginable to the average person in Canada," (Mawhinney, 1995, p. 214). Levels of suicide, violence, infant mortality, shared homes with poor sanitation, unemployment and low incomes are much higher than the Canadian average (p. 215). Similar problems are experienced by many Aboriginal people who live in First Nations Communities.

As the trend towards Aboriginal self government continues, more Aboriginal social workers probably will work for Aboriginal people. Although the Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) called for "a crash programme over the next ten years to educate and train Aboriginal people to staff and manage health and social services at all levels" ( p. 74), it is likely that Aboriginal people will still encounter non-Aboriginal social workers, in hospital and other specialist institutions, and in rural

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<sup>5</sup> This is because families with children under 15 are more likely to contact a social worker than other population groups.

communities. Not all social workers will have been educated in Aboriginal social work programmes but all need knowledge, skills and commitment to practice humanitarian and egalitarian social work with Aboriginal people.

### Immigrants and refugees

Despite rises and falls in annual rates of immigration to Canada, larger numbers of immigrants came to Canada in the 1990s than in almost all years since before the outbreak of the first world war. In only three years between 1914 and 1989 did the number of immigrants exceed 200,000.<sup>6</sup> In each of the years between 1990 and 1996 more than 200,000 immigrants arrived in Canada (Colombo, 1997, p. 650).

The ethnic diversity of immigrants to Canada, as reflected in the countries of birth of immigrants, has increased markedly. Of immigrants who arrived before 1961, 59.3% were born in the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany or the Netherlands. In contrast, only 9.5% of immigrants arriving between 1991 and 1996 were from the United States or any of Western Europe.<sup>7</sup> Those who immigrated between 1991 and 1996<sup>8</sup> came from many different locations. Over half of immigrants between 1991 and 1996 came from East Asia, South Asia or South East Asia. The highest proportion (19%) was from China (including Hong Kong), with 6.9% from India and a further 6.9% from the Philippines.

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<sup>6</sup> 1957, 1967 and 1974. Unless otherwise indicated statistics in this section are drawn from 1996 Census data (Statistics Canada, 1997 {1})

<sup>7</sup> This includes parts of the Middle East.

<sup>8</sup> These statistics include the first four months of 1996 only.

No other country provided more than 4.3% of immigrants.

Therefore, Canada had larger numbers of immigrants, and immigrants from a greater range of countries than in recent years. Social workers are likely to work with newcomers who are immigrants, refugees or temporary residents in Canada. Many newcomers experience reduced socio-economic status, an unfamiliar social, economic and political system, language and climate. Social workers need to address these issues. They need to acquire commitment, knowledge and skills for this work during their social work education. Social work educators must develop curriculum content and teaching and learning methods to prepare them.

#### PRAGMATIC JUSTIFICATIONS

Pragmatic justifications can also be added to those outlined in the previous sections. First, I outline legislation relating to diverse people that social workers must adhere to in their practice. Social work educators need to ensure that requisite knowledge is conveyed in the social work curriculum. Second, I outline the response of CASSW to issues of diversity over the last decade. I show that social work educators ignore this issue at their peril, for it is firmly established in Education Policy Statements and Accreditation Standards.

#### Legislation

Humanitarian and egalitarian ideals compatible with the social work value base are enshrined in federal and provincial law, providing a legal justification for curriculum to prepare students for work with diverse people. Social workers, like other citizens,

must obey the law themselves and must also advocate for their diverse clients if others infringe their clients' legal rights.

Canada's Multiculturalism Act is informed by Section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which states: "this Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians." (Pask, 1994, p. 125). The following quotations are from the Canadian Multiculturalism Act:

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to:

- a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of the Canadian heritage and identity . . .
- e) . . . respecting and valuing diversity . . .
- f) . . . encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character.

The egalitarian and humanitarian goals of social work are congruent with these clauses.

The Human Rights Act of New Brunswick states: ". . . all people are equal in dignity and human rights without regard to race, colour . . . national origin, ancestry, place of origin." The act goes on to prohibit discrimination in employment, rented accommodation and housing sales and also the publication of discriminatory material. (Government of New Brunswick, 1996). Social workers must be vigilant within their own as well as other structures to ensure that the legal rights of diverse clients are upheld. A knowledge about this legislation should, therefore, be conveyed through the social work curriculum.

### Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work

Schools of Social Work are required to adhere to the policies and standards of CASSW if programmes are to gain or retain accreditation. Some social work educators have attempted to respond to Aboriginal voices. Aboriginal programmes have been established. Some have been developed from existing non-Aboriginal programmes. The programmes at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and at Yukon College initially reflected the curriculum and courses at the University of Regina. Then changes were introduced such as a required "Culture Camp" to embed the curriculum within Aboriginal culture. Programmes include a Diploma in Social Work Programme at Memorial University developed with the Labrador Inuit Association and an Inuit initiative at McGill University. The University of Manitoba has a Northern Social Work programme which focusses on work with Aboriginal people. Other Schools such as the Maritime School, Carleton and University of Victoria have developed initiatives in First Nations Communities. The Aboriginal caucus at CASSW has obtained funding for developing social work curriculum related to violence.

Until recently few programmes provided the knowledge and skills for work with immigrants, refugees and other people of colour. An exception has been Wilfrid Laurier University's decade old graduate programme. Nevertheless, a number of Schools have introduced courses in Social Work with Minorities. Some Schools such as Atkinson College at York, Victoria and Ryerson have rewritten mission statements to include reference to an anti-racist focus.

CASSW has recognized that all Schools should address diversity. In 1987 the CASSW Task Force that investigated responses to diversity concluded:

from east coast to west coast, in northern communities and in the south, we were told by administrators, faculty, students, field instructors and community groups alike that, although most schools recognize ethnic, cultural and racial diversity as a reality they have yet to respond adequately to today's multicultural and multiracial issues.  
(Task Force, 1991, p. ii).

Revisions to educational policies, informed by a recognition of ethnic, cultural and racial diversity, have been in evidence in CASSW since this time. The Task Force report was considered by the General Assembly of CASSW in 1992, approved in principle and Appendix E of the report was appended to the Accreditation Standards while new Educational Policy Statements and Accreditation Standards were developed.

In 1996 new Educational Policies approved by CASSW emphasized the multiple and interlocking bases of oppression experienced within Schools of Social Work and in the outside community. These policies are gradually being incorporated in modifications to Accreditation Standards which give diversity a more prominent position when Social Work programmes are accredited. Standards approved by CASSW in 1998 included:

Schools shall be expected to provide evidence of effective progress in attaining multicultural/multiracial diversity given the school's context and mission. (Standard 1.10)

The curriculum will ensure that the student will have . . . transferable analysis of the multiple and intersecting bases of oppression and related practice skills. (Standard 5.8d)

They were ratified with additional revisions in 1999. Several of these revisions related



to diversity (Standards 2.14; 3.4; 4.8; 5.9; 6.5).

As Schools develop their policies and programmes, CASSW expects that the views of diverse people will be influential. Amendments to the Standards of Accreditation in 1998 included the following:

2.11 The School shall provide stakeholders with opportunities to participate in policy formulation, program development and program evaluation.

2.12 Aboriginal communities affected by the school's programmes shall have opportunity to participate in the planning and the on-going evaluation of those programmes.

After the Task Force report was received, CASSW established an "Ethnic, Cultural and Racial Advisory Committee" to the Board of the Association to assist Schools to respond more appropriately and effectively to ethnic, cultural and racial diversity. In 1995 the committee sponsored another national survey to explore schools' progress in responding and their need for assistance in doing so. The survey found that some schools had made considerable progress in changing curriculum to reflect CASSW policy about diversity, but others had barely begun. Faculty in the latter Schools claimed they lacked skills and knowledge to do so. CASSW obtained funding in 1997 to create a regional self-help network to develop curriculum that would respond to diversity. Progress was reported in a special session at the 1998 CASSW Conference. Reports, workshops and a concluding presentation were made at the 1999 CASSW Conference.

CASSW gives high priority to the need to respond to diversity in the social work curriculum. Each year Accreditation Standards and the Educational Policy Statements

become stronger. Social work programmes must respond to the CASSW standards. The research reported in this dissertation is an attempt to do so.

## JUSTIFICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL AREAS

Social workers in rural<sup>9</sup> contexts must be prepared for the humanitarian and egalitarian ideals of the social work profession in contexts of diversity. In the past, many rural areas have had small proportions of diverse people. Social workers who have only lived in the most homogeneous regions may have had little opportunity to challenge their biases and may have narrow views about “normality.”

Classic sociological writings suggest a number of concepts that help social workers to understand issues faced by newcomers in rural communities. Rural communities often have *gemeinschaft* features holding them together by a sense of mutuality and common destiny. Ferdinand Tonnies contrasted such societies with *gesellschaft* societies based upon formality, rationality and a market form of exchange. He suggested that rural societies tended to be *gemeinschaft* and urban communities *gesellschaft*. Although this theory stereotypes and oversimplifies urban and rural differences, differences can exist. “*Gemeinschaft*” might not extend to newcomers and thereby exacerbate their isolation.

Despite *gemeinschaft* features, established conflicts often exist in these

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<sup>9</sup> I define “rural” as a community with a small population and low population density. This is compatible with Statistics Canada’s definition of “rural” areas as those with a population density of under 400 and a total population under 1000 .

communities (Martinez-Brawley, 1990, p. 188). A newcomer, particularly from a different background, may easily and unwittingly become enmeshed. Weber writes of the difference between communal relationships based on belonging and associational relationships based on joining. It may be difficult to gain acceptance to belong to environments which have established communal relationships. Durkheim writes about mechanical and organic solidarity (Ritzer, 1996, p. 430). The values of diverse people might differ from the “collective consciousness” that Durkheim suggests holds together rural society. Social work curriculum is needed to enable students in a rural province to reflect on these ideas, and develop the conceptual skills to understand how they can inform work with diverse newcomers and existing residents

Social workers in smaller communities may not have access to ethno-specific resources, services or expertise often available in cities with a more diverse population. They need to be sensitive to local culture and develop a keen eye for local resources (Banks, 1999, p. 232). These rural social workers will need competence for work with newcomers from many different countries who are in Canada for varied reasons and planned durations. They are likely to work in communities with small numbers of people arriving from different world areas and have few specialist resources to call on. These factors have implications for the development of curriculum for social workers who are likely to practice in rural areas.

Most Canadian immigrants move to large cities such as Toronto and Vancouver where immigrants make up 38% and 30% of the population respectively (Badets, 1994, p.

29). A few opt for rural areas, sometimes asking for a rural or smaller urban community to increase their chances of a successful immigration application, rather than because they want to live in rural areas (Whelan, 1996). Despite this, in 1996, 85% of all immigrants, and 93% of those who arrived between 1991 and 1996, lived in a census metropolitan area compared with 57% of Canadian-born people. Newcomers in rural communities face a number of issues not experienced in urban areas. Few people are available to interpret language and custom from their countries or regions of origin. Newcomers may also have difficulty understanding dynamics of rural communities where interpersonal histories may have a profound but subtle influence on the present.

Although Schools of Social Work in rural regions can expect many graduates to work in their own regions, these graduates also need skills to practice in any part of Canada. Rural schools, situated in relatively homogeneous communities, must draw upon knowledge gained in urban schools and upon their own local resources to enable their graduates to work competently in both rural and urban areas. St. Thomas University must develop responses to diversity relevant to its rural context. I now turn to consider particular features of the New Brunswick context that justify this work.

## **SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT TO ADDRESS DIVERSITY IN THE SAINT JOHN RIVER VALLEY, NEW BRUNSWICK.**

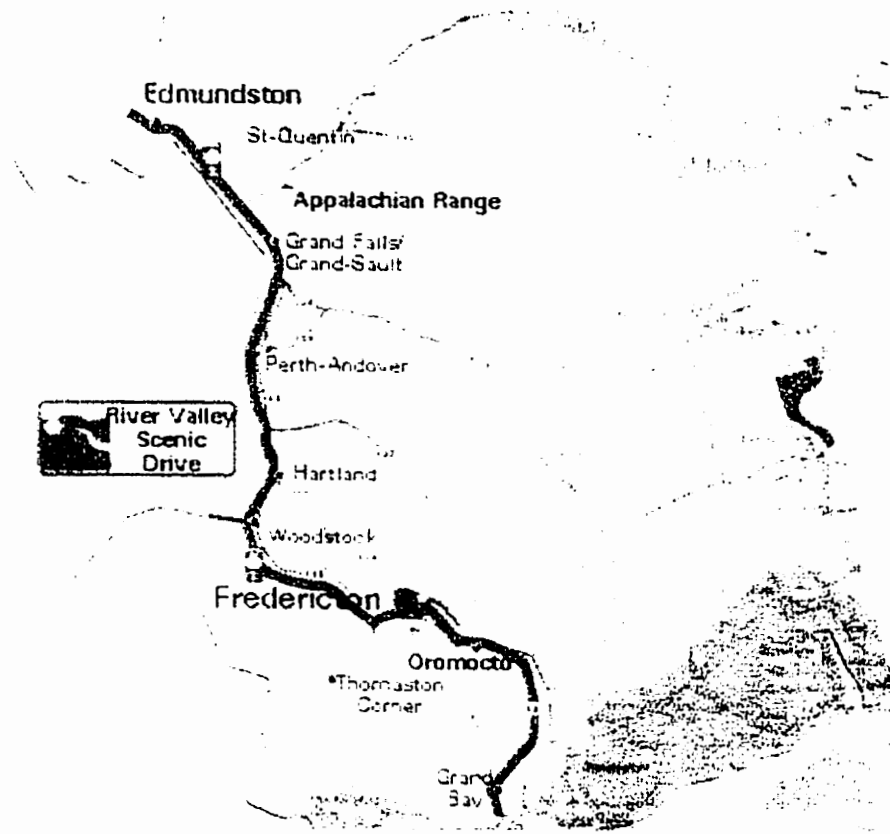
### **Introduction**

This section introduces the Saint John River Valley, New Brunswick where St. Thomas University is located. It then considers how attention to diversity is congruent

with the philosophical base of the university and the social work department.

Past and present relationships between diverse people in the area, the commitment of the university to pursue social justice, and the recognition by faculty of a need to enhance the curriculum response to diversity, all justify this work. The section begins by a brief geographical and historical overview, with particular emphasis on the diverse population living in the area.

St Thomas University is situated in Atlantic Canada. The region is highly dependent on primary industries such as farming, fishery and forestry and also on the development of natural resources. Chellam (1975) idealizes the “artistry” of many cultures which gives Atlantic Canada a culture of it’s own: “idiom, music, humour and literature . . . within the region itself many diverse cultures exist, each with its own sentiments, values and language” (pp. 1-2). Chellam’s idealism invites readers; “if you take delight in diversity shall we look into the kaleidoscope together.” This Atlantic kaleidoscope contains contemporary images of racial, cultural and ethnic oppression as well as a history of bloodshed. For this reason alone it is fitting that research to inform anti-racist social work curriculum be conducted here.



The Saint John River Valley

### Aboriginal people in New Brunswick

The first settlers in the Atlantic region were Aboriginal. The Mi'kmac people were the first indigenous people to have contact with European settlers five centuries ago when 10,000 to 35,000 Mi'kmac people lived on the eastern coast of Canada (York, 1989, p. 55). St-Amand (1988) points out:

The geography of the region is as rich as its history. Its fertile plains, its rivers teeming with fish, its bays (Chaleurs and Fundy) and its vast and varied forests made it an ideal habitat for its native population, North American Indians of the Micmac and Maliseet tribes. (p. 14).

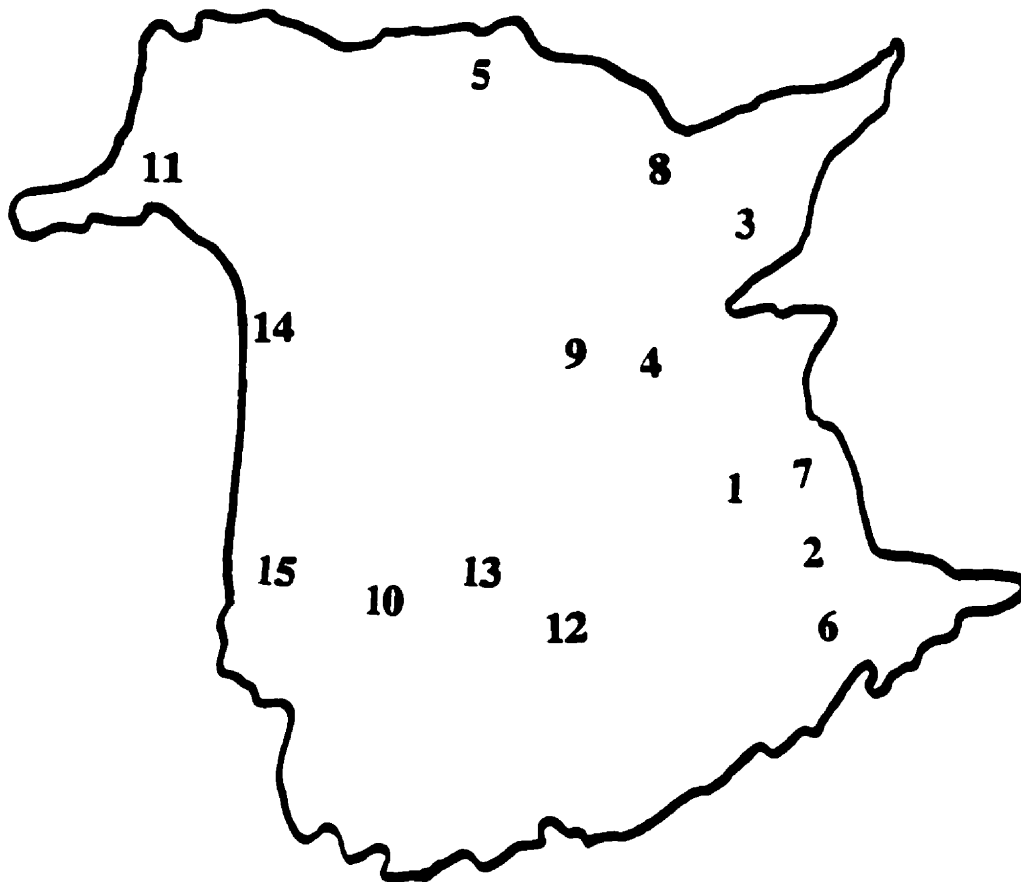
Fredericton, located at a bend in the St. John river, was a seasonal stop for Mi'kmac and Maliseet people who hunted, fished and grew corn along the St John river since the time of first European contact (City of Fredericton, 1997).

In New Brunswick the historical relationships between Aboriginal people and their colonizers are important in the present. During the more than four hundred years since the first European "contact" with Mi'kmac and Maliseet people, their colonizers, with their European ideology of inherent white superiority, introduced policies of extermination, enslavement or assimilation in the region and successive attempts were made to eliminate Aboriginal people or their culture. This legacy impedes these people's attempts to access their traditional ways of thinking and acting and has left many unresolved land claims and much residual pain (Leavitt, 1995). York (1989) traces the way in which Mi'kmac people in New Brunswick were "uprooted again and again by the legal and political institutions of white society" over three hundred years (pp. 54-87).

Reid (1995) outlines the colonial relationships between British and Mi'kmac people in eighteenth and nineteenth century "Acadia" (Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick). This local history of oppression of Aboriginal people is another powerful argument for the development of curriculum to enable social workers to learn to respond competently to Aboriginal people encountered in their work.

Statistics Canada reports that in 1996, 10,250 or 1.4% of New Brunswick residents, self-identified as Aboriginal. Although this represents an apparent decline from the 12,815 people classified as "having Aboriginal origins" in 1991, changes in enumeration methods may account for differences. Of people self-defining as Aboriginal in 1996, 70% lived in the 15 First Nations Communities (Government of New Brunswick, 1997). The following map shows their location. There are 9 Mi'kmac communities at Eel River Bar, Pabineau, Burnt Church, Red Bank, Eel Ground, Indian Island, Big Cove, Bouchtouche and Fort Folly. Six Maliseet communities are located at Oromocto, St. Mary's, Kingsclear, Woodstock, Tobique and Madawaska.





### New Brunswick First Nations Communities

#### Mi'kmac First Nations Communities

1. Big Cove
2. Buctouche
3. Burnt Church
4. Eel Ground
5. Eel River Bar
6. Fort Folly
7. Indian Island
8. Pabineau
9. Red Bank

#### Maliseet First Nations Communities

10. Kingsclear
11. Madawaska
12. Oromocto
13. Saint Mary's
14. Tobique
15. Woodstock

### Acadian people in New Brunswick

The history of conflict between the French and the British settlers is also well documented. From the time of Jacques Cartier's arrival in 1535, "the possession of territory and commercial interests were the dominant forces" (St-Amand, 1988, p. 15). The area where Fredericton is now located came under British jurisdiction in 1785 when the British swept through the Saint John river valley, burning homes and expelling Acadians. Many Acadian people moved north but some remained in Fredericton. Stigma has been associated with an Acadian identity. New Brunswick Acadians:

were and to some extent still are, treated as people from an inferior race distinguished from the Anglo-Saxons and the Celts by social and physical differences. (Ng, 1991, p. 14).

New Brunswick is the only official bilingual province in Canada. However, English is dominant in the Saint John River Valley. Just under two thirds of the population of the total province have English as their first language and a little under one third have French (Government of New Brunswick, 1996, p. 11). St-Amand (1988) shows that Acadians are disadvantaged in terms of per capita income, years of education and levels of literacy compared to Loyalist descendants. Writing about New Brunswick Acadian people who had been defined as "ill," St-Amand described their oppression as follows:

oppressed groups - the Acadians in this study - suffer a double oppression, of which regional disparity, the disadvantages faced by minorities, and the forms of treatment they are subjected to are all reflections" (p. 11).

This contrasts with the views of both Acadian and Anglophone elites who claim that the

two founding people live in “harmony and cooperation” (p. 26).

### Immigrants, refugees and “people of colour” in New Brunswick

Diverse people have immigrated to the Atlantic region for generations, but numbers of some groups has been small and their presence not always been recognized by dominant groups. After the American revolution at least 14,000 Loyalists settled in the New Brunswick area. They were rewarded for loyalty to England by land concessions, tools and supplies. The Black presence in the Maritimes goes back to the early years of the seventeenth century. Black slavery existed in “New Brunswick” from 1767 (Pachai, 1987, p. 7). van den Hoonard (1991) writes about the “silent ethnicity” of Dutch people who have been in New Brunswick since the seventeenth century (p. 21). Many Irish people who fled the potato famine in the early nineteenth century came to the province. The region’s population grew rapidly from 25,000 in 1803 to 193,000 in 1851 due to the influx of Dutch and Scottish people who joined Loyalist and Irish settlers (St-Amand, 1988, pp. 16-17). The first wave of Lebanese people to the Maritimes occurred in the 1840s (Jabbara, 1987, p. 15). Shyu (1997) chronicles the hardships of Chinese people in the Maritimes since the late nineteenth century (p. 12). Dogra (1987) reports that “Indo-Canadians, who began arriving in the Maritimes in the 1940s, although happily settled, find at times they are victims of systemic discrimination” (p. 19).

Oppression in the twentieth century is evidenced in the location of the only wartime internment camp in Eastern Canada in New Brunswick. Stories from “both sides of the wire” tell of those who “fled from Nazi oppression only to be arrested in England,

shipped across the ocean, and imprisoned in the wilderness of a New Brunswick forest” (Jones, 1988, cover).

The oppression of diverse people in Canada as a whole and in Atlantic Canada and New Brunswick in particular is clear. One example is the failure to recognize international qualifications (Otuki, 1998). This marginalizes newcomers to New Brunswick, leading to their unemployment or underemployment. Works cited in Chapter 4 (Andrew, Rio and Whalen, 1995; Marcoccio, 1995; Miedema and Wachholz, 1997) provide further examples of this oppression. Social workers need knowledge, commitment and skills to redress the damage and educators need curriculum to prepare their students to do so.

Immigrants to New Brunswick between the mid nineteenth and mid twentieth centuries were mainly from Western Europe. More recently this began to change, and immigrants and refugees have arrived from all continents. Numbers coming to New Brunswick are small. In 1996, just 741 new immigrants and 188 refugees gave a New Brunswick destination (Colombo, 1997, p. 67 and p. 69). There is evidence that this may change. The New Brunswick Liberal government policy was to encourage immigration. In February 1999 the New Brunswick and the federal governments agreed to increase the number of Business Class immigrants to the province to counteract the declining provincial population. In April, refugees from Kosovo were accommodated in a New Brunswick military base.

### St. Thomas University, Fredericton

The provincial capital city of New Brunswick is Fredericton which had a population of 46,507 in 1996. Military historical sites in the centre of Fredericton today are a reminder of past conflicts between different ethnic groups. There are two universities in the city including St. Thomas University. In 1997-1998, this university had 1970 full time and 281 part time students taught by 80 full time and 68 part time faculty. This liberal arts university has programmes in education and social work.

The Roman Catholic influence is still very apparent. The university chapel is central to the campus, and classes are occasionally cancelled for mass. A humanistic philosophy and a longstanding commitment to social justice are reflected in the university mission statement. This small university has an "Atlantic Centre for Human Rights," a Native Studies programme, a Criminology programme, a "Human Rights" programme, as well as many liberal arts courses with social justice components. These features are consistent with promoting curriculum to prepare social workers for humanitarian and egalitarian practice with diverse ethnic and racial people.

### BSW Programme at St. Thomas University

St. Thomas University has an English speaking BSW (Bachelor of Social Work) programme, with no graduate programme at present. Approximately 25 students are admitted to two years of social work studies each year. The curriculum is taught almost exclusively by the six full time faculty. One or two introductory courses are taught by sessional instructors. The department fosters a collegial environment with decision

making by consensus of the faculty and four student representatives.

The vision of the founders of the social work programme at St. Thomas was to apply Habermas's critical theory to social work by the development of a structural social work theory that located the cause of problems in social structures rather than individuals (Mullaly and Keating, 1991). Today curriculum developments are influenced by structural social work theory. Teaching and learning methods at St. Thomas are informed by the popular education of Freire (1970, 1973) and the adult education model of Knowles (1980). This view of social work is compatible with the theoretical perspectives outlined in the following chapter that form the bedrock for this research. It highlights the need to develop teaching and learning opportunities to provide experience of diversity.

Faculty, students and social workers usually come from the region. Three of the six faculty in 1998-1999 were St. Thomas University graduates. A fourth was a New Brunswicker by birth and a fifth has lived in the area for 15 years. In the 1998-1999 third and fourth year classes at St. Thomas University Department of Social Work, 42 of the 52 social work students gave a home address in New Brunswick and the others gave a home address of the Maritimes or Atlantic Canada. Thirty of the 38 social work fieldwork teachers whose degrees are listed in the St Thomas University Calendar were awarded at least one degree from New Brunswick. Therefore it is probable that few faculty and students will have experienced the diversity of large Canadian cities.

St Thomas University's small undergraduate programme in a small university probably facilitates curriculum change because the less bureaucratic structure than larger

universities may simplify decision making. The students and faculty are mutually influenced in many ways. Any curriculum change is likely to have a more noticeable immediate impact on students. Often changes take longer to have an impact in a larger school.

### Response to Ethnic and Racial Diversity at St. Thomas University

In 1991 CASSW researchers concluded that not all faculty in the Atlantic region recognized the need for greater attention to issues of ethnic, cultural and racial diversity. Although the structural ethos of the St. Thomas should mean that:

issues of racism, sexism and so on are incorporated into every course . . . specifically cultural elements have been integrated most explicitly into the regular courses offered by the Aboriginal coordinator (of the Native BSW stream) who was, at that point, at the end of his teaching mandate. (Task Force, 1991, p. 15).

The researchers (Task Force, 1991) noted that although the other School of Social Work in New Brunswick (Université de Moncton) had a mission to train Acadians, issues relating to Acadians should still be more visible in the curriculum at St. Thomas (p. 21).

Although St Thomas University has conducted no systematic research about its responses to diversity, since the report was published some developments are evident. In 1996 I was appointed to develop courses to respond to diversity. Several new courses have been developed by myself and others. In 1997 three new courses were added to address issues of diversity: Feminist Counselling, Social Work with Oppressed Groups, and Anti-racist Social Work. A course in "Family Diversity" was added. Recently an Aboriginal faculty member has developed a number of courses with First Nations content

that parallel existing courses. For example, students can take “Native Child Welfare” in addition to the existing “Child Welfare” course, and they can take a “Native Organizations” course in addition to the existing “Organizations” course.

## CONCLUSION

In this Chapter I justified the development of curriculum to prepare St. Thomas social work students to respond to Canadian diversity. I began by justifying the need for curriculum developments across Canada. I have shown that the profession’s humanitarian and egalitarian ideals support this initiative. I have argued that the history of oppression of diverse people is a powerful reason for social workers to respond to their needs today. Biographical accounts illustrate that the legacy of past oppression is still painful to diverse people and compounded by their difficulties of today. This supports the need for curriculum that will enable students to develop knowledge and skills to respond to this pain. Demographic changes in the Canadian population have increased the probability that social workers in both rural and urban communities will encounter diverse people. I have suggested pragmatic justifications for responding to the challenge of diversity, by citing national and provincial legislation, and standards for accrediting social work programmes developed by the CASSW. I have examined features of rural communities and shown how rural social workers face different challenges from those encountered by urban social workers. This points to a need for curriculum to inform rural social work with diverse people. The research outlined in this dissertation is part of the response of St. Thomas University to the challenge of diversity.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS: CAN THE FOUNDATIONAL AND ANTI-FOUNDATIONAL COEXIST?

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews theories underpinning my methodology. It explores whether foundational thinking<sup>1</sup> that takes as its bedrock the belief that racism exists and that this racism should be challenged by social workers, can co-exist with a postmodernism that values local analyzes and solutions to difficulties. This review identifies the possibility that sensitizing concepts can create new relationships between foundational and anti-foundational thinking.

A foundational perspective that derives from a critical theory of society is outlined. I explain how this informs a structural approach to social work practice which in turn informs a response to ethnic and racial diversity<sup>2</sup> based on anti-racism. I explain how people who are oppressed by ethnicity or perceived “race”<sup>3</sup> sometimes have similar and sometimes have different experiences from people oppressed by other conditions. These ideas form the foundations of my thinking and inform a social work approach to diverse people which analyzes and confronts this oppression, I call this anti-racist social

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<sup>1</sup> By this I mean a perspective that has clear ideas about the role of social workers; it derives from a “modern” assumption that we can know what this role should be. I explore the meaning I attribute to foundationalism in more detail later in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Major terms are defined in Appendix Nineteen. I refer to ethnic and racial diversity as “diversity” for the remainder of this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> I do not place this socially constructed term in parenthesis during the remainder of this chapter.

work. Then I outline limitations of foundational anti-racist thinking. This thinking forms a grand story, or metanarrative, that might not be relevant in a particular context. I explore whether selected concepts from postmodern literature, or literature located at the interface between postmodernism and modernism, can expand my thinking about anti-racist social work. This exploration challenges me to grapple with an apparent conflict between foundational (structural/anti-racist) and anti-foundational (postmodern) elements of my thinking. I consider whether “sensitizing concepts” from an interactionist perspective, based on an analysis of how people understand each other’s reality, can link foundational and anti-foundational thinking.

I explain four metaphors (“heart,” “head,” “hand,” and “soul”) that are foundational sensitizing concepts which inform my own approach to anti-racist social work education. The research aims to identify and understand sensitizing concepts from others so they can come into dialogue with, and challenge my sensitizing concepts as well as my broader theories and help me to understand the sensitizing concepts of others. My approach to teaching and learning is one of helping students to develop knowledge, values and skills so they can respond competently to the needs of clients from diverse groups. This approach combines foundational critical perspectives about the need for anti-racist curriculum with anti-foundational valuing of the unique self-defined learning goals of each student. Ideas in this chapter, and the literature reviewed in the next, and my understanding about the unique features of New Brunswick have helped me to develop an anti-racist social work curriculum. These ideas should be considered the

foundational starting point that informed my dialogue<sup>4</sup> with research participants.

### AN ANTI-RACIST BEGINNING

A critical theory about society is at the base of many of my ideas about social work and social work education for work with diverse people. This theory proposes that social science should change rather than describe society. A conflict rather than an order perspective is key. People within society have different interests. Some can exert power and realize their interests at the expense of those with less power (Lukes, 1974; 1986).

When those with power use it to impose their will and thereby oppress others, differences between people can lead to overt conflict. This would be the case when indigenous people rebelled against colonial rulers. On other occasions the oppression is covert. More powerful people structure the agenda so those with less power are unable to pursue their interests. For example, outsiders may define a problem as “alcohol” and offer substance abuse counselling while those experiencing the problem may seek another form of healing for a different problem, the residual effects of colonial oppression. A final exercise of power results in a failure of the least powerful to recognize possibilities open to them. This is sometimes the “learned helplessness” of people who have become accustomed to accept others’ decisions and who do not familiarize themselves with what is available (Barber, 1986). On other occasions no publicity is given about available resources in order to restrict the demand that may be made on resources. For

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<sup>4</sup>I recognize fully that unequal power was brought to this dialogue. In Chapter Six I explain how I encouraged participants to express their own voices rather than echo my own.

example, newcomers to Canada<sup>5</sup> may be unaware of the existence of relevant resources.

From my foundational anti-racist perspective I conclude that people from diverse groups can be helped if social workers try to break down the power of dominant groups. Social work educators should develop curriculum to assist social work students to acquire the requisite knowledge, skills and commitment. Anti-racist social work education should help students to challenge the power that some exert “over” others, and foster commitment, knowledge and skills to act as allies (at the invitations of oppressed people) in challenging this power. Diverse people can then increase their control over their lives.

Therefore, from this foundational perspective, social work education should have an anti-racist focus in confronting oppression by dominant groups (Dominelli, 1997). A Glossary to this dissertation defines anti-racist social work as “social work which tries to identify and challenge racial bias so that people from all ethnic backgrounds can access social work that meets their different needs” (Appendix 19). As Dominelli (1997) suggests, “anti-racist social work forms the bridge that white people cross to reach the competence necessary for beginning to work in non-racist, egalitarian ways with Black people” (p. 17). Anti-racist social work is, therefore, “ a bridge between social work in a racist society and social work in a non-racist one” (p. 167). Those who practice anti-racist social work can contribute to this social transformation. Having articulated my approach to social work with diverse people as anti-racist, I will refer to “anti-racist social

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<sup>5</sup> In this dissertation a “newcomer” is defined as someone who was born outside of Canada.

work” rather than “social work with diverse people.”

### Anti-oppressive component of anti-racist social work

Because anti-racist social work involves confronting oppression, the concept “oppression” is a key element of my thinking. Oppression can occur at three levels: first, through individual interactions; second, through cultural norms and third, through structures which serve the needs of some rather than others (Thompson, 1993). Often all levels simultaneously reinforce one another. On occasion people will be conscious of their oppression or their actions as oppressors, and on occasion a system of ideological domination may prevent the weaker party from being aware of differences in interest or world-view from those who exert power over them. Marx called this “false consciousness.” Those who are oppressed may internalize the views of those who oppress them, and mimic their oppressors, acting towards others in ways that others find oppressive. Oppression can have a multiple base: differences in class, gender, ethnicity and sexual preference<sup>6</sup> are potential sources of oppression of some people by others. Each source of oppression can link with others to produce an “accumulation of handicaps,” (St-Amand, 1999). This dissertation aims to give voice to people who live in a context of racism in order to develop social work that will meet their expressed needs.

Young’s “five faces” of oppression (1988) provide a useful framework for considering social work with people who experience oppression by ethnicity or race. It

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<sup>6</sup> These are just four examples. There are many more.

can act as a checklist to inform social workers about a focus for their anti-racist practice.

One “face” of oppression is exploitation (p. 280). Young’s thinking here is rooted in Marx’ theory of surplus value created by wage labourers, but retained by owners of the means of production in excess profit. This Marxist analysis is extended to include the unreciprocated transfer of women’s labour to men. A segmented labour market reserves the highest paying jobs for white people so that menial labour is a racially specific form of exploitation. Anti-racist social work, therefore, identifies exploitation.

The second “face” of oppression is marginalization (p. 280). This occurs when people are excluded from full participation in society. A clear example of this is the failure to recognize international qualifications (Otuki, 1998). This practice marginalizes newcomers and leads to their unemployment or underemployment. Similarly, Aboriginal people may find it difficult to qualify for particular jobs. Even when they are qualified, employers may be unwilling to offer work. Work offered may be difficult to accept because of transportation difficulties from a First Nations Community. Anti-racist social work should identify and challenge this marginalization.

A third face of oppression, according to Young, is powerlessness. This “describes the lives of people who have little or no work autonomy, exercise little creativity in their work, have no technical expertise or authority . . . and do not command respect” (p. 282). Young contrasts the power of professionals with the powerlessness of non-professionals. The concept of “powerlessness” can be applied to the day to day life of newcomers from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds. Until they

have met residence requirements, landed immigrants are excluded from voting for politicians who will develop laws and policies that will determine whether they can remain in the country. Anti-racist social workers should identify situations where power is denied and assist those so denied to gain power. This research challenges the powerlessness of diverse people by inviting them to contribute to anti-racist social work curriculum development.

Young defines the fourth face of oppression, "cultural imperialism," as "the universalization of one group's experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm" (p. 285). Some non-Canadian authors show how privilege is afforded through a white skin colour (Kivel, 1996, pp.30-32; McIntosh, 1990, pp.2-3). At a cultural level this is reinforced through the association of white with good and the association of black with bad (Kivel, 1996, p.20-21). Cultural imperialism has an impact on the day to day lives of people from diverse backgrounds. Eurocentric assumptions, for example, are embedded in health care (Lee & Javed, 1993; Clews, 1995). One task of an anti-racist social worker<sup>7</sup> is to identify and confront these manifestations of cultural oppression.

"Violence" is the final face of oppression and includes "name calling or petty harassment which intends to degrade or humiliate," as well as threats of physical violence (Young, 1988, p.287). Anti-racist social workers must be alert to this face of oppression and find responses that are relevant for diverse people. Sending an Aboriginal

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<sup>7</sup> By "anti-racist social worker" I mean someone who tries to practice anti-racist social work.

woman away from her community to an urban refuge, for example, may not be her preferred solution for domestic violence.

Anti-racist social work enhances awareness of these five faces of oppression and finds ways of challenging this oppression. This involves social workers enhancing awareness of their own biases, and subtle and less subtle bias in social systems. Alliances to confront these biases can then be formed. Ife (1997) and Mullaly (1997) call this social work “radical structuralist.” Radical structuralist social work seeks to identify oppressive structures, and change them or create alternatives. Building upon the egalitarian value base of social work, it seeks to transform society of which racism is a part.

Another task for anti-racist social workers is to reflect the humanist value base of the profession by sensitive responses to people who are experiencing personal difficulties and/or oppression. This humanism is Rogers’ “warmth, genuineness and empathy” to be communicated by social workers when they encounter personal suffering of others (Rogers, 1951). The radical part of the equation involves discouraging self-blame and instead encouraging people to look at systemic causes of difficulties. Radical humanist social work encourages people to value not hide their differences. It seeks to normalize, or encourage people to realize the difficulties they experience may be the same as the difficulties experienced by others. For example, it is the “norm” for newcomers to Canada to experience difficulty in securing employment.



### Racism and other oppressions

From this view of society comes my foundational view about social work. An important task for social workers is to become aware of oppression and to challenge it in all its forms. Payne (1997) calls the social work that would challenge multiple oppression a “socialist-collectivist view of social work.” It is a social work that “seeks cooperation and mutual support in society so that the most oppressed and disadvantaged people can gain power over their own lives” (p.4). Social workers can assist through anti-racist social work that includes radical humanist and radical structuralist approaches.

The impact of oppression is multiplied when several conditions that lead to oppression coexist (St. Amand, 1988, and 1999; St-Amand, Kerisit & Vuong, 1994; Bishop, 1994; das Gupta, 1996; Ng, 1982). Forms of diversity often overlap, interlock and reinforce each another. Thus, Ng (1982) shows how immigrant women can be oppressed by gender as well as immigrant status; and Das Gupta (1996) shows how gender, race and social class simultaneously oppress.

Stakeholders representing the different forms of diversity which can lead to oppression, risk competing with one another for space in the social work curriculum. I consider that this competition is unnecessary and unhelpful to those encountered by social workers. Each person’s situation is unique. Each element of diversity is a part of the unique identity of each individual, family, group and community. Each form of diversity can be both a reason for oppression and a source of affirmation. These differences between people often oppress or affirm, not singly but in multiples.

The potential competition among stakeholders representing different forms of diversity has led some to conclude that a focus on particular forms of diversity is divisive (Mullaly, 1997; Ife, 1997). They argue that the nature of oppression itself should be considered rather than oppression based on particular forms of difference. I consider that it is important to understand how people with different forms of diversity can sometimes be oppressed in similar ways. However, we should not lose sight of the ways in which different forms of diversity can lead to different forms of oppression. We should also understand that “multiple oppression” or situations when several forms of diversity co-exist, can greatly increase the experience of oppression.

The sources of potential oppression are also part of each person’s unique identity and experience. Sometimes people seek to hide their characteristics. They may be ashamed or realize that a particular characteristic is not valued by dominant groups. Young’s “five faces” can help social workers understand unique experiences of oppression. The unique features of particular oppressions include those based on differences in ethnicity, culture and race. Reflection upon the unique leads me to challenge the metanarrative about anti-racism described above.

#### Limitations of an anti-racist perspective

Those with an “anti-racist” orientation may not hearing diverse voices. As a privileged white woman I have argued that social workers should adopt my definition of an anti-racist approach by addressing Young’s five faces of oppression in their work. This seems very clear to me, but is it equally clear to diverse people from different

backgrounds? Am I perpetuating my colonial thinking that I know best? Interactions with people from different backgrounds have encouraged me to hesitate and step back every time I generalize or every time I think that I have “the answer” to preparing students for work in a rural context of increasing diversity. To assume that I can help is patronizing unless I allow many different and unique views to influence me.

Ristock and Pennell (1997) “interrupt” their foundational feminism with postmodern challenges to these foundations. Similarly, I step back from the foundationalism above to explore whether postmodern ideas can assist me to shake these foundations and make me more open to hearing and understanding alternatives. In the next section I locate this postmodernism in the history of Western thought. Then I reflect on implications of postmodern ideas for my foundational anti-racism. Finally I explore some concepts from post-modern literature that may challenge my thinking and help me to explore alternatives.

## POSTMODERN INFLUENCES

Howe (1994) provides a useful account about the development from the pre-modern through the modern to postmodernisms<sup>8</sup> and shows the influence of these three phases on social work. His linear categorical approach is modernist but it identifies how some postmodernisms differ from much modern or pre-modern thinking. He argues that the pre-modern world accepted that God and destiny were in control. People marvelled at

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<sup>8</sup> There is not a single postmodernism. The postmodern concepts that I have chosen to explore, and the way I have explored them, were my narrative, a product of the time they were written. There are many other postmodernisms.

God's creation. Attempts to change their position in "the natural order" were considered blasphemous (p. 514). The modern world developed through scientific and industrial revolutions. As people began to control the natural world they looked to science and human reason to provide life's answers. Beliefs developed that human beings could understand and change societies and a better society would evolve.

This "modern" optimism has gradually dissolved as the modern era "has run its course" (Lyotard, quoted in Irving, 1994, p.20). For Howe, the belief in a single truth disappears as the modern era disappears. Without the premodern ultimate authority of God, or the modern authority of human reason, there is no foundation for determining truth. In postmodern thinking truth is decentred. For Howe, postmodernisms are relativistic. Truth is located in many places, dependent on context and in a constant state of flux. Therefore, universal principles no longer apply. However, there can be no single account of postmodernism because there are many stories about it, and accounts alter as they are narrated.

Howe's relativistic approach to postmodernism is not universally accepted. For Hollinger (1994), the relativist emphasis on "particularity and difference" is one of the "pre-cursors to postmodernism" rather than postmodernism itself (p.67). Norris (1993) distinguishes between 'textualist' and 'end of ideology' postmodernisms. The 'end of ideology' perspective suggests relativism in Howe's tradition while the "textualist" approach suggests that local truths can be discovered. Geertz (1983) challenges the relativist characterization of post-modernism and suggests it is a criticism of

postmodernism by those who assume foundations. Geertz, tries to understand local knowledge, or comprehend social phenomena from “local frames of reference.” This latter perspective is compatible with my attempt to understand local views about the nature of anti-racist social work curriculum rather than gain some universal<sup>9</sup> understanding. A willingness to locate myself in either a ‘textualist’ or an ‘end of ideology’ postmodernism is contrary to my postmodernism that is suspicious of such categorizations. Instead I have sought phrases from various postmodern traditions, or traditions at the interface between modernism and pre-modernism, to conceptualize an anti-racist social work that values diversity. These phrases do not knit together to form a “story” about my postmodernism. My postmodernism is described by the phrase below.

“Pastiche, a collage or montage of colliding images” (Irving).

There is no single postmodernism, so attempts to define shared features run the risk of oversimplifying, thereby distorting postmodernisms. Attempts have been made to categorize postmodernisms but the very attempt to categorize is a modern rather than a postmodern exercise. My postmodernism is unique and is constantly changing. Irving’s favourite image of post-modernism (Irving, 1994, p.20), as a collage encouraged me to seek out fragments from postmodern writings that help me to step back and review my foundational anti-racism. The parts do not fit together. They may collide and contradict each other. Postmodern thoughts that I find helpful tolerate ambiguity and conflict. From

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<sup>9</sup> This does not mean that I am seeking a local “truth” about anti-racist curriculum. I am arguing that research in a local geographical context is more likely to help me to understand sensitizing concepts that will be more relevant in this context.

this ambiguity and conflict can come new insights.

From a logical, linear, rational perspective any attempt to combine the anti-foundational (in this section of the chapter) with the foundational (in the previous section) is impossible. It is necessary to step out of this way of thinking, to “expand the dichotomy” (or challenge it) so that new insights can emerge. I do not expect to find a consensus viewpoint among stakeholders in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme about what this focus should be. My views, or those of research participants, are not necessarily internally coherent. I believe that views should develop and change during research and reflection processes. Irving’s idea of a collage of colliding images encourages me to tolerate uncertainty, ambiguity and internal conflict, reflect upon it, and constantly seek new meanings, realizing that there will never be a final resolution.

“Incredulity towards metanarratives”(Lyotard)

Lyotard (1994) states, “I define postmodernism as incredulity towards metanarratives” (p.27). He also refers to “metadiscourse”<sup>10</sup> (p.31). These ideas encourage me to seek stories and explanations other than those in current Canadian social work wisdom. Postmodern insights urge me to not allow meta-narratives to inform my theory. I agree with Rogers and Summers (1999) that grand narratives tend to reflect “dominant cultural values, discourses, knowledge bases and institutions” (p.344). I also think that Brown (1994) is usually correct in her claim that “the competing worlds of

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<sup>10</sup> The prefix “meta” means “of a higher order” (Allen, 1991, p.745).

marginalized and less powerful social groups are not reflected in theory or in institutional practices” (p.34).

These quotations encourage me to consider who is silenced by dominant Canadian discourses about social work with diverse people. In particular, they encourage me to listen to the voices of diverse people, students and others who have stakes in social work education. Unless I consider diverse viewpoints I am likely to develop and impose a grand narrative about anti-racist social work curriculum.

Canadian Schools of Social Work have been heavily influenced by Dominelli’s anti-racism. Postmodern insights encourage me to ask if other “narratives” about social work with diverse people in specific locations are equally or more relevant. They encourage me, in the footsteps of Geertz, to seek local stories from this local context. Therefore in this study I ask diverse stakeholders in a social work programme for their views that relate to anti-racist social work curriculum development thereby, like Butler, allowing my foundational ideas to be contestable.

“Foundations as permanently contestable assumptions.” (Butler)

I define foundational ideas as ideas and assumptions that are at the base of my beliefs and thoughts and form their bedrock. The modern world replaced the foundational authority of God with the foundational authority of the power of human reason. In worlds of postmodernisms universal claims are challenged. Leonard (1997) draws from the work of Bauman to point out:

Postmodernity does not seek to substitute one truth for another . . . instead

it splits the truth . . . it denies in advance the right of all and any revelation to slip into the place of the deconstructed/discredited rules (p.15).

Postmodern insights encourage me to allow others to contest my foundations, and then explore differences. Derrida (1982) coined a new French term “differance” and played with the words “differance” and “difference.” I seek “difference” (unlikeness or dissimilarity) as well as Derrida’s “differance” (deferral). By allowing myself to tolerate “differance” I explore “difference” without fixing myself in a firm unchanging position.

There is a limit to this though. Schools of Social Work are located in “modern” worlds. Such worlds must have foundations for curriculum that impact on social work with diverse people. Course outlines are required, textbooks must be ordered, CASSW accreditation standards must be considered. These foundations should not be presented as permanent and unchanging “truths” though. I need to engage in a reflexive process that enables me to challenge my own foundations in regard to anti-racist curriculum. The foundations should be made transparent so that others also can challenge them. I want to explore the foundations of others’ thinking as I reflect on my own, and I believe that this will reveal other alternatives. Then I can challenge my own foundations about anti-racist curriculum development as well as those imposed on me by the foundational world of orthodoxy about Canadian anti-racist social work education.

Linear thought limits what I think. Cyclical thinking provides more possibilities. Conceptions of the whole present still more alternatives. If linear models, cyclical models and conceptions of the whole all inform my thinking I am open to many more



possibilities. If I expand further and am open to hearing ideas that are simultaneously linear, cyclical and holistic still more possibilities are open. If I take a further leap I will become open to hearing about an epistemology that is neither linear, cyclical nor holistic. I seek to extend the bounds of my thinking so that I can hear as many rich ideas as I can comprehend. My job as a social work educator is to help students to do the same.

Butler (1994) suggests that we need to leave “universal” concepts “permanently open, permanently contested, permanently contingent . . . in order not to foreclose in advance future claims for inclusion.” Butler’s idea moves away from a postmodernism that would reject any universal concepts but it is valuable because it encourages me to explore concepts that might challenge my own. It encourages me to explore the views of many with a stake in the curriculum and to constantly seek their views. If I do so there will not be one challenge, but many. Derrida’s concept “intertextuality” helps me to explore this idea.

#### “Relationship between ‘author,’ ‘text,’ and ‘reader’” (Ife).

Postmodern ideas about the ‘author,’ ‘text’ and ‘reader’ have implications for social work with diverse people, for social work curriculum and for teaching and learning methods to prepare students for this work. The following quotation from Ife (1997) explains Derrida’s intertextuality:

Modernism has been seen as giving priority to the author, who is regarded as the source of the text, with the reader passively consuming the author’s product. From this perspective, the text has a timeless quality and objective reality, and is the creation of the author. By contrast, postmodernists emphasize the role of the reader in interpreting the text,

and in doing so, also constructing the author. Each reading of the text is different, and in the process of interpretation the constructions of both text and author change (p. 86).

This idea can be read with the social work educator as “author,” the curriculum as “text” and the social work student as “reader.” Alternatively the social worker can be “author,” knowledge, values and skills for social work can be “text” and the client can be “reader.”

As the social-work-educator-author, I am encouraged to write a curriculum-text that can be interpreted in different ways by different student-readers. I want to develop a curriculum-text that student-readers can use flexibly to develop social work knowledge, values and skills for work with diverse people. As author I want to learn from student-readers so that my curriculum-text can be rewritten each occasion I teach to maximize the learning of students. When the student-authors enter the social work profession I want them to use their social work texts of knowledge, values and skills flexibly, “analyzing, interpreting and constructing” (Collier, 1993) how best to use them in each unique situation. I do not want them to view their “texts” as unchanging foundational “truths,” but as drafts that will change as they learn from their diverse client-readers.

Intertextuality occurs when “every text is penetrated with traces from other texts so that neither is the single text itself the ultimate locus of meaning nor does the author determine the meaning of the text (for the reader)” (Irving, 1994, p. 54). This is what I aim for in my teaching.

### Conclusion

Postmodern insights help me to recognize my biased thinking about anti-racist

social work that derives from my social location as a privileged white woman. I have a responsibility to continually try to become aware of my biases. I should be clear about my contestable ideas. I should present these ideas in a manner that allows different students to explore them in ways that are compatible with their own interests, self defined needs and learning styles. This leads me to the following discussion about teaching and learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT ANTI-RACIST SOCIAL WORK

### Introduction

My ideas about teaching and learning are informed by both foundational and anti-foundational ideas. My anti-foundationalism encourages me to devise unique teaching and learning experiences for each unique student in context. It also encourages me to maximize student-participation in determining what is learned and how it is learned and to find ways for the student-reader to influence my text (as the author) as they learn. My foundationalism has many roots: as a social work educator I have responsibilities to other stakeholders as well as students. I have a responsibility to ensure that students develop what diverse people consider is competence to work with them. I am required to grade student work. To do so I need to make decisions about their learning and the standards of their work. Furthermore, I should not deny the knowledge and experience that I have acquired through reading, research and university teaching. I try to make my assumptions and foundations “permanently contestable” but there remains a tension between the foundational and the anti-foundational elements of my teaching philosophy.

In what follows I outline some of the conflicting ideas that coexist in my thinking as I prepare for teaching and as I teach.

### Popular education and adult education

I am influenced by adult educators such as Knowles and by popular educators such as Freire. I agree with Knowles (1980) that social work students, as adult learners, should play a major role in determining what to learn and how to learn. They bring a wealth of experience and can often learn best when they apply knowledge and reflect on experience. Teaching and learning opportunities should accommodate different student interests, learning styles, gender (Davenport, 1984), race (Luttrell, 1989) age, existing knowledge, previous experiences of education, and current expectations of education (Clews, 1995). The social work educator should not provide a blueprint but create an environment where students can creatively construct learning opportunities.

Many authors have valued experiential learning in adult education. Kolb (1976) suggests a cycle of concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization and active experimentation. Green (1995) claims that Kolb's model is useful in cross-cultural social work because culturally competent practitioners must apply skills in concrete situations. Students must move beyond the "concrete experience" stage or, as Weaver (1998) points out, experiential education will be "more of a vacation than a learning experience" (p.67). To prepare for anti-racist social work students need to reflect on the pain caused by racism and relate it to their world. If we require a reflective process from our students we must engage in it ourselves.

Students and instructors should strive for dialogical relationships to explore what is learned and how it is learned. This draws heavily from Freire (1970, 1973) who contrasted dialogical learning with a “banking concept of education” where “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire, 1995, p. 53). Freire suggested that the teacher should coordinate learning, and enter into dialogical relationships with students so that they can emerge from a “culture of silence” and no longer be passive recipients of “knowledge.” Leonard (1995) applied the “banking approach” to a social work classroom where “the teacher speaks with authority and manages the speech and writing of students who listen, reproduce ‘knowledge’ and submit to this authority” (p. 11). As Leonard points out, dialogical relationships between social work educators and students, where “power and authority is deeply embedded in systems of domination [requires] a great deal of effort” and willingness on the part of both student and educator (p. 12).

The role of the student is to learn and the role of the instructor is to facilitate this learning and nurture the unique qualities of each individual student. My anti-racist epistemology leads me to encourage each unique student to develop commitment, knowledge and skills to affirm difference and to confront oppression and domination in its personal cultural and structural manifestations (Thompson, 1993), and in all the faces mentioned by Young (1988). As an instructor I must constantly reflect on my work and listen to both students and others with a stake in student learning about working in a context of diversity, so that my foundational beliefs are “permanently contestable” in and

outside of the classroom. I now turn to explore some of the contestable foundations of my thinking.

### Radical humanism and radical structuralism in social work education

Radical humanism and radical structuralism are both relevant to anti-racist social work education. Radical humanism leads to affirming the qualities of each unique student, and radical structuralism identifies and tries to change educational structures that prevent the expression of these qualities. My radical humanism encourages me to attempt to break down hierarchical oppressive relationships that bell hooks (1994) says lead to a “rote assembly line approach to teaching” (p. 13). Instead, I want students to be subjects rather than objects of learning, partnering with me and other stakeholders in co-authoring the curriculum-text, to determine the outcome of social work education, and teaching and learning methods that will achieve it. How can I teach students to become anti-oppressive if I oppress them in the classroom?

Yet students may not want to learn to be anti-oppressive practitioners. If this is the case, my anti-racist foundationalism will cause me to challenge them. I must hear and respond to the voices of those who have spoken and written about their suffering in a Canada that causes them emotional pain. Students are important stakeholders but not the only stakeholders. The diverse people who may be their future clients are also important. Therefore, I endeavour to help students to understand difference, power and oppression and develop skills to confront it.

Traditional pedagogies of assigned readings and lecture, although they may have

some benefits, cannot provide everything students need to become anti-racist social workers. These approaches, used alone, suggest that I, as instructor, or the authors of the readings are “expert” on what the student needs to know. It assumes that this knowledge can be transferred to students through a “banking mechanism” (Freire, 1970). It also assumes that this mechanism can foster commitment, values and skills needed for anti-racist social work. Burstow (1991) shows how Freire’s ideas of “problem posing” can be introduced in the social work classroom. She presented students with cartoon pictures that illustrated oppression. Students reflected and added to these images. These reflections enhanced their understanding about oppression and led to classroom dialogue about the role of social work in confronting it. Similarly I have sought ways of making the suffering of diverse people apparent to social work students. I discussed other means of doing so with research participants.

In the social work classroom I seek what hooks calls “engaged pedagogy” where students and I can grow together (hooks, 1994, p. 21). “Whole person” students must engage in “whole-person” learning to become anti-racist social workers. As hooks suggests, this necessitates teaching that “respects and cares for the souls of students” (p. 41). A “whole person” teacher must also be prepared to change. This leads me to the radical humanist dimension of my social work education.

My radical humanism has led me to the metaphors “heart,” “head,” “hand,” and “soul” as my guides in developing curriculum content and teaching and learning methods. I borrowed the concepts “mind,” “heart,” and “hand” from Brown (1988), who argued

that these components of the student self should be addressed in social work education.

I thought that this was incomplete so I added the “soul.” Aboriginal students have suggested that these concepts are similar to ideas about the medicine wheel in North American Aboriginal thought, so I have explored these ideas (O’Meara & West, 1996; Sun Bear & Waburn, 1992). From these Aboriginal teachings I have learned that the whole is more important than the four directions because only in combination is the circle complete. Each part contributes to the whole and the parts as well as the whole should be nourished.

From the “heart” comes feelings, commitment, rage and compassion that leads many to social work as a career. Unless the “heart” is nourished social workers “go through the motions” without authenticity. Social work educators should attend to the “heart,” and help to develop the commitment and the rage that encouraged many students to become social workers.

From the “head” comes knowledge that social workers apply in their practice and conceptual skills to apply this knowledge to unique situations. Social work educators should identify and introduce students to relevant local knowledge and also help them to develop conceptual skills for practice.

From the “hands” come practical skills needed to carry out anti-racist social work. Students need skills to work both outside and within oppressive structures to change them. They also need skills to relate to those with whom they work.

Finally from the “soul” comes the essence of the unique person that is the social



worker and the beliefs and values that will sustain them in their work. Social work educators should encourage students to nourish their “souls.” Students need to reflect on the foundational value base of social work contained in the CASW Code of Ethics (1994) and relate it to their own beliefs and values. Social work is stressful. Anti-racist social work strikes at the core of our values as we examine our assumptions. Students need a strong sense of identity. Social work educators should encourage students to nourish their souls so that they have spiritual resources needed for social work practice (Canda, 1995).

The “heart,” “head,” “hand,” and “soul” metaphors represent parts of a whole. In practice “head” knowledge about concepts such as “empowerment” or “normalization” must be combined with “hand” skills to apply these concepts. Unique social workers engage “heart,” “head,” “hand,” and “soul” as they interact with unique clients. Social work educators help students to develop the “heart,” “head,” “hand,” and “soul” resources so that they can engage in both radical humanist and radical structuralist anti-racist work. The social work educator does not have all the answers! Student are experts on their own learning style preferences. It can be helpful for them to dialogue with the instructor and other students to identify learning to enable them to become anti-racist social workers.

In Chapter 4 I review models of cultural competence (for example Burgest, 1989; Logan, Freeman & McRoy, 1990; Sue, Arredondo and McDavis, 1992). I show that these approaches can be prescriptive and not compatible with the dialogical approach outlined above. They often do not adequately acknowledge differences in students, the instructor

or the practice environment. Also, developed in the United States, these models may not be relevant for rural New Brunswick. The “heart,” “head,” “hand” and “soul” metaphors are more promising, enabling student and instructor to consider each aspect of self and how it can be nourished and developed. This framework is more compatible with my postmodern emphasis on context, small stories and contestable foundations.

### STRUGGLES TO COMBINE THE FOUNDATIONAL AND THE ANTI- FOUNDATIONAL

This postmodern epistemology seems to have a potential for liberation, because of the value it places on small stories and local cultures and its rejection of hegemonic metanarratives. Nevertheless, a conflict is apparent between the anti-foundationalism of postmodernism and the acknowledged foundationalism in anti-racist social work practice and education. Anti-racist social work acknowledges and retains its foundations. The notion that racism is bad is explicit. Radical structuralist and radical humanist approaches are foundational in challenging this oppression. Postmodernisms that are willing to contest all foundations worry me. With no foundation there is no criterion for challenging racism and other forms of oppression. There are no grounds for arguing that anti-racism is preferable to racism or that cultural competence is preferable to cultural incompetence. I want the best of both worlds. I want to combine the “foundational” and the “anti-foundational,” or better still, to expand (and thereby challenge) this dichotomy and leap to a perspective that is both “foundational” and “anti-foundational” as well as neither “foundational” nor “anti-foundational.” Logic suggests that this is impossible.

Of course, I am not the first person to experience this struggle. Some deny the conflict. Mullaly (1997) suggests that structural social work is compatible with postmodernism because of a shared parentage in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, and a shared challenge of the status quo. Yet the nature of the challenges from postmodernism and foundational structural social work are different. Structural social work challenges social workers to identify features of contemporary society which oppress and then promote change by evolutionary or revolutionary methods. Postmodern thinkers would caution us against issuing any such challenge.

Many have grappled with the theoretical problem of incorporating the benefits of the foundational and the anti-foundational. Leonard (1993) acknowledged that his Marxism triumphed over his "postmodern skepticism about the value of grand narratives" (p. 62). Some suggest that the postmodern exploration of the voices of diverse people can be liberating. Brown (1994) argues that we must be attentive to the plurality of women's experiences because this weakens attempts to identify authoritative voices and enhances the possibility of change (pp. 35-38). When Lather (1991) considered whether she should impose liberatory curriculum on students who expected the usual hierarchical relationships, she explored these resistant voices. This exploration had creative consequences for teacher and student. Hearing diverse voices, although important, is not enough. We must allow what we hear to influence us. In this tradition Ristock and Pennell (1996) suggest that postmodern notions can interrupt, constantly challenging their feminism and precluding rigidity.

In 1994, Leonard argued for a skeptical and questioning attitude to all narratives including his own. A dialogical relationship between the foundational and the relative can “unearth hidden knowledge reflecting the diverse experiences and world views of subordinate populations” (p. 24). I sought such a dialogue in my research.

Leonard’s concept of “critical pluralism” is helpful. He is not prepared to abandon his emancipatory foundation but everything else can be contestable. He defines critical pluralism as “a discourse on alternative and diverse theories, strategies and priorities in the struggle for transformative social change.” He states:

Critical pluralism, in my view, is based on a prior commitment to emancipatory struggle for economic and social justice: the pluralism comes in the different roads which might be followed in arriving at this goal, roads which emerge from diverse economic, social and cultural experiences and locations (p. 12).

I agree with Leonard. I long to shed all foundations but my personal value base, my location as a social work educator in a structural social work programme, my contacts with diverse people, and my learning about the oppression they have faced lead me to retain a foundation in my thinking. My uncontestable foundation is a commitment to anti-racism. This affects what I am prepared, and what I am not prepared, to teach and how I am prepared to teach. I will not teach, practice or condone what I believe to be oppressive in my social work classroom. Instead I will help students to pursue anti-racist social work. I recognize that my background may have led me to have a biased view of what anti-racist social work is, so this definition is open for challenge. Like Leonard I hope that:

If we can develop the notion of critical pluralism then perhaps we can relinquish our need for the 'transcendental guarantees' of orthodoxy and open ourselves to a range of diverse views of the world which do not have to be centered within a Western linear view (p. 12).

My research explores a range of views to enable me to become aware of, and then contest, my other foundations.

My methodology for this research emerges from the challenge of developing a dialogical relationship between my foundational anti-racist focus in regard to social work and the unique and diverse views of research participants. My challenge has been to first understand and then make explicit this uncontested foundation, and the other contestable foundations so that participants can both challenge them and explore their own foundational concepts.

My opposition to racism is uncontested. The way that social work and social work education oppose it is contestable. I allow the "heart," "head," "hand," and "soul" metaphors about the nature of anti-racist social work education to be challenged. The meaning I give to anti-racist social work (radical humanism and radical structural work with diverse people) is equally open to challenge.

I believe that the term "anti-racist social work," like any other term, is socially constructed. Therefore, if a participant is able to convince me that my construction of this term is biased and there are alternative ways that social workers can challenge injustice to diverse people, I allow my foundational views about anti-racist social work to be challenged. A successful challenge to "anti-racist social work" will affect my anti-racist social work curriculum content and also have implications for the teaching and learning

methods I employ.

There is no precise formula to determine what I would and what I would not consider within a broad definition of “anti-racist social work.” I cannot know this. My ability to consider it is limited by what others have considered “anti-racist social work” and my knowledge of these ideas. In its broadest sense I would not assist students to develop social work knowledge and skills that I think are likely to harm rather than help diverse people. I would not support social structures that I believe oppress rather than liberate them. I aim to help students to identify and challenge these oppressive behaviours or social structures. This does not mean that my view about what would harm rather than help is the only view. I allow my position to be contested by participants’ sensitizing concepts. Furthermore, I believe that means as well as goals are important. Therefore I could not condone or promote what I believe to be oppressive teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work (although I would be open to challenge about whether or not these methods actually oppressed).

Two examples might help to clarify my uncontested foundations. One of these examples is about goals and the other about means to reach a goal. There are some goals that I would not pursue and some structures that I would confront. First, I would challenge behaviours or structures that have the intention of promoting hatred of any ethnic or racial group. Also I would help students to develop commitment, knowledge and skills to mount a challenge. The second example is about teaching and learning methods that I would not adopt. I tell a story to explain. In 1970s Britain some white

people were just beginning to become aware of racism. A number of “racism awareness” courses developed. Some of these courses were highly confrontational. White people were deeply challenged about the racism of all White people. The rationale for this challenge was that they should feel the pain that Black people had felt. I attended several courses and workshops and talked to others who had also attended. There were many different reactions. Some course participants were convinced by what they had heard and developed a commitment to identify and challenge racism. There were other reactions. Some were deeply hurt; others were consumed by guilt; others decided that they would reject “racism awareness;” others may have had biased views reinforced. The point I am making is that I consider the pain caused by these efforts to promote awareness of racism was unethical and I know it was sometimes counterproductive. I would not use highly confrontational methods of this nature in my classroom. This is an uncontestable foundation.

Therefore, my struggle to retain the benefits of foundationalism and anti-foundationalism results in a commitment to help students to learn to pursue anti-racist social work by teaching and learning methods that are not experienced as oppressive. At the same time I strive to become alert to the social construction of my definitions of “anti-racist social work” and “non-oppressive teaching and learning methods.” In order to maximize this alertness I conducted research designed to place before participants my foundations and ask them to share their ideas and comment on mine.

This is no easy task. As a social work educator who is researching my own

discipline, I risk convincing myself that I have reached the Nirvana of self-knowledge and communicate this belief, thereby silencing my participants. My uncontested foundationalism is my commitment to pursue “anti-racist social work” by “non-oppressive” teaching and learning methods. My anti-foundationalism is my wish to maximize my understanding of what “anti-racist social work” might be and increase the range of possible “non-oppressive” teaching and learning methods I might employ. One struggle is to let the foundations of my thinking be shaken and shifted. Another struggle is not to silence the participants but to hear and respond to their diverse views. Then the approach to anti-racist social work and anti-racist social work education can be informed by other epistemologies. This can possibly lead to the development of curriculum content and teaching and learning methods that are more relevant for more people. I now turn to explain how sensitizing concepts might form a bridge between the foundational and the contestable thought. To do so, I add a symbolic interactionist thread to my epistemology.

#### SENSITIZING CONCEPTS: A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE FOUNDATIONAL AND CONTESTABLE?

Blumer (1969) a major thinker in a symbolic interactionist tradition, suggests that people act on the basis of meanings that they give to the social world. They make “indications to one another and interpret each other’s indications.” Social acts, whether individual or collective, are constructed through a process in which the actors note, interpret, and assess the situations confronting them” ( p. 50). Part of my epistemology is in a symbolic interactionist tradition because I seek to understand how stakeholders in the



social work programme at St. Thomas University think that the anti-racist focus of the programme should develop. I seek to “interpret” their ideas and use this understanding in the development of anti-racist social work curriculum.

The potential for misunderstanding is high, particularly in a multicultural situation. I am more likely to understand a smaller element in the reality of another person than a larger element. The concept is a small element. By concepts I mean ideas about some aspect of the world. Concepts are not isolated thoughts but thoughts linked together to form ideas that can be building blocks for theory (Ford, 1975). They can also become building blocks for an anti-racist focus in a social work programme. I have outlined above some of the concepts that are foundational to my thinking. These ideas derive from my social location as a white social work educator. They may not make sense to diverse people who have a stake in the anti-racist focus of social work education. I want to explore the concepts of others and enable them to bring them into a dialogue with my own. Sensitizing concepts have promise to enable this to happen.

The term “sensitizing concept” was conceived by Blumer as a transition “from actors’ understandings and meanings to analytic, generalizable concepts” (van den Hoonaard, 1997, p. vi). Unlike Blumer I do not seek here to generalize about experiences of racism but want to understand some of the concepts that inform stakeholders’ thinking about anti-racist social work curriculum content and teaching and learning methods. This exploration can form the basis for anti-racist social work education in a specific locality. I think that a single exploration will not be enough. The term “anti-racist social work”

should be dynamic and change with new knowledge about ethnic and racial oppression.

I share van den Hoonaard's (1997) definition of a sensitizing concept as "a construct which is derived from the research participants' perspective, uses their language or expression, and sensitizes the researcher to possible lines of enquiry" (p. 1). I add that this line of enquiry might differ from the researchers own "language or expression." The sensitizing concept is more than a repetition of someone else's words. Sometimes a sensitizing concept makes sense of many words. The researcher may think of a phrase which appears to encapsulate the thinking of one, or more than one, participant. Then the researcher moves beyond the words or actions of a particular participant in order to understand their meaning. As an example, in a recent undergraduate research course, students were reluctant, even terrified by the prospect of studying research. I gave students an assignment to carry out a research project and most of them had different ideas about research by the end of the course. One final exam question required students to write to an imaginary student worried about beginning a research methods course (Clews, 1999f). One student wrote that students "learn by doing." This phrase captured my intention to demystify the research process by "doing" small exercises and a research project. He used the sensitizing concept "learn by doing," to explain what happened during the course. He did not use my words but his sensitizing concept captured his experience of my intentions. His words had immediate face validity to me. The phrase "learn by doing" is a sensitizing concept with meaning to us both.

Criteria for identifying a "sensitizing concept" are varied. Some researchers

identify sensitizing concept by the response of the researcher.

You will know a sensitizing concept when you see it because the expression will move you to reflection--- “a double entendre” will be evident to your reading intellect and you will pause to ask, “what does this mean? What is the significance of this expression? What are they saying about this aspect of life by choosing to express it in this way?” (Turner, 1998).

Some suggest signals that might alert the researcher to a sensitizing concept; if the participant becomes emotional, frequently repeats words, uses jargon or familiar expressions in an unfamiliar way or goes into a narrative, it might suggest a sensitizing concept (van den Hoonaard, 1998). Similarly Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest that the researcher looks for words that “sound different from . . . ordinary vocabulary” and “vividness.” (p. 230). These authors also identify “stories” with “fluency in narration,” “careful structure,” “haunting symbols,” “change of speaking tone or posture by the narrator,” and interviews “ignoring interventions and questions by the researcher” (p. 32) as likely to contain sensitizing concepts.

Rubin and Rubin also suggest that sensitizing concepts<sup>11</sup> can be identified from a “matched pair” of terms. As an example, participants in one study about housing projects often used the words “bricks and mortar.” The researcher looked for a phrase which suggested a less visible product. The term “social services support” was identified as a matched idea to the concept of “bricks and mortar” (p. 231).

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<sup>11</sup> These authors use the term “key concepts” but their meaning of “key concepts” is the same as the definition of “sensitizing concepts” used in this dissertation. I use the term “sensitizing concepts” when I am discussing their work.

A sensitizing concept must be understood as well as identified. During ethnographic research with medical students Becker (1993) found the term “crock” was used often and seemed important (p. 31). He describes the “detective work” necessary to understand its meaning. Whenever the term was used, he reflected on the context and asked questions. Initially a sensitizing concept may be identified through “intuition,” but “intuitions are great but they don’t do much for us unless we follow them up with the detailed work that shows us what they really mean, what they can account for” (p. 35). Becker used two of the signals mentioned by van den Hoonaard’s to intuit that “crock”<sup>12</sup> was a sensitizing concept; the term was jargon and often repeated.

Before seeking to identify and understand the sensitizing concepts of others about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work education, I needed to engage in a reflexive process to enhance my awareness of sensitizing concepts that inform my own thinking. This is what Kirby and McKenna (1988) refer to as “doing conceptual baggage.”<sup>13</sup> The clearer I became about my own “conceptual baggage” the more I was able to understand sensitizing concepts<sup>14</sup> of others.

### Sensitizing concepts, foundational and anti-foundational thinking

I propose that sensitizing concepts can create new relationships between the

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<sup>12</sup> A “crock” was someone who was diagnosed with a psycho-somatic illness.

<sup>13</sup> Unlike these authors I do not “bracket off” this knowledge but use it to help me to understand others’ ideas.

<sup>14</sup> Lest it appears that I am in danger of reifying the “sensitizing concept,” I must point out that a “sensitizing concept” is an artificial construct. There is no absolute standard. What appears to be a major sensitizing concept now might, at a later time, be displaced by other sensitizing concepts.

contestable and the foundational elements of my thinking. This can occur if I allow a dialogue between the sensitizing concepts and the contestable foundations of my thought. New foundations may emerge or old ones may be challenged through this exercise. I have one foundation, a pursuit of “anti-racist social work” by “non-oppressive teaching and learning methods.” Everything else is contestable. My views about the nature of the struggle, what it means to feel emancipated, the role that social workers should play and the meaning of “anti-racist social work” are all contestable. My concepts “heart,” “head,” “hand” and “soul,” my curriculum content and my teaching and learning methods can all be contested. I welcome the dialogue that will help me to develop and change them. What is not open to challenge is my pursuit of anti-racist social work.

My particular construction of anti-racist social work curriculum is a metanarrative that I do not want to impose on others. Therefore I invite others to contest my foundations through sharing with me sensitizing concepts about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods. I can share my sensitizing concepts with research participants and they can share their sensitizing concepts with me. As I reflect on our dialogue, my (contestable) foundations can be challenged. If this is successful the sensitizing concept can act as a bridge that enables me to understand part of the reality of someone else. In doing so, it enables me to explore the implications of this understanding for possible change in my own ideas.

If we acknowledge uncontestable foundations and are willing to change other foundations, sensitizing concepts can enter to challenge these contestable foundations. In

doing so sensitizing concepts may remove a contestable foundation from the status of foundation. Sensitizing concepts can possibly act as bridges because they can cause the social work educator to move something from the contestable foundational to the unfoundational and vice versa. Indeed if diverse stakeholders consistently challenged what presently I am defining as uncontestable foundational I would reconsider whether the single value within this category should remain there. In this study I explore this potential bridge between the foundational and the anti-foundational as I reflect on the data and allow it to dialogue with my contestable foundational ideas.

Sensitizing concepts from diverse stakeholders therefore have three potential applications. They may directly inform curriculum content, they may allow people who were previously silent when curriculum was developed to have voice, or they may create new relationships between the contestable foundational and the non-foundational. In this study I explore whether the sensitizing concepts that I gather from diverse stakeholders have utility in any of these ways.

Therefore, the unit of analysis in this research is sensitizing concepts from diverse stakeholders. Before I explain how I conducted the research to gather these sensitizing concepts I have one more task. In the next chapter I outline the literature that added to my foundational ideas about anti-racist social work curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

These, then, are the theoretical foundations of my ideas about social work, anti-racist social work and social work education. I have outlined a foundational critical

thread in my thinking that stems from a conflict model of society leading to an anti-racist focus in my social work education. I have also described a contrasting postmodern thread of valuing uniqueness or local perspectives, diversity and change and the avoidance of certainties. These two elements of my thinking are in tension. There is certainty implied by the term “ anti-racist,” a certainty that racism is wrong. Therefore anti-racist social work will challenge this wrong. There is no certainty in my postmodernism. The tension of trying to reconcile the anti-foundational with foundational (anti-racist) elements in my thinking has led me to consider which of my foundations are contestable and which are not. I decided that I only had one foundation that was not contestable, I was not prepared to pursue racism or oppression rather than anti-racism and anti-oppression in my social work curriculum although the meaning of these terms can be challenged.

Then I explored the possibility of the sensitizing concept contesting the foundational elements of my thinking that I am prepared to make contestable. I explored the potential for sensitizing concepts to act as a bridge between my foundation that is contestable and the realities of others. In this research I laid the foundations of my thinking open to their challenge and invited them to contest them by sharing their sensitizing concepts with me. In the pages that follow I describe this work.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SOCIAL WORK WITH ETHNICALLY AND RACIALLY DIVERSE PEOPLE: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter critically reviews literature to inform social work with New Brunswick ethnically and racially diverse<sup>1</sup> people that is compatible with the theoretical perspective in the previous chapter. After briefly outlining the range of available literature I explore potential organizing frameworks. I explain why the work of Barth (1969), expanded by Green (1995), is compatible with my theoretical base. Barth distinguishes between literature that employs a “categorical approach” in grouping by ethnicity, and literature that is “transactional” and emphasizes interactions between people. I briefly review categorical work. I show that transactional literature is more compatible with my theoretical base. I consider transactional literature that contributes to my understanding about culturally competent social work, anti-racist social work, social work in rural communities and teaching and learning about anti-racist social work. I explore biographies of diverse people that can inform curriculum. Finally I review literature from New Brunswick that can inform anti-racist social work. Considerable literature can be found in these groupings. I select examples from each group emphasizing Canadian literature, recent publications and literature that I have either found particularly useful or that clearly exemplifies major limitations with existing work.

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter when I refer to “diverse” I mean “ethnically and racially diverse” unless I explain otherwise.



Literature about cross-cultural social work includes much from the United States (for example Cox & Ephross 1998; Green, 1995), and the United Kingdom (for example Dominelli, 1997; Thompson, 1993), but little from Canada until the 1990s. Recent Canadian conference papers and articles have moved some way to redressing this omission. Attention has been given to social work with Aboriginal people (Dudziak, 1998; Feehan & Hannis, 1993; Fiddler, 1993; Morrisette, McKenzie & Morrisette, 1993). English and French Canadian literature has considered recent Canadian immigrants and refugees (Aldous, 1999; Austin & Este, 1999; Laaroussi, Tremblay, Corriveau & Duplain, 1999; Reinberg, 1999). Canadian English social work literature addresses Jewish people (Gold, 1994), Chinese people (Saldov, 1999), Black people (Bernard, 1999) and South Asian people (Maiter, Trocme & Shakir 1999).

Much Canadian French literature has focussed on the resettlement of immigrants and refugees. Ulysse (1998) reviewed explorations of immigrants' experiences in education, the labour market, housing and criminal justice, and identified wide gaps between the racism and discrimination experienced by immigrants and the political discourse of multiculturalism. A large study conducted over three years period in two regions in Quebec explores how Arabian, Vietnamese, Latino and Yugoslavian participants adjusted to life in Canada. The views of formal agencies about resettlement processes were found to differ starkly from the resettlement strategies actually employed by families (Laaroussi, Tremblay, Corriveau & Duplain, 1999).

Recent Canadian English literature about social work with diverse people

addresses child care (Aldous, 1999), social work with women (Kreiger-Grossi, 1998), men (Austin & Este 1999) and elderly people (Bergin, 1995; Saldov, 1991). Issues of ethnicity and race in the social work practicum have also received attention in both English and French Canadian literature (for example Cohen, 1984; Razack, 1999; Razack, Teram & Sahas, 1995; Summers & Powers, 1995; Trainer, 1995). In French literature Jacob explored the role of social services with diverse ethnic groups (1992). Specific fields of practice with diverse populations considered in French literature include: mental health (Bibeau, Chan-Lip, Locke, Rousseau et Sterlin, 1992), youth (Chamard, 1998), Black youth (Davies et Shragge, 1992), and services to young families (Legault, Heineman, Gravel, Fortin et Alvado, 1995).

#### GROUPINGS OF THE LITERATURE

Several have attempted to group this work (Chau, 1991; Green 1995; Ka Tat Tsang & George, 1998; Razack, 1999). In this section I briefly summarize these groupings and then use Barth's perspective applied by Green because it is most compatible with my symbolic interactionist theoretical base (Barth, 1969; Green, 1995).

Chau (1991), focusses on cross-cultural teaching of social work practice and places approaches in five categories: cognitive content, oppression, conceptualizations of different ethnic groups, the role of social workers and values of diverse people (p. 125). These categorizations do not support my theory. As argued in the last chapter, categorizations inevitably oversimplify. Furthermore, these categories are not mutually exclusive so I find that they have little practical utility in organizing literature.

Razack's literature review (1999) justifies greater attention to diversity and anti-racism in the field practicum (pp. 312-313). She quotes from Tully and Greene (1994) who found that 60.4% of social work literature about diversity addressed social work practice and only 1.3% related to the field practicum (Tully & Greene, 1993). She suggests that recent Canadian literature tends to focus on either the need to understand cultural backgrounds of clients, or the importance of ethnically sensitive social work practice. This review does not provide a useful framework for me to evaluate the literature, because I consider both cultural backgrounds and ethnically sensitive work to be important.

Ka Tat Tsang and George's review (1998) provides a comprehensive list of categories (pp. 74-75). They identify "the inferiority or pathological model," "the deviant model," "the disorganizational model," "the culturally deficient model," "the genetically deficient model," "the colour blind approach," "the culturally different model," "the multicultural model," and "the culturally pluralistic or culturally diverse model" before suggesting their own model with some features of the last three models. These categories are often undefined or unexplained, there are too many categories for organizational purposes and several categories relate to social work approaches no longer in use.

Green (1995), following Barth (1969) distinguishes between two ideal types,<sup>2</sup> underpinned by either "categorical" or "transactional" perspectives on ethnicity. I select

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<sup>2</sup> I am using this term in the way it is used by Max Weber. An ideal type is, therefore "theoretical constructs which have been simplified to their key characteristics for use in analysing social interaction." (Dominelli, 1997b, p. 29).

this framework to organize my literature because Barth's work is compatible with the symbolic interactionist and postmodern theoretical underpinnings articulated in the previous chapter. In his 1969 work Barth highlighted the complexity of ethnicity. He suggested a need for distinction between the ethnic organization of a group, how individuals self-identify and how they are defined by others. I agree that simple descriptions of an ethnic group are inadequate. Who makes the description, the social location of the person describing and why they describe are three issues of importance.

Barth (1989) developed and illustrated his work in Bali. He suggests that we should "observe the litany of authorities . . . that make a claim to be heard in Bali-Hinduism's variously instituted liturgies and priesthoods" (p. 127). He went on to list Sanskrit manuscripts, different ranks of the priesthood, deceased ancestors and the gods. Kahn (1995) expands Barth's list to include "Indonesian government officials, Balinese politicians and aspiring politicians, people promoting Bali as a tourist destination, the cultural performers, musicians and dancers" (pp. 129-130). Barth's said that "to approach such a raucous cacophony of authoritative voices with the expectations that their messages and their teachings will be coherent" and provide a single perspective on Balinese culture is unlikely to meet with success. This is compatible with my postmodern and symbolic interactionist theoretical bases. These perspectives lead me to conclude that I should dialogue with a diverse sample of people who have stakes in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St. Thomas University, and understand the range of views to help me to avoid making "authoritative statements" about what the nature of

anti-racist social work for this location should be. Drawing upon Barth's notion of 'boundary maintenance,' Green's position (1995) that social workers have a critical role as 'boundary mediators' between different cultures informs my approach to the research (p. 28). I continue this chapter by considering literature from a categorical perspective.

### CATEGORICAL PERSPECTIVES

A categorical perspective assumes that clear differences exist between ethnic groups. This perspective:

emphasizes cultural 'content' between groups, assumes high levels of cultural uniformity within groups, seek conceptual simplification in response to cultural 'otherness', [considers] assimilation or acculturation [as] policy and intervention goals, [and are] associated with melting pot and pluralistic ideologies (Green, 1995, p. 28).

Green states that these perspectives presume that "an individual who 'fits' one category probably fits many of the others that define the group as well" (Green, 1995, p. 29).

These ideas do not appear compatible with my theoretical foundations but I review this literature to evaluate its potential utility for developing anti-racist social work curriculum.

Social work knowledge informed by categorical perspectives begins with assembling "traits" descriptive of people from various ethnic groups. Existing social work knowledge, sometimes modified to accommodate differences from majority groups, is generally assumed to be an appropriate foundation for work with diverse people, a little extra knowledge is all that is needed. For example, literature refers repeatedly to differences between ethnic groups in the amount of eye contact permitted. The analysis rarely goes deeper than this. The reader is left to conclude that with slight modifications

for eye contact, the relationship between social worker and client will be similar for people from all ethnic groups. Other authors caution that skin pigmentation of African people not be mistaken for child physical abuse. Definitions of physical abuse in different cultures are not considered. The social worker is simply provided with knowledge to identify bruising on the child's body. Much of the literature informing work with diverse people is from this categorical perspective.

Social workers sometimes use counselling manuals. Several manuals consider counselling diverse people from a mainly categorical perspective (d'Ardenne & Mahtani 1989; Pederson, 1985; Wehrley, 1995). This literature often stereotypes. For example, one article in Pederson (1985) advises: "Hispanics suffering from emotional distress use folk-healing practitioners" (Padilla & Salgado de Snyder, 1985, p. 159). Another article in this collection of readings stereotypes in a similar way:

clues to the mental-health of Black women can be found in data on alcoholism . . . alcoholism among Black women has increased and, with it, mortality for cirrhosis of the liver (Smith, 1985, p. 181).

The categorical perspective frequently underpins diversity-oriented sections of many generalist social work texts. For example, Zastrow (1995) in *The Practice of Social Work* has a forty-one page chapter on "Social Work Practice with Diverse People." This short account of the knowledge needed to practice social work with diverse people contains brief suggestions about intervention practices. Few references to diversity appear elsewhere in this 700 page text. The need for knowledge about the social worker "self" is addressed in two paragraphs (pp. 354-355). In the 1993 edition of *Direct*

*Social Work Practice*, Hepworth and Larsen claim expanded material to prepare social workers for practice with “vulnerable groups” (p. xvii), including “expanded content related to ethno-cultural factors entailed in assessing and enhancing the functioning of minority families” (p. xix). The authors assume that the addition of material about ethnic and cultural differences will enable student social workers to apply their social work model (which assumed homogeneity) to work with diverse people. The model’s basis in norms, values and beliefs of a white, urban society is not acknowledged.

Several books on social work with people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds are compatible with Green’s “categorical perspective” and adapt or apply perspectives developed for work with non-minority clients. Examples of modified approaches include a psycho-social model (Burgest, 1989), a “strengths perspective” (Logan, Freeman & McRoy, 1990), a generalist “process-stage approach” (Lum, 1996) and an ecological (person-in-environment) model (Greene & Watkins, 1998).

Some publications also categorize by ethnic group. Vacc, Wittmer and Devaney’s (1988) categories include people “on the reservation,” “Black people,” “South-East Asian persons,” “Asian Americans,” “Cuban Americans,” and “Mexican Americans.” Dana (1989) has sections on “Native Americans,” “Afro Americans,” “Hispanic Americans,” and “Asian Americans.” Harrison, Thyer & Wodarski (1996) write about “African Americans,” “Latinos”, “Asian Americans,” and “Native Americans.” The Pederson counselling manual cited above categorizes by “Cambodians and Laotians,” “Central Americans,” “The Chinese,” “The Iranians,” “The Japanese,” “The South Asians,” “The

Vietnamese,” and “The West Indians.” Although this literature helps social workers understand more about people from particular cultures than publications with just a brief mention of these cultures, they often oversimplify. For example, “the modern family structure” in Iran, outlined in five paragraphs, oversimplifies, and neglects differences within Iran (Behjati-Sebat, 1990, pp. 98-99).

These texts assume that information about an ethnic group is sufficient for competent practice. Furthermore, many of these publications are from the US and elsewhere. Therefore they provide information about newcomers who arrived at different times and in different circumstances from Canadian immigrants. Information needed for practice with people from particular ethnic backgrounds will differ between Canada and the United States (Christensen, 1999, pp. 294-298). Regional differences within Canada are also important.

The many works from a categorical perspective add little to the knowledge base for anti-racist social work education. Work carried out from a categorical perspective generally assumes that social workers with appropriate knowledge and skills (and sometimes values) will provide appropriate service to clients from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. This ignores the racism embedded within society, social workers and social work practice theories, as well as racism experienced in interpersonal interactions, cultural assumptions and social systems. I now consider whether publications written from a transactional perspective have more promise to inform the social work educator developing curriculum in New Brunswick.



## TRANSACTIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The transactional model explains how relations across ethnic boundaries “tend to be rigid and stereotypical” and how this enables people from different ethnic backgrounds to “carry on their business without having to learn much of one another’s culture”(Green, 1995, p. 29). This model:

emphasizes boundaries between groups, expects differential expression of surface features within groups, seeks conceptual complexity within a comparative perspective, [seeks] resolution within indigenous frameworks as an intervention goal, [and] anticipates resistance to cultural and political dominance (Green, 1995, p. 28).

This approach, therefore, emphasizes complex realities within each group that are themselves diverse and expressed in diverse ways, and exist beneath surface features. Authors with this perspective tend to explore the meaning of ethnicity and race and develop frameworks based on these analyses to inform theory and social work practice. This approach is closer to the “transcultural” perspective in Canadian literature written in French<sup>3</sup> and the anti-racist approaches of Canadian literature written in English. A transactional perspective is compatible with my position on ethnic and racial differences, because it acknowledges diversity at a deeper level. It also helps me understand how racism develops and is sustained through personal interactions, cultural patterns and social systems. This understanding informs attempts to transform social work theory and

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<sup>3</sup> The transcultural perspective is used more often than an anti-racist perspective in Canadian French literature. This perspective is based on a conflict model of society, emphasizes differences within and between cultures, and often explores the experiences of people from a particular culture as they attempt to adapt to a different dominant culture (for example, Laaroussi, Tremblay, Corriveau & Duplain, 1999). This model appears to contain anti-racist, postmodern and symbolic interactionist themes and is, therefore, compatible with my theoretical perspective.

practice so that embedded racism can be recognized and challenged.

Literature informed by a transactional perspective is more varied and difficult to group than literature from a categorical perspective. Nevertheless I attempt to organize it under six groupings: culturally competent social work, anti-racist or anti-oppressive social work, social work in rural communities, teaching and learning about anti-racist social work, biographies from diverse people and finally literature that describes the lives of people from diverse backgrounds in New Brunswick. These groupings are for clarity but it should be noted that much literature contributes to more than one grouping.

#### Transactional literature on cultural competence

In recent CASSW conferences “cultural competence” as a model for social work with diverse people is referred to in disparaging terms. “Anti-racist” approaches are clearly the current orthodoxy. This view is understandable. Much literature about cultural competence is from a categorical perspective with the weaknesses already outlined above. More recent literature, however, is less simplistic. Kivel (1996) argues that multicultural competence, defined as “the ability to understand another culture well enough to be able to communicate with, and understand people from that culture,” is necessary for people who want to work to promote social justice, particularly anti-racism. I agree. Those who encounter social workers in a professional capacity want workers who can communicate with them!

Although the generalist text by Kirst-Ashman and Hull (1993) is mainly categorical because it lists ethnic groups in the US and describes how to work with them,

the section that addresses ethnic and racial diversity adds useful suggestions (pp. 398-420). For example the checklist on page 414 of “within-group differences” can assist the social worker to avoid stereotyping all people from a particular ethnic group. This is compatible with the postmodern elements of the theoretical basis outlined in the previous chapter. These authors use Green’s 1992 edition to suggest “strategies for cultural assessment” (Green, p. 182; Kirst-Ashman & Hull, p. 419). Useful tips include:

Treat all “facts” you have ever heard or read as hypotheses to be tested anew with each client. Turn “facts” into questions;

Consider all clients as individuals first, as members of minority status next and then as members of a specific ethnic group. This will prevent overgeneralizing and making erroneous assumptions;

Engage your client actively in the process of learning what cultural content should be considered. This means you should ask clearly about clients experiences, beliefs and values.

These and similar suggestions promote competent practice by helping to avoid some of the generalizations inherent in categorical approaches.

Cox and Ephross (1998) want social workers to develop an “ethnic lens,” to understand issues faced by people from ethnic and racial minority groups. Their consideration of the ethnic profile of the United States and welfare policies in the United States is not really relevant to the Canadian reader. Their consideration of how relationships between social workers and clients from different ethnic and racial backgrounds might be influenced by ethnicity is useful. The “lens” focusses on expectations of both client and social worker, and the authors warn against stereotyping.

This framework could help Canadian social workers challenge their assumptions and is compatible with the symbolic interactionist threads in my theoretical base.

Green's later edition (1995) identifies qualities of "ethnic competence." These qualities include awareness of one's own limitations, openness to cultural differences, a client-oriented approach, appropriate utilization of cultural resources and acknowledgment of cultural integrity (pp. 90-97). Green then suggests of a path to promote ethnic competence (pp. 97-109). This has applicability for New Brunswick.

Some authors, including Green, suggest skills for cross-cultural competence. Herberg (1993) focuses on micro skills and highlights necessary skills for work with people from diverse ethnic groups. The reader is encouraged to reflect on how assumptions about appropriate micro skills can lead to misunderstandings or ill-feelings. Herberg, (1998) explored in detail skills of verbal and non-verbal communication, and described her work as a preliminary step to developing anti-racist education.

Devore and Schlesinger have written about ethnic-sensitive social work since 1981, with a fourth edition in 1996. Although early chapters of the 1996 edition focus on US history and politics, much is valuable for a Canadian context. These authors emphasize the need for students to develop knowledge, values and skills to work with different ethnic groups. Their detailed work outlines the contribution of major social work theories to work with diverse people and highlights issues faced in micro and macro levels of practice.

Christensen's work points to deficiencies in social work curriculum and

suggests how it can be improved. She has written about immigration to Canada (1995), social policy (1994), Aboriginal students in social work programmes (1994), minority women in academia (1993), and has provided a framework for social work education (1990). A recent chapter summarizes her earlier work (1999). She argues that social work has failed to “incorporate multicultural realities as integral factors in the provision of social services when envisioning the social welfare of Canadian society” (1999, p. 294). She suggests that because many Canadian courses have used US resources, Canadian students have incorporated myths about Canadian history (p. 307). The first myth is that Canada had only two “founding” people, the British and the French. The second is that only recently have “people from the Third World . . . become part of the Canadian mosaic.” Christensen challenges these myths and suggests that Canadian history of diverse people should be included in social work curriculum.

Finally, some literature suggests cultural competence with particular ethnic and racial groups without stereotyping and oversimplifying in the manner of categorical literature. Examples include work to develop cultural competence in work with Aboriginal people (Feehan & Hannis, 1993), recent Canadian immigrants and refugees (Aldous, 1999; Austin & Este, 1999; Laaroussi, Tremblay, Corriveau & Duplain, 1999; Reinberg, 1999), Jewish people (Gold, 1994), and with Chinese people (Saldov, 1999).

The Canadian literature on cultural competence is patchy. Herberg makes some very useful suggestions about micro skills for culturally competent practice, but macro skills are also important. Devore and Schlesinger (1997) and Green (1995) suggest

content for culturally competent work, but not always with relevance to rural Canadian New Brunswick context.

### Transactional literature on anti-racist social work

The dichotomy between “cultural competence” and “anti-racist” approaches to social work is unhelpful. As indicated in the previous chapter, I use the term “anti-racist” because it acknowledges racism and clearly suggests that social work must confront it. Nevertheless, I contend that anti-racist social work must also be culturally competent. How can we confront racism in social work practice unless we understand how it is experienced? How can we gain this understanding unless we can communicate competently with people from diverse groups who are experiencing it? I now turn to review literature that can inform the development of an anti-racist focus and thereby complement the “cultural competence” literature reviewed above. This anti-racist work is from a transactional perspective because it emphasizes interactions between people and looks beyond surface differences. I begin with the work of Dominelli.

Dominelli (1997a) focusses on racism reflected throughout society and therefore present in social work agencies and in social work education. She argues that racism is endemic to social work theory and practice and calls for social work to confront institutional oppression. She concludes that social work educators should prepare students for this work, by exploring barriers that prevent anti-racist practice. These barriers include: denial of racism, ignoring the racial dimension of social interaction, de-contextualizing by implying that racism lives only “out there,” a colour-blind approach

which leads to all people (who are different) being treated the same, a “dumping” approach of placing on ethnic and racial minorities a responsibility to eliminate racism and finally a failure to confront racism, even when recognized (pp. 72-73).

Anti-racist social work is the converse of this and requires social workers to be sensitive to their own internalized racism as well as racism in interactions between others, in cultures and social structures. Anti-racist social work acts upon heightened sensitivity and awareness to encourage pride in diversity and promote change in racist cultural patterns, social structures and interpersonal behaviours. Although Dominelli explains how racism permeates British society, a similar analysis can be made of Canada. Canadian anti-racist social work developments draw heavily upon her work, which informed Canada’s 1991 Task Force report. Dominelli presented in Canada on several occasions, and in 1998 she facilitated a session at the CASSW conference. It is important to be familiar with her ideas because they are very influential with Canadian social work educators at the present time.

Kivel (1996) also contributes to understanding anti-racist social work. Although American and writing for a non-social work audience, he provides a useful analysis of the dynamics of racism and anti-racism and points to the importance of understanding history. Canadian social workers also need to understand their history and how it has been constructed by dominant ethnic groups and sometimes interpreted differently by others. Kivel explores concepts such as “institutional racism” and “affirmative action” and considers how white people can ally with members of minority ethnic and racial

groups. All of these ideas are relevant in Atlantic Canada, just the knowledge base about the Canadian context is different.

Bishop's work (1994) is useful for New Brunswick social workers because it was based on work in the neighbouring province of Nova Scotia. It relates theories about oppression to lived experiences. Bishop, like Kivel, shows how human service workers can become allies in the struggles of oppressed groups. She emphasizes that this work must be informed by oppressed groups rather than preconceived social work ideas. I have used this book extensively as a course text. My intention of enabling voices of New Brunswick diverse people to directly enter the social work classroom through their sensitizing concepts is, in part, inspired by her work. Thompson (1993) complements much of this work. He argues that social work practice should confront all forms of discrimination whether due to gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, language, social class or mental illness. He explains how oppressive conditions can multiply oppress and provides a model of the dynamics of oppression which can act as a framework for anti-oppressive practice.

Gil's work (1998) can help social work students to develop conceptual skills to inform their anti-racist practice. He starts with the belief that oppression is unjust. He locates the meanings of the concepts "justice" and "oppression" in a Marxist epistemology, traces oppression of different ethnic groups in American history and then calls for social workers to confront oppression in direct practice and social policy work. Mullaly's ideas (1997) also contribute to conceptual skills about racism. The second



edition of his *Structural Social Work* (1997) includes a new chapter that explores the concept 'oppression' in depth. He argues that conventional social work contributes to oppression and he advocates for a social work that identifies and changes oppressive structures. His analysis was made while he was professor at St. Thomas University and his clearly articulated ideology underpins its social work programme. However, he does not clearly identify knowledge and skills needed for anti-oppressive practice. Instead concepts such as "the personal is political," "dialogical relationships," "normalization," and "empowerment" provide beacons to inform practice. His work does not assist social work students to develop practical skills needed for this practice. I now consider literature that aims to provide practical as well as conceptual skills to inform work in rural communities such as New Brunswick.

#### Transactional Approaches to Rural Social Work Literature

Although recent literature from the United States addresses work in rural communities (for example Carlton-LaNey, Edwards & Nelson-Reid, 1999; Ginsberg, 1998) this has limitations in Canada because of our differing economic, political and social systems. Even Canadian publications from one region have limited relevance elsewhere. Atlantic Canada has a much longer history of colonial oppression than the west, and this influences the experiences of diverse people. Geographical, climatic and political differences between provinces are also important. Canadian rural social work literature is limited. Three examples are Banks (1999), Collier (1993), and Tobin and Walmsley (1992).

Banks (1999) suggests that his model of community social work practice can be applied in rural as well as urban communities and provides an illustration of his model from the rural north. He suggests that social workers must first “identify locally perceived needs,” then consider “locally perceived solutions” and finally “build a collective response” (p. 233). He provides an example from a Metis settlement in Saskatchewan. Although useful for community practice this model does not help social workers in multi-ethnic or multi-racial contexts. “Collective responses” often tend to favour those from the most powerful ethnic and racial groups.

Tobin and Walmsley (1992) collected materials from Northern Manitoba about social work in a rural multicultural region. The material shows the importance of addressing rural context. They consider the knowledge, values, skills and stamina needed to work in a remote region. The authors describe lifestyles and resources in a particular region and how they can be employed by social workers. Although rural New Brunswick is different, issues such as unemployment, preserving the traditional ways of life in a First Nations Community, or promoting healing made necessary because of colonial oppression, are comparable.

Collier (1993) cautions against stereotyping the “rural.” The valuing of uniqueness and the Marxist theoretical base of his work are compatible with my attempts to combine foundational and anti-foundational epistemologies. Collier argues that because of rural differences there can be no “blueprint” for social work. Instead social workers should be “interpreting, analyzing, [and] constructing” unique responses to

unique situations (1993, xxii). He emphasizes the need for conceptual skills for rural social work practice. Collier's message about when to intervene is clear. Social workers should only intervene when asked, and then limit their intervention to what is absolutely needed. Social workers can sometimes help the most by not intervening because any intervention could help to destroy a lifestyle. Collier identifies misconceptions and stereotypes about rural and remote communities that are useful for social work students to review from their context in New Brunswick. Collier's non-intervention ideas can inform the rural social work role in First Nations Communities in Atlantic Canada but he does not identify social work knowledge and skills that may be needed if intervention is requested. His work can inform classroom debate about features of a particular community and useful roles for social workers in that community. It does not address the knowledge or skill base for anti-racist social work. The literature considered below takes up that challenge.

#### Curriculum for teaching and learning about anti-racist social work

Literature that informs my philosophy of social work education has been discussed in the previous chapter (for example Brown, 1988; Freire, 1970, 1973; Green, 1995; Knowles, 1980; Kolb, 1976; Weaver, 1998). Here I consider literature that suggests how to develop the "heart," "head," "hand" and "soul" for anti-racist social work practice. Some of this literature has already been explored.

Gil (1998), provides practical ideas about how to expand critical consciousness, such as reflection on characteristics of oppressive societies, and their converse. His

portrait of a non-oppressive society with an ideal of “justice,” is contrasted with one based on oppression. This could form the basis for a student exercise to explore the meaning of oppression. Bishop’s work (1994) contains exercises to enhance awareness of diversity and help the reader to understand concepts such as diversity, oppression, silence and healing. This work can be adapted for the social work classroom. Short vignettes illustrate complex ideas. Christensen (1992) suggests how to develop awareness of one’s own assumptions and values.

Dominelli’s “avoidance strategies” can be considered in class. Students can reflect on their own actions and those of others as they think with their instructors of ways to challenge racism (1997, pp. 72-73). I have adapted one of Dominelli’s exercises to inform practice at the agency level in New Brunswick. This heightened students’ awareness about how racism is embedded in agency practices. Kivel (1996) suggests strategies for confronting personal, cultural and systemic racism.

The work edited by Jacobs and Bowles (1988) devotes seven chapters to social work curriculum issues that relate to ethnicity and race. Useful ideas are included about issues such as teaching research (Fellin, Chapter 12), and infusing minority content into existing curriculum (Chestang, Chapter 15; Williams, Chapter 11). Methods of teaching and learning groupwork, are also explored (Currin Adams & Schlesinger, Chapter 13).

I have found no literature that systematically suggests how to use the stories of people from diverse backgrounds as curriculum content. I have used literature of this nature myself, and explore it in the next section.

### Biographical accounts

Other voices should be brought into the classroom to help students to understand diversity. Guest speakers or films are useful and they can be supplemented with written biographies. Students can use biographies as “case studies” to construct a role for social workers. Alternatively students can role-play written accounts.

I have reviewed elsewhere much of the literature on issues faced by Canadian immigrants (Clews, 1996). Two collections of vignettes by Charon (1988, 1989) highlight issues faced by people living in different parts of Canada for varying amounts of time. Lee (1995) provides narratives from three immigrant women in rural Saskatchewan and Martinez (1992) chronicles the experiences of a Chilean refugee. James and Shadd (1994) offer an excellent collection of vignettes of newcomers and people of colour narrating experiences before and after coming to Canada.

The work of Aboriginal Canadian academics (for example Adams, 1995; Graveline, 1998; Monture-Angus, 1995) also include some powerful biographical reflections. Non-Academic Aboriginal people from Saskatchewan told stories in a book edited by Funk and Lobe (1991). Closer to New Brunswick, the Nova Scotian Mi'kmaq poet Rita Joe has written her autobiography (Joe, 1996). This provides an insight into Aboriginal issues locally since the 1930s.

A study of biographies is compatible with my emphasis on the small and the unique, and also my wish to understand issues from within their context. Themes in biographies, rather like the sensitizing concepts in my research, tend to be memorable.

Frequently expressed emotions include sorrow, pain, anger, isolation as well as joy and healing. The stories tell of difficulties faced and resolved by diverse people. They can broaden the horizons of students. An understanding of experiences of “real people” can assist students to gain empathy, commitment and knowledge to assist diverse people. It is particularly important that literature should inform practice issues in the local community. Therefore in the next and final section of this literature review I outline some literature from New Brunswick.

#### New Brunswick literature about ethnic and racial diversity

Literature from the New Brunswick that can help social work educators to develop anti-racist curriculum is varied. One francophone writer considers the impact on minorities of the Anglophone dominated psychiatric services in the province (St-Amand, 1988). An article (written in English by an educator in a francophone social work programme at the Université de Moncton) explores oppression in language (Marcoccio, 1995). I also consider three research studies conducted in the Fredericton area by Anglophone researchers: one considers the process of becoming Canadian as perceived by local immigrant women (Andrew, Rio & Whalen, 1995), another explores the justice system for abused immigrant women in New Brunswick (Miedema & Wachholz, 1997), and the third is a study of Dutch people in New Brunswick (van den Hoonard, 1991). Finally I review the province’s report of the Task Force on Aboriginal issues (Government of New Brunswick, 1999).

These works provide important, but piecemeal, information about diverse people

in New Brunswick. They are compatible with a “transactional” perspective moving beyond description of different ethnic groups to an analysis of how they relate to the social structures. Therefore they are compatible with the theory outlined in the previous chapter. This literature does not directly address curriculum for anti-racist social work but forms a useful background for my study.

“The politics of madness” (St-Amand, 1988)

St-Amand drew from Foucault in his study of “oppression of the production and reproduction of illness.” He compared the experiences and views of Acadian people with those of Irish and Loyalist descent, in regard to psychiatric services. He confirmed Foucault’s idea that “madness” is “manufactured” concluding that “the definition of madness would appear to be arbitrary, relative and dependent on the interests of particular groups in society.” and that institutionalization was a response to perceived deviance of those who do not “conform to the prevailing social order.” The definitions of social order, conformity and deviance, though, were made by psychiatric services that were English in “language and outlook.” Therefore, Acadian people, who are “subjected to psychiatric treatment in significantly greater numbers than the English,” received treatment that “amounts to the virtual dissolution of their collective identity.” Compared with the other two groups studied, Acadian people suffer the most from “psychiatric treatment” by dominant groups. This work encourages me to explore oppression of Acadian people in the Saint John River valley and consider implications of this for social work curriculum.

### “Oppression in language” (Marcoccio, (1995)

Marcoccio’s useful conceptual article considers the relationship between language and oppression. She writes about “language acts that wound, acts that deny or mask one’s reality, but above all acts that relate less to who one is as an individual than to the category or group of people with whom one is identified.” Further, she argues that language productions:

can be seen as both manifesting and confirming oppressive ideologies that justify discrimination . . . contributing to or reproducing concrete relations of unequal power and privilege within a society.

She argues that social workers must explore how “language might be transformed into a vehicle for positive social action.” The study reported in the following chapters explores the lived experience of oppression by language.

### The process of becoming Canadian (Andrew, Rio & Whalen, 1995)

This qualitative study conducted in the Fredericton area considered reasons for coming to Canada and difficulties experienced in resettlement by 15 immigrant women who arrived in Canada between the 1970s and early 1990s. Most came to improve quality of life, particularly for their children. Challenges explored included the problem of passing on the cultural heritage to children, missing family and friends in country of origin, language, employment and educational difficulties. The researchers concluded that although the women had “accepted the Canadian multicultural dream,” they were often reluctant to take Canadian citizenship and had “continuing dreams of returning to the country of origin.” My study explores experiences of newcomers and it also asks



about social work knowledge, skills and values that might be relevant for social work.

Access to justice for abused immigrant women (Miedema & Wachholz, 1997)

Focus groups with immigrant women revealed that the New Brunswick justice system has little to offer abused immigrant women. Women lacked knowledge of their rights, were reluctant to access the justice system because of financial and sponsorship dependency, and structural constraints such as “language barriers and perceived racism in the criminal justice system.” Participants said that they would only contact the police to obtain protection from a violent husband in extreme cases of physical violence. They were reluctant to use shelters in case members of their community gossiped about their situation. This study underlines the importance of involving diverse people in planning social work curriculum so that social workers and services developed by social workers are relevant to the needs of diverse people.

Dutch “silent ethnicity” in New Brunswick (van den Hoonaard, 1997)

Dutch people made significant contributions to New Brunswick, particularly in “agriculture and engineering, high culture (music and crafts), and grocery and hospitality businesses,” but there has been little acknowledgment of their numbers, their length of time in the province or the contributions that they have made to it. Van den Hoonaard found that Dutch people were unlikely to express an overt ethnic affiliation through the retention of Dutch forenames for children, living in a community with other Dutch people or forming “Dutch” organizations. Nevertheless Dutch ethnicity was “silently” expressed in “the non-public aspects of culture” such as attachment to home life and religion.

**“Crisis in the forest” (Task Force on Aboriginal Issues, March 1999)**

A Task Force was established to “improve the relationship between the province’s Aboriginal communities and the provincial government,” after the reversal on appeal of a court decision that Aboriginal people have a right to harvest wood on Crown Land. The report described the numerous concerns identified by Aboriginal people in New Brunswick and suggested how they could be resolved. There was no magic bullet:

**We present this report with a clear understanding of its limits. Those who seek a formula that will magically solve the longstanding issues that exist between the province and Aboriginal people will be disappointed. (Government of New Brunswick, 1999).**

Social workers in the province need to be aware of these “longstanding issues” and social work educators should introduce students to them.

Literature from the New Brunswick context is particularly useful because St. Thomas students will have their practicum placements here and many will live and work in the province. Local students can relate to this local material more easily than that from elsewhere. My conclusion to this chapter explains how this review of literature helped me to refine the research described in this dissertation.

## **CONCLUSION**

I have reviewed selected literature from the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada that suggests different approaches to social work with people from diverse backgrounds and literature about teaching and learning for anti-racist practice. Some took what Barth (1969) calls a “categorical perspective.” People from diverse

backgrounds are categorized and each category is described. Although this approach has an advantage over “colour blind” approaches that ignore the reality of diversity, it has many difficulties. The danger of stereotypical thinking, oversimplifications and ignoring differences within groups is high.

The alternative approach that focuses on transactions has the premise that people create their social worlds including interpersonal interactions, cultural patterns and social structures. This approach is compatible with my symbolic interactionist epistemology. Many “transactional” writers acknowledge power differences between minority and majority diverse groups. Transactional approaches to diversity vary but caution against a simple study of characteristics of “the other” as a sufficient basis for work with them. Literature that emphasizes cultural competence is important, providing it does not propose a blue-print for all situations. Social work educators do not have to choose between “cultural competence” and “anti-racism.” If social work is to confront the racism embedded in social work practice (Dominelli, 1997a), we must construct social work that is experienced as competent by people from all ethnic and racial groups. Therefore, I argue that cultural competence is a part of anti-racist social work. This research attempts to find out what stakeholders in the anti-racist focus of the programme at St. Thomas University consider to be culturally competent by exploring their ideas about “head,” “heart,” “hand,” and “soul,” of the Anglophone New Brunswick social worker.

The literature about anti-racism is also important. As explored in the previous chapter, one of my foundational beliefs is that social workers should confront racism at

personal, cultural and structural levels. My question about “how” social work educators can help future social workers to do so led me to explore ideas about teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work education. The postmodern search for the small story encouraged me to review biographies as sources from which students could learn about issues facing real people and how these issues were resolved. I reviewed literature that provided some ideas about rural anti-racist social work curriculum for areas such as the St. John River Valley in New Brunswick. Finally I considered some of the piecemeal literature from the New Brunswick local context that may suggest curriculum content or teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work.

Literature to inform anti-racist social work curriculum in New Brunswick comes from many sources. When diverse people who live in the province, or when social workers who work with them, talk in my classroom or when we study written biographies it is often more powerful than other written material. I have been unable to find literature in which Canadian rural diverse people comment on what they want from their social workers. Therefore, I decided to conduct research to directly hear the views of New Brunswick people who have different stakes in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St. Thomas University.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDING, LISTENING, AND HEARING DIVERSE VOICES

#### INTRODUCTION

The next two chapters describe a qualitative, postmodern, critical enquiry that utilizes questionnaire and interview techniques to identify sensitizing concepts. Chapter 5 provides an orientation to the research and describes the sample and why it was selected and data collection methods. Chapter 6 explains my data analysis. I begin this chapter by providing an overview of the research process. I explain how the research goals and the theory outlined in chapter 3 gave rise to a qualitative methodology. The research question and the meanings of concepts within it are then explained. Different methods of answering this question are considered and a rationale for qualitative interviews and pre-interview questionnaires is provided. The limitations of this method are acknowledged. Finally I provide a detailed linear explanation of actions taken at each stage of the data collection process.

#### OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

This qualitative study explored sensitizing concepts of diverse stakeholders in the social work programme at St. Thomas University that relate to curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work. Data were collected between May and October 1998. There was a main sample of 28 participants with different stakes in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St. Thomas University and a sample of 31 St. Thomas social work students.

There was an 88% main sample response rate (28 out of 32 contacted),<sup>1</sup> and 55% social work student response rate (31 out of the 56 contacted). Participants were advised about the research process by letter and signed Informed Consent Forms before participating (Appendices 4 and 9). Main sample participants were asked to complete a 28 item pre-interview questionnaire and engage in detailed interviews to discuss sensitizing concepts that informed their thinking about anti-racist social work curriculum. Nineteen main sample participants completed questionnaires and 5 partly completed them. Following advice by cultural guides, two participants were not given questionnaires. These two participants were advised about the nature of the research by the cultural guides and then by me prior to signing consent forms. Social work student participants were asked to complete questionnaires anonymously and were not interviewed because my dual role as professor and researcher gave potential for abuse of power in eliciting participation.

The questionnaires, Appendix 3 (Main) and Appendix 7 (Student) included questions on demographics so I could check the demographics of early participants and select later participants who had different experiences or characteristics. Questions explored ideas about “heart,” “head,” “hand,” and “soul,” as well as teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work and invited participants to share stories that illustrate their views. Only one participant reported that the questionnaire impeded her thinking. Others stated that they found the questionnaires to be useful introductions to interviews,

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<sup>1</sup> It should, however, be noted that only people who were likely to be willing to participate were contacted.

even though they did not all complete one.

The interviews began by exploring completed questionnaires but this structure was relinquished if participants began to explain their views in different ways. After the interviews were completed and transcribed, participants were sent “relevant”<sup>2</sup> sections of their interview transcripts and invited to change, delete or add to them. Ten did so. This gave a data base of 600 pages of “relevant” interview transcripts (from the original 1000 pages), 63 pages of field notes, 31 completed student questionnaires and 24 fully completed or partly completed questionnaires from main sample participants.

Data analysis began by taking out irrelevant material from the transcripts. This reduced them to 600 pages. “Relevant” transcripts and field notes were reviewed to collect a list of sensitizing concepts by using the concepts that were the most sensitizing. There is no exact formula for identifying the concepts that were “most sensitizing;” the guidelines I used were concepts with the greatest number of sensitizing features (as itemized in the Sensitizing Concept Checklist in Appendix 13) and also the greatest intensity of these features. I grouped concepts into themes. I noted that some contributions by participants did not have many sensitizing features so these themes were added. The total content was summarized in chapter 7 so that the contribution to curriculum content and teaching and learning methods was not restricted to the “sensitizing concepts.” Therefore chapter 7 documents and summarizes all views to

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<sup>2</sup> I describe the process for identifying relevant sections later in this chapter and in chapter 6. In brief they were sections of interviews when participants were discussing issues that related to the research question.

provide a data base that enables the voices of diverse stakeholders to contribute to curriculum developments through words other than “sensitizing concepts.” Chapters 8, 9 and 10 provide the sensitizing concepts.

#### RESEARCH GOALS, THEORETICAL BASE, ETHICS AND METHODOLOGY

I did not begin with a clear blueprint that informed each stage of the research but instead allowed some guiding principles to inform the choices at each stage. Rubin and Babbie (1997) describe epistemology as “the science of knowing” and methodology as the subfield of epistemology that “might be called the science of finding out” (p. 5). I reject these authors’ use of the word “science.” I did, however, have some principles that informed my “finding out.” Therefore, I define my “methodology” as the principles that informed my selection of research method. These principles are derived from my theoretical base, my research goals and my views about ethically sound research. I explore the influence of each on my methodology.

Some of the principles that informed my research methodology were derived from the theories that informed my work. As explained in chapter 3, my theoretical foundations are in critical theory and a postmodernism, bridged by a symbolic interactionist epistemology. This combination suggested a qualitative design. The critical theory base of my epistemology was compatible with a methodology that is action oriented and that seeks to acknowledge and then reduce the power difference between myself as researcher and research participants (Ristock & Pennell, 1996; Kirby & McKenna, 1989). Informed by my postmodernism, this research sought richness from



unique views rather a single “correct” answer to the problem of designing anti-racist curriculum. My belief that the contexts of the province, the university and the social work department at St. Thomas University, are all unique encouraged me to gain understanding and then allow these unique features to inform my research design. My symbolic interactionist base in theory, led me to seek in-depth understanding of different views of participants as reflected in their sensitizing concepts. All three of these theoretical bases encouraged me to share my own foundational ideas and allow them to be challenged by ethnically and racially diverse<sup>3</sup> participants.

A second group of principles informing my methodology were derived from my research goals. As previously stated, there are three goals for this research. The first goal is to develop enriched anti-racist social work curriculum. To achieve this goal I needed to select methods that maximized the likelihood of hearing ideas that might lead to this enrichment. A second goal is to explore whether sensitizing concepts can bridge foundational and anti-foundational thinking. Therefore I needed to select methods that would enable me to hear and understand sensitizing concepts. A third goal was to evaluate whether the research process is effective in enabling diverse stakeholders in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St. Thomas University to participate in curriculum development. Therefore, I needed to identify stakeholders, select a sample, and select data collection methods with potential to enable diverse stakeholders to

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<sup>3</sup> When I refer to ethnic and racial diversity in the rest of this chapter I use the term “diversity.”

participate in curriculum development processes.

A third group of principles that informed the methodology were derived from ethical considerations. I explore ethical issues in detail when I evaluate the credibility of my research. At this stage, it is relevant to indicate the ethical considerations that informed my decision making as the research proceeded. My decisions were influenced by my commitment that participants should be aware of the research process and give consent to a process that they understood. Also, I sought to make decisions that did not appear to have a potential to harm participants. I wanted participants to envision some benefit from the cost of their time in participating in the research. I now explain the research question that this study attempted to answer.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

In this section I explore the meaning that I attributed to key concepts within the research question at the outset of the research. During the research process my attributed meanings were often enriched and sometimes changed. I outline changes in chapters 6 to

11. The research question was as follows:

What sensitizing concepts inform the thinking of people with a major stake-holding in the anti-racist focus of the BSW programme at St Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick, in relation to curriculum content and teaching and learning methods?

#### Stakeholders and constituencies

Research participants were selected from people who have a stake in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St Thomas University. I called these people

“stakeholders.” I refer to the collectivities of stakeholders who have a similar reason for interest in the social work programme as constituencies, as in a constituency of “newcomers” and another constituency of “Aboriginal people.” Participants with different stakes in the anti-racist focus of the programme were selected because this would enable me to hear a rich array of ideas. Within each constituency I strove for diversity. For example, within the Aboriginal constituency I sought people living in and living outside of First Nations Communities and both Mi’kmac and Maliseet people.

Constituencies differ. Sometimes stakeholders within a constituency will know each other, as with the constituency of social work faculty at St. Thomas University. In other constituencies they may not know each other. People sometimes belong to several constituencies and may know stakeholders from other constituencies. In small Schools of Social Work, particularly in rural areas, people within constituencies are more likely to know each other than in larger urban schools. I made it clear that I did not expect participants to represent the views of others in their constituency (or constituencies).

Everyone is a “stakeholder” because all can become the client or co-worker of a social work graduate from St. Thomas University. Therefore, I used a continuum based on the likelihood and the extent of people being affected by the anti-racist focus of the social work programme. Social workers who are more affected reside in the Saint John River Valley, so I restricted my sample to these major stakeholders. The anti-racist focus of the programme affects the constituency of social workers rather than the owners of local businesses in New Brunswick, so the former have a greater stake. Specific criteria

for my actual sample selection are described later in this chapter.

### Race and racism<sup>4</sup>

The concept "race" has been used in many ways since first noted use in the Oxford Dictionary in 1508. The Oxford Dictionary (1989) classifies usages into 2 main categories: "a group of persons, animals or plants connected by common descent or origin," and " a group or class of persons . . . having some common feature or features."

Banton (1987) identified five uses of the term. The first is race as lineage. The second is race as type: terms such as "'Negro', 'Indian', 'White'. . . have varied in number, currency and assumed precision and acceptability over time" (Sanjek, 1994, p. 1). A third variant is "race as subspecies," drawing from Darwin's theory of evolution is the notion that some of the world population is at a "higher stage of development" than others. The fourth and fifth definitions suggest that the term is socially constructed. The fourth (race as status), considers race in terms of power differentials. The final use, "race as class," portrays race as the basis for social stratification.

The confusion generated by different usages has led Collier (1993) to reject the term as without utility (p. 3). Furthermore, Collier and others have pointed out that theories of "race" have been used to justify domination of one group by another (Collier, 1993, p. 5; Omi & Winant, 1986, p. 16). They point out that those who believe in the scientific basis of Banton's second or third definitions have used the concept to justify

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<sup>4</sup> A greatly extended version of this discussion is contained in my paper entitled "Racism or cultural competence: A concept for social work" (1995).

master races, slavery, imperialism and colonialism. Therefore the term should be used with caution. Like Christensen (1995), I use this social construct because it is often used by people to refer to themselves and others (p. 210). It is used by the CASSW and I drew from the glossary of "Crossroads," (Task Force report) as approved by the CASSW General Assembly and attached to the Accreditation Standards, to define "race:"

Race refers to an arbitrary classification of populations conceived in Europe, using actual or assumed biological traits (eg. skin colour and other physical features) to place populations of the world into a hierarchical order, in terms of basic human qualities, with Europeans superior to all others (Task Force on multicultural and multiracial issues in social work education, 1991, Glossary).<sup>5</sup>

Defining the term in this way shows that I do not accept hierarchical notions that underpin some usages of the term. My definition of racism is also borrowed from The Task Force Glossary:

Racism refers to the belief or ideology that races share distinctive and immutable cultural and behavioural traits, and are unequally endowed with human qualities such as intelligence, morality, and industriousness, by virtue of genetic inheritance (Glossary).

Anti-racist, ethnic, racial and multicultural

I use the term "anti-racist social work" to mean social work that attempts to provide a culturally sensitive response to people who have experienced oppression because of their ethnicity or "race" (radical humanism). At the same time as carrying out radical humanist work, anti-racist social work confronts and tries to change structures,

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<sup>5</sup> There are limitations with this definition. Europeans are not the only colonial oppressors.

cultural patterns and interpersonal behaviours that are experienced as oppressive by some ethnic groups and biased in favour of others (radical structuralism).

I use the term “ethnic” to apply to collectivities of people who consider themselves to have a common heritage. The “Crossroads Report” gives “ethnic” two meanings: “a term used by European people to belittle those of non-European descent,” and “people who consider themselves to have a similar heritage.” I take the second meaning. By “multicultural” I mean a situation or context in which people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds are present.

#### Anti-racist focus

By an anti-racist *focus* I mean attention directed towards anti-racism. As the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St Thomas University develops, faculty and students should become more aware of ethnic or racial bias, or oppression within the curriculum, climate and structures in the programme and take steps to change them.

#### Curriculum content and teaching and learning methods

The “curriculum content” refers to the “what” of teaching and learning and the “teaching and learning methods” refer to the “how.” I explored both curriculum and teaching and learning methods because of the interrelationship between what is taught and how it is taught. This work can subsequently influence other anti-racist dimensions such as “culture” and “climate.”

The teaching method selected is influenced by the content. If I want students to develop skills in cross cultural counselling I can give them an exercise to practice

interviewing. If I want students to learn about the ethnic composition of the population of Fredericton I lecture or assign them research to discover this information. The curriculum content and the teaching and learning methods are both informed by ideas about the nature of anti-racist social work. Those who consider that anti-racist social work is mainly about having a particular knowledge base (i.e. "head") would use different methods from someone who thinks that "heart," "hand," and "soul" are also important.

### Sensitizing concepts

The term "sensitizing concept" discussed fully in chapter 3 is defined as "a construct which is derived from research participants, using their language and expression and sensitizes the researcher to a line of enquiry" (van den Hoonaard, 1997, p. 1). Particularly in cross-cultural research, this line of enquiry often differs from the line of enquiry that would have been most obvious to the researcher.

The reason for using "sensitizing concepts" as my unit of analysis is informed by the critical, postmodern and symbolic interactionist bases of my theory. This unit of analysis derives from the critical base because sensitizing concepts might enrich the critical foundations by incorporating different ideas that might inform change. Reflecting my postmodern quest for small, the unit of analysis is the concept, a single cluster of meanings. This small unit of analysis helps me to avoid stereotypes or grand narratives around participants' views.

## SELECTION OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS

### Introduction

In this section I provide a rationale for my selection of data collection methods. I review possible methods including mailed questionnaires, focus groups and different models of participatory action research and conclude that my selected method of interviews preceded by pre-interview questionnaires is most likely to allow me to identify and understand sensitizing concepts of diverse participants. Nevertheless I recognize the limitations of the methods selected and I highlight some of the difficulties that can emerge in cross-cultural research. Student data is not very rich and further research using a different design would be beneficial.

Reflections on my theoretical base, research goals and ethical considerations confirmed that a qualitative methodology was most compatible with my work. The next stage was to decide which qualitative design was most appropriate. As Mason (1996) points out, qualitative approaches derive from “a wide range of intellectual and disciplinary traditions” (p. 3). Rossmann and Rallis (1998) state that qualitative research “is emergent rather than prefigured” and “fundamentally interpretive” (p. 9). This is true of this study. I sought to understand the worlds of others and, although I began with foundational ideas, I allowed them to be contested as new ideas emerge. I began with a guide for interviews but I did not allow it to become a blueprint. Rossmann and Rallis state that the qualitative researcher “is sensitive to her own biography and how it shapes the study” and “systematically reflects on who she is in the study” (p. 9). Reflexivity is



an important element of this research design.

### Selected methods

I selected a semi-structured interview preceded by a questionnaire as the most appropriate method for encouraging the development and communication of participants' sensitizing concepts. Questionnaires do not provide depth of information, but they enabled participants to reflect on issues to be addressed subsequently in interviews so that they are not silenced by an interview question they need to think about. These semi-structured one-to-one interviews can provide more depth. I explored and rejected a number of alternatives as not having the potential for a comparable richness of data.

### Mail questionnaires/Participant's reports

I could have explored the views of a larger sample using a mail questionnaire. This method is used more often in quantitative research and is not congruent with my particular qualitative perspective. I could have heard from more participants but not explored their views at the depth needed to identify and understand their sensitizing concepts. Data from mailed questionnaires is often superficial. Robson (1993) asks the reader to recall the frustration when completing questionnaires that "are not the questions you would have asked; or none of the permitted responses seem right" (p. 203). I wanted participants to tell me about questions to ask, as well as answer mine. I wanted a dialogue impossible through a mailed questionnaire. I also rejected asking participants to write reports outlining their views, because some participants might find written expression difficult. Written reports would allow participants to express their views but

not all might have been comfortable with report writing and I could not dialogue with them unless I conducted a follow-up interview.

### Focus groups

I considered but rejected focus groups. This method enables participants to spark each others' ideas, but some voices are always louder. Some may be unwilling to express their views because of the presence of others (Rothe, 1994, p. 99). Confidentiality cannot be assured. In a small community this could be problematic. My own ideas could also "spark off" the ideas of participants. In focus groups probably I would have understood less about the unique viewpoints of individual participants.

### Participatory action research

Finally I considered but rejected participatory action research, a research method that aims to foster "consciousness-raising, politicization and activism" (Wachholz & Mullaly, 1997, p. 30). My reasons for rejecting this method requires more than cursory attention because it is highly congruent with the theoretical perspective in chapter 3.

My review of the literature revealed many variations in definitions and practice of this approach (Barnsley & Ellis, 1992; Purkis, 1999; Ristock & Pennell, 1996; Wachholz & Mullaly, 1997). For example, some define participatory action research (PAR) narrowly as a partnership between community members (usually in a group) who request assistance from respected researchers to combine their own experience and knowledge with the technical expertise of the researcher (Purkis, 1999, p. 4). Ristock and Pennell argue that when researchers and participants have "different degrees of involvement in

the process” it differs from an orthodox approach to PAR as described by Stull and Schensul or Whyte (Ristock & Pennell, 1996, p. 17; Stull & Schensul, 1987; Whyte, 1991). At the other end of the ‘PAR continuum’ is Barnsley and Ellis’s characterization of it as research “for change . . . to improve the situation of people in the community” that involves their “participation” (Barnsley & Ellis, 1992, p. 9).

Wachholz and Mullaly (1997) state that people claiming to adopt PAR have “varying degrees of participation on the part of research subjects in the design, development and administration of research projects.” They state that the “involvement of research subjects may range from the active participation in many facets of the project to the participation of a few key informants in a review of the final document” (pp. 30-31).

I certainly involved participants or their constituencies in my work, through dialogue before the research, through my engagement with cultural guides, through three opportunities for main-sample participants to express or modify their views (questionnaire stage, interview, offer for amendment) and through my plans to continue to involve participants in curriculum design when this phase of the work is completed. However, I did not engage in the ideal-type PAR outlined by Purkis, and participants did not have the involvement authors such as Ristock and Pennell suggest is necessary in an orthodox approach to this research method. As Ristock and Pennell (1996) illustrate, strict adherence to an “orthodox” approach to PAR can paralyze (p. 30).

I did not use an “orthodox” version of PAR for four main reasons. First, it was my problem as researcher/educator that informed my research question, not the problem

of the participants. Through my research I hoped to give voice to diverse voices rarely heard in curriculum development. By definition, the participants were stakeholders and either affected or potentially affected by curriculum decisions. Second, the participants were geographically separated, and also had different stakes in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme. To bring them together physically, or to facilitate their engagement around the anti-racist focus of the curriculum, would have been time consuming, even impossible. Third, many who agreed to express their views to me in interview would have been unlikely to engage in the more lengthy participatory action model. I might have “lost” participants (probably those with views most likely to challenge my own), if I had made more demands on them. Fourth, the number of people who can engage in a participatory action research exercise is limited. Through my chosen method I explored views of 28 people interviewed as well as 31 students. Finally, voices from constituencies not involved as participants deserve to be heard. Indeed, all social work faculty at St. Thomas University should reflect on the findings and engage with me in determining their impact on our curriculum. If all faculty had agreed to become involved during the research process (although they had their own agendas), participants from diverse groups could have been silenced.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, I sought views not generally heard when curriculum is developed. A model other than a participatory action approach was appropriate. As Ristock and Pennell (1997) point out, research that fosters empowerment does not necessarily need a

collaborative working group (pp. 30-31). I considered the potential advantages of the selected methods outweighed the disadvantages. Nevertheless there were problems that arose from my selected method.

## LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH METHOD

### Cross-cultural research

The qualitative interview and pre-interview questionnaire method presented challenge because in cross-cultural work the participants' line of thinking often differs from that of the researcher. In particular, it is very difficult to identify and understand a sensitizing concept in a cross-cultural context. When research participants translate ideas, elements of the meaning may be lost. When the researcher attempts to understand the meaning from a different language and cultural perspective more is lost (van den Hoonaard p. 48).

Training materials for cross-cultural communication show how even subtle factors, such as the phrasing of sentences and patterns of rise and fall in speech volume, differ from culture to culture and these differences can lead to misunderstanding. There are difficulties when researchers try to understand what participants convey and further difficulties when the researcher discusses a possible sensitizing concept with the participant (p. 47). There are no easy answers to these difficulties. The use of interpreters is often problematic. Interpreters frequently develop ideas and add or change what participants say (Baker, 1991, p. 9). These difficulties have led to the development of clear procedures to limit the use of interpreters in locations where there are many

different first languages.

These problems involved in using interpreters has led a metropolitan social services authority to conclude that “interpretation is not an ideal to be sought but that service staff should be employed having direct knowledge of appropriate languages to facilitate effective service delivery direct” (Baker, 1991, p. 107). Van den Hoonaard (1997) explores how differences in language can impede understanding sensitizing concepts and concludes that “the learning of a new language is the only most opportune way of seizing hold of the participants’ meanings of their world” (p. 54). This is not always feasible. I could not become fluent in the first languages of all my participants. Van den Hoonaard suggests that sometimes no attempt should be made to translate a word. He gives as an example of the Dutch word “gezelligheid” which has a rich meaning of a place that is comfortable and warm, for which there is no English equivalent (p. 52). As I began my research I thought that I might need to carry out even more detective work in the manner advocated by Becker if I was to understand the meaning of concepts from languages other than my own, but anticipated using the same procedures.

However, this problem did not arise. The francophone participants were offered an opportunity of completing pre-interview questionnaires in French but all elected to use the English version. It would have been particularly difficult to communicate with any recent newcomers who had a very restricted knowledge of English. I did not interview recent newcomers because the guides suggested that attempts to do so would be intrusive at a very busy and stressful time. All but one of the newcomers I interviewed had very

good command of English and I did not experience difficulty with the person who was less familiar with the language. Possibly though I missed some of the “sensitizing concepts” she might have expressed in their first languages.

#### Leading participants

There were other difficulties with my selected methods. I realized that the pre-interview questionnaire might lead participants to identify and reflect my ideas rather than express their own. Later in this chapter I explain how my interview style was designed to reduce the likelihood of “leading” participants to reflect my ideas.

#### Duration of study

A further weakness is that the chosen methods only permitted participants to develop and share their views over two months. The participants who did not receive the pre-interview questionnaires had little opportunity to reflect on their ideas than this. A future research study, or a future stage of the curriculum development process at St. Thomas University should be undertaken to enable reflections over a longer time period.

#### Student participants

The greatest loss was the limited amount of data from students. Because ethical concerns prevented me from interviewing students and questionnaires were “second best.” I explored a number of other ways of interviewing students. Students from another School would be from a different context and I sought views from the context of the Saint John River valley. I rejected the option of employing another interviewer because I wanted my dialogue with participants to develop the sensitizing concepts that could

dialogue with my thought foundations. Furthermore, anyone doing the interviews would also have to do the analysis, both because the content might allow me to identify most students, and because the interviewer would have useful non-verbal data. More research is needed, using a different design, to hear students voices.

## DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES

### Introduction

I explain my data collection processes in detail for three reasons. First, it enables the reader to determine whether the decisions I made as the work progressed were compatible with my methodology. Second, because transparency is a key element in evaluating the credibility of my work and detailed descriptions make it transparent. Third, because detailed descriptions enable others to follow this process. Therefore I describe the planning, preparation and data collection stages of the research in this chapter and explain the data analysis in the next.

### Preparation and planning

I agree with Kirby and McKenna's view that:

when one of the goals of the research process is to challenge the monopoly certain groups have established on the production of knowledge, the need for methodology that supports and encourages this challenge is clear (p. 65).

From early stages my methods encouraged such a challenge.

In designing and teaching a course in anti-racist social work at St. Thomas University I read much of the literature reviewed in the chapter 4. I consulted with



teaching, human service colleagues and people from minority groups about appropriate curriculum content. This formed the basis of the first two courses in anti-racist social work and helped me to develop the theoretical base articulated in chapter 3 that is congruent with my beliefs and also relevant to the local context. I discussed with colleagues the research about anti-racist social work education needed by our department. Their feedback on various drafts of my proposal helped to refine my ideas and maintain a focus of benefit to the Department and the community.

In early discussions colleagues recommended a general investigation of interested community people's views about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work. At a social work department meeting in January 1998 more specific advice was given, that I should consider the views of the province's non-Acadian Francophones. Social work faculty also reviewed and commented on questionnaires.

With the approval of the chair of my dissertation committee I met with the St. Thomas Social Work Advisory Committee in January 1998 to explain my research (Appendix One). This consultation was helpful. All agreed that the proposed research question was worth asking, although some hoped that it would not be presented to participants in that form. My plans became clearer as a result of this consultation.

During this consultation committee members spoke about racism in New Brunswick and possible social work curriculum to address it. Some mentioned the bias of social workers currently in practice. Many emphasized the crucial importance of hearing the voices of Aboriginal people, newcomers and other ethnic minorities. As a

result, I selected more stakeholders from these constituencies and fewer human service professionals than planned. This was fortunate because almost half of the participants in the main sample were also human service professional or volunteers, even though most were selected for other reasons. Advisory Committee members also told me about individuals who might contribute, enabling me to hear from more diverse stakeholders.

This committee is part of a traditional North American university structure and might reflect and reinforce rather than challenge my ideas. Therefore I selected some participants without a direct university or government connection. The committee recommended changes rather than reinforced ideas. Thus, prior to data collection, there had been formal and informal contact with diverse stakeholders and different ideas were already in dialogue with my own. Prior to beginning data collection I pretested my research instruments and process.

### Pretesting

Pretests are intended to “throw up some of the inevitable problems of converting design into reality” and “if things go seriously wrong for whatever reason or if it appears that the (method) is not going to deliver in relation to research questions,” enable the researcher to “abort and transfer efforts elsewhere” (Robson, 1995, p. 301). Three people from different ethnic backgrounds pre-tested the main questionnaire and a social work graduate from 1998 pretested the student version. I interviewed them afterwards. All thought the questionnaire wording was clear and did not suggest any modification. One person did not like the phrase “people of colour” but others were comfortable with it so I

retained the term, but decided to discuss this issue with participants. Another found the questionnaire very “heavy” but agreed it was suitable as a pre-interview research tool. All found the Informed Consent form to be clear.

After pre-testing the questionnaire but before debriefing about it I pretested the interviews with the same volunteers. I conducted the pre-test interviews to test an “Interview Checklist” I planned to use in the study (Appendix 11). During each interview I explored ideas about “head”, “heart”, “hand,” and “soul.” I organized and analyzed the data from the pre-test interviews as planned for the study to check that this process was effective in identifying sensitizing concepts. After the pre-test I discussed the process with participants and confirmed it for use in the research. I decided that modifications were not necessary.

#### Participant selection

In the previous chapter I defined “stakeholders” (people with vested interests in the social work programme), and constituencies (the social locations from which they are drawn). In selecting actual participants I identified stakeholders with ethnic, racial or linguistic minority status including:

- Aboriginal people
- Immigrants
- Permanent residents who were born outside Canada
- Temporary residents
- People of colour
- Jewish people
- Francophones
- Non-Francophones who have a first language other than English.

Other constituencies include:

- Social work Advisory Committee at St. Thomas University
- Social work faculty at St. Thomas University
- Other faculty at St Thomas University
- Recent graduates
  - (awarded a BSW from St. Thomas University in 1997 or 1998)
- Current social work students
- Those who are planning to seek admission to the social work programme
- People who live or practice social work in different sized communities
- Clients of social worker
- Social workers
- Social work union representatives
- Social Work professional association
- Supervisors of social workers
- Public and independent schools
- Churches
- Local businesses

I selected 28 participants for the main sample. They included eight participants who self-defined as Aboriginal, eight newcomers,<sup>6</sup> three francophone people, and (when I realized that they had been omitted them from the study) three Jewish people. Two white Anglophone social workers were added to identify the particular difficulties faced when working with people from diverse backgrounds. I included two human service workers who specialize in work with newcomers. I added a participant because one restricted the amount of information that I could report and was not willing for audio-taping of her interview. I included the information that I was permitted to include. Shortly before I completed the data collection I added a human service participant with

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<sup>6</sup> By "newcomers" I mean participants who were born outside Canada. One participant moved to Canada twenty two years ago and perhaps this is a strange term to use about her. I could not think of any other term that would include temporary and permanent Canadian residents born outside of Canada, as well as immigrants and refugees to Canada.

different expertise. This gave a sample of 28 rather than the planned 24 participants.

Membership of a constituency was one criterion for selection but there were others. I tried to make the sample as diverse as possible. I sought balance in gender, age, and urban and rural residence or place of work in different parts of the Saint John River valley. Several participants were members of more than one constituency. I did not deliberately include participants from public or independent schools, local businesses and participants from churches or other places of worship. Nevertheless, my selection of participants resulted in a school teacher and a Minister of Religion being included. I excluded social work faculty and members of the Advisory Committee because these constituencies would be heard when my findings and their implications were discussed. Details of the demographics of the main sample are included in chapter 7.

#### Contacting participants

##### Aboriginal participants

The eight Aboriginal participants included two Aboriginal people who live outside of a First Nations Community and six from four different First Nations Communities. Participants included two social workers, a human service worker, a spiritual elder, a band politician and three other Aboriginal people.

I entered Aboriginal communities with caution aware of the understandable suspicion of “white” researchers who may “colonize” knowledge of a different culture (Battiste, 1998, p. 3; Clews, 1999c, p. 28). My first participant volunteered. As I began data collection a dispute about the timber-harvesting rights of the province’s Aboriginal

people had united them. Many met at a “sacred fire” in Fredericton. As a result, one person came to tell me that he considered my work was important and asked to participate. He fitted my selection criteria so he became my first participant.

The selection of Aboriginal and newcomer participants in the main sample relied upon the support of guides. The difficulty often experienced by researchers from a different ethnic group is well recognized in the literature. Beccara (1997) states that valid research on ethnic minority populations can only be carried out by researchers from the same ethnic group, that strangers are “easily spotted and researchers require legitimation or research may be suspect, with a low response rate, much missing data and inaccurate information” (p. 112). In rejoinder, de Anda (1997) states that “ all good researchers . . . begin their research into communities by securing key informants, building trust with them and using them to gain access to groups within the community” (p. 114). Green explores ways the cultural guide can assist the researcher (pp. 102-105).

Three Aboriginal people acted as guides to help me gain credibility and acceptance in First Nations Communities, to identify Aboriginal participants, provide valuable introductions and act as cultural interpreters to assist me in understanding the New Brunswick Aboriginal context. They gave me practical advice about when it was appropriate to distribute questionnaires. The guides signed an undertaking to not disclose the identity of people they introduced to me (Appendix 2). I selected three guides because association with a guide might close the door to potential participants. People know each other well in this rural province, but the guides had different social networks

and contact with different potential participants.

Two guides spoke about my work at the “sacred fire.” As a result three additional people agreed to participate. They recommended that a questionnaire would help two of them (Appendix 3). An Aboriginal social worker participated himself and asked for two questionnaires for others who might be interested. They were from different social locations in the community and could add to the richness of ideas, therefore I agreed. I attached two copies of the “Informed Consent Form” to each questionnaire requesting that one be returned with the questionnaire and one retained (Appendix 4). The social worker contacted me when people were “ready” for interviews and I visited to interview them. I collected the completed questionnaires and one consent form during these visits. A Caucasian social worker introduced me to a Spiritual Elder from another community who agreed to participate. This completed the selection of Aboriginal participants.

### Newcomers

Newcomers were people born outside of Canada, including immigrants, refugees and temporary residents born abroad. I planned that another eight participants in the main sample should be newcomers. One person who I understood was prepared to participate would not be audio-taped and restricted what I could report. I added another newcomer, giving nine in total.

Many recent newcomers to Canada are refugees from war torn countries and may be suspicious of “authority.” Social workers are often viewed as “authority.” A worker at an agency serving newcomers acted as a cultural interpreter, discussed possible

participants and initially contacted three people. All wanted to hear more and agreed that I could telephone. After the call I sent questionnaires to two of them. Following advice from the guide that one of the potential participants had very limited command of English, I did not send a questionnaire but arranged to visit. Two completed questionnaires were returned and I arranged interviews by phone.

I selected an immigrant working in post-secondary education, two temporary residents and two people who had arrived several years ago. These people had different backgrounds and experiences. This sample was diverse in terms of length of residence in Canada, countries of origin and reasons for coming to Canada.

#### Francophone participants

For reasons explored in chapter 2, I planned that three participants should have French as a first language. I invited two Acadian francophone people to participate in the study and mailed them a questionnaire. Through networking I learned of a non-Acadian francophone who also agreed to participate.

#### Jewish participants

I included three Jewish people in my sample because, despite growing anti-Semitism in this country, they have often been excluded in thinking about anti-racist social work in Canada (Gold, 1994). I invited one Jewish person known to me and was put in touch with a second by a local Rabbi. A participant put me in touch with a third. Two other Jewish people chose not to participate.

#### Participants from other constituencies, non-student



I wanted to include one Caucasian social worker from a First Nations Community and one more participant to complete my sample. A Caucasian social worker agreed to participate. I needed another two participants to represent all the remaining stake-holding constituencies mentioned above. I added the human service worker with particular expertise. This produced 28 participants in the main sample including the one who restricted some reporting.

#### Student sample

Thirty one current social work students participated in the research. I included current social work students because even recent social work graduates are unlikely to know about changes or planned developments in the St. Thomas social work programme since their graduation. Students in the first two years of study, although designated social work students, have little contact with the Social Work programme. Students in their third or final (fourth) year of study have much clearer ideas about what they want to learn.

One ethical research principle is to avoid an abuse of power. I faced an ethical problem with the inclusion of students. They could feel coerced to participate in their professor's research. Those participating might feel entitled to privilege. In our small programme, I have contact with most students before they graduated, and after graduation they often request references. Therefore, I asked current students to anonymously complete questionnaires but did not interview them.

I followed this procedure. After mentioning the research in a regular student meeting I left an envelope in each student mail box with a questionnaire, letter and two

copies of a Student Informed Consent Form (Appendices 7, 8 and 9). The questionnaire was enclosed in an unsealed envelope labelled: "Teaching and learning about anti-racist social work - Student Questionnaire."<sup>7</sup> Participating students were asked to return the envelope with the completed questionnaire and one copy of the consent form to the social work secretary. To protect their confidentiality the consent form did not require a signature. After two weeks I asked the instructors of third and fourth year compulsory theory classes to read a reminder to their students. This told them how to obtain an extra questionnaire (Appendix 10). The five part time or full time social work students not attending classes that semester were sent a package through the mail to their home address on file. After three weeks a follow-up letter was sent to them. I received only one completed questionnaire from part time students.

### Responses

Four potential main sample participants did not agree to take part in the study. I replaced them. Participants were not selected at random so these substitutions do not present a methodological problem. Nevertheless unwilling people might have very different views about anti-racist social work curriculum and teaching and learning methods than those who did participate.

A total of 31 out of the 56 students contacted completed questionnaires. Because

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10. It could be argued that students might reflect back concepts taught by me in an anti-racist social work class. This is likely. I asked students to complete questionnaires during the fall term 1998. None of the third year students but 6 of the fourth year students at that time had taken this class. I recognized some of my ideas in the questionnaire responses.

the questionnaires were supposed to be anonymous I do not know the characteristics of all who participated. Several students chose to sign their forms despite instructions not to do so. Others told me that they had completed questionnaires. Some of the content of completed questionnaires identified students, Although I have a good idea about the categories of students who did and did not participate I do not report this in my results.

### Questionnaires, Consent Forms and Letters

#### Questionnaires

The questionnaire was the first stage for all but two of the main sample participants, and the only stage for the student participants. The use of questionnaires had a number of advantages. First, they allowed potential participants, without undue influence, to think about whether they wanted to participate. Second, they could reflect and develop their ideas at leisure. I expected more depth and variety in responses than if participants had not been given notice of the planned questions. Third, I hoped that the opportunity to think about the questions would promote a more egalitarian relationship with the participant. A potential disadvantage was that pre-interview questionnaires could encourage participants to focus on answering my questions rather than their own questions and answers. I thought that this potential disadvantage was outweighed by the advantages.

The questionnaire is in two versions, one for students and the other for main sample participants (Appendices 3 and 7). The student version contained extra questions to enable them to share the ideas I discussed with main sample participants in interview.

The first page defines major terms such as “social work.” Some respondents might come from cultures with no social workers and unless those from Canada had contact with them, not all would know about the social work role. Although I recognized that a questionnaire beginning with definitions could be daunting, their inclusion was necessary and facilitated our discussion of their meaning.

The first 8 questions of the main questionnaire located the participants in their constituencies, asking about country of birth, ethnic affiliation, language spoken as a child and size of community of residence. Questions 9 to 16 explored experience of human services or social work, particularly with a multicultural or anti-racist focus. Questions 17 to 20 addressed the metaphors “heart,” “head,” “hand,” and “soul” asking about “attitudes and values” for “heart” and “soul,” “what social workers should know” for “head,” and “what they should be able to do,” for “hand.” Questions 21 and 22 were open-ended questions asking about what and how social workers should learn. The next question asked for words or phrases about “anti-racist social work or teaching and learning about social work in a multi-cultural context.” to invite ideas that might be participants’ sensitizing concepts. Participants could add anything not already been referred to, addressing Robson’s criticism of the failure of some questionnaires to do this (Robson, 1995, p. 203). The open-ended questions permitted a variety of responses and enabled me to identify issues that might be discussed in depth in interview. Other questions were intended to generate more specific answers about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods. The last question was a request to meet for an interview

and an invitation to consider “experiences, events and stories” that illustrate answers.

The student questionnaire differed slightly. It contained no identifying information. Questions about social work graduation were eliminated as irrelevant. Nevertheless, I asked for confirmation of status as social work students. I also asked students to write about “experiences, events and stories” rather than just think about them, because I would not be interviewing students.

#### Consent form

There were two versions of the consent form (Appendices 4 and 9), one for students and the other for main sample participants. Both outlined the extent and limitations of confidentiality. I undertook to not tell anyone the identity of participants. I clarified that participants’ comments might be included in a research report and pointed out that others might recognize the identity of participants from the content of questionnaires. The offer of a summary of results was offered to all participants. The location where copies of the dissertation would be lodged was added. Participants were asked to confirm that they had a support network.

There were slight differences between the student and main sample versions of the consent forms. Main sample participants were offered the opportunity to withdraw from the research for a month after they completed the questionnaires. Students were not required to sign but the enclosure of a blank questionnaire with the consent form indicated consent to the content. I could not allow students the opportunity to change their minds about participating because I should not know the identity of student

participants.

### Covering letter

The letter that accompanied student and main sample questionnaires outlined the research process and asked for participation (Appendices 5 and 8). I explained why the person had been selected, what participation involved and what would be done with the research data. Potential participants were given the opportunity of contacting me, my dissertation supervisor or the chair of the social work department at St. Thomas University for more information.

### Interviews

#### Rationale

Interviews were my primary method of data collection with the main sample. In these interactions between myself and each research participant we shared our understanding about the questions and possible answers to them. Kirby and McKenna (1988) and the reflections by Hyde upon her research journey (1994) encouraged me to express my own voice during this process. Participants could talk about the issue being discussed and were not restricted by particular questions. Indeed, as Rubin and Rubin recommend, the interview seemed to be “invented anew” with each participant (p. 7). Throughout I was guided by Douglas’s ideas about “creative interviewing” (1985). I attempted to “bracket off” many of the rules of “good interviewing,” (particularly that as a researcher I should be invisible) and adapted to each unique situation.

Generally the interview was “face to face” but I conducted one by telephone. My

dialogue with participants was guided by the notion that qualitative interviews are conversations in which each party talks in turn, but which differ from ordinary conversations because of the intensive listening required by the interviewer to really hear what is said (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 7).

As Becker (1997) points out, we all “implicitly or explicitly attribute a point of view or an interpretation . . . so the only question is not whether we should but how accurately we do so” (p. 4). Unless I am clear about my assumptions, definitions and interpretations, I am unlikely to understand others. When we do not explore our own meanings and those of others, “we will, of necessity invent them. The danger is that we will guess wrong” (Becker, 1997, p. 4). Wrong guesses are particularly likely in cross cultural research where thought foundations of researcher and participant may differ.

Interviews permit more effective dialogue than other methods. I hoped that they would enable me to “follow up ideas expressed in the questionnaire, probe comments and explore feelings in a way that other methods of data collection would not” (Bell, 1987, p. 70). Interviews promised to permit differentiation of participants’ voices from my voice as I tried to understand their comments and relate them to my own ideas.

Kirby and McKenna (1988) assert that an interview can empower both the researcher and the research participant because “two persons . . . can share in data gathering where asking back, an equal sharing of risk and of information is experienced. The interviewer and the participant may at some time share political action or even reverse roles.” Both the researcher and the participant can “break off, withdraw, retreat

for a time, ask questions, respond to questions,” (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 69). This occurred during interviews.

Rubin and Rubin (1996) point out that qualitative interviews vary with the knowledge and interests of participants. This was true here. I expected and found that some participants made a full answer to one question and some were more interested in others. Nevertheless, I was sometimes surprised by what was known and felt by particular participants. People who have experienced cultural, ethnic or racial oppression but who have had little experience of human service education generally had more to say about the first than the second, but when participants had experienced profound oppression they could be very clear about what and how students should learn about anti-racist social work. Interviews allowed me to probe participants’ areas of interest and expertise to identify and understand their sensitizing concepts and themes they considered important. I was able to listen as participants developed their ideas and told their stories.

#### Description of interviews

I arranged the interview when a completed questionnaire was returned or when contacted by a participant. Generally the interview was conducted two or more weeks after sending out a questionnaire. Because interviews were conducted during the summer months sometimes there was a gap of several weeks before a suitable meeting time could be arranged. Interviews ranged from 40 minutes to two hours. The average interview was 90 minutes long. I tended to talk at the beginning to explain my letter and the consent form. Then I encouraged the participant to talk more about issues that emerged



from the completion of questionnaires, or when questionnaires were not sent or completed, about their perspectives on social work and anti-racist social work. Typically, about two thirds of the way through an interview or when the conversation was flagging I would begin to raise issues from questionnaire responses that had not been discussed. Interviews ended when the participant seemed to have contributed all that was likely. The interview transcripts revealed that participants spoke for about 80% of the time with a range between about 60% and 90%. The richest data was often obtained when participants spoke the most.

The interviews differed but none was a “highly structured interview with pre-established questions, a limited set of response categories,” with “little room for variation in response” (Fontana and Frey, 1994, p. 363). Because of my postmodern inclinations I did not attempt to minimize my own voice in polyphonic interview in which “the voices of subjects are recorded with minimal influence from the researcher”(p. 368). Instead I acknowledged my own voice as changing. Although I planned for interviews to follow the format of the questionnaire, I adopted a less structured format if participants’ contributions did not fit this plan.

Social work interviews differ in purpose, informed by the theoretical base and the unique qualities of the social worker and client. The format for my interviews was like many (although not all) social work interviews. The focus is upon the client but without attempts to hide the social worker’s perspective. I asked participants to share their views about teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work. I attempted to be explicit

about those elements of my voice that form contestable foundations for my questions. I encouraged participants to evaluate these foundations from their own perspectives, to identify other foundations of my thinking and challenge them. They often did so.

This interview style could arguably encourage participants to reflect my words rather than express their own. My role as interviewer could be disempowering. I guarded against this. The questionnaire allowed for thought when I was not present, although the questions themselves could direct thinking. The interview questions were broad to encourage different responses. Also, I was careful to not interrupt. I allowed pauses for participants to reflect. Allowing my voice to be challenged encouraged participants to express their own. After the interviews participants could change contributions providing a further opportunity for their views to be heard.

My structural approach to social work resting on a conflict model of society and the belief that social work should challenge oppression by radical humanist and radical structuralist practice, informs my questions and my responses to participants in early parts of interviews. This approach to social work was laid before participants. Like everything else I said, it was open to challenge, and was actually challenged. An Aboriginal participant, for example, employed a definition of social work as a goal that people should try to achieve. Activities were only “social work” if they helped.

My metaphors “heart,” “head,” “hand,” and “soul” help me understand social work but were sometimes limiting to others. On these occasions I ceased to use them. Some of the concepts in the questionnaire could be interpreted differently in different

cultures, and some of the concepts may be meaningless. There was no “typical” interview because I adjusted my approach to each new situation. After the first few interviews I learned to trust the process. When I did not try to control the interview, participants expressed their views about anti-racist social work in a multi-cultural context.

At the beginning of the interview I asked participants to agree to being audio-taped by signing a consent (Appendix 12). All but one agreed. At this stage I asked those who had questionnaires for their opinions about them. Twenty six questionnaires had been distributed and 19 were fully completed. As previously stated, two had not completed the questionnaire at all and five had only partly completed it although all but one found it a useful orientation. One participant who had clearly found the questionnaire a hindrance was perplexed about social work (which she knew little about) and anti-racist social work (which she knew nothing about). We put the questionnaire aside and she just talked providing some of the richest data in this study.

To affirm the voices of participants I began most interviews with an open question about thoughts and feelings since completing the questionnaire. Some began without this prompting. For others I followed the Interview Guide. I asked questions about helping and the difference between this and professional social work in their culture. Then I asked about incidents or stories that illustrated their views about social work, and then anti-racist social work. These questions helped me to understand participants’ knowledge about social work in Canada. Early questions sometimes suggested possible

sensitizing concepts that I followed up as the interview progressed. After this, unless the participant was moving the interview in another direction, we reviewed their completed questionnaire. I asked how useful the questions were in allowing them to express their views and made a mental note of how their views differed from my own. This informed how I introduced my own voice as the interview proceeded.

I listened carefully to the terms used by participants and used these same terms myself. For example, concepts of pain and healing rather than need and intervention were often used by Aboriginal participants, so I used this terminology. In traditional Aboriginal communities parents and elders teach by sharing experiences rather than by isolating required the knowledge and skills (Leavitt, 1995, p. 6). Neither the Mi'kmac nor the Maliseet language distinguishes between teaching and learning (Leavitt, 1995, p. 8). In much Aboriginal thought the process of learning is of paramount importance while in much non-Aboriginal thinking it is the consequence that matters. Leavitt illustrates this point by comparing Mohawk and English phrases about learning. The English expression is, "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again." The Mohawk reflecting Mi'kmac and Maliseet ideas is "watch and listen and do it right, watch and listen and do it right" (Leavitt, 1995, p. 9). I explored differences of this nature in the interviews.

Early in the interviews I asked participants about terms such as "people of colour," "First Nations," and "Aboriginal." Then I slowly and gently made explicit some assumptions behind the questions. I asked if the participant had difficulty with any question. When requested, I justified some of the questions. I explained to participants

why they had been selected, the meaning of “stakeholders” and told them that I was seeking their views rather than the views of their constituency.

Then, providing the structure of the interview had not changed, I turned again to the concepts in the questionnaire. I asked participants to reflect on concepts<sup>8</sup> that give meaning to anti-racist social work or teaching and learning for anti-racist social work. The completed questionnaire acted as a schedule for the remainder of the interview. I stated underlying assumptions for each question. For example, the question; “It is important that people who graduate as social workers from St. Thomas University should know the following in order to practice in an anti-racist way” assumed a body of necessary knowledge and I asked participants if this existed. I presented an opposing view that “knowledge” can blind “people who work with people” to the unique individuals they work with. Then if the participant considered that knowledge is important, I asked about the necessary knowledge. I encouraged them to reflect on their own answers and to modify, change or confirm them.

Throughout I encouraged participants to talk generally about anti-racist social work education and to tell the stories that are rich ground for sensitizing concepts. If the interviews followed the tentative plan, towards the end of interviews we shared our ideas about similarities and differences in our views. I ended by telling the participants that I would provide a summary of their data for their comment.

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<sup>8</sup> I was more likely to use the terms ‘words or phrases’

I explained that after I had analyzed the work I would offer a summary of data from all participants. We talked about how the data will be used to develop the anti-racist focus of curriculum content and teaching and learning methods. I told participants that a copy of the dissertation will be kept in the Department of Social Work at St Thomas University, the St Thomas/University of New Brunswick Harriet Irving Library and the Library at Memorial University.

Although this is the general structure, interviews varied. On occasion the completed questionnaire inhibited rather than encourage interaction. Some participants initiated a dialogue about my assumptions. I tried to help participants to express their own voices and share their stories as they critically considered with me my possible ethnocentric bias. When appropriate I shared my own developing voice and story. My criterion for “appropriateness” was when, in my judgment, sharing this voice would encourage participants to share their own voices.

I took steps to avoid unduly influencing participants. On occasion I clearly stated a view was mine or that of another person. For example, I told one Aboriginal participant that some social work programmes have “culture camps” where instructors and students try to live traditionally and follow traditional Aboriginal teachings. I asked her view. She told me that “everybody likes camping,” and suggested that student learning is more likely to occur if students spent time in a First Nations Community. My voice had encouraged her.

I also answered participants’ questions. Some asked how long I had been in

Canada, presumably because of my English accent. Others asked if I had children. If interviews began to focus on me rather than the participant I shifted the discussion. I answered questions but emphasized that my interest was in their views, not in their agreement with mine. I sometimes presented both sides of a dispute. For example, some focussed on learning about other cultures during anti racist university classes but others thought that self-exploration was important and I asked for the participant's view.

I did not deny my understanding about possible cultural patterns, (such as a tendency to describe and explain through narratives with Aboriginal people), but I guarded against stereotypical assumptions that all Aboriginal people would explain and describe in this way. Throughout, I presented my views as tentative and developing and encouraged participants to help me to develop and change my ideas. I asked open ended and probe questions and encouraged participants to tell stories to illustrate their views.

Each interview changed my views and my starting point for the next. Thus the views of earlier participants were indirectly available to later participants. Sometimes these views were also directly available. For example, one of the early participants mentioned "in the closet" racism to describe racism in rural communities. In contrast he spoke about racism being "out" in urban communities. This interesting addition to my bank of sensitizing concepts was shared with other participants during interviews. I did not, of course, name an earlier participant or use a comment that I knew would identify an earlier participant. At the end of the interview I explained again that it would be transcribed and a copy given to participants to for comments, deletions or additions.

### Reflective processes

Prior to each interview I “did my conceptual baggage,” “my experience and reflections that relate to the focus of the research” (Kirby & McKenna, 1988, p. 49). I reflected on my expectations and hopes for this interview. Sometimes I taped my reflections, and on other occasions I made notes. My ability to understand and respect the “unique language and culture of each of my participants” (Fontana & Frey, 1996, p. 366) was enhanced by my efforts to recognize my own prejudices and biases. My views changed during the data collection stage, even though almost all the interviews were completed within 2 months. I tried to attend to the unique views of each participant. My reflections upon my pre-interview conceptual baggage after the interview assisted my analysis. I did not attempt to “bracket off” my conceptual baggage but acknowledged it as something carried with me that can help and can also hinder interactions with others.

After each interview I reflected on how my views about anti-racist social work education were developing and changing. Sometimes I used a blank questionnaire as a guide but often I reflected on key ideas as I was driving away from interviews. My notes, on thoughts evoked through this process, were explored during the data analysis. This increased accountability, enabling me to check whether I was leading participants to utter my words or to share their own ideas. It also helped me to explore my changing ideas.

Two people transcribed interviews and confidentiality agreements (Appendix 14). The transcripts varied from 21 to 46 double-spaced pages, producing almost a thousand pages of interview transcript, 63 pages of field notes (some handwritten and some



transcribed from audio-tape), 31 student and 24 main sample questionnaires. After deleting irrelevant sections of interviews,<sup>9</sup> I sent transcripts to main sample participants. Six phoned and four wrote back and I met with one participant. Most emphasized points made in their interviews. Two returned slightly amended transcripts. Three asked to exclude a small part of the transcript. I added or deleted in accordance with their wishes.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter I described my research methodology informed by principles derived from my theoretical base, research goals and research ethics. I analyzed the research question and provided explanations about the meaning of concepts within it. I provided a linear account which details sample selection and the data collection instruments and processes.

The lengthy description of the data collection processes illustrates how I applied the methodological principles in my work. These descriptions also explain a strategies to achieve one of my research goals, to enable diverse stakeholders to contribute to curriculum development. I evaluate the successfulness of these strategies in chapters 7 and 11. Some of the illustrations I have given, for example the participant's comment on "anti-racist social work," begin to show how my contestable foundational ideas were challenged by sensitizing concepts. This theme is explored later in chapters 8 to 10. In chapter 6 I explain the data analysis and evaluate the credibility of the methods used.

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<sup>9</sup> One participant, for example, spoke a lot about people she knows at St. Thomas University, another was interested to hear about my children and how they had settled in Canada.

## CHAPTER SIX

### WHAT DID I HEAR? DATA ANALYSIS TO IDENTIFY SENSITIZING CONCEPTS FOR ANTI-RACIST SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes data organization and analysis processes to identify sensitizing concepts to inform curriculum and to dialogue with my thought foundations. The analysis drew heavily on the thinking of Kirby and McKenna (1989), van den Hoonaard (1997), Rubin and Rubin (1995) and Ristock and Pennell (1996). From Kirby and McKenna came the value base that underpins the research. I sought to give voice to participants so that they could influence the development of the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St. Thomas University. I took the steps suggested by these authors for recognizing my own voice so that I could hear participants' voices. I checked carefully that what I had heard was what participants wanted to communicate. From van den Hoonaard came "sensitizing concepts" and thoughts about how to identify them. I followed Rubin and Rubin's process for analyzing the data (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, Chapter 10). Ristock and Pennell contributed greatly to my evaluation of the credibility of my work. These authors all advocate flexible methods of data analysis and all allude to the difficulties inherent in cross-cultural research. In this chapter I summarize the data analysis process, followed by a more detailed account to make these processes transparent. Then I evaluate the credibility of this study.

## SUMMARY OF DATA ANALYSIS

### FIRST STAGE: ALL DATA.

1000 pages interview transcripts, 63 pages field notes.  
27 audio-tapes, 31 student questionnaires, 24 "main" questionnaires.

### SECOND STAGE: RELEVANT DATA.

"Relevant" sections of transcripts, participants' changes, notes from  
field notes and questionnaires, (600 pages).

### THIRD STAGE: ALL SENSITIZING CONCEPTS.

Words, short phrases or short stories with high sensitizing features,  
grouped in "head," "hand," "self," and "how"<sup>i</sup> (350 items).

### FOURTH STAGE: SENSITIZING CONCEPTS AND THEMES.

Third stage data organized into themes and then "head," "hand," "self,"  
and "how" (200 pages).

### FIFTH STAGE: SUMMARY OF THEMES.

Summary of 4<sup>th</sup> stage data, organized into "head," "hand," "self,"  
"t. & l. methods" (27 pages double spaced, reproduced in ch. 7).

### SIXTH STAGE: SENSITIZING CONCEPTS AND FOUNDATIONS.

Collages of sensitizing concepts embedded in themes and stories  
illustrating their impact on thought foundations. (94 pages, ch. 8 - 10).

Figure 1 - Data analysis process.

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<sup>i</sup> "How" is teaching and learning methods

The stages in the data analysis process are summarized in the chart above, although the process of analysis did not always follow this linear pattern sequentially. The first stage gathered all the data. This included audio tapes and transcripts of the 27 interviews that totalled 1000 pages, including my notes about the one that was not audio-taped. I added my 63 pages of field notes, 31 student questionnaires and 24 completed or partly completed main questionnaires.

The second stage isolated "relevant" data. Relevant data was data that I thought that I might use in this dissertation or related work. I reflected on the data and sometimes replayed part of the audio-tape to clarify sections. I eliminated sections that were definitely irrelevant to my research question and thereby shortened each transcript to between a third and three quarters of its original length. "Irrelevant data" that was eliminated included my explanations about the research process, stories that did not appear to be directly or indirectly related to curriculum content and teaching and learning for anti-racist social work (such as foreign travel, and questions and my answers about my life and my family). I sent "relevant" sections of transcripts and my notes about their interviews to participants and asked if they wanted to change anything. I added written comments from participants and my notes about follow-up letters, phone calls and one follow-up interview in which participants had added, clarified or asked to delete information. I made notes from student questionnaires. The remaining and "relevant" sections of transcripts, my notes and participants changes formed the second data base of 600 pages.

The third stage made a preliminary identification of sensitizing concepts. With the aid of the "Sensitizing concept checklist" (Appendix 13), I attempted to identify and list sensitizing concepts under the "heart," "head," "hand," "soul," and "how" (teaching and learning methods) categories. After unsuccessfully attempting to differentiate the "heart" and "soul" categories I eliminated the distinction between them because many participants did not clearly differentiate them or differentiated between them differently. I introduced a new "self," category which combined "heart" and "soul."

I realized that the third stage list omitted a number of ideas that could not be defined as "sensitizing," even with a very broad definition of the term "sensitizing concepts." For example, some participants spoke about lectures and group discussions. This narration did not have sensitizing features but these ideas still seemed important to them. It had become clear to me by this stage that I was reifying "sensitizing concepts." I realized that my quest to determine whether a concept was or was not "sensitizing" reflected the modernism I was struggling to reject. I decided that there was no absolute standard. Instead I was looking for concepts with "sensitizing features." It became clear that whether a phenomenon was or was not a sensitizing concept was less important than its utility to enrich curriculum. After this my data analysis was easier. I identified a list of approximately 350 possible sensitizing concepts<sup>2</sup> to form the third data base.

The fourth stage added to the third stage data themes and ideas that had few

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<sup>2</sup> At this stage I was not sure if I should define some of the concepts on this list as "sensitizing." Also, I included page references to short stories that often contained several sensitizing concepts.

sensitizing features but that appeared important to particular participants, or were mentioned frequently. These additions were from the second data base. I summarized the third stage material together with the extra themes in a 200 page, single spaced document. This was my fourth data base.

The fifth stage condensed the fourth stage material. I identified the major themes contained within the fourth stage and organized them into “head,” “hand,” “self,” and “teaching and learning methods” categories. This material could potentially form the basis for anti-racist social work curriculum and teaching and learning methods to convey it. The fifth stage analysis is reproduced in chapter 7. This material can be used directly in curriculum and indirectly inform curriculum development. I explain these uses in chapters 7 and 11

During the sixth stage I analyzed the relationship between the fourth stage data and my thought foundations. I considered different ways that the data had impacted upon my thought foundations outlined in chapter 2. I concluded that on some occasions the data had confirmed my foundational thought. For example participants’ sensitizing concepts reflected my own view that experiential learning was a useful way of learning to become an anti-racist social worker. On other occasions sensitizing concepts challenged my thought foundations. An example of this is participants’ reactions to the distinction between “heart” and “soul.” Sometimes the challenge led me to create new foundations. Many participants emphasized the importance of student social workers developing knowledge and skills to understand the people with whom they were working, rather than

gain knowledge about social work theory and then attempt to apply it in situations of diversity. Similar reflections on sensitizing concepts led me to conclude that they had the effect of modifying by contextualizing, enhancing and clarifying thought foundations. In chapter 8 I describe how sensitizing concepts confirmed my thought foundations. In chapter 9 I explore how these concepts challenge foundations. Chapter 10 explains how they were modified. I begin by describing why I chose to not use computer software in the analysis.

### THE QUESTION OF COMPUTER SOFTWARE

I did not use one of the major computer software packages for my data analysis because none would not support the method outlined here. Ethnograph is not sufficiently flexible to allow me to reflect on the data in the way I intended. The linear model of creating categories for coding is not compatible with my approach of immersing myself in the data and identifying unique sensitizing concepts, and has potential to lose some of the richness of the data. The main benefit of these and other software packages is to save the researcher time in coding and retrieving data. Richards and Richards (1994) state that few researchers would use a "code and retrieve"<sup>3</sup> method "if the software they bought didn't support it" (p.446). I did not intend to use a "code and retrieve" as my major method of data analysis, certainly not a simple version of it.

Although I looked for themes that, for example, indicated lived experiences of

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<sup>3</sup> In May 1999, I attended a workshop on the use of NUD\*IST. Although I can still see problems in using it for data analysis, recent versions appear more flexible than I had imagined and I intend to explore its use.

racism, some of the words and phrases, particularly those with many sensitizing features, were unusual. Often the meaning of a term was only clear within the context of the overall interview. When planning this research I thought that if I was to understand the data it would be necessary to move beyond the transcripts. The words on interview transcripts do not indicate accompanying non-verbal communication. A comment about anti-racist social work sometimes was a reaction to a particular life experience of racism and sometimes resulted from a preceding question. As Rubin and Rubin (1995) indicate, it is necessary to "read and re-read the interviews to note core ideas and concepts, recognize emotive stories and find themes" (p. 229). Computer packages tend to tear data from the context. I did, however, keep both complete and "relevant" transcripts on my word processing files. This enabled a "cut and paste" from the actual transcripts for longer quotations in the "results" chapters of this dissertation.

### ORGANIZING DATA

The organized data represented the first stage of the analysis. Kirby and McKenna advocate the use of both process and content files for data organization and analysis (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 131). They also propose that originals of all documents be kept in a document file and that a tape file be kept for recordings. Finally they suggest that an identity file for the actual, coded and altered names of participants. I used their system (pp. 131-134) in modified form. I had two files with multiple sections to store student questionnaires and my attached notes. Each section contained the questionnaire and my notes about completed questionnaires. A file for each interview



participant contained letters requesting participation, completed questionnaires, the tape of the interview, my pre-interview and post-interview reflections, the transcript of my notes as well as notes made when I listened to the tapes. Therefore, the file included my developing thoughts about the overall meanings the participant was giving to the questions as well as my thoughts about how they were answered. This places me in the research process and helped to enhance my awareness of my thoughts and feelings so I could hear and understand more of participants' meanings.

I began a field notes file when writing my dissertation proposal. This included "written documentations of various aspects of the qualitative research" (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 32). It also contained thoughts about this proposal, sections that I wanted to expand and research further for the dissertation and a whole series of thoughts about the interview process. During the interview stage I included thoughts about the research process in my field notes file and added comments to participant files. All the data organized into these files represented completion of the first stage of the analysis.

## PROCESS OF THE ANALYSIS

### First to Third Stages

The stages of data analysis were not as clearly differentiated in reality as the above summary suggests. During the weeks of gathering and organizing data into participant files I was also considering which parts were irrelevant to the study (second stage) and reflecting on the data for sensitizing concepts (third stage). Indeed, my third stage identification of sensitizing concepts often began during my review of questionnaires.

As soon as possible after I received a questionnaire from a main sample participant I reflected on it for possible sensitizing concepts that I would explore during interview. Immediately after each interview I tried to make notes on the content and process. Whenever possible I listened to the audio-tapes of each interview two or three times before conducting the next interview. I arranged to have each interview transcribed as soon as possible after I had reviewed the audio-tape to enable me to reflect on transcripts while interviews were still fresh. I read and re-read the interview transcripts as well as the field notes. Then I removed data that was not relevant to the study. My explanations about the reasons for the research and the research process were eliminated. Also eliminated were sections where participants had spoken about issues not directly relevant to the research. For example, many participants recognized my accent as English and wanted to know when and why I had come to New Brunswick. This was often followed by their stories about visits to Britain. I removed sections such as this from the transcripts and sent the rest of the transcripts to participants for their comment.

Ten participants commented on the data. Six telephoned to confirm that they were willing for the data to be reported but either did not offer any more ideas or made few additional comments. I received letters from four. Generally the letters confirmed participants' views but occasionally particular ideas were highlighted. I was asked to remove or add small sections. One participant asked to see me. Her main concern was that her comments were not always expressed grammatically or typographical errors had been made by the transcriber. After our discussions she appeared to be reassured.

By the time that I received the comments I had begun to identify sensitizing concepts. I searched for ideas that participants stated were important, those that were used often, in an unfamiliar way, are vivid, contain jargon, or are part of a narrative or "matched pair." I used highlighting pens of different colours to mark provisional "sensitizing concepts" in the transcripts, and initially categorize them as "head," "hand," "heart," "soul" (before "heart" and "soul" were combined) and "how" categories. After my detailed study of a questionnaire or interview transcript I added to my field notes, hunches and ideas that I planned to think about more or look for in other data.

I had created a "sensitizing concepts checklist" to assist me with their identification (Appendix 13). I completed a checklist every time I thought that I had identified a sensitizing concept. I listed the concept, reasons for thinking that it was "sensitizing" and its referent. For example, detecting a clear theme referring to the past, I created a "history" category and listed relevant concepts. I also noted whether each concept was about "head," "hand," "self," or "how". On occasion I indicated in my notes that a concept could be placed in more than one category. I included on the form my reasons for thinking that a concept was sensitizing. I attached the completed form to the questionnaire or the interview transcript.

I decided to conduct the second and third stages of analysis for each major constituency in sequence. Reflecting on ideas from one constituency before moving to the

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<sup>4</sup> Teaching and learning methods.

next made it easier to identify and understand sensitizing concepts. For example, the concepts "apartheid, imprisonment," used to refer to First Nations Communities were clearer when I had immersed myself in transcripts of several Aboriginal participants who had spoken about their history.

I had interviewed Aboriginal people before other participants so their transcripts were the first that I received. Therefore I began my attempts to identify sensitizing concepts with "Aboriginal" transcripts. I identified sensitizing concepts and then tried to group them into "head," "hand," "self," and "how" categories. Then I moved to the questionnaires and interview transcripts from people in the newcomer category (the second group I had interviewed) and repeated the process. I added their sensitizing concepts to the "head," "hand," "self," and "how" lists from the Aboriginal participants. Some concepts such as "racism" were important to more than one constituency so I looked carefully at transcripts to try to understand views about racism. I considered Francophone, then Jewish and then the remainder of the transcripts. Last, I analyzed student questionnaires.

After I had identified provisional sensitizing concepts I left questionnaires and transcripts for that constituency for a time and moved to collecting and analyzing other data. Later, when the detail of the data was not so clear in my mind, I returned to consider whether the provisional sensitizing concepts still appeared to be sensitizing.

A decision about whether a concept is "sensitizing" is, of course, subjective. As I reflected upon questionnaires and interview transcripts I realized that it was more helpful

to conceptualize sensitizing qualities rather than make a definitive modernist statement about whether a concept was or was not sensitizing. The extreme "ideal type" situation was the easiest to decide. If a word or phrase appeared to me to capture the essence of a profound truth, seemed really important to the participant, and if my "intuition" that this was the case was confirmed by the interview participant, when it was vivid, when it used familiar language in an unfamiliar way or when it was repeated, the phrase had many of the "ideal type" qualities of a sensitizing concept so there were powerful grounds to include the concept as sensitizing.

On occasion I added a concept to my "sensitizing list" with a conviction that it belonged there. More frequently I reflected carefully upon a concept to decide if it had a sufficient number of sensitizing features, or if the intensity of a few of the features was so extreme, that it should be on the list. During interviews, non-verbal cues as well as the words used, alerted me to "sensitizing" qualities. The expression of emotion, pauses and the emphasis given to certain words and phrases suggested the sensitizing nature of concepts. These issues were noted in my field notes. The context in which a phrase was used was also important. A key phrase in a story, particularly when this phrase was repeated several times during the interview, suggested that it had sensitizing qualities. Sometimes study of a transcript led me to search for a phrase remembered from a previous transcript which encapsulated thoughts and feelings of this participant. Through this process I judged the extent to which concepts were sensitizing. At the end of the process I had 350 words, phrases or short stories that had a sufficient number of

sensitizing features for me define them as “sensitizing.” Then I checked that these words, phrases or stories were in the grouping (“head,” “hand,” “self,” or “how”) that I considered was most relevant. This almost completed the third stage of my analysis. Occasionally during later stages I moved back to my second stage “relevant” data for an example, a phrase or a story that encapsulated something that I was writing about.

#### Fourth stage

I felt uneasy on concluding this work. During data analysis the clarity about sensitizing concepts in my dissertation proposal often eluded me. Although the research question had sensitizing concepts as the unit of analysis, some important themes about anti-racist social work were not expressed through these concepts.

I had begun to think that the notion of sensitizing concepts was less useful than the notion of concepts with sensitizing qualities. The issue was not whether a concept is or is not sensitizing but its number and degree of sensitizing features. A rigid categorization of “sensitizing” and “non-sensitizing” is less compatible with my epistemology than the notion of sensitizing features or qualities. A categorization suggests something fixed and certain, more compatible with modernist thinking. I concluded that in future research I would not consider the phrase “sensitizing concepts” to represent a discrete category of observations but would look for sensitizing qualities.

As I re-read the transcripts, interviews and field notes I added themes and listed them under the four (“head,” “hand,” “self,” and “how”) categories. I grouped sensitizing concepts around these themes. For example, very early on it was clear that “racism” was

a theme so I assembled sensitizing concepts to illustrate it. On occasion when the data included a theme that was important to participants but without sensitizing concepts, I included the theme. For example, in the knowledge area “social work concepts,” a number of participants listed such concepts without emotion. At the time I thought it important to report “social work concepts,” even if there were no or very few sensitizing features. To do otherwise would make my account of participants’ views about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work incomplete. To rely only on sensitizing concepts felt like reporting the icing on a cake without the cake itself!

Then I categorized the concepts and themes. I reviewed my decision about whether or not they should be placed in the “head,” “hand,” “self,” or “how” category I had intended. During data analysis I became aware of different ideas about “head,” “hand,” “self,” and “how.” Some participants found the division useful, others not. Sometimes when I was analyzing and categorizing I found it very difficult to decide if a concept or theme belonged in a particular category. I decided to maintain these distinctions for the purpose of reporting but my experience highlights the problem of employing pre-set categories in qualitative research (even if these categories are presented as foundational starting points for conversations). These difficulties are not experienced by grounded theorists who build up from the data (Glasser and Strauss, 1967). Categories did inform my thinking, so I thought I should discuss with participants whether the categories contained inherent culture-bound assumptions.

When I had located the concepts in the “head,” “hand,” “self,” and “how” categories I determined sub-themes. For each sub-theme I identified a phrase that reflected the thinking of participants. For example in the “head” category the first sub-theme was “racism.” The phrase *“racism is alive and well in New Brunswick”* was a fitting preface to a cluster of ideas about why, contrary to views of many they had met, participants thought that racism does exist in New Brunswick.

I wrote about themes, sub-themes and concepts, recalling other phrases and stories that reflected the issue I was writing about. By this time I was so familiar with the revised transcripts<sup>5</sup> that I could always identify the participant and generally the page where a phrase occurred. I added these phrases to the results as I wrote them up. The results at this fourth stage ran to over 200 pages of single spaced script, including and organizing in themes everything said in my first stage of analysis. This, together with my original “sensitizing concepts checklist” became the new data base.

#### Fifth stage

The next two stages determined whether the data could inform curriculum and whether it could enter a dialogue with my foundational ideas. I consider the potential value of the sensitizing concepts for anti-racist curriculum in chapter 7 and the impact of these concepts on thought foundations in chapters 8, 9 and 10.

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<sup>5</sup> Transcripts that had been reviewed and sometimes amended by participants.



The fifth stage was a simple process that involved identifying and briefly describing the content of each of the four categories in the fourth stage. I produced tables which showed the main sub-themes in each of the categories. For example the four sub-themes that are most frequently discussed in relation to “head” knowledge that should be possessed by anti-racist social workers were “racism,” “the rural New Brunswick context,” “difficulties faced by diverse people,” and “differences.” I located the participant constituency for each of these concepts. For example, all eight Aboriginal participants, all but one of the newcomers and all of the Jewish people mentioned racism. The tables for “head,” “hand,” “self,” and “how” are reproduced in chapter 7 and I briefly describe what participants said about each theme and sub-theme. Often this meant removing many of the sensitizing concepts so that the theme could be described succinctly. I produce the fifth stage summary in chapter 7.

#### Sixth stage

The sixth stage was an analysis of the relationship between the data and foundations. To carry out this analysis I returned to the fourth stage data base. I reflected on each of the main groups of sensitizing concepts and themes and considered how they had an impact on my foundational ideas expressed in chapters 3 and 4. For example, one participant referred to New Brunswick racism as “reading between the lines racism.” This helped me to understand how racism was experienced in the New Brunswick context. Racism is here but people need to “read between the lines” to identify it. Prior to beginning the study I had an understanding about racism. The sensitizing concepts

had contextualized this understanding. Therefore, one effect of sensitizing concepts on my thought foundations was to contextualize them.

I searched for a word that would describe the effect of each of the groups of sensitizing concepts on my thought foundations. I concluded that there were three major effects. Sensitizing concepts in this study sometimes confirmed, sometimes challenged, and sometimes modified thought foundations. I explore these effects in chapters 8, 9 and 10. The sixth stage of data was collages of sensitizing concepts and short stories, grouped around themes and subthemes. In each instance I suggest the major impact that each of the themes and subthemes had on my thought foundations. This is reproduced in chapter 8, 9 and 10.

#### CREDIBILITY OF THE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In this section I evaluate the credibility of my work. I briefly review and summarize issues of reliability, validity and other indicators of credibility, including adherence to ethical principles of quality research. Rubin and Rubin (1995) argue that whereas in quantitative research reliability and validity are usually the hallmarks of good quality research, a hallmark of credible qualitative research is "transparency". They suggest that "transparency means that a reader of a qualitative research report is able to see the basic processes of data collection" and analysis (p. 85). I have described my processes in detail to make them transparent.

##### Reliability and validity

Becker (1997) argues that the meaning of the terms "reliability" and "validity"

should be understood by reference to the broader epistemology that informs the work. According to this viewpoint, because my research is informed by postmodern, symbolic interactionist and structural epistemologies, these epistemologies should inform my thinking about reliability and validity. In this section I demonstrate that my work is credible by employing definitions of reliability and validity compatible with my epistemology. I address Rubin and Rubin's three hallmarks of credible research (transparency, consistency-coherence and communicability). Finally I describe my steps to ensure that my work is credible in addressing principles of ethically sound research.

The theoretical traditions on which this research is based are compatible with a definition of reliability that centres on accuracy. The definition of validity provided by Ristock and Pennell (1996) is "the integrity and value of the research achieved through accountability both to the participants and those who will be affected by the outcome" (p. 50). I sought participants from the major constituencies that I believe will be affected by the outcome of the research. I consulted with other key stakeholders before the work began, and these stakeholders confirmed the work's worth. Research designed to hear the views of diverse people about the development of an anti-racist focus in curriculum content and teaching and learning methods has intrinsic validity. The research enables people affected by the curriculum but rarely heard to contribute to its development.

#### Reliability

Because my research is not in a positivist tradition, the type of consistency that is required in research from this tradition is not present. I do not claim that another

interviewer on another occasion would identify the same sensitizing concepts or themes that I have identified. Therefore I did not ask someone else to review my data in an attempt to promote inter-rater reliability. It would not be desirable to seek such standardization because it would deny my unique interaction with each participant. I would not even want to claim that another interview with the same participant at a different stage in the research process would proceed in the same way.

Mason (1996) suggests that reliability in qualitative research is concerned with accuracy. I have thought about and described my methods in some detail. I checked my analyses for obvious inaccuracies such as miscounting the demographics of the sample of participants. I also perused the interview transcripts many times to find additional examples of phenomena that I described, as well as for inaccuracies in my work.

### Triangulation

Ristock and Pennell (1996) define triangulation as "using multiple methods in order to obtain more thorough coverage of a subject" (p. 51). Drawing from Lather (1991), they suggest that the process involves "assembling multiple data sources and trying to assess the consistency as well as the counter patterns." Although interviews were the major method of data collection, the use of questionnaires afforded some degree of triangulation, although participants may have developed their thoughts between the questionnaire and interview.

In earlier work I immersed myself in written narratives and conducted focus groups with Canadian newcomers and some of the sensitizing concepts about anti-racist

social work that I brought to each unique interview have been informed by these accounts (Clews, 1996). This knowledge and previous research can, to some extent, triangulate with this work. However, the previous work was carried out in another Canadian province and the written accounts studied were drawn from experiences of different North American people. The context was different so one would expect different results. In this study I interviewed people from several different constituencies and these multiple sources enabled me to reflect on "consistency as well as counter patterns."

### **Reflexivity**

Reflexivity is an integral part of validity and an important tool for accountability. My research design provides considerable opportunity for reflexivity, "self consciousness with the goal of establishing non-exploitive relations between the researchers and the communities researched" (Ristock and Pennell, 1996, p. 48). I have described how personal reflections were built into my research process.

### **Accountability**

I consider that I am accountable to participants researched and also to others who will be affected by the work, including the social work faculty at St. Thomas University. I involved this latter group in consultations prior to beginning the research and throughout the research process. The Social Work Advisory Committee at St Thomas University represents people in the community who have stakes in the social work programme. Therefore, through involving the committee and participants, I sought to challenge existing exploitations by allowing "non-university" voices to influence curriculum.

There is, of course, cost to those who agreed to participate with me in the research process, the cost of their time. I hope, and I believe, that the benefit of the inclusion of their voices in research that has relevance to them will outweigh this cost.

### Construct validity

Lather (1991) suggests that "our empirical work must operate within a conscious context of theory building" (p. 67). The method described consciously attempts to identify the concepts which can be building blocks of theory. I have identified the ideology that informs the concepts regarding anti-racist social work and anti-racist social work education that I am bringing to this research. The purpose of my research is to identify sensitizing concepts of others, modify my own ideas as a result of my work, and suggest ideas that may be beneficial to others for curriculum content, curriculum development and the relationship between foundational and anti-foundational ideas. I have described the way in which I intend these sensitizing concepts of others to come into dialogue with my own and contribute to my own theoretical base and to the shared ideological framework of the Social Work Department at St. Thomas University.

The research has helped me to build theory and reveal limitations of old metaphors. I have also alluded to a stage beyond the research when I will participate with other stakeholders, my colleagues and the Social Work Advisory Committee, to build a dynamic model of anti-racist social work curriculum content and teaching and learning methods. I hope by sharing my work with colleagues to also contribute to development of anti-racist social work theory.

### Face validity

This involves taking steps to ensure that my work will make sense to others (Ristock and Pennell, 1996, p. 50). Consultations with colleagues was partly intended to check that this work makes sense to them. Discussions with people from constituencies that did not participate in the research, as well as those who did, helped me to check that the research and emerging ideas still made sense. I have described how, at the end of the research, I will share findings with all interested participants and discuss curriculum development informed by what they have told me. At the end of the research process two other groups of stakeholders, my colleagues and the Social Work Advisory Committee, will be able to comment on face validity. The dialogue about whether it makes sense and what we should do about it will continue.

The Learning and Teaching Development Committee at St. Thomas University provided a grant of \$500 toward research costs. The Social Work Department wrote a letter supporting the endeavour. Furthermore, the Social Work Department has contributed \$300 in cash and an equivalent sum in stationery, postage, couriers and telephone calls (Appendix Sixteen). This suggests that they considered the research had the potential to make sense. A book chapter and two articles based upon this research have already been published, suggesting that the results make sense to colleagues in the academy (Clews, 1999a, 1999c, 1999h).

### Catalytic validity

This is the most important aspect of validity for me. The anti-racist foundational

theoretical base that runs through my methodology led me to conclude that the research is only useful if it can energize and lead to action. I selected a research focus and question that had potential for catalytic validity. The process of planning and carrying out the work has usually energized me to continue to promote anti-racist social work practice and education. Some stakeholders encouraged me to continue the work because they consider it important, an indication of catalytic validity. The long term goal is to enable stakeholders who have previously either been silent, or whose voices have not been attended to, to influence the research. If this occurs the work is worthwhile.

#### Other measures of credibility

Other measures of credibility, are transparency, consistency-coherence and communicability (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, pp. 85-91). I consider each in turn.

#### Transparency

Transparency is the quality that enables readers to see “basic processes of data collection,” so that they can “assess the intellectual strengths and weaknesses, the biases and the conscientiousness of the interviewer” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 85). I have endeavoured to maximize the transparency of my research. Each stage is summarized and described in detail and my reflections on each stage are provided. The appendices make transparent my research instruments and processes.

#### Consistency-Coherence

Another measure of credibility is consistency-coherence. Rubin and Rubin (1995) describe this as follows: “coherence means that you can offer explanations for why



apparent contradictions in the themes occurred and what the contradictions mean” (p.87). My research was not designed in the modernist tradition that informs this criterion. I do not seek to provide a single answer to curriculum content or teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work. Indeed, my research was designed to produce diverse rather than uniform results. I selected participants from many different constituencies and I tried to find many different perspectives within each constituency. Furthermore, I encouraged participants and myself to develop our ideas throughout the research process so I expected changes to occur. Participants had such different experiences and interpreted them in such different ways that if I had found complete consistency I would have been suspicious of my results.

Despite this, there were some consistent themes throughout the transcripts. For example, one theme was that racism was a reality for many New Brunswick people. Some research results appeared in opposition to these viewpoints. Although many Aboriginal people thought that racism was “alive and well”<sup>6</sup> in New Brunswick, some thought it was diminishing. An Aboriginal graduate stated that “white people” had begun to teach her not to hate by behaving in a more accepting manner towards her, and behaving less often in a way that she experiences as racist.

### Communicability

A further measure of credibility is communicability. This is akin to “face

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<sup>6</sup> Words or phrases in quotation marks are direct quotations from participants.

validity” discussed above but it is slightly different. Rubin and Rubin suggest that there are three aspects of communicability. First: “your conversational partners should see themselves in your descriptions, even though they may not agree with every detail or interpretation.” Second: “other researchers should understand your text and accept your descriptions because they complement what they and others have seen.” Third: “the richness of detail, abundance of evidence and vividness of the text help convince others who have never been in the field that the material is real” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 91). Several of the research participants have seen summaries of results or articles based upon them. Feedback suggests that I have not misrepresented or misunderstood their viewpoints. The Social Work Advisory Committee feedback about early results of the research to in September 1998 and was positive (Appendix 18). Views of peers in the academy is reflected in publications. The research made sense to the cultural guides.

#### Ethical issues

Throughout this work I have been acutely aware of ethical responsibilities towards the research participants. I realized that I had an obligation to “acquire and disseminate trustworthy information in ways that cause no harm to those being studied” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 93). Furthermore I knew that I could be guilty of colonizing knowledge (Clews, 1999c). Human Subjects Approval to carry out the work was granted from St. Thomas and Memorial Universities (Appendix 17). In this section I outline the steps that I took to abide by the letter of what was approved and, more important, the spirit of ethical research.

## Cross-cultural issues

Research among Indigenous people by those from outside the culture often has a colonizing effect and can be a source of oppression rather than mutual respect and equality (Battiste, 1998). North American research, mainly carried out from a dominant white perspective, has forged “conceptions of Indigenous people with frozen or fabricated identities, distorted histories that marginalize Indigenous peoples and romanticized or stereotyped Indigenous realities” (Battiste, 1998, p. 1; Francis, 1993). Stereotypes about immigrants and refugees could be reinforced through my work and I needed to be diligent in identifying and confronting my own cultural bias. Battiste (1998) comments: “standards of ethics are needed that go further than informing and protecting individuals from personal harm and institutions from legal repercussions” (p.2).

I tried to avoid “scientific colonization” by checking the accuracy of what I had transcribed, sharing the results with participants and carrying out the research to allow people who might not have been heard to influence curriculum development. Although I shared both the reasons for the research and the data with participants, my agenda and my discourse, not that of research participants motivated this research. Therefore, throughout the process I tried to maximize involvement of the participants in deciding what questions should be asked as well as answers to them.

## Informed consent and issues of power

Research participants have a right to be fully informed about the research, and only be asked to participate after learning about the “purpose, usefulness, expected

benefits, methods, effects, risks (including risk to psychological well-being and jeopardy to social position), and possible alternative procedures.” A potential participant can only give fully informed written consent if the request sets out the “purpose of the research, benefits envisaged, any inconveniences, tasks to be performed, rights of the subject, risks involved, the name(s) of the person(s), group(s) or institution(s) eliciting or receiving the consent” (Social Science and Health Research Council of Canada, 1997, p. 64). This principle informs the ethical approval procedures of the two universities for this work.

The following steps to uphold this principle were outlined in my proposal:

I have outlined the process of writing to potential participants advising them about the research.<sup>7</sup> I will await their consent and the return of their questionnaire before I contact them for an interview. I have explained how I will ask all of the participants to sign a form in which they consent to participation in the research and keep a copy of their signed form. I will also ask each participant to sign a “Consent to Taping of Interview Form” before the interview begins. All of the participants will be advised that they can withdraw from the work at any time. None of the participants will be children.

I limited the right to withdraw from the study when I sought Human Subjects Approval. I allowed main sample participants to withdraw from the study for a month after their interviews. This change was reflected in Main Sample Consent Forms.

“Informed” newcomers and Aboriginal participants in my study may not have been fully informed when they gave consent. My “consent to participate” and “consent to have the interview taped” forms covered all the areas noted by the SSHRCC, but may

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<sup>7</sup> I explained why I did not contact all Aboriginal participants by letter earlier in this dissertation.

have protected me rather than empowered the participants. Many participants were ready to sign forms without reading them. The important question may have been whether I was a person of integrity rather than the specific provisions in the research I was carrying out. Issues of power exist between myself and the participants. This was particularly important in regard to student participants, as previously discussed, and influenced the research design for this participant constituency.

#### Privacy and confidentiality

A fundamental principle underpinning research is that people have a right to privacy. Any probing of personal issues should be made explicit. Anonymity or confidentiality generally should be guaranteed. If this is not possible, participants should be informed and possible consequences discussed. The participants should understand what information will be included in reports and what will not (SSHRCC, 1997, p. 65). This principle is also reflected in the Human Subjects processes of the two universities that approved my protocols.

I took steps to maintain confidentiality. I do not identify any participant by name. Raw research data is kept locked away. I plan to destroy the questionnaires, my notes and the audio-tapes and transcripts of interviews after five years. Although I alluded to the contributions of other participants during the interviews, I did not name them or provide identifying information. The two research assistants who transcribed interviews signed undertakings to keep confidential anything learned from the work. The guides who assisted in participant selection signed oaths to not divulge the identity of participants

(but they knew who had participated and this could affect future relationships.) Even though I am sure that the guides will keep confidentiality I am still concerned that the rural “rumour mill” might somehow identify participants. Participants were informed that their words could identify them to others.

The guides helped me to select participants who would be unlikely to be harmed by participating. Similarly, the guides who introduced me to newcomers not only helped me to select newcomers who had a knowledge and understanding about the goals of my research, but also helped me to identify and overcome any ethical dilemmas that might arise. For example, although I had wanted to select more recent newcomers the guides assured me that many would be so concerned with meeting basic needs that requesting involvement would be intrusive. They helped me to conduct ethically sound work.

The selection of participants and the reporting of their ideas presents challenges and dilemmas in small rural communities. For example, if a First Nations Community has only one white social worker and I select and report this person as a participant, I have identified my participant. If I chose to not report the selection of this participant, many ideas cannot be reported either because these ideas will be from the vantage point of a white social worker in an Aboriginal community. If I do not select this potential participant because of a wish to maintain confidentiality I lose the potential of useful data. I resolved this dilemma by eliminating data that I thought might identify, so some sensitizing concepts relevant to curriculum content to promote anti-racist social work is not reported.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has described my data analysis process. I described six stages in the process of analyzing the results, processes that led me to summarize and then relate my data to my questions about whether it could inform curriculum or forge a new relationship between foundational and non-foundational thinking. I have also outlined the steps taken to produce credible research and how I attended to ethical issues.

In chapters 7 to 10 I summarize stakeholders views about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work in New Brunswick and provide collages of sensitizing concepts. I do so to explore whether the methods used allowed diverse stakeholders to be involved in curriculum development processes, whether foundational and anti-foundational thought can be bridged, and whether the data gathered can inform anti-racist curriculum developments at St. Thomas University. I begin by providing an overview of these results in the chapter 7.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SAMPLE PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR IDEAS

#### A COLLAGE OF VOICES

There is a whole new world, and you can never live like them. You can never neatly fit in the sense of being a true Canadian and do what the other Canadians do. Yet you cannot live as yourself, as you have been brought up . . . you are in a void . . . you have to keep things to yourself . . . solve your problems on your own . . . you have to weigh everything, maybe some day if I have a problem who do I tell, what do I tell, when do I tell? Do I write back home and tell them? You don't want to get them concerned. Or do I tell someone here? They won't want to know about my problems because everyone has their own problems to deal with. Refugee

Many professional helping people go into the field unprepared. Many social workers have the best intentions, but may lack practical knowledge. I believe that it is very important that potential social workers are versed in multi-cultural issues. Student

Me: You graduated from here in 1990 . . . how did your education prepare you?  
Social worker: believe me, it didn't! I got culture shock. I didn't have any inkling of how it was going to be to work in another culture. A conversation would come up once or twice in the classroom . . . no one ever really got into it. No one talked about how one would survive. There was nothing. Social Worker in First Nations Community

A lot of Social Workers come into our community (with) their own baggage. They need to go through their own healing. They come in with good intentions but . . . whose needs they begin to meet is their own. Because they are so needy. And, many come in carrying guilt, not knowing us at all, and rather than being able to facilitate something that's constructive, they wind up avoiding the situation around them. Aboriginal person

I don't think people understand what racism is. A family had been terrorized for several nights. Around midnight a group would come with tomatoes and start throwing them all over the house. And the little children would wake up and hear this thump, thump all over the house . . . they were frightened of course. And the husband started keeping all night vigil . . . he would even sleep out in his car. I told him, if there was any way in which I could help, just to let them know they were not alone, that someone in the community was aware . . . and did not approve of it. He was very, very appreciative. The police came out, and investigated. I made a bit of a fuss. I spoke in church. This did not speak well of our community. Human Service Worker



## INTRODUCTION

The preface above provides a glimpse of some participants' views. This chapter and chapters 8 to 10 explore participants' themes, sensitizing concepts and stories. I review ways in which sensitizing concepts influenced my foundational thought in chapters 8 to 10. In this chapter I describe participant demographics and summarize the themes, sensitizing concepts and stories mentioned in questionnaires and discussed during interview. I then consider whether participants' ideas can enrich anti-racist curriculum and suggest direct and indirect ways that this might occur. These themes, and the sensitizing concepts embedded within them, can directly inform anti-racist social work curriculum content and teaching and learning methods because ideas shared by participants can be incorporated in the curriculum. Alternatively, sensitizing concepts, themes and stories can have an indirect influence on curriculum. Instructors might be inspired to develop curriculum that responds to participants' ideas. The discussion helps me to evaluate whether participants' views can enrich anti-racist curriculum content and teaching and learning methods.

## SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

### Constituencies

Table 1 shows the constituencies from which participants were drawn. The first row shows the numbers of participants selected in each of the constituencies, as already discussed. As expected, a review of questionnaires revealed that several participants were members of more than one constituency. For example, Aboriginal people and

Francophones were sometimes social workers or human service workers. The second row shows the number of participants from other constituencies that were also associated with a particular constituency. For example, in addition to the three people selected because they were Francophone, were two others who identified themselves as Francophone. Two points of clarification should be made. First, participants are only included in the "constituency member" row if they spoke from the perspective of this constituency. For example, the "newcomer" category includes non-Canadian born people who made comments from their experience about issues facing newcomers. Therefore, participants who were born outside of Canada but came to Canada in very early childhood and can neither remember their country of origin nor their arrival in Canada are not included in the newcomer "constituency member" row. However, a participant who narrated incidents about her childhood arrival in Canada is included. Second the "human service" constituency includes both volunteers and paid workers, a number of newcomers volunteered for a few hours a week to gain Canadian experience.

Table 1. Constituencies of Participants - Main Sample.

|                      | A | N  | F  | J | HS | SW | TOTAL |
|----------------------|---|----|----|---|----|----|-------|
| Reason for Selection | 8 | 9  | 3  | 3 | 3  | 2  | 28    |
| Constituency Member  | 0 | +1 | +2 | 0 | +3 | +5 | 11    |

Key:

A = Aboriginal

N = Newcomer

F = Francophone

J = Jewish

HS = Human Service Worker

SW = Social worker

I now explain the demographics that were not apparent at the point of selection.

#### Aboriginal participants

This constituency included people from four different First Nations Communities and two who lived outside of a First Nations Community. There were two social workers, a Band Politician, two elders/spiritual leaders, a human service worker and three others. No additional participants were added to the "Aboriginal" constituency after the demographics reported in the questionnaire were analyzed.

#### Newcomers

I selected nine newcomers (people born outside Canada) but found that an additional five were not born in Canada. Therefore half of the main sample was born outside of Canada. Of the five other non Canadian-born participants, four arrived in early childhood so are not included as "newcomer" constituency members. Two of the ten newcomers who are included had been in Canada for under a year, two for between 1 and 2 years, two between 3 and 10 years, three between 11 and 20 years and one more than twenty-one years. Four newcomers came as refugees, four as immigrants and two were temporary residents. Two newcomers were from the United States, one from Western Europe, two from Eastern Europe, one from East Asia and four from African countries.

#### Francophone participants

In addition to the three people selected as Francophone were two other Francophone participants. Of the five, three were Acadian, one was from Quebec and one from the U.S.

### **Jewish participants**

Three Jewish people were selected. No other participant claimed Jewish heritage, but the questionnaire did not ask them to do so.

### **Social workers and human service workers**

Two human service workers were selected because they specialized in work with people from ethnic or racial minority groups and a third had previous experience of doing so. Three other participants were human service workers, including two newcomer volunteers attempting to gain Canadian experience. I selected two social workers but five others were social workers, two francophone, two Aboriginal and one newcomer.

### **Other Demographic Features, Main Sample**

The main sample included considerable diversity. A social work union representative and three other social work union members, a social work supervisor, a Minister of Religion, a high school teacher and a retired human service professor were all included. There were 16 women and 12 men in the main sample. I did not ask about age but three said that they were seniors, at least two were over eighty. The youngest participant appeared to be in the mid twenties.

### **Demographic Features, Student Sample**

No student participant self-defined as a person of colour. There were only two Aboriginal students in the programme during the time that the questionnaires were distributed. I do not report Aboriginal identification because this would identify responding students.

### Linguistic Diversity

Over 90% of students had spoken English as the main language in childhood, on one occasion with another language. French or English were the main language for all but one. Of the five main sample participants with French as a first language, three were New Brunswick Francophones, one was from Quebec and one was from a French-speaking country. The seven main sample participants in the "other" linguistic category spoke five different languages.

Table 2. Main Language Spoken as a Child - All Participants.

|         | English | French | Other | French/<br>English | Other/<br>English | TOTAL |
|---------|---------|--------|-------|--------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Student | 27      | 2      | 1     | 0                  | 1                 | 31    |
| Main    | 14      | 5      | 7     | 1                  | 1                 | 28    |
| TOTAL   | 41      | 7      | 8     | 1                  | 2                 | 59    |

### Size of community of residence and work

Table 3 on the next page outlines urban and rural residence. Nine participants reported living in "small rural"<sup>1</sup> communities and a further 14 reported "rural" communities. This represents almost 40% of the total sample. Two thirds of students lived in an urban community, probably Fredericton. Nevertheless, classroom discussions have revealed for me that many have lived in rural communities.

Many of the 13 social workers or human service workers or volunteers had work

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<sup>1</sup> The definitions of "rural", "urban", "small rural" and "small urban" are those employed by Statistics Canada for populations of these sizes.

catchment areas that covered communities of more than one size. Nine of the 13 participants practiced in either small rural or rural communities. Twelve of the 13 participants practiced in a small rural, rural or small urban community.

Table 3. Size of Community of Residence - All Participants

|         | <99<br>small rural | 100-999<br>rural | 1,000-9,999<br>small urban | >10,000<br>urban | TOTAL |
|---------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Student | 5                  | 3                | 2                          | 21               | 31    |
| Main    | 4                  | 11               | 4                          | 9                | 28    |
| TOTAL   | 9                  | 14               | 6                          | 30               | 59    |

### Conclusion

The 28 participants in the main sample represented diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. They came from communities of different sizes. A sample with such diversity had promise for generating many different sensitizing concepts about anti-racist social work curriculum and teaching and learning methods.

### GENERAL THEMES ADDRESSED BY PARTICIPANT

In this section I use the "head," "hand," and "self" metaphors to describe curriculum content that participants thought was necessary to prepare students for anti-racist social work practice. Then I explore participants' ideas about teaching and learning methods that might facilitate this learning. I consider "head," "hand," and "self" separately but many comments suggested that these categories are not discrete. Indeed some participants considered it inadvisable to separate these three parts of self.

Differences in view about the relationship between the parts is explored in chapter 9.

I provide a "big picture" in this chapter to enable the reader to set in context the sensitizing concepts in the next. This section provides a broad canvas of the issues discussed so that the sensitizing concepts are not torn from the overall context of the data without a sense about the whole. I begin each section with a summary table of the major issues mentioned by participants. Although I provide numbers of participants who discussed each of the issues I do not suggest that in this qualitative study particular issues are more important because a higher number of participants discussed them. Numbers are provided to give information about how often issues that were discussed. Sometimes participants spent a large portion of the interview discussing a particular topic and sometimes the issue was mentioned briefly. Ideas differed about each topic. For example, the meaning of "racism," was not the same for all participants, and the precise "differences" that participants thought social workers should know also varied.

Table 4. Views About Necessary Knowledge by Participant Group

|                      | Aboriginal | Newcomer | Jewish | Francophone | Social Worker | H. Service Worker | TOTAL MAIN | STUDENT |
|----------------------|------------|----------|--------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|---------|
| Racism & stereotypes | 8          | 9        | 3      | 4           | 5             | 6                 | 26         | 20      |
| Rural or NB          | 5          | 8        | 3      | 4           | 7             | 3                 | 22         | 1       |
| Difficulties         | 8          | 10       | 2      | 4           | 4             | 3                 | 22         | 4       |
| Differences          | 6          | 5        | 2      | 2           | 4             | 2                 | 19         | 16      |
| Self-knowledge       | 8          | 3        | 2      | 3           | 3             | 5                 | 17         | 3       |
| History              | 7          | 6        | 2      | 1           | 1             | 1                 | 17         | 1       |
| Views of S Workers   | 8          | 2        | 0      | 0           | 2             | 2                 | 11         | 1       |
| Social Work Concepts | 2          | 2        | 1      | 2           | 4             | 3                 | 11         | 17      |
| Legislation Policy   | 4          | 2        | 0      | 0           | 2             | 1                 | 7          | 2       |
| TOTAL                | 8          | 10       | 3      | 5           | 7             | 6                 | 28         | 31      |

Footnote: Each row total generally exceeds the sum of the each cell because some participants are members of more than one constituency.



### Knowledge

The table on the previous page summarizes participants ideas. The "TOTAL MAIN" sample column is the number of different main sample participants who mentioned a particular theme. Constituency members include participants who were selected because of membership of a particular constituency and others who I subsequently discovered were also members of this constituency. The number of participants in each of the cells represents the number of participants from a particular constituency who mentioned a theme. Thus all eight of the Aboriginal participants, nine of the ten newcomers and all three of the Jewish participants mentioned "racism or stereotypes." The six human service participants include the three selected because of membership of this constituency and three who I discovered were members of it during the research process, the three "discovered" are included in another constituency too. Therefore, this double counting results in 39 in the "Total participant" row even though there were only 28 participants. The themes are listed by order of the number of times that they were mentioned by main sample participants. The number of students who mentioned a theme is indicated in the right hand column.

### Racism

The clearest finding was that participants stated overwhelmingly that the most important curriculum area was racism. In one form or another racism was the topic of conversation for between a quarter and a third of most interviews. One participant said that social work educators should "teach them what it is like to live with racism." Participants told stories about their own and others' experiences of racism, emphasizing that New

Brunswick was not immune to it. Although overt and covert forms of racism exist in rural communities, "people don't want to see it . . . they don't know how to handle it." Participants spoke about stereotyping, powerlessness, workplace racism and racism in academia. They spoke about cultural biases unrecognized by dominant groups but experienced as racism by minorities. Comments about racism were rich ground for the sensitizing concepts that I explore in the next chapter. Participants said that they often had to justify that New Brunswick racism existed, despite the fact that it was clearly in evidence to people living in the province. The number of times that "racism" was mentioned suggests that it is important to address it in the curriculum. Nevertheless, one reason why this topic was mentioned so often could be that participants thought that they expected to talk about racism because the research was about anti-racist social work.

#### Rural context

Many main sample participants thought that students should learn about the rural context in which they would be practicing anti-racist social work. Features of rural communities mentioned were homogeneity, stability of population, frequency of gossip and the fact that people were viewed as a member of a family or a particular religious denomination rather than as an individual. Human service workers, Aboriginal people and students were less likely than other participants to refer to the rural context.

#### Difficulties

Main sample and student participants differed in their views about the importance of knowledge of difficulties faced by people from ethnic and racial minority groups. Most main

sample participants spoke about the difficulties of diverse people. Human service and social workers were less likely to mention this area of knowledge. People who thought that this knowledge area was important supported the view that anti-racist social work should have a cultural competence dimension. An understanding of difficulties is an important beginning for cultural competence. Participants emphasized that people from minority backgrounds faced some of the same difficulties as other people in Canada. They experienced special difficulties as well. Aboriginal participants spoke of anger about past and present oppression and anger turned inwards leading to self destructive actions and turned outwards leading to hatred of oppressors. Newcomer participants mentioned difficult adjustments to life in Canada. Refugees brought with them scars from trauma and worried about families left behind. Francophone people were often saddened by a probable loss of their language in the next generation. Jewish participants spoke about generations of oppression of Jewish people.

### Differences

Approximately half of the students and two thirds of main sample participants mentioned the need for students to know about human differences. Some mentioned that Aboriginal people differed from others, in particular with their circular rather than linear thinking. Others emphasized that newcomers need to learn the "taken-for-granted" Canadian knowledge. Participants pointed out that social workers should know that their own "taken for granted" assumptions about life might differ from those of diverse people.

### Self-knowledge

Main sample participants thought that social workers must understand themselves

before they can understand others. Social workers need to be secure in their identities, and willing to examine personal bias and acknowledge alternatives. Students should be taught that racism resides within themselves as well as outside them. They should also be gentle on themselves and realize that we are all products of our backgrounds. One participant thought that social work education should have a heavy emphasis on student healing because she had observed many social workers who were "sick."

### History

Many participants, particularly those from minority groups, emphasized that an understanding of the history of ethnic groups was important. Participants had different ideas about necessary knowledge. Some thought that a history of immigration and relationships with Aboriginal people, including government policies, was crucial. Others spoke about the need for local historical knowledge such as local history of Aboriginal people, or relationships between Francophone and Anglophone people. Minorities emphasized the importance of oral history because written history often reflected colonial ideas.

### Views about social workers

All Aboriginal participants and three others thought that social workers should know how they are viewed. They said that non-social workers have limited knowledge and misunderstandings about social workers' roles. Some Aboriginal participants mentioned the need for white social work students to recognize that their legacy of suffering sometimes produces hostility towards all white people. The view was expressed that some social workers were "needy people" who hindered rather than helped because they were consumed by their own problems.

### Social work concepts/legislation and policy

Most social work students wanted to know how concepts from their theory textbooks such as “normalizing,” “empowering,” and “reframing” related to social work in a cross-cultural context. Eleven main sample participants also mentioned the need for social workers to apply social work concepts in a multicultural context. Often, however, main sample participants thought that social workers should realize that “empathy” in a cross cultural context had a different meaning from textbook definitions and that social workers should examine classroom theory afresh. A quarter of participants in the main sample spoke of the need for social workers to know about legislation and policies. Particular knowledge included the Indian Act, and legislation and policies affecting newcomers to Canada.

### Conclusion

This brief account of many hours of conversation provides context for participants’ sensitizing concepts about social work knowledge provided in chapter 8. Participants in both samples wanted curriculum that both addressed racism and also provided an understanding about diversity. There were some differences though. At the beginning of their careers, many social work students wanted to know how people of different ethnic backgrounds differed from themselves and how to apply social work theory to their work. In contrast, many in the main sample mentioned the need for students to understand the context in which they were working and the precise difficulties faced by the people with whom they worked. Rich sensitizing concepts about these areas were shared by main sample participants. This finding highlights the need for instructors to consider not only the views of student

stakeholders in designing curriculum. Other stakeholders identify areas of knowledge that students may not have considered. Of course, students would have raised other issues if they had been interviewed, but there was also a greater range of ideas in main than in student questionnaire responses, suggesting that main sample participants had richer views. I now turn to consider the second theme, skill for anti-racist social work. The tables on the next page summarize data about “hand,” and the “self.”

Table 5. Views about Necessary Skills by Participant Group

|                | Aboriginal | Newcomer | Jewish | Francophone | Social Worker | Human Service Worker | TOTAL MAIN | STUDENT |
|----------------|------------|----------|--------|-------------|---------------|----------------------|------------|---------|
| Micro Practice | 8          | 8        | 2      | 4           | 6             | 4                    | 25         | 27      |
| Self           | 8          | 6        | 1      | 3           | 5             | 6                    | 22         | 7       |
| Macro Practice | 8          | 4        | 2      | 1           | 2             | 6                    | 17         | 14      |
| TOTAL          | 8          | 10       | 3      | 5           | 7             | 6                    | 28         | 31      |

Table 6. Views about the Social Worker "Self" by Participant Group

|              | Aboriginal | Newcomer | Jewish | Francophone | Social Worker | Human Service Worker | TOTAL MAIN | STUDENT |
|--------------|------------|----------|--------|-------------|---------------|----------------------|------------|---------|
| Quality      | 7          | 5        | 2      | 2           | 5             | 3                    | 18         | 12      |
| Relationship | 6          | 5        | 1      | 4           | 5             | 3                    | 15         | 8       |
| Belief       | 3          | 2        | 1      | 2           | 3             | 2                    | 8          | 12      |
| TOTAL        | 8          | 10       | 3      | 5           | 7             | 6                    | 28         | 31      |

### "The hand" skills.

Table 5 summarizes skills. The "Total" row at the bottom of the table indicates the number of participants in each constituency including those selected because of their membership of a particular constituency and those who I discovered were members of this constituency as well as the constituency from which they were selected (8 "Aboriginal," 10 "newcomer" etc.). The "Total Main" and "Student" columns indicate the numbers who spoke about a theme. For example, 25 main sample participants and 27 students mentioned "micro skills," although none actually used that term.

Many participants found it daunting to begin to think about necessary social work skills. Social worker participants often indicated that the boundaries of what they thought social work should be were stretched in social work with people from diverse backgrounds. They said that skills developed during professional education were relevant but far more was needed for anti-racist practice. Participants said that sometimes they could modify existing skills but often needed to develop new ones. Social work participants said that every skill that they had learned, in life as well as social work, might be beneficial in anti-racist social work. Social work students often referred to the need to develop social work skills taught in the social work programme, such as "reframing," or "empowerment" that they had mentioned as necessary knowledge. I organize some of the main ideas about skills into three groups: micro practice, "self" and macro-practice.

#### Skills in micro-practice

Many different micro-practice skills were identified, including forming



relationships, communication, empathy, counselling and competence to help resolve personal difficulties. Sometimes different concepts were used by different constituencies of participants. For example, Aboriginal participants sometimes spoke about the role of social workers in promoting individual healing, while non-Aboriginal participants were more likely to talk about “problems” and “solutions.” Different constituencies clearly had different ideas about the nature of professional helping. This has implications for the skills needed.

Skills needed for work in diverse situations were discussed. Some skills, such as “using interpreting services,” are generally only needed in a multi-lingual context. Others may be relevant in all social work situations, for example “listening.” Participants alluded to skills that have an “additional twist” in a multicultural situation. For example, to communicate empathy, social workers need knowledge about other cultures.

#### Skills relating to self

More than three quarters of main sample participants said that students should develop self-awareness and self-acceptance skills. All Aboriginal and human service participants thought that students needed to know themselves and develop the skills to enable self knowledge to grow. Many said that foundations of beliefs are challenged through work with diverse people. Participants thought that students need to understand their biases. They suggested that students need to learn about self-care, how to identify their stress levels and then reduce incapacitating stress. Although each sample did not have homogeneous ideas, some differences between the social work student sample and

the main sample were pronounced. In particular, students were less likely than main sample participant to mention the need to develop skills to understand “self.”

#### Skills for macro practice

Macro practice skills were discussed less frequently than the other two categories. Skills for macro-practice that were mentioned included different methods of working with communities as well as educational, promotional and anti-racism campaigning skills. Participants thought that social workers needed to find ways of reaching out and then “blending in” to diverse communities, while retaining a sense of personal identity.

#### Self, the “heart” and “soul”

The “self” of anti-racist social work was referred to less often than self-knowledge and skills of self-understanding. When participants spoke about the “heart” and “soul” of anti-racist social work they alluded to beliefs and values about diversity and commitment to reach out to others. I have divided the comments about the “self” of anti-racist social work into “personal qualities,” “relationships,” and “beliefs,” but these categories overlap. Participants’ views are summarized in Table 6.

Many Aboriginal participants indicated the importance of the “self” of anti-racist social work. Often Aboriginal people commented that what you have done, and the paper qualifications that you can produce to “prove” it, are valued highly outside Aboriginal communities. They thought that this overlooks the more important “self.” Sometimes participants were disdainful of paper qualifications. For many participants, experienced and qualified people are only valued if they are considered “honourable,” “good,” and

“kind.” It is difficult to develop these qualities through the social work curriculum. Participants suggested that they could tell if someone was honourable when they met them. Aboriginal people said that have been subjected to deception for generations so they are skilled at recognizing “the Trickster” (Graveline, 1998, p. 11).

Prior to beginning the research I wondered whether non-Aboriginal social workers would be accepted in First Nations Communities. I discovered that these social workers have to prove themselves . . . but so do Aboriginal social workers. Caucasian and Aboriginal social workers faced different difficulties. It took longer for the Caucasian social worker but her stories indicated that eventually she gained acceptance. Again, this confirmed the view often stated that the “self” as a whole rather than some particular attribute, even ethnicity, was important.

#### Personality

Aboriginal participants confirmed the reflections of the social workers. One thought that a “white” skin will remind Aboriginal people about their experiences of colonial oppression. Another participant commented that non-Aboriginal social workers are sometimes “better” than Aboriginal social workers. A third participant said that people secure in their own identities and who have “good hearts” will be accepted.

Social workers also need to prove to immigrants and refugees that they are honourable. One refugee said that some were just curious when they asked him to tell his story. Another said that social workers are “authority” and people in war-torn countries have learned to be suspicious of “authority.” Social workers should “bring in their

personality and allow the people to get to know them and judge for themselves.”

Aspects of personality that would gain acceptance in diverse situations included an acknowledgment that one’s world view is not the only one possible. Participants thought that social workers should be prepared to acknowledge that they do not know everything. People who appear “strong, confident and firm,” but still humble, are likely to gain acceptance. Resourcefulness was often needed because there are no easy answers to questions about cross-cultural social work. Social workers should love challenge and be determined to find answers to their questions. Finally, participants emphasized that integrity is needed to demonstrate congruence between words and deeds.

#### Relationships

Fifteen main sample participants and eight students mentioned the need for social work relationships with diverse people to be based on sincerity, openness and respect. First, participants suggested, relationships with those being helped should focus on client needs. Second, social workers should not pre-judge these needs or how they should be satisfied but explore each situation with patience and perseverance. Third, social workers should recognize that they may have different beliefs from those of their clients. Relationships should be based on respect for who people are, not who they might become. Several mentioned the need for concern for others. The terms “kindness” and “caring” were used by students to refer to this quality. An Aboriginal person said that this quality would be reflected by a social worker who is willing to “cry with them . . . do everything possible, reach out and bring help.” A social worker said that the necessary

quality is a "wish to help people." A human service worker simply said, "a good heart."

### Beliefs

Eight main sample participants and 12 students thought that social workers should believe in anti-racism. One considered racism to be a moral issue. Another thought that social workers should promote justice, humanitarianism and egalitarianism.

### Conclusion

Many participants emphasized the importance of the identity of the anti-racist social worker. This included personality qualities, relationships and beliefs. Although the quantity of comments in this section, or the time devoted to discussing them during interview, was less than the time spent in elaborating views about knowledge and skills, the "self" of anti-racist social work seemed very important to participants. Participants spoke emotionally about the need for the right person rather than a "technician" with knowledge and skills for anti-racist practice. These comments by participants can either be directly shared with students, or they can form the basis for curriculum that is designed to develop the "self." Although there were some differences between participants, there was a high degree of consistency in what was suggested. Social work educators are greatly challenged in educating this part of the student self because so much depends on the "self" of the social work educator.

Table 7 Views about Teaching and Learning Goals by Participant Group

|           | Aboriginal | Newcomers | Jewish | Francophone | Social Worker | Human Service Worker | TOTAL MAIN | STUDENT |
|-----------|------------|-----------|--------|-------------|---------------|----------------------|------------|---------|
| Empathy   | 6          | 4         | 3      | 3           | 5             | 1                    | 19         | 15      |
| Self      | 6          | 4         | 1      | 4           | 3             | 3                    | 14         | 6       |
| Skills    | 2          | 3         | 2      | 1           | 2             | 0                    | 8          | 8       |
| Knowledge | 1          | 1         | 1      | 1           | 2             | 1                    | 6          | 18      |
| TOTAL.    | 8          | 9         | 3      | 5           | 7             | 6                    | 28         | 31      |

### Teaching and learning for anti-racist social work

Table 7 shows that a quarter of main sample participants and almost as many students considered that traditional lectures and readings to be inadequate preparation for anti-racist social work. A refugee said that anti-racist social work education can never be just “something that should be limited to lectures within the university.” A francophone social worker said “we can all study it in a textbook, you want something more.”

Practical rather than theoretical learning was important. Different teaching and learning methods were suggested but many participants agreed with the social worker who said: “it should be experiential because that’s the only way you are going to learn.” Participants’ ideas can be grouped into three main goals for anti-racist social work curriculum: the development of empathy, learning about the self and the development of appropriate skills and knowledge for work in a cross-cultural context.

#### Empathy

Participants realized that it is difficult for students to develop empathy without similar experiences to those with whom they are working. As one participant put it: “it’s hard for people who haven’t been there themselves to understand.” Participants suggested several ways social work students who “haven’t been there” could learn to develop empathy. Some suggested that students could get in touch with their own experiences to help them to understand difficulties faced by diverse people in New Brunswick. Others recommended experiences with diverse people to assist the development of empathy.

### Learning about self

Teaching and learning methods with this goal address the students themselves rather than imparting new knowledge or developing new skills. They aim to help a student become open to developing knowledge and skills. Several participants recognized that some students will resist this learning. It was suggested that students in a structural social work programme such as that offered at St. Thomas University, will often be concerned with political correctness. Therefore participants recommended that instructors should try to normalize the fact that bias is learned by all during socialization processes. First students should acknowledge their biases, then try to reduce them.

### Skill development

Eight participants in the main sample and eight students recommended methods of teaching and learning to develop skills in anti-racist social work. These methods included role play, simulations, learning by actually participating in anti-racist social work and coaching. Sensitizing concepts reported in the next chapter illustrate these methods.

### Development of knowledge

Just six participants in the main sample but 18 students recommended methods for enhancing knowledge that would facilitate anti-racist social work. Traditional methods of teaching and learning were suggested. Lectures, handouts and assigned readings were considered worthwhile but to be used infrequently. Classroom discussions were also suggested so that students could learn from each other. Although more students emphasized teaching and learning methods for developing knowledge than main sample



participants, over 20% of main sample participants also mentioned the importance of teaching and learning methods to develop a relevant knowledge base. The methods suggested were the traditional "lecture," "readings" and "group discussions." No sensitizing concepts about methods for learning knowledge were present in completed student questionnaires and it was rare for main sample participants to mention with conviction methods for teaching and learning knowledge for anti-racist social work.

### Conclusion

Participants suggested many different methods of teaching and learning that would be beneficial for anti-racist social workers. I was particularly surprised that traditional pedagogies, particularly the lecture and textbook method, were not valued by many main sample participants. I was interested that students had more traditional views than other participants about teaching and learning methods.

Anti-racist social work education was described as a complex area of work. It challenges the "self" by requiring both teachers and learners to explore at deeper levels the cultural bias that underpins all our thinking. Participants suggested that if students are to have the confidence to examine their bias, modelling is needed from their instructors. Instructors need to state clearly that it is acceptable and quite "normal" to admit to bias. Lifelong learning about anti-racist social work is about unpeeling deeper layers of bias so that social workers can respond with increasing openness to their clients. The knowledge and skills sections of this chapter appear almost as an afterthought. Perhaps participants gave less attention to these areas because, as one suggested, social workers will acquire

knowledge and skills if they are really committed to do the personal work necessary to develop their anti-racist practice.

### TOWARDS ENRICHING ANTI-RACIST SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM

In this chapter I have outlined varying views from diverse stakeholders about necessary “head,” “hand,” and “self” for anti-racist social work in rural New Brunswick. Participants sometimes suggested that knowledge and skills usually taught in social work programmes could be adapted for work with diverse people. “Forming relationships” and “communication” are important in many situations. However, specific areas such as knowledge about racism and about the history of diverse people are also considered important.

Tables have shown the numbers of participants that discuss particular themes and give an overview of opinions within my sample. I emphasize that I am not claiming that these views are representative of the views of all stakeholders in the social work programme at St. Thomas University in Anglophone New Brunswick. These numbers give the reader a general view of the discussions and the context of data from which the sensitizing concepts described in the next chapter were drawn. Some of the differences reported here, particularly differences between people from minority groups and other main sample stakeholders, or between main sample stakeholders and students, could inform a hypothesis for a quantitative study addressing possible differences in ideas between constituencies. Such a study could also investigate whether a more systematically drawn sample of stakeholders had similar views

One goal for this study was to explore whether the voices of participants could enrich curriculum. The themes outlined in this chapter and the sensitizing concepts in Chapter 8 can have both direct and indirect influences on the curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work. I consider these in turn.

#### Direct influence on anti-racist curriculum

The themes and sensitizing concepts could directly inform curriculum developments. It would be possible to ascertain if the major themes suggested by participants are included in curriculum, and include those that are not. Some of the stories of participants could act as case material for classroom discussion. People from the constituencies represented in this study could be “other voices” to be brought into the social work classroom to enrich curriculum. Collages of sensitizing concepts, such as those appearing in Chapters 8 to 10 could be presented to social work students and classroom discussions about appropriate curriculum could ensue. Many interesting and creative teaching and learning methods suggested by participants could be adopted.

#### Indirect effect on anti-racist curriculum

The themes, stories and sensitizing concepts could also have an indirect effect on curriculum. In this section I explore how instructors might construct a curriculum that responds to these ideas. Then I suggest that the data can be shared with a group who could develop curriculum. Finally, I explore the possibility of this data having a direct effect elsewhere in the social work programme and then an indirect effect on curriculum.

An indirect effect could be for social work educators and their students to design

curriculum that responded to issues discussed by participants, rather than directly incorporate these ideas in curriculum. For example, social work educators could devise learning opportunities that highlighted the racism experienced in New Brunswick. Curriculum could be developed to confront the manifestations of racism suggested by participants. For example, students who heard about racism in schools were inspired to develop a puppet play with an anti-racist theme for a course assignment (Clews, 1999i).

Second, the sensitizing concepts, themes and stories could be shared with a group of diverse people to devise a curriculum that was informed by these concepts. This guards against the bias of any one person attempting to use participants' ideas in curriculum developments. This participatory action model could also address a second goal of this study, that of enabling diverse stakeholders to contribute towards curriculum developments.

Third, the data could be shared with other social work educators. Implications of the data for the broader programme could be considered. For example, questions could be raised about whether the student selection procedures for the programme encourage applications from "needy people" and then offer them places. Comments about systemic racism could be applied to the social work programme and inspire a critical evaluation of possible disadvantages for minority groups resulting from policies, procedures and structures. A critical evaluation of other elements of the social work programme would have implications for the curriculum.

Finally, the themes, stories and sensitizing concepts from this study could

challenge my thought foundations, and those of my colleagues, so that our future work is less biased towards the needs of the world we know. Few sensitizing concepts have been reported in this brief summary. In the following chapter I explore the sensitizing concepts in detail and consider how they have sometimes confirmed, sometimes challenged and often enriched the foundational ideas articulated in Chapter 3. Collages of these concepts can be brought into the classroom thereby enriching curriculum.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SENSITIZING CONCEPTS CONFIRMING THOUGHT FOUNDATIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter and the next illustrate how selected<sup>1</sup> sensitizing concepts, and some of the themes and stories within which they are embedded,<sup>2</sup> impact on the uncontestable and contestable foundational thought outlined in chapter 3. In chapter 3 I stated that some of my thought foundations were not contestable (or open for challenge) but that I was prepared to allow other thought foundations to be contested. I defined my uncontestable foundational thought as “a pursuit of anti-racist social work by non-oppressive teaching and learning methods.” After acknowledging that my foundational thinking about the nature of “anti-racist social work” and “non-oppressive teaching and learning methods” were the products of my experiences as a privileged white woman in rural and urban areas other than Atlantic Canada, I outlined this foundational thinking. My contestable foundational thought described in chapter 3 included my views about the nature of anti-racist social work and anti-racist social work education. In chapter 4 I reviewed literature that I thought might assist me to develop anti-racist social work curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter and the next two I have selected groups of sensitizing concepts that illustrate particular themes. For example, concepts about teaching and learning methods were selected because they illustrate how thought foundations were confirmed.

<sup>2</sup> When I refer to “sensitizing concepts” in the remainder of this chapter and in chapter 9 I am including the themes and stories within which they are embedded. Drawing upon the work of van den Hoonaard I defined sensitizing concepts as “constructs drawn from the perspectives of others that alert researchers to particular lines of thinking that might differ from their own thinking.”

In this chapter and the next I evaluate different elements of the theoretical base and the literature I reviewed to evaluate how the sensitizing concepts of diverse stakeholders impacted upon them. In this chapter I show that on some occasions sensitizing concepts confirmed my thought foundations. In chapter 9 I show how sensitizing concepts challenged thought foundations and in chapter 10 I write about how they modified foundations.

I begin this chapter by briefly outlining the foundations that were set out in chapter 3 and 4. I outlined an anti-racist social work that confronted oppression, i. e. , the exercise of power by dominant groups over diverse people. I stated that anti-racist social work tries to identify and challenge racial bias so that people from all backgrounds can access social work that meets their different needs. Drawing on Mullaly's structural social work I defined "radical humanism," and "radical structuralism" as twin pillars that can underpin anti-racist social work. Radical humanist anti-racist social work provides sensitive responses to people who are experiencing difficulties whilst encouraging them to avoid self blame by realizing that many of these difficulties have causes in the wider society. Radical structuralist anti-racist social work is social work which identifies and challenges social structures that oppress by virtue of ethnicity or race. I acknowledged that these ideas had been derived from my understanding of anti-racism that may differ from that of people from other ethnic and racial groups. Therefore, I explored the value of concepts from different postmodernisms for affirming diversity. An apparent contradiction between my foundational anti-racist perspective and anti-foundational

postmodernism and the wish to retain benefits of both led to me exploring the possibility of sensitizing concepts forging new relationships between foundational and anti-foundational thought.

In chapter 3 I also explored my foundational ideas about anti-racist social work curriculum and teaching and learning methods. I suggested that the metaphors “heart,” (feelings) “head,” (knowledge) “hand,” (skills) and “soul” (beliefs) could organize social work curriculum content. I advocated the utilization of many different teaching and learning methods informed by popular education and adult education to promote experiential learning.

In chapter 4 I explored literature that might assist in the development of anti-racist social work curriculum. I explained how transactional approaches to understanding diversity, those based upon understanding interactions between people, were more compatible with my theoretical bases than approaches that categorize diverse people. I considered six transactional “groupings’ of literature that might help me to develop curriculum: literature about culturally competent social work, anti-racist social work, social work in rural communities, teaching and learning about anti-racist social work; biographies of diverse people, and the New Brunswick context. The task of this chapter and the next two is to explore how sensitizing concepts of people who had different stakes in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St. Thomas University impacted on these contestable thoughts.

Reflections on the sensitizing concepts of diverse stakeholders indicated different



impacts. The following figure shows these impacts:

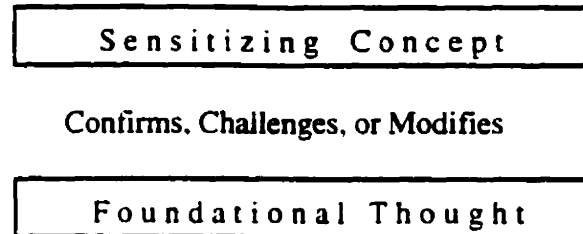


Figure 2 - Relationship between sensitizing concepts and thought foundations

The above chart illustrates that sensitizing concepts sometimes challenged, created or modified my thought foundations. I describe these processes in this and the next two chapters. In the remainder of this chapter I explore how sensitizing concepts confirmed some of my foundational thoughts. In particular, I show how sensitizing concepts confirmed my assumption that ethnically and racially<sup>3</sup> diverse people experienced behaviours, and were required to utilize social systems that they experienced as “racist.” I also show that many participants’ sensitizing concepts about teaching and learning are compatible with experiential learning based on popular education and adult education principles.

Two illustrations show how sensitizing concepts serve to confirm my foundational thought. First, my uncontestable-foundational position that social work should be committed to pursuing social justice (of which anti-racist social work is a part), is

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<sup>3</sup> For the remainder of this chapter when I refer to “diverse people” I mean “ethnically and racially diverse people.”

supported by participants' sensitizing concepts that illustrate clear views that racism exists in New Brunswick. Therefore, social work curriculum is needed that will help graduates to confront racism. Second, I show how my contestable-foundational view that I should provide varied teaching and learning methods, informed by experiential learning, was also confirmed in many sensitizing concepts. I begin by providing sensitizing concepts that confirm the existence of racism in New Brunswick.

### **RACISM? ALIVE AND WELL!**

This study assumed that racism exists in New Brunswick. Without racism there is no need for anti-racist social work. My collage of sensitizing concepts illustrate a participant's view that racism is "alive and well." I explore each concept in turn with their related themes and stories.

Everywhere  
Because I wasn't a white person . . .  
Gossip between themselves, speak of smell . . .  
Lazy and drunk  
Somebody's assistant  
Black people from gangs . . . groups that kill people  
Smart and rich  
I know what a cherry tomato is and I can read  
When you have an accent they assume you can't speak the language  
Credit refused  
Canadian qualifications problem  
Canadian experience problem  
The house has been taken  
Children half way across the world  
Smudging sets off the hospital alarms  
Thump, thump, thump  
White backlash

The concept "racism" in different forms was the main topic of discussion

for between a quarter and a third of most interviews. Participants emphasized that racism existed, described its expression in individual interactions and social structures and its pervasiveness for people from diverse groups. They explained particular ways that racism was reflected in the province, emphasizing various effects on different ethnic groups, and the impact of white backlash on responses to this racism. Many people prefaced accounts of their experiences of racism by emphasizing that New Brunswick was not immune to it. Despite encountering denials, one human service worker found racism to be “alive and well” in the province. An immigrant human service worker said:

The Maritimes are so friendly and so nice, but it is only friendly and nice to people who look like the dominant culture, it’s not so friendly to minorities.

#### Everywhere

Participants mentioned that they encountered racism in numerous everyday ways. As one participant commented, “it is everywhere.” A refugee often encountered racism with “things that involve sharing . . . with the lighter community . . . then you know you are going to face some resistance.” Racism was encountered by many people as they tried to negotiate the social structures of a New Brunswick that reflected the values and needs of white people who emigrated from Western Europe, particularly Britain, before the middle years of the century.

An immigrant human service worker stated that for people in the Saint John River valley racism is a part of “regular everyday living.” An Aboriginal participant agreed that “you get immune to it . . . to accept that it is out there and will always be out there.”

### Because I wasn't a white person

A human service worker gave the example of shopping in a grocery store:

Now there are more products on the supermarket shelves that will fit people's needs, that has been taken care of because it is money-making . . . but there's still no sensitivity. A minority person could be in line and the person behind them would be asked to come up front sometimes.

A temporary resident confirmed this view:

There are some supermarkets I used to go to . . . sometimes they would make a mistake in one of my articles . . . the lady would look up at me . . . the impression I got was because I wasn't a white person . . . I had to show her my receipt and she had to look very carefully before she actually acknowledged that a mistake was made.

Similarly, an immigrant said: "I went to the post office to pay my bills . . . they were so rude . . . I can't say what was said it was so rude."

### Gossip between themselves: speak of smell

A human service worker found that people from diverse minority groups often experienced racism in public services. People from minorities with limited English were trying to explain themselves while "going to the hospital, going to the library," would be greeted with a hostile "pardon me, pardon me." In her work she encountered clerks who would "gossip between themselves," and "speak of smell."

Two participants emphasized that New Brunswick racism is not just a "white person's disease" but found in all parts of the community. A social worker in a First Nations Community regretted the oppression of his own people by band politicians. Another participant said that although many overt acts of racism are by "white Aryan

nations . . . the Ku Klux Klan," people from all ethnic groups exhibit intolerance. Many Jewish and Aboriginal participants had a strong sense of the history of the oppression of their people. They are alarmed by hate literature, particularly anti-Semitic, on the internet, and fear for the future. One participant referred to hate literature on the internet as "conclusive proof" of racism in New Brunswick today. Issues of concern to Aboriginal people, newcomers and Jewish people were unseen or ignored.

#### Lazy and drunk

Many participants spoke about stereotypical and often hostile attitudes towards people from different cultures. Stereotypical thinking is reflected in different ways in different situations. These sensitizing concepts clarify some of the stereotypes prevalent in New Brunswick." The general idea out there is that Indians get everything for nothing, they are lazy and drunk." said an Aboriginal participant. Another Aboriginal person was appalled that a fellow student had asked why Aboriginal people were not doing anything with the money from government.

#### Somebody's assistant

A refugee who had taught in a refugee camp before coming to Canada, attempted some anti-racist education in New Brunswick. Invariably officials assumed that he was an assistant to somebody else and initially he was generally accompanied. It was assumed that he knew nothing about electronic equipment and might break something.

#### Black people from gangs . . . groups that kill people

Another refugee thought that social workers should be aware of New Brunswick

stereotypes about people from minority groups. This would confront their own stereotypical thinking and help them recognize it in others. He had encountered a number of stereotypes in the province such as:

Black people form gangs, and when they form gangs they get into groups that kill people, and rob people's property, break into people's cars, they have this kind of life that they always live in gangs . . . gangs that tend to be of a criminal nature.

Some of these views were based upon "historical prejudices on some groups of people that they are not achievers . . . not as intelligent."

Smart and rich?

A contrasting stereotype was mentioned by a Jewish person. This older participant spoke about an enduring stereotype of Jewish people. "We're the smartest, we're the richest, stereotypical picture that is so untrue."

I know what a cherry tomato is and I can read!

An Aboriginal person and an immigrant told stories that illustrated assumptions that they had limited cognitive abilities. The Aboriginal participant had attempted to buy cherry tomatoes. The sales clerk told her that she was looking at cherry tomatoes, repeating this loudly when she did not respond. She was angry because of a clear sign over the "cherry tomatoes." and "I know what a cherry tomato is and I can read."

When you have an accent they assume you can't speak the language.

Two participants stated that an accent that suggests a first language other than English gives rise to stereotypical thinking and comments from others. A Caucasian

immigrant living in Canada for many years retains a slight accent said “when you have an accent they assume you can’t speak the language.” A refugee said that a black skin colour combined with a non-Canadian accent resulted in many assumptions in New Brunswick. This participant is fluent in several languages. People comment on his excellent English and assume that he learned it in Canada. Another refugee pointed out: “you lived before you came here . . . it’s not as if you are just children arriving.”

#### Credit refused

Immigrants and refugees spoke about different ways that Canadian structures and policies assumed previous Canadian residence. Finance was difficult. An immigrant intending to reside briefly in Canada attempted to rent a television. An absence of a credit rating made this impossible. The participant finally was allowed to take a television home when she “deposited” the full price of a new one. On another occasion a refugee attempted to buy a computer on credit. He was turned down and referred to his bank. He had sufficient funds in his account but did not want to pay cash. He suggested to the bank that they put a stop on some of his funds until his debt was paid off. They refused to do so and told him that the only way he would be able to secure a credit rating was to obtain and use a bank credit card.

#### Canadian qualifications problem

Four of the newcomers spoke of not having their qualifications accepted in Canada. A refugee mentioned reactions when he applied for work or higher education. First he encountered the “Canadian qualifications problem.” finding it difficult to get his

qualifications recognized. When applying for an MBA he could not demonstrate his undergraduate qualifications:

They insisted I do some business course before I qualified, before they take me in. I even asked the Dean: "Have some faith in me and what I can do. I have my qualifications, I can do it."

The approach was unsuccessful and he took qualifying courses. "I did it much better than they expected . . . it cost \$5000 and a lot of time at home." He said that the "Canadian qualifications problem" was experienced by many newcomers. "They come with Masters Degrees, with PhDs, with all this but . . . they have to start at zero."

#### Canadian experience problem

Difficulties continue when newcomers attempted to find work.

There is that feeling of shock . . . I'm submitting a resume about a job that has been advertised . . . it is not expected that I would . . . when I go for an interview . . . the interviewers . . . seem to wonder how they're going to deal with me . . . I see confusion in their eyes.

Then the "Canadian qualifications problem" becomes the "Canadian experience problem." Another refugee stated: "They always ask me for Canadian experience. How will you get Canadian experience if nobody hires you?" A refugee discovered that when she did find work people are "always trying to test you, they give you some small project. They check up on you . . . it kind of gnaws."

Conversely, one refugee said that newcomers expect too much and should be willing to take minimum-wage work as she had done, and then move up. If newcomers work hard they will be able to succeed. "Sure they are going to hire someone who



speaks the language," she pointed out.

They . . . want to get paid for their qualifications . . . but it's hard for Canadians . . . I've worked for minimum wage . . . now I've come to the point that . . . I'm happy, it's still not what I should be making, eventually I'm going to get there.

Others disagreed. One social worker was unable to provide the "proof" of qualifications required by CASW (Canadian Association of Social Workers) to accredit her qualifications in Canada lacked understanding of what it was like to "escape with only your clothes on your back." She hoped that her country of origin would settle sufficiently to enable her to secure the proof required. Meanwhile she was doing volunteer human service work to secure the needed "Canadian experience."

#### The house has been taken

Particular difficulties were experienced when people tried to rent property. "Looking for housing made for some interesting situations," said one refugee. He would make a telephone appointment to view a property but when he arrived the owner would show surprise at his skin colour.

Later when I called to say I would like to take the house . . . the owner would say, "No, the house has been taken." [He thought that] neighbours tell the landlord . . . "we don't want those kind of people around here."

#### Children "half way across the world"

Refugees and temporary residents were often very saddened by the racism experienced by their children. One temporary resident was pleased that her son was well accepted in the first elementary school he attended but everything changed in his next

school. He was taunted by other children because of his black skin. His mother felt guilty that she had "brought him half way across the world to experience this," so that she could pursue graduate studies. When she told her son that she planned to raise these racist taunts with the School Principal, her son begged her not to. He preferred to be nice to the children who were taunting him so that they would realize that "brown people can be good people." This remark made her feel "really bad." A refugee said that:

kids are very careful in the presence of the teachers . . . in the playground these racial slurs come in . . . calling them stupid . . . go back where you came from . . . this is not your country . . . black monkey.

An immigrant thought that her son would be identified as a trouble-making ring-leader in any difficulty.

I have one boy . . . he is so active and he has been with a group of other active kids . . . if anything goes wrong . . . (he will be picked out) because he is different . . . assumptions are made about who is the ring-leader.

A refugee bought a coat for her son from the Salvation Army. The coat cost \$7 (a lot of money for her). Another child claimed the coat as his. The other child's father visited the participant and asked her to return the coat. She showed the father the receipt but he still demanded the coat. The father was a police officer and the participant felt totally powerless. She "returned" the coat which her son had not stolen.

An immigrant spoke about the difficulties experienced by herself and her children as they attempted to settle in Canada:

When I came here, I had four kids, and my kids went through hell . . . if they weren't strong kids, I think they'd be in the streets . . . if the family wasn't strong . . . I had the stresses of outside and then I'd have to go

home and deal with all of the stresses the kids faced, and help them. I then started educating in public places, going into the schools, and educating the public about it, because it was becoming too much.

### Smudging<sup>4</sup> sets off the hospital alarms

A hospital social worker identified a bias amounting to racism in hospital policies and routines. At difficult times Aboriginal people want to carry out ceremonials such as "smudging." This sets off fire alarms and people evacuate the building. Customs, particularly those surrounding birth and death, vary across cultures and often hospital policies cannot accommodate them. Culturally sensitive organizational policies are particularly important at traumatic times of severe illness or death. Dialogue is needed between Aboriginal spiritual leaders and hospital administrators to devise a system that maintains safety for all patients but enables Aboriginal people to engage in the rituals that promote adjustment to life transitions or healing.

### Thump, thump, thump.

Examples were also provided of occasions when "hate" was expressed in a community. Allusions were made to a New Brunswick schoolteacher who, many argued, denied the holocaust. Another story was provided about a refugee family:

There was a family from Iraq. They had been terrorized for several nights. Around midnight a group would come with tomatoes and would start throwing them all over the house. The little children would wake up and they'd hear this thump, thump, thump all over the house. They were frightened of course. The husband started keeping all-night vigil. He would even sleep out in his car hoping to catch them. So I told him, if

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<sup>4</sup> A ritual cleansing that involves the burning of sweetgrass.

there was any way I could help or support the family, just to let them know they were not alone in this; and that someone in the community was aware of what was happening to them and did not approve of it.

He went on to say that the family were most appreciative. He cautioned that social workers who want to confront racism will become known and will be called upon on occasions such as this. These social workers may also be the targets for aggression from the perpetrators of these attacks. Nevertheless, he would continue to intervene because of the suffering caused by these attacks.

The effects are devastating, your whole being is practically ripped and torn to shreds. you are made to feel worthless, alienated. There has to be work with the victims. Help them and support them.

#### White backlash

Two social workers noted that more bilingual social workers had been hired. Although advantageous for clients, some unilingual social workers have resented the change and working life has become more difficult for Francophones. When promoting change, anti-racist social work must be sensitive to the potential backlash and curriculum should help students to anticipate and respond to this backlash.

#### Conclusion

These sensitizing concepts, and the stories in which they are embedded, confirm participants' views that racism is, indeed "everywhere." It is reflected in personal interactions, it informs cultural assumptions and is built into the fabric of society at a systemic level. Participants' sensitizing concepts illustrated Thompson's (1993) notion that oppression can be experienced at individual, systemic and cultural levels. These

concepts enrich the model in a way that will help students to remember it.

These sensitizing concepts provide the first example of how sensitizing concepts can support foundational views. My uncontestable-foundation that social work should be committed to pursuing social justice through taking an anti-racist stance is supported by the comments that racism is “alive and well” and impacting on the everyday life of people from diverse backgrounds. Simultaneously, the variety of these comments, and the fact that they sometimes contradict each other, support a postmodernism that would reject a simple meta-narrative about the nature of racism in New Brunswick.

Understanding the sensitizing concepts about the nature of racism in New Brunswick confirmed yet enriched my understanding of the nature of racism. It also helped me to understand how I could hold a postmodern valuing of the small and the unique but pursue my uncontestable foundational goal of anti-racist social work.

At the curriculum level these stories and concepts can be brought into the classroom to enrich students’ understanding about racism. They can act as case examples to discuss radical humanist and radical structuralist anti-racist social work responses to the difficulties faced by diverse people. For example, students could be asked to consider their intervention with the child and his mother who were required to “return” the coat. They could also consider strategies for changing the hospital policy that led to building evacuation when traditional methods of healing were practised.

Finally, when I write down these concepts, and when I speak about them in the classroom, diverse stakeholders contribute to the curriculum by helping others to

understand their lived experiences of racism. In doing so they are contributing to an enhanced understanding about their oppression which could build towards greater tolerance in New Brunswick and further afield.

**THEY COULD TEACH YOU UNTIL THEY'RE BLUE IN THE FACE ABOUT ALL  
THE THEORY.**

Participants' sensitizing concepts confirmed my thought foundations outlined in Chapter 3, that varied teaching and learning methods based upon experiential learning are most appropriate if students for students to develop the "head," "hand" and "self" needed for anti-racist social work. In Chapter 3 I described how the metaphors "head," "hand," "heart," and "soul" could be used to refer to the social worker. Subsequently I explained that I combined the "heart," and "soul" metaphors to "self," because the distinction between them was not understood consistently. I now consider sensitizing concepts expressing ideas about teaching and learning methods to develop the "head," "hand," and "self." I organize the sensitizing concepts in three groups representing the metaphors.

Many main sample participants alluded to the limitations of traditional reading and lecture pedagogies. One said, "we can all study it in a textbook, you want something more." Another suggested that the "self" could be prepared more effectively by hearing first person accounts of experiences arguing: "it's one thing to read it in a book, it's another to hear someone who has gone through something." A refugee thought that "just reading and learning in school may not be enough." A participant who thought that social workers were very needy said: "they need to go through a healing process and

they're not going to learn that from a book."

Practical learning rather than the learning of theory was important. "They could teach you until they're blue in the face about all the theory and if you have no practical then how are you going to be able to put them together?" A multiplicity of different teaching and learning methods was suggested but many participants, in different ways, reflected the sentiment of the social worker who said: "it should be experiential because that's the only way you are going to learn."

#### Sensitizing concepts to inform teaching and learning for the "head"

This collage of sensitizing concepts illustrate views about the development of social work knowledge. Participants spoke of how students could be encouraged to draw upon their own experiences to gain understanding about issues experienced by diverse people. They also suggested ways that knowledge could be shared in the classroom so that other students could have experiences that would develop their knowledge bases.

The following collage of sensitizing concepts illustrates some of these ideas.

All students can understand grades  
If they wanted to do some kind of classroom presentation  
The rootless tree  
In the zoo  
Sort of on the outside looking in  
Other voices in the classroom  
I'm a star-trek fan

All students can understand grades.

Some participants suggested that students should get in touch with situations when they had been in a minority and then explore their feelings about it. Instructors

could help students to explore parallels between their experiences as students and those of other groups with little power. One suggested that a reflection on grades was potentially useful, enabling students to reflect on power differentials between instructors and students. An immigrant human service worker thought analogies could help. For example, the experience of going on vacation could be used to help students to understand being a Canadian newcomer:

If go on vacation for six weeks to some place and I don't like it, I can take off earlier. But when you think of a student or an immigrant, they're stuck, they just can't say . . . I don't like it here and I'm going to leave. Because they have invested so much into it, it's not a vacation, it's life, it is their whole life.

The human service worker who had given this example thought that other learning could be drawn from this example. She said:

If I'm going on vacation, I'm shelled shocked. If I'm travelling by air all night I can hardly see the country. Much less a [newcomer].

Therefore, students who gain empathy with newcomers' feelings on first arrival will not immediately subject them to "orientation."

If they wanted to do some kind of classroom presentation . . .

Many participants suggested that if a climate of trust existed, the classroom could be a resource to help students to develop knowledge. A main sample participant thought that "class members could act as resources for each other." Six different students commented on the value of class discussions in this regard. One student referred to "open discussion" and another included the phrase "honest dialogue."



An Aboriginal participant suggested a more structured way of learning. She recommended that students should be given the opportunity to share their experiences of diversity and oppression for the benefit of other students. She said that she would have welcomed this opportunity:

If you give Native students a chance, if they want to express themselves . . . maybe the professor should give them that chance or maybe . . . if they want to do a lecture . . . for the other students? I think that would be a good idea . . . if there was a group in the class and they wanted to do some kind of a presentation . . . just to make others understand what they went through . . . so that they could be accepted?

#### The rootless tree.

An immigrant human service worker suggested that students could be put in touch with experiences that could act as metaphors to help them to develop empathy with diverse people. She gave the example of a tree that had been severed at its roots. This tree will be unable to get nourishment from the earth. In the same way, people who have been cut off from family and friends will experience rootlessness. This was a particularly apt metaphor in forested New Brunswick.

#### In the zoo

Often students will have no experiences to help them to empathize with the experiences of diverse people, so a number of participants suggested ways to gain these experiences. A human service worker thought that students should "get to know people of different ethnic groups, so they become not just something you've read about . . . [but] real people."

Possibilities included volunteering, meeting “students in the Native students lounge,” or going into any “group where you are the minority.” An Aboriginal participant thought questions unhelpful.

I believe it's just sitting there and allowing them to know who you are and let them speak to you. Because questions . . . there's always more than one answer for each. But if you can get a bunch of people talking, you get a larger picture of what goes on.

An Aboriginal person suggested that social workers should be required to take a Native Studies course. Prior to entering the social work programme, social work students take a course that will familiarize them with western philosophical thought patterns: “I think that it should be required that they take Native Studies to get into the social work programme. They made us take philosophy.”

An Aboriginal participant thought that students could “go into the community. . . visit homes, speak with the elders.” Similarly an Aboriginal social worker thought that if he was a non-Aboriginal person who wanted to learn about Aboriginal culture could:

I would go into that community for a while to make myself [have] a better understanding of their race, their culture and what their needs are . . . once you become understanding of a particular group you can become more caring.

A social worker cautioned about all this commenting that “one thing they don't like is to be stared at as if they're in a zoo.”

sort of on the outside looking in

Some participants thought students should live in a multicultural situation to assist them to understand diversity. Two participants described helpful multicultural

experiences. An Aboriginal participant was dubious about whether anything less than a total living experience could help students to understand racism and anti-racism. She said: "I don't know if it can be taught as a subject, one on one you can. Come and live with me, we can figure it out." She suggested that anti-racist social work could only occur from a perspective of full understanding about a culture and thought that students would need an experience of "sort of on the outside looking in." She continued:

Let's say, a student is invited to stay a week with me at my home. Find out how I live, what kinds of foods do I eat? How do I pray? How do I interact with my people? What are those things that I share with my neighbours?

Another Aboriginal participant thought that living in a First Nations Community might be misinterpreted by Aboriginal people. He thought that:

Maybe I wouldn't live directly in the town or on the reserve. I wouldn't be what they call a Wannabee-Indian. I would want to be somebody who shows great interest in the culture and respect for it. I'd eat amongst them and get involved with activities around without trying real hard to fit in.

#### Other voices in the classroom

Several participants advised that a guest speaker could talk about communities in New Brunswick. Two suggested that knowledge about racism and multicultural awareness could be enhanced if:

an Aboriginal person [could] come in, or someone from the Jewish community, someone from the Black community, and talk about their community with the class. Say here are what our problems are, here's what our concerns are, here's been the effect of racism on us, and have that sort of very informal type of talk with students.

Similarly another suggested:

people of different colour should be brought in, and they should be able to speak about their experiences with racism in a way that students can examine their biases and prejudice. Bringing in people from different cultures and letting them talk about what their customs are . . . you sensitize the students to look for differences.

Ideas about guest speakers differed. Suggestions included: “graduates from different backgrounds.” “Acadian people.” or “leaders of religious communities” to help students develop an awareness of “hand” skills needed for work with people from diverse backgrounds. One participant thought that social workers should not be invited as guest speakers from First Nations Communities. Instead he suggested “medicine people” and “education officers.” Others advised that guest speakers should be “ordinary people” from diverse backgrounds. Participants pointed out that the stories of ordinary people could be more powerful than sanitized written accounts of discrimination. One said:

six million died . . . who can imagine what six million looks like? I can't. But if you focus in on a family . . . here is a Jewish family and this is what happened to them, it could have a major impact.

I'm a star-trek fan

Several participants thought that films, documentaries and biographies could enhance awareness. One thought that written material could develop “self.” He suggested that students should “read about people’s experiences, “victims of oppression, . . . [there’s] . . . no shortage of materials available on the shelves that’s first person account.” Another thought that films such as “Schindler’s List”, and “Power of One,” or television programmes such as “Star Trek” could be “fun ways” to learn that it is “OK to be different.”

I'm a big Star Trek fan. Star Trek, in a very interesting way, tried to put across the fact that people are different and it's okay. I think for some students, to look at a couple of Star Trek episodes and to analyze them, or to watch a film of Star Trek [to analyze how it] promotes the fact that it's okay we're different and what kind of accommodation or non-accommodation [can be] made. I think that would hook people in . . . by the . . . fun. [Learning about racism is] very heavy stuff, but that is on a lighter kind of note.

### Conclusion

Participants made many interesting suggestions about how to develop knowledge in the social work classroom. These views confirmed my foundational ideas about experiential learning explored in Chapter 3. Some participants suggestions would enable students to begin the experiential learning cycle by reflecting on their own experiences. Students in the social work programme strive to maintain the high grades that enabled them to gain admission so that they can maintain or gain scholarships. Reflections on the relative power of those who award the grades and those who receive them could help students to understand experiences of powerlessness of minority ethnic and racial groups. Similarly analogies about trees are apt in this province. they may help students to draw upon their own experiences to understand "rootlessness" of Canadian newcomers. Almost all have visited zoos and could empathize with analogies of "caged animals."

Other participants made suggestions that would enable students to gain knowledge. Bringing "other voices into the classroom" could enable students to understand lived experiences of racism as well as gain knowledge about differences between cultures and between ethnic groups. Such experiences could also inform

discussions about radical humanist and radical structuralist social work responses to the difficulties experienced by main sample participants. These experiences could also impact on the “self” as students are confronted by difference and challenged to examine some of their “taken for granted” assumptions about normality. In the next section I explore some of the sensitizing concepts most directly related to “self.”

Sensitizing concepts to inform teaching and learning for the “self.”

The “self” concept was the combined “heart” and “soul” metaphors discussed in chapter 3. During the data analysis process, described in chapter 7 it became clear that participants did not always find it easy to differentiate the “heart” (feelings) from the “soul” (beliefs) so I combined these categories. Several participants suggested ways that the student “self” could prepare for anti-racist social work. One participant thought that the key to this learning for the self should be “normalizing how we have been socialized.” This participant recognized that many students will resist this learning. She thought that if students recognized that all develop bias it “may reduce resistance to new concepts.” Students in a social work programme, particularly students in a structural social work programme such as that at St. Thomas University, may be concerned with political correctness. Therefore they need to be encouraged to acknowledge that we all have biases and need to confront them. These sensitizing concepts illustrate participants’ ideas about teaching and learning methods to develop “self.”

If you are that kind of person, then it emulates to those people who you’re  
teaching  
Go back and do their own work

Wow! That's what racism is  
No beating around the bush  
Nacirema

If you are that kind of person, then it emulates to those people who you're teaching.

A quarter of the participants in this sample, alluded to the importance of modelling by the instructor if the student "self" is to develop. One suggested that:

If you don't know the concept, then you won't be able to teach it. If you're not practising living and making decisions with your heart, then it's going to be hard for you to learn. You can't teach anything that you don't know. If you are that kind of person, then it emulates to those people who you're teaching. If you work from the head it will also go out to the people.

A participant who had been a faculty member in a human service programme said that, "we, as faculty have to accept the diversity in our students." Another participant who had been an educator alluded to differences in learning styles to be accommodated by an instructor. Then the instructor is also giving students the message that it is acceptable to think and learn in different ways. An Aboriginal social work graduate commented on the value placed on linear thought patterns in higher education. We both regretted that these linear thought patterns disadvantaged Aboriginal students. I asked for her advice. I sometimes allow students to present orally rather than in writing. This may help students to enhance grades, but would not help them to write in the linear form generally required for graduate study. The graduate recognized my dilemma and recommended the same assignment from all but with an important caveat. I should: "acknowledge that there are different ways of thinking so that they become aware that you know." Another Aboriginal person recommended that an instructor should "allow

everybody to express themselves . . . find great interest without trying to choke students.”

Modelling to students can encourage them to seek for, and value, diversity in their clients.

One Aboriginal participant thought that it is necessary for instructors to:

find some way that only the truth is spoken within a group of instructors.  
In the Native community when you take out the pipe and you load the pipe, you're making that connection with your creator.

She was unable to suggest any way to build this environment into the classroom. Another Aboriginal student, however, suggested that modelling cooperative work in a context of diversity could possibly occur with “non-Native profs. working with Native profs. and learning from each other.”

Go back and do their own work

Later in this chapter I explore the ideas of many participants who believed that social workers often need their own personal healing. Ideas were provided about how this healing could occur. An Aboriginal social worker said that the healing process in an Aboriginal community might be adapted for work with non-Aboriginal students but was cautious.

If you look at the medicine wheel and how that works and the reasoning behind that I think that . . . you might be able to draw from that and incorporate that type of thinking into the program . . . but it's a matter of looking at how life is seen for Native people.

Wow! That's what racism is.

Many participants expressed the need to provide students with experiences that would “touch them personally.” An Aboriginal participant spoke of a documentary that



could be adapted for social work students. It is the famous “blue eyes, brown eyes” exercise an elementary school teacher gave children with different eye colours to help them to understand oppression. His suggested modification was as follows:

Take your social work class . . . so you don't tell them anything. Take people with blue eyes and make them wear a handkerchief around their neck . . . people with brown eyes, don't do nothing to them . . . someone with blue eyes make them wear a funny hat. And then just treat . . . the ones with brown eyes normal and the ones with the silly hat, just laugh at them and, don't take them serious . . . and the ones with the handkerchief, just be real rude to them. And let them try to figure it out. They're going to be saying, why are they being mean to me like that? And then you can ask them after the exercise is done, how did you feel that we made fun of you? And then they're going to say, 'Wow! That's what racism is.'

#### No beating about the bush

A number of participants thought that self awareness exercises could be developed to assist students to get in touch with biases. One advocated “questionnaires they could fill in on themselves,” and another suggested specific questions that would help students to “put themselves in those people's shoes.”

I think some questionnaires could be passed to make them face some of their prejudice also and have them work on it . . . people don't have to put their names down, but questionnaires . . . measuring attitudes, no beating around the bush . . . just get right down to the nitty gritty . . . when you see a black person, what do you automatically do or think? If you see a black person with a white person as a couple, how do you feel? Put yourself in a black neighbourhood . . . you're the only white person there . . . how would you feel? Would you feel out of place? And if there is a little bit of name calling, how would you feel? Put themselves in those people's shoes.

#### Nacirema

These self- awareness exercises were designed to uncover cultural bias and

prejudice. A human service worker and a refugee suggested another way of achieving this awareness. They recommended that students be helped to get in touch with their own cultures in order to recognize that there can be an alternative. The refugee stated:

to really appreciate some other culture, I think that you have to start with your own, gain an appreciation of your own culture, see how it impacts on your identity and your value system . . . then you can better appreciate that of other people. If you can't gain that of your own [experiences of other cultures] will be like a story you hear somebody is talking about and it doesn't sink in.

The human service worker suggested that students should be given the "Nacirema" exercise to help them to recognize the elements of culture that they take for granted but that may seem strange to one from another culture. "Nacirema" is American spelled backwards. A number of customs such as the use of a toothbrush and the disposal of bodies after death are described in a disguised way. The reader often takes a while to recognize that their own culture is being described.

#### Conclusion

These suggestions confirm my foundational view that varied teaching and learning methods based on experiential learning have the potential for helping students to recognize bias within their own thinking. Different suggestions by participants help to bridge the uncontestable foundational pursuit of anti-racism with a postmodern valuing of diversity and uniqueness among diverse people and social work students. The questionnaires and the exercises could impact on the student-selves in different ways. The more overt "no beating about the bush" approaches might be effective with some

students while the more subtle Nacirema exercise may be effective in helping others to realize the strangeness of some North American customs to newcomers.

Participants' sensitizing concepts turn the focus on the instructors who are helping students to learn to become anti-racist practitioners. Students do not only learn from the words uttered by instructors or the exercises that provide experiences to help to enhance understanding of diversity. They also learn by their experiences of observing the "selves" of the social work educators. In chapter 3 I suggested that an uncontested foundation was to avoid oppressive teaching and learning methods. Participants' words confirmed this foundation by showing me that modelling oppression in the classroom would provide a poor environment for students to learn about anti-oppressive practice. The suggestions for developing the student self, help the student to acquire commitment to enhance the "hand" skills needed for anti-racist social work. I address this in the next section.

Sensitizing concepts to inform teaching and learning for the "hand."

Finally, participants provided few sensitizing concepts about teaching and learning methods to inform the "hand." As explored in chapter 7, ideas about the development of skills were not rich ground for sensitizing concepts. The final small collage of sensitizing concepts provide ideas about "hand." Many also imply teaching and learning methods for the "head" and "self."

you always have enough clowns in the class who will perform for you  
practice. practice  
activist kind of learning  
rather than saying 'pardon me. pardon me,' say 'I heard this but I really  
didn't get the rest.'

you always have enough clowns in the class who will perform for you

Several participants thought that role plays of case scenarios in the classroom could assist skill development. One participant commented that at “one university they bring actors in . . . you have to have money for that . . . you always have enough clowns in the class who will perform for you.”

Another suggested the beginning of a script:

You take three or four and they’re a family, and get the social worker coming in and knocking on the door . . . and saying . . . we have reports . . . out partying last night and you left your kids.

It was suggested that simulations and role plays could facilitate the development of skills at macro as well as micro levels. For example, a simulation about racial tension in a community could facilitate skill development for “consensus building.”

practice, practice

A participant suggested that “practice, practice” is the key to developing social work skills. This participant thought that as many opportunities as possible, in and outside of practicum placements, should be provided for students to develop anti-racist social work skills.

activist kind of learning

Some thought that actually doing anti-racist work could help to develop skills for this work. One suggested fund-raising for community groups. He recommended an “activist kind of learning” through involvement in activities in the community. A student suggested anti-racist social work activities such as writing and producing a puppet

play with an anti-racist theme at a local elementary school.

Rather than saying 'pardon me, pardon me,' say 'I heard this but I didn't get the rest.'

A human service worker spoke about the value of coaching to develop cultural competence skills in anti-racist social work. She suggested that, "some behaviours need to be unlearned. Frequently people need to be told that it is not necessary if somebody looks different to speak louder, like they're deaf." She conducts workshops and said that she provides participants with

a list of things that you can do, simple things that are helpful too . . . I give scenarios of when [immigrants] come and speak and rather than saying 'pardon me, pardon me,' say 'I heard this but I really didn't get the rest' . . . smiling is important . . . call me by my name . . . eye contact we were taught in those text books should be thrown away.

Students can practice these responses with clients. She receives positive feedback." I get calls back the next day that they use the scenarios and it works so much better. They start to feel more competent."

### Conclusion

Participants suggested teaching and learning methods to help to develop the "hand" of anti-racist social workers. Sensitizing concepts have been explored that indicate the importance of coaching and practicing through role plays and simulations. These are further examples of experiential learning supporting my foundational view that this method is of benefit in anti-racist social work education. They also support a social work education, informed by a postmodern valuing of diversity, that provides an opportunity for students with different learning style preferences and previous

experiences. to engage together in developing skills that have the foundational goal of preparing them for anti-racist social work practice.

## CONCLUSION

In this section I have provided illustrations of the way that sensitizing concepts confirmed some of the foundations of my thinking. I have shown how participants' graphic stories in which they shared sensitizing concepts supported both an uncontested foundation and a contestable foundation. An uncontested foundation was that social work should pursue social justice, of which anti-racism is an element. Participants' stories about how they encountered racism "everywhere" supports the need to pursue anti-racism. One of my contestable foundational ideas at the outset of this research was that students can learn most effectively through a variety of pedagogies and through experiential learning. Sensitizing concepts of diverse stakeholders also supported this contestable-foundational idea. In confirming foundations sensitizing concepts did not bridge the foundational and the non-foundational. Nevertheless, they showed that teaching and learning methods can be developed that combine a postmodern valuing of diversity with a foundational development of "head," "self," and "hand" for anti-racist social work.

The account of different experiences of racism earlier in this chapter also confirms my foundational idea that anti-racist social work is needed in Anglophone New Brunswick. Anti-racist social work is a foundational pursuit because it rests on the clear foundation that racism is wrong and should be confronted. The rich, different and

sometimes conflicting data about New Brunswick racism is compatible with my postmodernism. Participants ideas support that there should be foundational (anti-racist) and anti-foundational (postmodern) elements in the New Brunswick anti-racist social work curriculum content and teaching and learning methods.

These sensitizing concepts add to the literature reviewed in chapter 4. Data about the nature of racism in New Brunswick contribute to literature about anti-racist social work. Knowledge of the difficulties faced by diverse people as they confront racism is the first step towards cultural competence. Participants suggested a range of pedagogies such as classroom exercises that can enhance cultural competence. Located in a rural community these sensitizing concepts illustrate one Canadian rural face of racism. They also add to New Brunswick literature. This chapter has outlined various ideas about teaching and learning anti-racist social work, thereby contributing to this group of literature.

This chapter has explored ways in which my foundational ideas about the existence of racism in New Brunswick requiring anti-racist social work practice has been supported and confirmed by the sensitizing concepts of participants. It has also shown that my foundational view that a variety of teaching and learning methods based on experiential learning is supported by sensitizing concepts. However sensitizing concepts did not always support the thought foundations. In chapter 9 I explore ways in which sensitizing concepts sometimes challenge thought foundations, and sometimes encourage me to remove existing foundations or create new ones.

CHAPTER NINE  
SENSITIZING CONCEPTS CHALLENGING THOUGHT FOUNDATIONS  
INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about how sensitizing concepts challenged the thought foundations outlined in chapters 3 and 4. The sensitizing concepts in chapter 8 altered thought foundations slightly but the sensitizing concepts in this chapter provided fundamental challenges to them. I show how sensitizing concepts sometimes challenged my existing foundations, and sometimes challenged my omissions in foundational thinking about anti-racist curriculum. When these challenges were successful they sometimes changed existing foundations and sometimes created new ones. I begin by providing two examples of how participants' sensitizing concepts challenged my own. I show that some participants thought that the concept "anti-racist social work" should not be used. Also I describe how the "heart," "head," "hand," and "soul" metaphors were challenged, and my response to this challenge.

I provide two illustrations of ways that my foundations were challenged as incomplete. First, through their sensitizing concepts and through their stories participants told me that purposeful working relationships between social workers and ethnically and racially diverse<sup>1</sup> people require that social workers understand the views held about them by these people. Understanding these perceptions permits the construction of a social

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<sup>1</sup> On future occasions in this chapter when I refer to "diverse" people, I mean ethnic and racially diverse people.



work that acknowledges and responds to them. When I acknowledged this challenge and added new curriculum content a new contestable thought foundation was created.

Second, the challenge from sensitizing concepts encouraged me to create a second thought foundation about anti-racist social work, summed up by the phrase “know the people.” Although I had always realized the importance of social workers understanding the people with whom they were working, over the years my focus has shifted more towards students pursuing their self-identified learning needs. The sensitizing concepts of diverse stakeholders challenged this omission. “Know the people” created (or re-created) a new foundation of developing curriculum that encourages students to turn outward from a focus on themselves and the university to clearly face the people that social work educators are training them to work with and for.

#### SENSITIZING CONCEPTS CHALLENGE “ANTI-RACIST SOCIAL WORK”

I asked participants in the main sample to comment on what “anti-racist social work” meant to them. Three made negative comments about the term “anti-racist social work.” One, unsure about the meaning of “social work,” found it impossible to grasp the meaning of anti-racist social work and was rather irritated that she was asked. Two other participants found problems with the term. A human rights worker considered that the term’s negative focus was difficult. “People will always talk more about the negative side of things. Students should learn about benefits and methods of cultural inclusion rather than anti-racism.” A social worker thought that probably students were turned off by the term anti-racism; “it’s a term that scares people away . . . if you’re looking at

cross-cultural social work practice . . . it's not so much a negative term." Some participants considered the term appropriate. Three participants accepted the term because it "indicates what social workers have to do," that is "challenge racism and promote anti-racism." Another said that the term "challenges social workers constantly to look at cultural assumptions and whether they are doing what they believe in." This participant thought that "social workers [need to] understand that racism does occur and we should try to combat it." Other main sample participants were neutral.

Therefore, some participants challenged my foundational concept "anti-racist social work." On occasion the challenge was made by participants who thought that social work should address the positive rather than the negative. They did not like the "anti" prefix. Some thought the term might put some students off learning about this important work. However, others supported the use of the term. I do not accept the challenge to my foundations and retain "anti-racist social work," because this term describes the overall focus of my work. Nevertheless, I consider that it is important for social work educators to be aware of and address negative views about the term. Therefore the sensitizing concept challenged my foundational view. I considered the challenge but, nevertheless, retained the foundation.

### SENSITIZING CONCEPTS CHALLENGE

#### "HEART," "HEAD," "HAND," AND "SOUL."

Participants' ideas about the metaphors "heart," "head," "hand," and "soul," differed. The questionnaire and interview transcripts showed that the distinction between

the “heart” and “soul” was often unclear. Participants who were clear about the distinction identified “heart” feelings and “soul” beliefs in different ways. One participant referred to “heart” but implied a definition that was closer to my concept of “soul.” She said that social workers must work from the “heart,” meaning their beliefs should be reflected in their practice. What she termed “heart” was what I termed “soul.”

Participants had such a range of ideas about the distinction between “heart” and “soul” concepts that I do not report them separately in the rest of this dissertation. Instead I introduce a new “self” category, combining “heart” and “soul.” “Self” refers to participants’ ideas about necessary beliefs and values as well as feelings and personality qualities of anti-racist social workers. This difficulty experienced with the distinction between the “heart” and “soul” concepts was intriguing.<sup>2</sup> I use these concepts as organizing principles in the classroom and students distinguish between them with ease. I conclude that the distinction between them is not useful for cross-cultural research purposes but is still useful in my classroom at St. Thomas University. Therefore, participants challenge to the “heart” and “soul” foundational metaphors made me decide to cease to use them in this research. A foundation had been removed, temporarily at least

During interviews all participants could make a conceptual distinction between knowledge (head) and skills (hand). As we discussed knowledge and skills the

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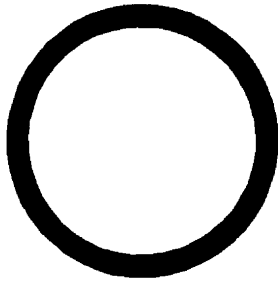
<sup>2</sup> Possible explanations are that students in a university context are more comfortable with the abstract nature of these terms than research participants who may be not trained or experienced in abstract thinking. Alternatively it could be the cross-cultural nature of the research that caused such confusion.

distinction became less clear and less useful to some participants. Occasionally participants defined “knowledge” what I would define “skill.” For example, the concept “they should be aware of the various types of racism” was considered a skill by one participant. Particular difficulties were experienced with conceptual ability. Some considered conceptual ability to be “hand” and others considered it “head.” Many participants referred to the importance of “self-knowledge” or “self-awareness.” Some placed this in the “head” and some in the “hand.” On other occasions the “self-aware” person was part of a “self” category. Often social work or other human service participants seemed to find the distinction between knowledge and skill easier than Aboriginal people and newcomers. As I reflected on the differences in meaning attributed to the concepts I became uncertain myself.

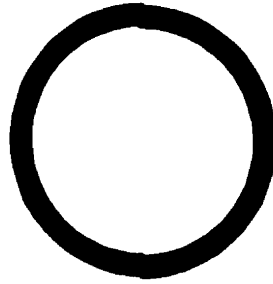
During interviews I emphasized that we should not reify these concepts into firm exclusive categories divided by clear boundaries. I asked participants about the utility of the concepts. Five Aboriginal participants and newcomers considered these concepts a hindrance in their reflections on anti-racist social work curriculum. One said, “I’m not sure that I would made the distinction,” when referring to his answers.

Some preferred a holistic approach. One said:

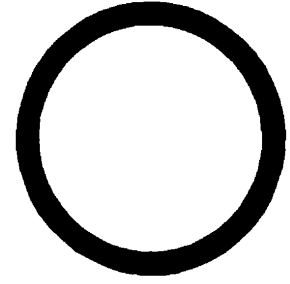
I think you’ve done a pretty good job of dissecting it. you’ve got the head, you’ve got the heart, they’re all separated . . . the way it should be is that we are whole . . . people associate themselves as just hands, or just feet . . . we’ve got to put people together.



1.1. Knowledge (Head)  
Example: "The Indian Act"



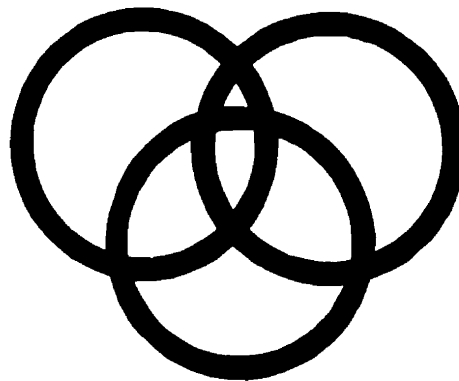
1.2. Skills (Hand)  
Example: "Communication"



1.3. Heart/Soul (Self)  
Example "Kindness"

**Figure 3 - Categories**

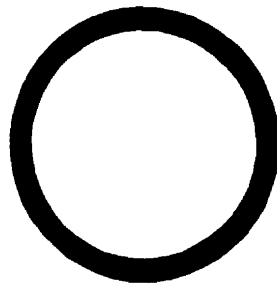
Head



Self

Hand

Example: Anti-racism  
**Figure 4 - Themes**



Example: The "me" interacting with the "you"  
**Figure 5 - The Whole**

The figures on the previous page show three “ideal types” of participants’ responses to the metaphors. Sometimes participants distinguished clearly between “head,” “hand,” and “self” and subdivided each category. One participant, for example, had a clear “head” concept subdivided into “legal,” “educational,” “social,” and “moral” considerations. Another spoke about the need to “communicate,” subdivided into “active listening,” “verbal communication,” and “written communication.” Similarly, “working with an interpreter,” was subdivided into “working with a cultural interpreter,” and “working with a linguistic interpreter.” I was tempted to encourage this method of responding as it is clear and easy to report and analyze.

There was a second way of responding illustrated by the chart overleaf. For example, one participant said the need to work with “the people” was a major task for anti-racist social work. “Head” knowledge and “hand” skills as well as the “self” qualities overlapped. The relationships between these concepts was emphasized.

Therefore, to respond to “the people” an anti-racist social worker needed to have knowledge about the pain and misery caused by racism in New Brunswick (head), skills in confronting racism (hand), and the personal courage and commitment to do so (self). Participants who held this view would suggest that “racism” rather than “head,” “hand,” and “self,” should be the major unit of analysis, but that the “head,” “hand,” and “self,” could assist understanding.

The final model was holistic. Here there was a resistance to splitting the self as I had conceptualized. Participants suggested instead that an anti-racist social work

educator should instead develop curriculum to address the whole person student and assist this whole person to respond to the whole person client. A focus on the intellect on some occasions and skills on other occasions, is splitting what should be united. It was argued that these divisions could lead to unhelpful divisions in the curriculum.

Sensitizing concepts shared during the interview process challenged some of my foundational concepts. I respond to the challenge of the concept “anti-racist social work” by confirming my intention to continue to use it. Nevertheless, the challenge will make me explain more clearly my reason for its use. The successful challenge of the distinction between “heart” and “soul” had an immediate impact on my combination of the categories in data analysis. I will not use these concepts again during future research on diverse people because they confuse as much as illuminate. Nevertheless, I will continue to encourage participants to share their views about knowledge, skills and self as they reflect upon curriculum development.

This section illustrates how the challenge by sensitizing concepts can lead to changes in thought-foundations. Prior to conducting this research I proposed that the “head,” “heart,” “hand,” and “soul,” metaphors were all useful. I had experienced their utility in the classroom and assumed this would transfer to the research. This was not the case. Participants had different ideas about their meaning. They disagreed about the relationship between them and whether the concepts fragmented or affirmed the wholeness of people. Use of these concepts in future similar research is not likely to be successful. My foundation has been successfully challenged and I will not do so.

It is important for me to be aware of my foundational thought and it is valuable to sometimes share my thoughts during dialogue with participants. Pre-established categories for the data based upon my thought foundations, however, provided me with the problem of deciding where to locate the data from participants who did not categorize their thoughts in this way. The metaphors, or even the distinction between knowledge, beliefs and skills, sometimes confused participants. The use of these concepts makes assumptions about the categories of thought of all participants and, therefore, is not compatible with my postmodern orientation that seeks to understand unique sensitizing concepts. Groupings of concepts that emerge from my reflections on the data such as “racism,” discussed earlier in the chapter and “perceptions of social workers,” discussed in the next section, provide a more accurate reflection of discussions.

#### SENSITIZING CONCEPTS ABOUT PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Sensitizing concepts challenged my thought foundations by pointing out an omission in the foundational thinking about social work curriculum content outlined in chapters 3 and 4. I had not realized the importance of including client’ perceptions of social workers in anti-racist curriculum. Participants thought student social workers should learn how their profession was viewed in a multicultural context. This knowledge could inform social workers’ attempts to develop a working relationship with their clients. A Caucasian social worker who works in a First Nations Community spoke at length about her initial reception in the community. Despite the fact that 11 main sample participants considered that this issue was important there were many different views



about social workers. This diversity of responses supports my postmodern approach that emphasizes the unique rather than categories. Here is a collage of sensitizing concepts about this issue:

they come in with good intentions  
need to heal themselves  
the sorriest man I've ever met  
nothing but talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk  
we do not see that individual as a human being  
the boogie man  
ten doors are closed  
I salute the social people  
to be honest, Rosemary, I don't really know . . .  
hand over the files  
great leaps and bounds.  
I'm supposed to be . . . an ideal citizen  
they say I'm the big boss  
grab that mop . . . all you're good for

#### They come in with good intentions

No participant questioned the good intentions of social workers but several indicated that "good intentions" were not enough. An absence of basic knowledge often resulted in social workers harming rather than helping Aboriginal people. One participant gave an example of a social worker who took a person with addiction problems for a "social drink." Drunkenness and domestic abuse resumed. Another participant said that many social workers are blinded by stereotypical "noble savage ideas."

#### Need to heal themselves

Some thought that social workers are in need of healing. An Aboriginal person

said that social workers showed as many needs as some of the community residents. Social workers bring a “lot of baggage” and “wind up avoiding the situation around them” and focussing on their own needs. Another participant said “if you are secure enough to stand in your own truth as a human being you will understand where the people are and they can’t hook you in.” Many, however, had substantial needs such as the need to belong. She commented:

I have seen . . . non-Native social workers coming in who are married, get their job, divorce their husbands, and the next thing you know they are running around with an Indian man in the community . . . they don’t care who they marry. They need to heal that before they help us.

Another participant thought that some social workers had not come to terms with their mixed heritage. Social workers say “my great-great-great-grandmother was a Native,” and this statement was seen as revealing their underlying identity problems by the social worker who made it. In another example a social worker who lived in most insanitary conditions presumed to tell Aboriginal people how to live their lives.

I said to her . . . ‘it seems to me that social work should begin at home. How can you come into my home or into my community and tell me how to live my life? You live like a pig here.’

#### The sorriest man I’ve ever met

Three participants said that Caucasian social workers often appear guilty about the historical oppression of Aboriginal people.

They come in, I’m sorry, I’m sorry I’m taking an Indian job, I’m sorry . . . I said to one guy, ‘you’re the sorriest man I’ve ever met. Do your job, you’re a social worker, do your job. Don’t go around feeling guilty about it. Your guilt doesn’t help me.’

Another participant said that “the first thing they do . . . [is to talk about] . . . these poor people . . . it’s not right . . . pity is the last thing they need.”

nothing but talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk

One participant became a bit frustrated when I asked her to tell me about what she wanted from social workers. She said the following:

Social work is working with people. Right? People who are suffering . . . they have to be suffering in order for a social worker to be called. Something drastic has occurred and social workers are needed. Now if you get a social worker in there who does nothing but talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, direct and whatever, and doesn’t want to sit down and listen, is action oriented and takes off like a wild fire, you’re going to find more times than not, the poor people sitting there bewildered, asking themselves, ‘what’s happened here? I’m not being helped.’

The talking and the action orientation characterized many social workers she had met.

We do not see that individual as a human being

One participant said that a non-Aboriginal social worker reminds Aboriginal people about their past experiences of oppression. Another said that “Aboriginal people have a tendency to think that the white people are only there to take something away.” A third expanded on this thinking:

Because the first thing when we see a non-Native coming into our community . . . do you know what that represents to us? That individual, we do not see that individual as a human being. That individual is that system out there. If it is a woman, then it represents all of the women who got status in our community and where our women were kicked out of our communities and lost our status. This is what is triggered in our mind, in our memory.

### the boogie man

Another image is the social worker who steals Aboriginal children. One participant said the social worker is referred to as “the boogie man.” In the past parents told their children that a social worker would get them if they misbehaved with statements like “if you don’t listen to me I’ll call a social worker on you.” He said that this practice still exists but is declining. Social workers are almost portrayed as “the devil,” so Aboriginal children are “terrified of these workers.”

### ten doors are closed

One participant said that some social workers are more committed to satisfy the government rather than their clients, “getting a reputation at the expense of their clients.” They see social work as a career rather than as a service to families and satisfied “the government” by removing children from their families and community. The participant concluded: “I really think that . . . keeping families together is more important than trying to boost your ego up to keep the government happy,” and thought that social workers are encouraged to remove Aboriginal children from their communities.

Another non-social-work participant said that a good social worker acts as “an advocate for the people she works for, not the people who pay her.” This is what Aboriginal people want and expect, but social workers find difficult:

because they come out with ideals but they can’t actually put [them] into practice because they are concerned about the people that are employing them . . . It’s like too many doors . . . when you first start out . . . all doors are open . . . and you sign a contract. Immediately as soon as you get your name down on paper ten doors are closed . . . you get a first client.

You go to your supervisor . . . you find another ten doors have closed. I would never be a social worker.

I salute the social people

Three non-social work Aboriginal participants recognized that social workers have a difficult job and pointed out that not all people in First Nations Communities are hostile to them. One participant expressed it this way:

I want to put my thumb up and pat the social people on the back . . . I give them a lot of credit for taking that degree . . . it's a stressful job . . . any time of the night . . . they have to be there and . . . try to dissolve the problem . . . so I salute the social people.

To be honest, Rosemary, I don't really know . . .

Social workers often mistakenly assume that people in the community know about the social work role. Many immigrant and refugee participants had at best a sketchy idea about social work in their countries, and virtually no knowledge about the roles of social workers in the Saint John River valley. Most refugees are received by provincial representatives from 'Citizenship and Immigration' and the 'Multicultural Associations' in the province. Some participants had not encountered Canadian social workers so had no opinion about them. The lack of contact led one refugee to conclude that social workers in Canada might "look after orphans and refugees." When I asked about social workers in his country of origin, one participant replied, "to be honest, Rosemary, I don't really know." Therefore I had to explain the roles of social workers so participants could reflect upon "head", "hand," and "self" for anti-racist social work. This difficulty was experienced to a lesser extent by an Aboriginal participant. Although, upon reflection,

she had many views about social work, her immediate reaction had been:

first you ask me to think about social work, and I'm not a social worker  
. . . then you ask me to think about anti-racist social work. . .

### Hand over the files

An Aboriginal social worker who was asked by band politicians to relinquish his ideals chose to give up his job instead. He was asked by the Chief in Council to divulge the identities of the recipients of welfare checks.

Through one past administration I was asked to give over client files and I refused. I was told if I didn't I could be fired so I left . . . with all the files. They saw how sincere I was and they offered me another position.

Social workers should learn and accept that they have enormous power to benefit or oppress a community:

The power of social workers . . . it's very strong. It's almost like you become the oppressor. We should try to exhaust every avenue before we go into the actual removal of kids. I think that at one point we grabbed that. Now we've become the non-Native Health and Community Service agency . . . we need to refocus . . . we're no different from what they were.

### Great leaps and bounds

Three participants mentioned that social workers often come in with "ideals" but attitudes that are "a bit superior." These social workers think in a "slightly arrogant" manner that "they can come in and change it all." An Aboriginal social worker thought :

a number of people need to be involved in regard to the case and not just the social worker. If they think they're going to change this community and make great leaps and bounds, they're going to be sadly mistaken.

Another participant pointed out: "healing doesn't happen like a magic wand. . .it's hard

work and it's a process."

I'm supposed to be. . .an ideal citizen

An Aboriginal social worker living and working in a First Nations Community suggested that social work graduates who return to their home communities should anticipate difficulties. Community members will, by reminding them of their own youthful problems attempt to undermine their authority as social workers:

In small communities . . . gossip is probably the worst thing that could ever happen . . . that's how people are measured. . .like myself . . . I'm supposed to be perceived as an ideal citizen . . . which I think is unfair. I have no private life. like someone working in 'Health and Community' in Fredericton from nine to four. I'm here twenty-four hours a day.

They say I'm the big boss

A human service worker in a First Nations Community thought social work students should be warned that all social workers are often verbally abused by community members. She said "it's hard because the people are hurting."

They look down on me because I have my education, it's hard for them to accept me . . . they know I worked hard . . . they think I'm controlling them . . . they say I'm the big boss because I got that education.

The community rejected her because she moved away to find work and community members thought that she considered herself their superior.

Grab that mop. . . all you're good for

A Caucasian social worker told many stories about her initial rejection and her slow process of winning acceptance in the First Nations Community where she worked. After working in the community for a number of years she was given a nickname, a sure

sign that she was beginning to be accepted. Initially she “cowered like a little mouse,” and questioned everything about herself, but gradually she became angry and “started fighting back.” She persisted for several years to regain her self confidence. Eventually, she became secure enough to decide “this is my job that I’m supposed to be doing, and damn it, I’m going to do it.”

On her first day:

a man came in to get his welfare cheque, looked at me and said ‘who are you?’ I said ‘I’m the new social worker,’ he said ‘what the fuck do you think you are going to do here . . . if I were you I’d go and grab that mop and start mopping. That’s all you’re good for.’

People asked: “are you still here . . . you’d think they would have fired you,” or “another God-damned white person living off Indian money.” Hostile comments came “out of the blue.” She felt “they couldn’t wait to judge whatever I said or did or make a nasty comment, just because I was there.” Although she was personally distressed by these encounters she quickly realized the pain in the community that led to statements.

The hostility took a severe toll on her self confidence. People questioned her and she questioned herself. “I always took my whiteness for granted before,” she said. In contrast everything about her was questioned and she felt judged.

You’re judged on everything you do . . . from the way you dress . . . your clothes . . . the way you speak . . . the kind of car you drive . . . we’re not ready for that . . . you’ve got to be strong . . . because you’re out there and you’re floundering . . . My God, help me, I’m all alone, I don’t know anything . . . I don’t know how to dress.

While learning how to dress she moved from over-dressing to under-dressing. Now she



dresses comfortably and it is accepted. Social work education had not prepared her.

Believe me it didn't [prepare me], I didn't have any inkling [it was] culture shock . . . no one ever talked about how you would survive.

She slowly gained acceptance. "You always felt like your motives were being questioned." For the first three months she made herself visible in the community and thought that it took this long before people "really let [her] work with them." It took much longer to become accepted as someone with sufficient skills to help the community.

#### Conclusion: My response to the challenge

Diverse people expressed a number of different views about their social workers. Some considered them to be problem-ridden people needing their own therapy. Others emphasized that contacts with social workers over several generations inform the views about the profession that inform client-social worker interactions. Some considered social workers to be well meaning but limited by bureaucracy. Sometimes social workers had unrealistic expectations. They may face many challenges in gaining acceptance with diverse people, particularly in First Nations Communities. The "self" could easily be damaged by clients' hostility. Graduates have not come prepared. Participants suggested that social work educators have a responsibility to prepare students for these reactions. Participants' voices challenged my foundational thinking about curriculum content which had excluded this important area of knowledge. The challenge was successful. I will not exclude it in future. This challenge had therefore created another foundation.

## SENSITIZING CONCEPTS CHALLENGE “KNOW THE PEOPLE”

I now suggest a fundamental way in which foundations were challenged by the sensitizing concepts. Participants spoke very clearly about the knowledge base that should inform anti-racist curriculum. They suggested that curriculum should be informed by a knowledge of the people rather than by modifying of existing social work wisdom. This view challenges much existing social work literature that informs students how to help people rather than how to understand people who are ethnically or racially different from themselves. The simple to understand yet difficult to achieve “know the people” is a sensitizing concept for organizing much of the curriculum.

know the people . . . where they came from,  
who they are . . . where they want to go

Overwhelmingly, participants from all constituencies agree that social workers often begin work with simplistic ideas resting on stereotypical images. Social workers should take the time to understand individual and community issues. I begin with some comments about the present that yield these sensitizing concepts. then I share some comments about the past. Here is a collage of sensitizing concepts:

top of a mountain or tip of an iceberg  
life is a ceremony  
hi, hello or handshake?  
And this was supposed to be a place of learning  
apartheid, imprisonment  
the phoenix rose  
wait for it to pass  
they also run as refugees

### Mountain-tops and icebergs

Several participants spoke about human differences. A human service worker referred to differences as “the top of a mountain or the tip of an iceberg.” Although the tip is immediately visible, much lies below. This metaphor encourages human service workers to explore these differences in order to understand the people.

### Life is a ceremony

Social workers should understand beliefs and values of diverse people. Atlantic Canada is predominantly Christian and differences in spirituality are generally defined as interdenominational. In consequence, people with non-Christian beliefs and values often experience themselves as “minority.”

Some participants from Jewish and Aboriginal backgrounds encountered social workers who were unaware of differences between Christian beliefs, values and traditions and those of other faiths. Social workers assumed that everyone was Christian, but should be made aware of different views about deities, about the position of human beings in the universe and about the traditions associated with life and death. A human service worker suggested that beliefs and values were “sensitive areas” and misunderstandings by social workers could cause much anxiety. Participants from non-Christian backgrounds emphasized the importance of some of their beliefs. An Aboriginal participant spoke about a “circular” view and said that social workers should understand how this world-view differs from the linear non-Aboriginal world-view:

There is a difference between linear and circular thinking . . . for myself

life is a ceremony and it's very circular. I begin as a child and I am going through specific stages of my life, as we get older we go back to our childhood and it just keeps on . . . everywhere you walk your ancestors are there, have been buried before you, each step you take you need to be conscious of that.

Another said: "there are many powers . . . there's Glooscap . . . there's the eagles . . . there's animals . . . they're all our higher spirits . . . our higher powers."

Two Jewish participants spoke about the need for social work students from a non-Jewish tradition to learn about some key Jewish beliefs if they were to work with Jewish people. One example was the Jewish Sabbath. A participant thought that students should know the day and time that the Sabbath begins and the meaning of the Sabbath. Other key areas of learning concerned acceptable foods and methods of food preparation and rituals concerning life and death. One participant said social workers should know reasons for male circumcision. Another said that social workers should know about customs after death, particularly the need for burial rather than cremation as soon as possible after death. Jewish participants stated that many human service professionals lacked this basic knowledge. One Jewish person considered that one of the main problems with human service work was that:

people try to impinge their values on someone else . . . for example, where euthanasia is concerned, there are some people who believe that I should be permitted to end my life peacefully because I'm miserable and my life is miserable, and I've lived so long, and I wish I could die. According to some beliefs it is murder . . . so you have to show great respect for people and what they believe in. It may be entirely contrary to what the student believes in.

A hospital social worker highlighted the importance of differences in beliefs about

life and death. An example was given of a woman giving birth who was very quiet. When questioned she said that she expected to be beaten if she made any noise. On another occasion the participant learned about different traditions regarding death.

I worked with a couple who were Muslims and the husband died . . . the wife really reacted, she was very angry, she yelled and passed out. I was left alone with her and she said she wanted to see him again. A group of Muslims came, and they said she shouldn't go back. I couldn't understand . . . they said because people are not supposed to yell around the body . . . it's going to affect something . . . it felt mean, but I had to put that aside to respect where they were coming from.

Some participants said that it was important to understand countries of origin. A refugee said that a knowledge about customs in refugees' countries of origin facilitates understanding about their actions, hopes and fears in Canada.

#### hi, hello or handshake?

Although participants were sometimes angered at assumptions that newcomers were ignorant about everyday life in Canada, nevertheless social workers should realize that what was taken for granted in Canada was sometimes strange to newcomers. A number of examples illustrate that, "it is only obvious when you know it."

One refugee had previously lived in a country where people drive on the left side of the road. He stood on the "wrong" side of the road for several minutes before he realized that traffic on his side of the road was going in the opposite direction. Another example was given of customary forms of greeting in different countries. A refugee from a small village was accustomed to greeting people with a hug but quickly learned that this was inappropriate in New Brunswick. Another refugee was confused about when he

should say “hi,” when he should say “hello,” and when he should give “a handshake.”

And this was supposed to be a place of learning

Many sensitizing concepts were inspired by educational experiences of people from diverse backgrounds. The residential school experience still leaves scars for many Aboriginal people. One participant spoke about oppression and abuse that was an early experiment in residential “education” for Aboriginal people. Others alluded to the need for social workers to understand the legacy of these experiences.

Despite these experiences, many Aboriginal people consider education as a way to improve their life and that of their children. However, educational experiences were often painful and participants thought that social work students should learn about them:

The residential school system has done . . . a great harm . . . when they were educating us Indians, they wanted us to conform to society. And then they saw that education was a vehicle for that. The kids were uprooted from their communities and taken into residential schools, they were abused in some way if they didn't conform . . .

Indian Acts - “Apartheid” and “Imprisonment”

Another source of pain and bitterness was the lived experiences of the operation of the Indian Act. Participants sometimes mentioned that their sense of feeling “other” partly derived from their people's history:

Indian people have been isolated to a community geographically and they only qualify for certain programmes and services living on this Reserve. If I was to move outside of the boundaries of this Reserve, I would qualify for no service. We have legislation, the Indian Act, which dictates to how things are going to unfold for the Indian people. If I use an analogy in terms of the apartheid legislation in Africa, it's similar to the Indian Act. It dictates to you where you live, who can be Indian and who can't, what

services you qualify for . . . when the Bands have lawmaking authority it has to be approved by the Minister of Indian Affairs.

The Aboriginal social worker who said this reflected the views of many. Another participant likened the legislation to imprisonment. Asked how she had been disadvantaged, she pointed to the questionnaire:

Well, by that word [pointing to the word 'Reservation' on her answer to a question]. I feel that because of that my beginnings started off as not being a free person. I was only allowed to stay on a small little land and I was not allowed to venture off, or my ancestors were not.

A third pointed out that "they don't have an Italian Act . . . they don't have an Irish Act."

#### The phoenix rose

Participants thought that social workers should understand Aboriginal people's attempts to regain their lost culture. During the last thirty years, particularly during the last decade, Aboriginal people have tried to re-connect with their culture, language and traditions. One participant described this rebirth:

A long time ago they used to have the talking circles . . . the sweat lodges. Then along came the European society and they said no, none of that . . . destroyed the whole structure of the Native way of life . . . we ended up in little plots here and there . . . some of us in swamps. Because of the dominant race saying, 'no, you're no good,' lording it over the unsuspecting people of the land . . . they begin to lose sight of who they are . . . why they're there . . . if you tell a person for long enough that they're no good they begin to believe it . . . Back in the sixties it started coming back . . . you have to remember that in the fifties a person could be jailed for practicing their culture . . . the sweat lodges, the talking circles . . . people were kind of weary . . . then something happened . . . maybe the phoenix rose and rejuvenated those ones that were selected to go out and teach and give them the spirit to do so . . . in the sixties and seventies people met in small groups after 500 years of not doing this . . . they had to begin to trust themselves . . . they didn't know what an eagle feather

meant, they probably didn't know what this meant . . . [pointing at a smudge stick] . . . anything that you're born with, that's inside you, your spirit somehow knows . . . and maybe within that group, could have been two or three people there who had knowing spirits, and those people connected . . . and there began the resurgence of Native spirituality.

#### Wait for it to pass

Jewish participants had a strong sense of their people's history over thousands of years and thought social workers should know something about it. One person pointed out that Jewish people had often been oppressed and two spoke about the holocaust. One participant spoke about oppression prevalent across North America. In Atlantic Canada, clear signs "No Jews" were posted during the 1930s. Local golf clubs were closed to them. It was futile to apply for certain jobs. Stereotypes developed. "We're the smartest, we're the richest." Anti-Semitism was fuelled by the depression. Rumours of European anti-Semitism were pervasive. Jewish people had problems buying houses and were seen as taking jobs and becoming wealthy while non-Jewish people went hungry.

A human service worker who had worked with Jewish people thought that this history of oppression had affected Jewish people enormously. When he had asked a Jewish person why Jewish people had not challenged emergent anti-Semitism he was told poignantly that after generations of oppression Jewish people had learned to "keep their heads down and wait for it to pass . . . it always does."

#### They also run as refugees

Immigrants and refugees told stories of their lives before and since coming to Canada. Refugees are often reluctant to talk about their experiences but one did so:



I'm originally from . . . but I was a refugee in . . . for ten years, then I was selected to come here. By and large I think that social workers, just don't have an understanding of what it means, well you can't because you haven't lived through it. To have actually experienced that kind of thing . . . especially those harsh realities that affected our lives to a point where we need to be treated or be handled in a way that healing continues in our lives. Because we are like wounded people, because of war, because of losing dear ones, because of conflicts and we were originally people of one country but eventually because hostility . . . you do not know who is a friend or an enemy . . . you are just on the run and you get into a country which again becomes so hostile to you, just because you are refugees, you are foreigners, you are not welcomed. You are restricted to places called refugee camps, where conditions are extremely difficult and you barely survive on minimum nutrition, you know the survival of the human being. You have lost the protection of your country, you have lost the protection of your relatives, of your community and then you become a lone individual in the midst of so many other people who are all new to you, but they all share a common problem with you, they also run as refugees. There is always some bonding that results there. But still . . . right from the time when we are dealing with offices, like visa offices in Canada's High Commission, you need someone who can appreciate your situation and understand exactly what leads to running away, what kind of social problems you are having in another country, especially a hostile country. And eventually, once we are selected and we get here, what will be remembrance in our mind that we have to deal with. The whole challenge of leaving a community that has been part of your life, I left when I was 26, a part of my life for 26 years. I didn't know where I was going. I know there is no going back.

### Conclusion

Participants' stories were rich with sensitizing concepts. Diverse people in New Brunswick had many varied experiences prior to contacting a social worker. Few social workers will share these experiences. Participants had a rich array of different beliefs and values. In the presence of many Canadians they are likely to feel "other." If they are to help, social workers must understand these feelings. These stories that contained such

rich sensitizing concepts challenge a curriculum that fails to have a central focus on diverse people. They lead me to create a new foundation. A major thrust of future anti-racist curriculum will be for social work students to learn about the diverse people with whom they work.

Although these sensitizing concepts issue a challenge to me they also support my proposition that anti-racist social work should have a cultural competence component. Only if social workers understand how racism is experienced differently by different people will they be able to provide assistance to them. The data contained herein challenge categorical literature that does not recognize these differences. The sensitizing concepts support a postmodernism that values and seeks unique or local solutions when curriculum developments take place.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored how sensitizing concepts challenged thought foundations outlined in chapter 3, and the literature that has informed these foundations, reviewed in chapter 4. It has shown that some of the challenge was directed at my existing foundations. Participants challenged the “anti-racist” concept and the “heart,” “head,” “hand,” and “soul” metaphors. Other challenges were directed towards what was omitted. The foundational thinking did not mention the perceptions of social workers by diverse people. It emphasized the students’ self reflections rather than the people they were learning about.

When sensitizing concepts challenged thought foundations, I sometimes noted the

challenge and rejected it but determined to explain my position more effectively in future. I illustrated this effect by my discussions about the term “anti-racist social work.” I accept the challenge to the “heart,” “head,” “hand,” and “soul” metaphors and move them from my contestable foundations. Also, I accept the challenge that my foundational ideas about curriculum content are incomplete. I intend to include content about perceptions of social workers in future anti-racist curriculum. Furthermore, although I continue to think that students should reflect on themselves, “know the people” will certainly become an important beacon in future when I develop curriculum. The sensitizing concepts from diverse stakeholders, therefore, altered my foundational thinking by leading me to remove some foundations and construct others. In the next chapter I consider a more subtle effect, that of modifying foundations.

**CHAPTER TEN**  
**SENSITIZING CONCEPTS MODIFYING FOUNDATIONAL THOUGHT**  
**INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I explain how sensitizing concepts led me to modify my foundational thought. It is necessary for social work educators to ascertain whether the orientation towards practice they have acquired from social work experience, teaching, research, and literature is relevant for social work with diverse people living in the locality where their schools are based. Further, my postmodern foundational base encourages me to develop anti-racist curriculum specifically for New Brunswick. First I report sensitizing concepts about how participants experienced living or practicing social work in rural New Brunswick. Then I report sensitizing concepts through which participants suggested how social workers should orientate themselves as they plan anti-racist social work in New Brunswick.

As already quoted in chapter 4, Kirst-Ashman and Hull (1993) suggest social workers should "treat all 'facts' you have ever heard or read as hypotheses to be tested anew with each client" (p. 419). This sentiment can be usefully applied when attempting to import curriculum content, teaching and learning methods, or processes for developing curriculum to a new location. My ideas about appropriate curriculum have developed through living and working as a social worker and social work educator in different locations in two countries. These ideas have also been informed by my reading of

literature, including that outlined in chapter 4. Much of the literature has been developed in urban areas, often outside of Canada. In this chapter I provide a collage of concepts that contextualize by sensitizing me to the New Brunswick context. Then I provide a collage of concepts through which participants advise social workers about how to develop orientations for anti-racist social work practice in New Brunswick.

One reason for the inclusion of these sensitizing concepts in this chapter is that they are informed by, and help to develop, my postmodern theoretical base. From my postmodernism emerges Irving's phrase "a collage or montage of colliding images" (1994, p. 20), discussed in chapter 3. A collage of concepts about life and social work in the province do not form a coherent whole. Together the concepts form the backcloth that can help me decide curriculum content with each class I teach. Derrida's (1981) ideas about intertextuality, also outlined in chapter 3, are relevant. I am writing the "text" by reporting the sensitizing concepts from ethnically and racially diverse people<sup>1</sup> in New Brunswick. "Readers" of the text may be social work educators in other parts of Canada. Each "reading" will be interpreted differently in each other context and different meanings will be given to it. As I present a "text" of collages of sensitizing concepts to New Brunswick student "readers," each will interpret these concepts from their unique social location.

The inclusion of these concepts is also compatible with my anti-racist

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter when I refer to "diverse" people I mean "ethnically and racially diverse people unless otherwise indicated.

foundations. I need to understand how New Brunswick participants experience rural life and social work, and the orientation that they think is needed if the anti-racist focus of the curriculum is to be relevant to this context. For example, I need to inform my curriculum by an understanding of how Young's (1988) faces of oppression, discussed in the third chapter, are experienced (or not experienced) in rural New Brunswick.

Sensitizing concepts can augment the literature outlined in chapter 4. Cultural competence requires an understanding of how diverse people experience their lives and how they think that social workers should approach their work. The literature on cultural competence is enhanced by comments about their lives from Aboriginal people, newcomers to Canada, francophone people and Jewish people. As previously discussed the radical humanist and radical structuralist themes of anti-racist social work are contextualized by these sensitizing concepts. The limited amount of Canadian rural social work literature is enhanced by material from New Brunswick. Diverse participants' views about social workers orientation towards anti-racist social work can inform curriculum, as can reflections from practicing social workers about what it would have been useful to learn during their undergraduate studies.

#### **SENSITIZING CONCEPTS ABOUT LIVING AND PRACTICING SOCIAL WORK IN A RURAL COMMUNITY**

In this section I outline participants' sensitizing concepts about living and practicing social work locally to contextualize my existing contestable foundational ideas, to consider them in the light of the unique features of this province. As previously

discussed, when New Brunswick is compared with most other Canadian provinces, even the larger centres of population in the province have “rural” characteristics. Participants said that people throughout New Brunswick tend to know each other and each other’s families. Participants spoke about how this can accentuate feelings of being “other,” for people from minority ethnic and racial backgrounds. If “differentness” could be hidden, people could sometimes avoid overt racism. An elderly Jewish participant, reflecting on her life, commented that she did not experience overt discrimination because she was not readily identified as different from others. Her father did not require very strict adherence to Jewish practices and she attended Christian prayers at school. She was not aware of racism but was aware of “hiding” who she was in the rural community. In contrast her husband observed Jewish customs very strictly and her children were not allowed to attend Christian ceremonies. They were taunted as Jewish and sometimes beaten.

Human service and social work participants spoke about how the local rural context affected their practice. This information may help students to gain understanding about issues encountered locally. These stories can help students to decide if they want to practice social work here.

Social worker participants suggested that social work literature and education did little to prepare them for rural cross-cultural work. Some thought that students should learn about rural communities generally while others emphasized the need to understand particular features of New Brunswick and the Maritimes. Some thought that a specific understanding of the rural New Brunswick context was needed for empathy with the

people from diverse cultures who lived there. Others suggested that knowledge about rural practice was needed to enable them to identify potential resources in any rural community. Participants spoke about issues for both social workers and clients. Some spoke about cultural competence or anti-racism in rural social work, and others mentioned other dimensions of rural social work. The following collage of phrases provides glimpses of contemporary New Brunswick. They illustrate what it is like to grow up in a stable homogeneous community as a member of a majority culture, what it is like to live in such a community as a minority, what it is like to move to such a community from outside Canada, and what it is like to practice social work there. The collage of sensitizing concepts highlights many issues for social workers.

They pick out a stranger  
Oh, I heard you did such and such  
Only four families  
In the closet  
So white, so other  
Not accepted in either world  
A wounded people  
In a void  
Severed at the roots  
It's cold  
My children will not speak French to their children  
So friendly and so nice  
Insulated and isolated  
Not proper French  
A market in babies  
A place of learning?  
I wish I had what you guys have in Fredericton  
It's the nine out of ten thing  
It's just you  
Boundary problems



### They pick out a stranger.

A participant from a First Nations community commented that visiting strangers were immediately noticed and suspected. A social worker in a First Nations Community could do little in her first three months but tried to make herself visible to the community so that she was not considered an “interfering stranger.”

### Oh, I heard you did such and such.

A human services worker emphasized the importance of being known in order to be accepted in a rural community. She spoke about the benefits of being “Joe’s daughter.” When she was at school the rural grapevine would identify which of “our” kids were looking for a job and, if there was work, a selection would be made from them. Immigrants and refugees who will not be “known” may find more difficulty in settling in a rural community because they will not have immediate access to a helping network.

An immigrant who had lived in cities in Canada did not enjoy the way everybody’s news was known by everybody else. She spoke of a number of occasions when people had told her: “Oh, I heard you did such and such . . .” Sometimes they were wrong. The participant missed the privacy of urban settings.

### Only four families

Several participants alluded to the loneliness of being a newcomer in a rural community. An refugee stated that only four families from his country of origin had settled in the area. He emphasized the diversity within his home continent.

Each of these countries have many ethnic groups . . . has over three

hundred ethnic groups . . . each of us have different cultures and different ways of doing things.

It is unlikely that rural newcomers will find people from their country of origin and even more unlikely that they will find someone from their region.

In the closet, behind closed doors, between the lines

Although a minority of participants minimized the differences between urban and rural communities, many did not. The phrases “in the closet,” “behind closed doors,” and “between the lines” are sensitizing concepts that highlight participants’ views about how racism in New Brunswick rural communities differs from racism in urban Canada.

A well travelled Aboriginal person called the racism that he had experienced in rural communities “in the closet.” People were polite and guarded against overt acts of unpleasantness but he could “read between the lines” and identify racist intent and actions. Drawing upon his experience in his small New Brunswick town another stated:

there’s not a lot of overt racism or intolerance. It’s a fundamentalist Christian community and I think that people know how you are supposed to behave, at least publicly . . . what gets said behind closed doors I’m not aware of but . . .

Another participant contrasted rural racism with “out of the closet” racism from urban areas that he had visited. For example in a large Canadian city when he was not allowed to use his treaty card but was told: “I am charging you taxes . . . you can take your receipt and mail it to the government and let them reimburse you.” Before this he had only experienced the New Brunswick racism that had to be “read between the lines.”

### So white, so other

Rural communities, particularly those with stable and homogeneous populations, are often very difficult to enter for newcomers. A social worker said "Fredericton is still a very white city." A human service worker said that after refugees get beyond their initial euphoria at being safe they look around and see a world "so white, so other."

### Not accepted in either world

The more than four centuries since the first European contact with New Brunswick Indigenous people results in many who describe themselves as "mixed blood." If they hid their Aboriginal identities they could "pass" as white. One described herself as "mixed blood" with "Mi'kmac, Maliseet, Passamaquady and French blood." She had chosen to "adopt the Aboriginal culture, the sense of belonging was not there." She used the phrase "living in shame," to explain her feelings. Another middle aged participant only recently discussed her "mixed blood" with her mother: "It's something that she's very ashamed of so that's why it has taken her so long to talk about it."

One fair skinned, blue eyed participant said that people rarely realized that he is Aboriginal. He sometimes heard very rude comments about Aboriginal people, but took some satisfaction when the commentators eventually recognized his Aboriginal identity and began "biting their tongue or putting their heads down and walking away." Another spoke of difficulty as she tried to "dance between two worlds," without gaining full acceptance from either. An Aboriginal participant, spoke with sorrow about sexual abuse of Aboriginal people resulting in pregnancies and people of "mixed blood."

And these children . . . not accepted in their own community and not accepted in the white community. They just didn't know where they were, they were just stuck and hanging. They weren't Indians, they couldn't speak the language, and so they were rejected by their own people because of their ways.

Generations later Aboriginal participants indicated that they still feel the same.

a wounded people

New Brunswick refugees sometimes feel like the wounded or maimed among the uninjured. A refugee referred to himself and other refugees as "a wounded people." An Aboriginal person said that social workers should "come in with the understanding that we are crippled." Previous experiences had wounded and maimed leading to difficulties in day to day life. These wounds had different consequences for different people.

An Aboriginal person said that people in New Brunswick First Nations Communities were often angry because of "pain inflicted unfairly." Sometimes anger was channelled towards themselves or other Aboriginal people and sometimes towards social workers. The participant said that social workers should realize that communities are "very volatile." "We can externalize it or internalize it." Anger turned inwards produced self-destruction such as suicide, alcohol and drug abuse. Turned outwards it produced violence within the community or directed towards "colonial oppressors."

in a void

A rather different consequence of the "wounding" was experienced by a refugee who said that she experienced a void and expected to be there for the rest of her life.

There is a whole new world, and you can never live like them. You can

never neatly fit in the sense of being a true Canadian and do what the other Canadians do. Yet you cannot live as yourself, as you have been brought up . . . you are in a void.

There were many good things about Canada but she missed her family “to [talk about] personal problems.” In rural New Brunswick she lacked family and community support.

You have to keep things to yourself , solve your problems on your own. You have to weigh everything, maybe some day if I have a problem who do I tell, what do I tell, when do I tell? Do I write back home and tell them? You don't want to get them concerned.

#### severed at the roots

A human service worker gave an analogy of a severed tree. She spoke about people separated from their cultures as rootless trees.

We can't take a tree from a tropical country and say, 'OK, this tree is in Canada.' We (can't) plant it in the ground out there and leave it. It's going to die in the winter because the way it evolved is different. We need to bring that tree inside because it is not used to the winter.

#### it's cold

The coldness of winter was not just an analogy. Two refugees said that social workers should understand their problems with Canadian winters. The extreme cold, ice and snow were difficult for those with no experience of it. Some had never used heating and others needed for help in selecting winter clothes and learning about winter driving.

#### my children will not speak French to their children

A Francophone participant, two Aboriginal people and a Jewish participant did not feel severed from their roots but felt their cultures were disappearing. The Francophone participant said that her culture was reflected in her language and the

language was gradually dying. Although she had always spoken French to her children, and they attend a French school, “the language of their play” in “bilingual New Brunswick” was English. Many of their friends were Anglophone and unless they married Francophone people “my children will not speak French to their children.” Aboriginal participants spoke about the gradual death of the Mi’kmac and Maliseet languages in Atlantic Canada. One participant remembered her grandmother speaking Mi’kmac but could not speak the language herself. Another remembered a little Maliseet from her childhood and was trying to re-learn the language to teach her grandchildren.

A Jewish participant spoke about the death of Jewish culture in the Maritimes as Jewish people leave for larger centres. Earlier in the century she recalled a Jewish community of over 250 families in Saint John (the largest city in New Brunswick) and a sizeable Jewish population in Fredericton. Her family, like others had moved. One of her two sisters was in Toronto and the other in Montreal. None of her three children are in New Brunswick, but there are “three in Toronto, two in Montreal and one in Israel.”

#### So friendly and so nice

An immigrant spoke about a lot of surface friendliness in New Brunswick but an unwillingness to really let newcomers belong. She mentioned particular difficulties on public holidays when people wanted to be with families or close friends.

The Maritimes are so friendly and so nice, but it is only friendly and nice to people who look like the dominant culture, not to minorities.

### Insulated and isolated

A social work student described a childhood in a small rural community that “insulated” children from the questioning that occurs in a context of diversity. Although the participant was conscious of income, occupational, denominational, and later gender differences, during a childhood isolated from diversity, this participant encountered diverse people for the first time at university and issues resulting from population diversity became relevant. A social worker who travelled to small rural communities spoke about the stability and homogeneity of these communities. She concluded that, “for some of the people it’s a big thing to have gone to . . . Fredericton, and they have never gone beyond [it].” A Jewish participant, a member of the only Jewish family in his small town, spoke about the “air of mystery” that surrounds anyone who is “different” in a stable homogeneous community.

### Not proper French . . . kind of indigenous

Francophone participants also spoke about racism. One francophone participant mentioned a “hierarchy of esteem” for the French language. Non-francophones frequently judge the French spoken in France to be “proper French,” while the French spoken in Quebec is second best. Acadian French was near the bottom of the hierarchy. The participant had met someone who was proud that her child had learned French by a person who had lived in France. Her amusement became anger when Acadian French was referred to as “more basic,” and “kind of Indigenous.” “I am French,” said the participant.

### They know why I'm there before I do

The “confidentiality” principle has a whole new meaning in a rural setting where “everybody knows everybody’s business.” A social worker in a First Nations Community said that when her car was seen outside a house people start to talk. Very often, she said, “they know why I’m there before I do.”

### People really don't want to see it

A worker who had recently responded to “the issue of hate incidents and hate crimes,” said that “small communities are ripe for that to develop.” Another human service worker told a story about acts of intimidation in a New Brunswick village where “people didn’t really want to see it. They didn’t know how to handle it.” A Jewish participant expressed surprise that the existence of racism in New Brunswick is denied, and suggested that “all you need to do is read the letters to the editor about the Native logging issue.”<sup>2</sup> Another human service worker speculated on this denial:

There is a tremendous need to protect the image we all like to have of the happy, wholesome farm family and all the wonderful stuff that goes on in rural communities and how supportive rural communities allegedly are . . . any criticism of the behaviour of an individual in the community is viewed as a slight on the community as a whole.

### A market in babies

Several participants considered that local history was an important part of the local context. A particular example was given about a local “market in babies.”

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<sup>2</sup> During the time of this study there was a dispute between Aboriginal people and the provincial government about their right to harvest wood on crown land.



I think it should be compulsory to go and find out and study about residential school and what happened to us there . . . we are the first in Canada our people here, especially the Maliseet, to have had that experience. It started in the 1700's, it was called the Sussex Vale School, which was a school for Indian children. Parents were paid for their babies. There was a market in babies, paid for by the 'New England Company of England.' It was an experiment to teach Indians farming. It was a horrific history there. We ended up being child labour, slaves to the farmer. The girls were put into the houses to wait on them, they had free labour. The children were sexually abused, and when they became impregnated, the baby was just added onto the list and charged more money. It became so scandalous that England came over here and did an investigation and closed it down immediately. It is a shame, what they did. Right on the heels of that came the Shubunacaty School where the Catholic Church took over, and that's another horror story, but that's our experience. You can't just say that happened a hundred years ago, because this is generational . . . it lives inside of you.

#### A place of learning?

Many Aboriginal people today consider education a possible way to improve their life and that of their children or their community. However, social work students should know that education has often been very painful:

The residential school system has done . . . a great harm . . . when they were educating us Indians, they wanted us to conform to society. And then they saw that education was a vehicle for that. The kids were uprooted from their communities and taken into residential schools, they were abused in some way if they didn't conform . . . [parents] want the children to speak English so that we don't experience what they experienced. The Mi'kmac and Maliseet language is almost extinct. Language is important because it's the only form of communication we have.

Two middle aged participants spoke about going off the "Reserve" for secondary education. One went to the High School by bus.

All barriers broke down and I was able to go to school outside the reserve. Our grades went up to Grade Eight and anything after that you had to go

off the reserve. I remember that first day, the new ones 'us.' There were ten or eleven of us when we got off that bus in Richibucto. We were just a little group, all by ourselves. [We] didn't know what the hell was supposed to be going on, and this was supposed to be a place of learning.

The other participant lived in a First Nations Community in another part of New Brunswick and attended boarding school for Grade Nine:

It was my first time of leaving the Reserve . . . and it was very scary. . . I cried when my parents left me, the nuns were very strict. We had to get up at six in the morning and do chores. We weren't allowed to go anywhere, it was like a prison. My parents always pushed me to get my education. I got my Grade Ten and then I didn't want to go back there anymore.

High School students' grades fell because they were stereotyped as academically weak:

There were some teachers that were so young that they could not figure me out, so in those classes I excelled, but some of the older ones . . . they'd figure out that, 'yeh, she's from Big Cove so she's Native,' and obviously they have to teach me manners. I was not judged as a person, I was judged as a group. I was an "A" student until I hit Richibucto, then I became a "C" student. Even my parents questioned that because they knew I was smart.

#### I wish I had what you guys have in Fredericton

There were differing views. Some thought that rural communities welcomed newcomers. A refugee's papers were questioned by government officials and the family was offered local refuge. A friend from Toronto envied her, saying that the Fredericton welcome for refugees, together with the volunteer families assisting newcomers, was preferable to the Toronto services. He wished for: "what you guys have in Fredericton."

#### it's the nine out of ten thing

When discussing the difference in relationship between a social worker and client

in an urban and a rural community, an Aboriginal human service worker referred to the “nine out of ten thing.”

It's the 9 out of 10 thing; 9 out of 10 chances in the city, you don't know your client. One out of ten, you do. [In rural communities] 9 chances you definitely know your client. One out of the 10, you don't. As a social worker on Reserve you'll go to picnics, pot luck dinners, and you'll meet them through cooking or they'll just come right up and talk to you.

#### It's just you, boundary problems

The isolation of work in a rural community was emphasized by some. The urban social worker would have access to specialist resources, but for a social worker in a small rural setting “it's just you.” Isolated social workers were expected to be all things to all people, but also had to contend with “boundary problems.” In a rural community, particularly in a rural First Nations community, people were well known and even related to each other, and this often made social work difficult. One social worker spoke about removing his relative's children from home because of “protection” concerns. The social worker then had to face family members who “took sides.” After the dispute he had to live in the community where many were still angry with him.

#### Conclusion

The sensitizing concepts of ethnic and racial minorities and social workers contextualized the foundations expressed in Chapters 3 and 4 and contribute to curriculum developments that are relevant to New Brunswick's unique characteristics. Foundational ideas became enriched as they were contextualized. Participants' sensitizing concepts about rural communities and about New Brunswick illustrate

experiences and difficulties in rural areas. Social workers, who often had originated from rural communities themselves, sometimes lacked a background of experience of contact with diverse people to inform their practice. The “wounded” and “crippled” diverse people’s stories indicated their need for sensitive radical humanist responses. Sensitizing concepts can help social workers to understand and then help.

I permitted sensitizing concepts about living and practising social work in rural New Brunswick to dialogue with my own contestable foundational ideas. I learned about the history of diverse ethnic and racial groups that impact on the present. I learned about growing up in a stable homogeneous community, and moving to such a community as a newcomer. As I learned my contestable foundational thought about rural anti-racist social work was enriched by being contextualized.

All of Young’s (1988) faces of oppression are reflected through these concepts and the stories in which they are embedded. Stories of exploitation are most clear in the poignant stories of sexual exploitation in residential schools. Marginalization is illustrated by the sense of isolation of the refugee who noted how few people knew about his country of origin, and by the Aboriginal people who said that their “mixed races” led to a sense of marginalization by their exclusion from full participation in either “white” or Aboriginal societies. The francophone participant who predicted that “my children will not speak French to their children.” felt powerless to change what she considered to be an inevitability. Cultural imperialism was reflected through the stories about Anglophone dominance of Francophone culture and cultural genocide through Aboriginal residential

schools. Therefore, sensitizing concepts illustrated and contextualized in New Brunswick my foundational ideas based on Young's faces of oppression.

The variety of stories, and their often contradictory nature, reflect Irving's (1994) collage or pastiche of objects that can collide. A visitor from urban Canada envied "you guys from Fredericton," yet a refugee experienced Fredericton to be "so white, so other." The veneer of politeness contrasted starkly with the experiences of oppression. The surface friendliness co-existed with feelings of "being in a void." These differences support a postmodern orientation that celebrates such differences. Beneath these differences in perspective, it is clear that many people found the Saint John River valley to be an area where diverse people experienced difficulties. The final collage of sensitizing concepts provides advice from participants about how to develop an anti-racist social work that will help them address these difficulties.

#### **SENSITIZING CONCEPTS FOR AN ANTI-RACIST SOCIAL WORK ORIENTATION**

In this section I provide illustrations about how I allowed my thought foundations to be modified by participants' sensitizing concepts about the orientation needed for anti-racist social work. I use the term "orientation," to refer to social workers' bearings or sense of direction, as they engage in anti-racist social work. This section reports participants' direct advice to social workers as they approach their work. It is important to review my foundational ideas about curriculum in the light of this advice. There follows a collage of participants' sensitizing concepts providing advice from participants on the orientation for anti-racist social work in New Brunswick.

A zero kind of mind  
What seems wrong might be right  
Tune in  
Being there  
Our world view is just that, a view  
Two ears but one mouth  
I guess we do things a little differently  
A bank of information  
Identify when you are in deep water  
Leap over that divide  
Having a cup of tea, chewing the fat  
A window on the world

A zero kind of mind.

One participant suggested that anti-racist social workers need to empty their minds of any pre-conceptions so that they can attend to unique person before them. Social workers often want a tool kit or cookery book with “correct answers” to social work problems. They need to learn how to empty their minds of what is in the tool kit and the cookery book and instead develop the conceptual skills of “interpreting, analyzing and constructing” afresh in each situation (Collier, 1993). The participant said:

I think it is very important for a social worker to start with an open mind. An interest to learn, to know, without any pre-conceptions, any prejudices, any thing, start with a zero kind of mind.

What seems wrong might be right.

As people prepare to enter each situation with a “zero kind of mind,” they must be alert to difficulties faced by people from diverse backgrounds with different views about “normality” from themselves. Three stories illustrate this point.

An Aboriginal participant thought that “what seems right might be wrong,” spoke

about his experiences as a "drug and alcohol" worker in a First Nations Community.

Learnings about confrontations and non-collusion from non-Aboriginal sources were not appropriate in a First Nations Community. Instead he advocates gentleness and waiting, and offering help when someone is in "good shape" to hear it.

A refugee showed how what seems right to a newcomer may be wrong in Canada. She spoke about the prevalence of malaria in her country of origin. Anyone ill with symptoms resembling malaria tend to assume that he or she contracted it. Therefore, anyone from a hot country becoming ill in Canada, should be reassured that they do not have malaria (if this is indeed the case). For newcomers this fear seems right, but it is probably unfounded in Canada. If social workers know about this fear they can allay unnecessary anxiety.

Another example, provided by a different refugee, concerned expected practices if a driver is stopped by police. She learned in her country of origin that getting out of the car was the "right" thing to do when stopped by police. When she was stopped by police in Canada she did the same and was terrified when a police officer came towards her with a gun. She subsequently learned the custom in Canada is to remain in the car. She said out that many refugees are very fearful of people in uniform because of experiences in the country from which they have sought refuge. Therefore it is important for social workers to be alert to differences in custom when refugees encounter uniformed officials.

#### Tune in

After trying to create a "zero frame of mind," and suspend ideas about what is

correct and incorrect, social workers need skills to “tune in” to what they encounter. Participants from different constituencies emphasized the importance of “tuning in.” A social worker said: “you have to be able to tune in to where they’re coming from, and then you have to find a way to respond appropriately.” The relationship should be based on social worker flexibility and a willingness “to adapt themselves to the culture.” Participants suggested a number of ways that social work students could learn both to tune in and to demonstrate that they are “tuned in.” A social worker said that it is necessary to “take the sense of humour and not be offended.” She said that everyone in the First Nations Community has a nickname. Her nickname refers to one of her personal qualities and she has learned to accept it. An Aboriginal participant said that social workers needed to show that they were trying to understand. She suggested: “maybe you should take language classes . . . even if you don’t speak the whole language . . . I think that it’s important that they know they’re willing to speak our language.”

#### Being there

Participants thought that students should learn to be tolerant of just “being there.” particularly when they are newly arrived in rural cross-cultural situations. They need to become recognized. Only after “being there.” can they identify community difficulties that they can assist in resolving, and thereby demonstrate their credibility.

Aboriginal participants and a non-Aboriginal social worker thought that social workers needed to develop an ability in blending into the community. This was not the



blending of “wannabees”<sup>3</sup> but the blending by those who are secure in their own identities. Aboriginal people from other communities, or even those who had been away from their own community for a time, needed to develop an ability to “blend in..”

This ability to blend in provides confidence for social workers enough to leave the territory that is their office. One Aboriginal participant advised: “get out there in the community. I don’t think anyone can do anything just sitting in an office.” Others suggested how social workers could achieve a blending into the community. The social worker advised that other social workers should take every opportunity to participate in community activities. She said that she had learned a lot from “going to wakes.” She stated that social workers would be noticed when they did so but she warned; “don’t expect to be acknowledged.” An Aboriginal social worker suggested that other social workers should try to “be as non-threatening as possible” and another recommended that social workers should “blend in but don’t live that life.”

Our world view is just that a view.

A student encapsulated the thinking of many participants by stating that social workers need to understand that their world-view is just that. just a view. Many participants spoke about the necessary qualities of “openness” and a “willingness to learn.” For one this was a willingness “to grow and change.” and for others it was willingness to evaluate self or actions. Another thought that social workers who are open

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<sup>3</sup> A phrase used by Aboriginal people to describe white people who emulate the Aboriginal way of life because they are not confident and secure in their non-Aboriginal identity. “Wannabees” are people who *want to be* Aboriginal.

to themselves can be open to others and tolerant of differences. The need to recognize bias and work to eliminate it was mentioned by another. A refugee found the New Brunswick population "closed," and wondered if it is because people in New Brunswick have had such limited exposure to people from different ethnic groups. Social work students need to recognize and communicate that their world views are not the only possible ones possible and then communicate this understanding.

#### Two ears but one mouth

Social workers are trained to listen but participants sometimes say they talk instead (Clews, 1993). In this study, participants emphasized the importance of listening:

I was taught . . . there's a joke that goes round. It's a telling joke, it's a teaching joke. The question is 'Why do we have two ears and only one mouth?' Well, because we are supposed to listen more than we talk. Native people in my community learn by what we hear and what we see. Sometimes you're allowed to ask questions but the questions are not that important . . . just observe and you learn more from observing than you do by asking.

#### I guess we do things a little differently

An Aboriginal social worker emphasized the importance of social workers developing skills to identify the unit for intervention. He contrasted social work in a First Nations Community with work outside:

I guess we do things a little differently. When we're dealing with families, the non-Native agencies work directly with the client. Here we work with the heads of family: parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle . . . who will be the most significant 'other' in that family relationship. Then we would involve (the person) in the case conference, case planning, give them the responsibility in regards to . . . their sibling . . . they seem very reassured because:

- a) they know that we're putting in place some strategy that is going to benefit the client:
- b) they feel good about it."

An example of this difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal social work was provided by an Aboriginal participant who said that an important skill for social workers is understanding when to intervene. This may be different in and outside a First Nations Community. Intervention at the wrong time can cause hostility.

They'll want to argue with you or make a big scene right in the public area. And you've just got to learn not to go along with it. Walk away. Walk away. Go see them when they mellow down. Or even better, see a family member. If you made a big confrontation with me, I'd go see your son and say, 'how's your mom doing?' 'Good. Is she safe to go talk to? Let's go talk to her.' Or they'll come to you, 'Can you go see my mom? She's cooled down now.'

#### a bank of information

Participants described a "whole bank of information" to help social workers orient themselves to a community. Social workers need to discover and access non-traditional sources of information. A refugee spoke about the benefit of developing working relationships with "well established community organizations that also work with the social workers to help [them] understand the problems of those communities." Resources in Fredericton include the Human Rights Commission, the Multicultural Association and Aboriginal Councils. One person suggested that "a union could be a big support and . . . resource to a social worker." Rural communities frequently lack people or library resources to inform about diversity. Social workers could access national union data bases to learn about recent newcomers and social action strategies to confront racism.

Another suggestion was that social workers should meet people in the community to gain knowledge about it. If social workers were “comfortable enough to just chat [they] . . . can gather a lot of information of what [they] could . . . bring to the community or access for the community” from community leaders such as elders.

Some participants thought that social workers need skills in more formal research. One human service worker said that when “an anti-Semitic hate campaign” was waged in New Brunswick he had to conduct research to ascertain the truth and untruth of claims. Research was necessary to “counteract the information that was out there.” A social worker suggested that students needed flexibility in research methods. “You need to be able to ask people questions, go and read a bit, look for information and seek people out who are knowledgeable.” Participants generally tended to define research as library research or formal community surveys rather than creating knowledge through dialogue and allowing it to contribute towards empowerment. In contrast one participant said that “white” perspectives on history pervade libraries but they should be weighed against the perspectives of indigenous people and immigrants, as uncovered by dialogue with them.

#### Identify when you are in deep water

Many and varied skills and qualities and much knowledge is needed to practice the radical humanist and the radical structuralist dimensions of anti-racist social work. Social work graduates may possess some of these skills and not others. Therefore, they need to identify when they lack the necessary skills for practice. One social worker thought that social work students should continually ask: “am I being judgmental, am I

being culturally biased?" Another participant stated that whereas experienced social workers often have the skills to recognize unfamiliar situations, inexperienced social workers may not. Those who do recognize their limitations, she thought, are often unwilling to admit them. She believed that many social workers did not realize that they could not know everything. She expressed this view:

I think we have somehow to instill in social workers in training, to identify when they're in deep water, and when they are not feeling they have the skills. And then to teach them how to find the resources. Education used to be you'd go, you'd get your knowledge base and you were set. It's not the case anymore. There is so much to learn, we can't learn it in one stint of education, and so we really need to give workers skills to find the resources, to find the contacts, and to know how to go about that.

This participant indicated that identifying limitations is important in cross-cultural social work with an anti-racist focus. She pointed out that cross-cultural social work presents many new challenges where social workers were more likely to get in "deep water." The worker may encounter those "who think they know and they don't." Therefore she thought that social workers should learn to bring out a mental check list in unfamiliar situations.

I work in a place that has 100 employees and I've seen new people coming in and they often would be quite accepting of approaches and ways of the more experienced workers, and that's not necessarily a good thing. If we can give some kind of a mental check list for them to really evaluate for themselves. Where am I? Have I ever worked in this situation before? No? Well that should be a little clue here. What kind of training have I had to work? None. I'm working with an Aboriginal family, never worked with them, had no training in school or at work, no on the job training. Those should be clues.

### Leap over that divide.

If social workers are to learn to be self critical, they must be open to self-exploration. A social worker thought that students must learn to “pick up on when their attitude and belief system is influencing their intervention.” A non-social work participant acknowledging that “as a white middle class male I take a lot for granted,” considered that he needed be alert to difference. A francophone social worker suggested that if a social worker can develop the skill to recognize bias such as “when I hear someone speak French it upsets me,” then they can “work on” their biases. She thought that growing up bilingual had allowed her to develop skills in recognizing some of these subtle differences:

Having been raised bilingual, that's given me an opportunity to realize there's differences in people, and it's okay. I see how people are so intimidated if they are in an environment where some body is speaking a language that they don't understand. I've seen it in meetings. Because people who are of French decent, talk very quickly and they talk quite loudly and they get into discussion. And I've seen francophone people really not hear the person's point, and I've seen myself bridging that because I have got a foot in both. I've seen that happen often. And that is in work situations with fellow workers. So it's not just working with our clients, it's working together as social workers.

She suggested that social workers need to develop sensitivity in situations of cultural diversity. In order to develop this sensitivity they need to develop skills in exploring their cultural assumptions.

### Having a cup of tea: chewing the fat

The formal approach of visiting a social worker in an office and being offered the

“fifty minute hour,” to talk about problems is not appropriate in many multicultural situations. A social worker with Aboriginal people emphasized the necessity of putting aside social work jargon as well as learned skills about how and where to communicate.

You can't be a social worker with social work jargon. You have to come down and be a human. You sit on the doorstep and have a cup of tea while you're talking about problems. That comes over much better than being official. I like it better actually . . . to sit on someone's doorstep . . . one day sitting on a doorstep with a skirt . . . hiked up to cover my knees . . . having a cup of tea . . . chewing the fat. I was freezing to death . . . you sit there . . . and you really build a rapport with someone.

Interaction at this level opens up the possibility of an informal, casual relationship and culturally sensitive social work. She gave the example of a client who was not at home when she called. The following day she called round to investigate.

He said, “I was out all night. I didn't get home.” I said, “I suppose you were out on a bender.” “Yeah, as a matter of fact I was.” He said ‘I suppose you were here.’ I said “Yeah . . . when am I going to come round again?” “Well, how about driving me to the Irving by-pass. I've got to get gas for the lawn mower and you can counsel me on the way up.”

This sentiment was shared by two participants from First Nations communities. One said:

We want you to sit down and have a cup of tea. If you don't want to come to my house and have a cup of tea and a piece of bread you think that you are better than I am.

The other recommended:

They want to be told, ‘hi, how are you, what can I do for you today?’ I can't walk in and say ‘Mr. Aboriginal Man of Canada, can I help you with your psychological problem which affects your environment? They don't want to hear that. They just want a cup of tea and a cigarette.

This is certainly not the type of relationship-building that is written about in traditional social work text books. Social workers need to develop different orientations to inform their work in diverse situations.

### A window on the world

A social worker who experienced enormous difficulty in developing an orientation for work in a First Nations Community persisted in this work because she thought that it could promote understanding between “white” and Aboriginal societies.

I'm hoping I can be an ambassador because . . . I find myself defending what is misconstrued or misunderstood . . . They don't see . . . they're not there . . . they don't know . . . they mistake some of the habits and the ways of life for laziness or for indifference. But that's not what it's all about, it's their culture and I'm hoping that I can be someone that can demystify that. I said one time, I don't know why I'm here. I keep looking for answers . . . just when I think I have got them, I go back and search. He said “maybe you're our window to the world.” And I thought . . . that can be the role of the white social worker to be a window. . . you know . . . a two way window . . . that can help people.

To play this role a social workers need skills to become accepted in the worlds on both sides of the window. To do so they need support and advice of people on both sides.

### Conclusion

Sensitizing concepts illustrating participants' views about the orientation for anti-racist social work have modified my foundational ideas. The discussion about “orientation” or “bearings” highlights the inadequacy of the pre-established “heart,” “head,” “hand,” and “soul” metaphors to organize the data. “Orientation” or “bearings” do not fit neatly into any one of these pre-established categories. “Hand” has some



relevance because sometimes participants discussed how social work skills of developing relationships could be applied in a cross-cultural context. On other occasions new skills such as "blending in" were needed. "Head" is also important because social workers need knowledge that will inform how they enter communities and form relationships with people from diverse backgrounds. "Self" presented by the social worker will also influence their acceptance or rejection. These sensitizing concepts represent more, they suggest how the social worker should apply knowledge, skills and values to orient themselves to a rural community.

Social work educators need to develop curriculum to help their students to develop culturally appropriate orientations. The informality suggested by New Brunswick Aboriginal people may be as inappropriate with other diverse people but sensitizing concepts from Aboriginal people show clearly how professional social workers must modify their practice with diverse people. Certainly participants emphasized the need to "form relationships" and "listen" but there are differences between established practice wisdom about how to do so and what participants recommended. The "counselling" that occurs in a car ride on the by-pass to collect gas differs from Rogers' (1951) ideas about how to communicate warmth, genuineness and unconditional positive regard.

Relationships are much less formal, there are fewer rules, skills need to be developed to work with more flexible boundaries. It is good social work practice in all situations to enter work without preconceived notions but the work needed to enter a

situation with a “zero frame of mind” is far greater in rural cross cultural situations than in urban encounters between social worker and client from the same ethnic group. The variety of ideas presented in participants’ sensitizing concepts confirms Collier’s (1993) view that social workers need to construct their own social work to respond to their unique work contexts.

## CONCLUSION

In chapter 3 I outlined my thought foundations and in chapter 4 I reviewed a number of publications about social work with diverse people. The content of chapters 3 and 4, together with my experiences of life, social work and teaching anti-racist social work courses formed the foundational starting point for this study. When I allowed sensitizing concepts of diverse stakeholders to dialogue with my own they had different effects on my thought foundations. Although sometimes sensitizing concepts confirmed (chapter 8) or fundamentally challenged my thought foundations (chapter 9), more often the influence was more subtle. Sensitizing concepts served to contextualize my foundations about anti-racist social work, to modify, enhance or clarify them. These subtle influences often occurred simultaneously. For example, in enhancing my understanding about rural New Brunswick, sensitizing concepts also modified my foundational ideas about Canadian rural communities and contextualized my understanding. There were many subtle ways that my thought foundations were modified through the dialogue with sensitizing concepts. Together these changes enriched my understanding of issues in New Brunswick that should be addressed in anti-

racist social work curriculum.

This chapter provides sensitizing concepts that again contribute to the literature reviewed in chapter 4. In particular the sensitizing concepts reported in this chapter add to Canadian social work knowledge about rural communities and about New Brunswick in particular. They provide insights into what it is like to live and work in this province's Saint John River Valley. They support a postmodern emphasis on diversity by highlighting differences between participants. Yet they also emphasize the difficulties faced by many diverse people in the province and the failure of social work to address these difficulties. The sensitizing concepts themselves address some of the inadequate social work response. They add to the Canadian rural social work literature by suggesting how social workers can orient themselves to work in this rural community.

In the last six chapters I have examined how far my research goals have been achieved. In chapters 5 and 6 I described a process that enabled diverse stakeholders to contribute to curriculum development. In chapter 7 I summarized the data and explained how it could have a direct and an indirect impact on anti-racist social work curriculum. In chapters 8, 9, and 10 I have provided much more detail about sensitizing concepts that can inform curriculum and have shown how I created a dialogue between my foundational ideas outlined in chapters 3 and 4 and sensitizing concepts, themes and stories from diverse participants. I now turn to the conclusion of this dissertation in which I summarize and evaluate my work, and suggest curriculum, empirical and conceptual developments that might emanate from it.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### WHERE NEXT? SENSITIZING CONCEPTS AND ANTI-RACIST SOCIAL WORK THEORY AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AT ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY

#### INTRODUCTION

This dissertation presents a case that sensitizing concepts expressed by research participants with different stakes in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St. Thomas University can enrich curriculum content and contribute to new links between foundational and anti-foundational social work theory. Furthermore, I suggest that the research process provides a method for enhancing the participation of ethnically and racially diverse<sup>1</sup> stakeholders in social work curriculum development.

In this concluding chapter I briefly summarize and evaluate the work, and suggest further work that might emanate from it. The chapter begins with an overview of the work. Then I consider the strength and limitation of the methodology. I evaluate the work's success in enabling diverse stakeholders to participate in curriculum development processes. I review how the research contributes to literature about anti-racist social work and how it can influence curriculum content and teaching and learning methods. I evaluate the contribution of the study to the relationship between foundational and anti-foundational social work theory and describe how sensitizing concepts impacted on my thought foundations. Finally, I consider further work that might emanate from this study.

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<sup>1</sup>In this chapter I continue to refer to "ethnic and racial diversity" as diversity.

## OVERVIEW OF THE WORK

This dissertation attempted to answer the research question:

**What sensitizing concepts inform the thinking of people who have a major stake in the anti-racist focus of the BSW programme at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick, in relation to curriculum content and teaching and learning methods.**

The question was timely to ask for the reasons outlined in chapter 2. I argue that social work's history and its philosophical base justify attention to issues of diversity.

Population changes leading to greater proportions of Aboriginal people, and immigrants in much greater numbers from locations such as the African and Asian continents, all support the importance of the work. The pain of diverse people expressed in their written and oral biographies and histories shows the need for sensitive and competent social work responses. I draw from work by CASSW to show that Canadian social work educators' responses to diversity have been inadequate and have particular deficiencies in New Brunswick. Finally I explore particular features of the province that indicate a need for attention to diversity. The work reported in this dissertation responds to this need.

In chapter 3 I provide a theoretical base for the work. I explore the benefits of an anti-racist epistemology that draws from critical theory and advocates changing rather than describing the world. This critical theory informs the structural, anti-oppressive and anti-racist social work theories that directly influenced my work (Dominelli, 1997; Mullaly, 1997; Thompson, 1993; Young, 1988). The foundation or bedrock of these theories is that social work should challenge oppression. I interrupt this discussion to

question whether my position is biased because of my social location as a privileged European white woman. My concern that my view may not reflect the views of diverse people in New Brunswick, leads me to explore the potential contribution of concepts from postmodernisms that celebrate diversity and that challenge thought which has clear foundations. Concepts such as “avoidance of metanarratives” or grand explanations, appear to have promise for enabling diverse stakeholders to be heard. The contradiction between an anti-racist foundational critical theory and a postmodernism that calls for the elimination of foundations is apparent.

Drawing upon the work of Leonard (1995) I explore the notion of contestable and non-contestable thought foundations. I decide that my opposition to racism or to teaching and learning methods that reflect or promote racism and oppression represent uncontestable foundations. My other thought foundations can be challenged, so I define them as “contestable.” Therefore, the research explores whether sensitizing concepts, drawn from symbolic interactionist theory, can either bridge the divide between my contestable-foundational anti-racist thought and the anti-foundational thinking that derives from my postmodernism, or suggest a new relationship between my contestable-foundational and anti-foundational thinking. I explore whether sensitizing concepts, my understanding of small meanings that reflect the different views of diverse stakeholders, can challenge my contestable thought foundations about anti-racist social work curriculum content and teaching and learning methods. This would have theoretical and curricular implications.

In chapter 4 I review literature that can inform curriculum for social work with diverse people. I draw examples from the main groups of literature that I review and to which my research can contribute. Drawing upon Barth (1969), I suggest that categorical approaches that group diverse people and then propose different “recipes” for helping them have limited usefulness and are not compatible with the symbolic interactionist and postmodern elements of my thinking. I explore “transactional” literature that emphasizes interactions between people and suggests that anti-racist social work should both challenge racism (for example Dominelli, 1997; Kivel, 1996), and provide culturally competent responses to diverse people (Green, 1995; Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 1993). The rural context of work in New Brunswick should be considered, but the small amount of Canadian work available was carried out in other parts of the country (Collier, 1993; Tobin & Walmsley, 1992). I consider adult education literature that emphasizes experiential learning (Boud & Miller, 1996; Knowles, 1980), literature that views education as a tool for empowerment (Freire, 1970, 1973; hooks, 1994; Lather, 1991), as well as literature that specifically addresses curriculum for anti-racist, including culturally competent, social work (for example, Christensen, 1992; Herberg, 1993). I also consider the value of autobiographical accounts (for example, Charon, 1988, 1989; James & Shadd, 1994). Finally I review literature about diversity in New Brunswick (for example, Marcoccio, 1995; St-Amand, 1988).

Chapters 5 and 6 describe the qualitative methodology derived from my theory and designed to draw rich data from a small number of participants. I seek no

metanarrative about anti-racist curriculum. The methodology emphasizes the importance of reflexivity because I am considering how sensitizing concepts can change my ideas. Reflexivity was also needed to enable me to understand participants' views.

Chapter 5 explains how and why the participants were selected. Participants included a sample of 31 social work students and a main sample of 28 non-student stakeholders. Data collection methods included pre-interview questionnaires, qualitative interviews and post-interview contributions from participants over a 3 month period in 1998. Chapter 6 outlines the data analysis process of summarizing the data, identifying sensitizing concepts and grouping them into themes. I briefly indicate the effectiveness of the research methods for enabling diverse stakeholders to contribute to curriculum developments.

Rich data from the participants is outlined in chapters 7 to 10. Demographics of sample participants in chapter 7 provide a context through which the sensitizing concepts can be comprehended. Many different concepts and themes were discussed and I outline them briefly. I then consider how the major themes can inform curriculum content. Participants' sensitizing concepts reported in chapter 8 emphasized that racism was "alive and well" in New Brunswick. It pervaded all aspects of life, from store clerk's "gossip between themselves" and talk "of smell," to the inability of Aboriginal people to practice a purification ceremony without "setting off the fire alarms." Racism in rural New Brunswick was often not overt, but there "in the closet" and could be identified clearly if participants "read between the lines."



Many participants thought social work students should gain self awareness, and deal with their personal “needs,” such a need to “belong” or a sense of being overwhelmed by the “guilt” at oppression by previous generations. Then, social workers should “know the people” so that they can help them to pursue their own direction rather than “where the social worker wants them to go.” Only then will these social workers select “book learning” that helps rather than a hinders diverse people. I continue this chapter by evaluating the strength and weakness of the study’s research methods and consider how these methods contribute to diverse stakeholders’ participation in curriculum development.

#### EVALUATION OF METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

A qualitative methodology is compatible with the postmodern, symbolic interactionist and critical theoretical bases of this study. The postmodern search for small stories is compatible with a methodology seeking depth and richness. The interactionist theoretical base leads to an attempt to understand sensitizing concepts. This can be achieved through a research process that permits interactions between the researcher and research participant. This interaction can also permit the participant to comment on the researcher’s ideas. The social change with its roots in critical theory can be pursued by hearing, and then responding to, the views of people who are generally not heard during curriculum development processes.

Participants represented many different constituencies with diversity within and

between them. Therefore, Aboriginal people included Mi'kmac and Maliseet people, elders, social workers, human service workers and community residents. Newcomers were represented by people who had been in Canada for varying amounts of time, from different countries and continents, and immigrants and refugees who intended to stay in Canada as well as temporary residents. Human service and social workers were both volunteers and paid workers and managers or front-line workers with different employers. People resident in communities of different sizes were selected.

There were some omissions. The only people of colour born outside Canada were Aboriginal. Very few participants came from the southern part of the Saint John River Valley. Children were not heard. Jewish people were not included in the study until this omission was realized and neither student nor main sample questionnaires asked about anti-Semitism. These omissions reduce the range of perspectives heard in this study.

Data collection by questionnaires, followed by qualitative interviews for main sample participants, had a number of advantages. Participants could reflect on questions before answering them. I encouraged a wide range of ideas by a loose interview structure. The possibility of "leading" the participants by use of the questionnaire existed and, despite my efforts, some participants may have been silenced through reading the questions. However, the rich data obtained from main sample participants suggests that the data collection procedures did encourage different responses.

This study suggests that questionnaires alone are not an appropriate method for

identifying sensitizing concepts. Students, only provided with a questionnaire, rarely made statements with many sensitizing features. Furthermore, sensitizing concepts were difficult to identify through the questionnaires. Dialogue was much more effective for generating these concepts, and non-verbal communication helped in their identification. Therefore, a weakness of the study is that student voice is not fully heard. Further research, using different data collection methods, would rectify this weakness.

Although participants in the main sample had three occasions to reflect on their views, the research was conducted over a short time period. Students' only opportunity to provide data was when they completed their questionnaires. A study using longitudinal methods might provide for more reflection.

This study has the strength and weakness of qualitative research. It has been useful in suggesting directions for the curriculum and teaching and learning methods. This study suggests that New Brunswick features of racism should be included in the St. Thomas social work curriculum and varied teaching and learning methods should be employed, but generalizations are not necessarily possible. The logical data analysis was consistent with the methodology and produced ideas about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work. The participants' sensitizing concepts enabled me to explore how my contestable foundations could, and if they should, be changed.

## PARTICIPATION OF DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In this section I evaluate the success of this study in enabling diverse stakeholders to contribute to anti-racist social work curriculum development processes at St. Thomas University. I also consider the likelihood of diverse stakeholders continuing to be involved in these processes. In this study 28 participants who were not social work students and 31 social work students shared their thoughts about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work. Chapter 7 provides a summary of these themes and chapters 8 to 10 provide collages of sensitizing concepts that can be incorporated in curriculum. Without doubt the sensitizing concepts and summary of themes provide detailed ideas about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work. Two questions must be asked about this data. First, does the data accurately reflect ideas from diverse stakeholders in the anti-racist focus of the St. Thomas BSW programme? Second, will these ideas influence the curriculum?

### Does data reflect ideas of diverse stakeholders?

The data can only reflect the ideas of diverse stakeholders if they were research participants or in some way contributed to the study. Earlier in this chapter I indicated omissions of people of colour, very recent newcomers, residents from the southern part of the Saint John River Valley and children in the sample. Despite these omissions I included participants from diverse backgrounds, human service workers, social workers

and social work students. Other stakeholders including social work faculty at St. Thomas University and the Social Work Advisory Committee for the BSW programme did not participate. Nevertheless these and other stakeholders contributed to the research design and to my foundations as I discussed with them the ideas reported in chapters 3 and 4 that I discussed with research participants. This study does not claim to report the ideas of a representative sample of stakeholders. I decided to seek depth and richness of data from a qualitative research design. My guides would not have been able to introduce me to stakeholders who were most hostile to social workers, but the data does include negative images of social workers so I have some grounds for hoping that views of hostile people were expressed by other participants.

Research participants can not contribute to the curriculum unless the data accurately reports their views. In chapter 5 I explain the steps taken to make foundational views transparent to research participants. I consider that if I had not made my foundations explicit these foundations would still have had impact on the qualitative interviews and could still have silently influenced the participants. My uncontestable and contestable foundations were clearly articulated. Participants were provided with the opportunity to challenge these foundations and they often did so. The challenges and suggestions about inclusions suggest that participants were able to tell me their views. I immediately acted upon challenges that I accepted (such as the difficulty of distinguishing between the "heart" and "soul" metaphors).

To establish that participants were provided with an opportunity to contribute to anti-racist curriculum development it is also necessary to confirm that I reported these views accurately. Participants were provided with an opportunity to change “relevant” transcripts and I included their suggested amendments. I tried to honestly report what was said. The report contains sensitizing concepts that contradict one another, suggesting that I did not just hear what I wanted to hear.<sup>2</sup>

Will the participation of diverse stakeholders continue?

In chapter 6 I explained that catalytic validity was important to me. This study will have little utility unless diverse participants continue to influence the anti-racist social work curriculum. I expect that this will happen because of my own personal commitment, because of the commitment of the social work department and because of the expectations of stakeholders.

The exercise of gathering data from diverse stakeholders could end with the completion of this dissertation. This would not be empowering. Stakeholders would not gain from this exercise. Commitment to use the data is needed. First I must personally commit myself to use the data, which I have done. This commitment is evidenced by a course already taught and publications and papers already written and presented, that share with others sensitizing concepts from diverse stakeholders in New Brunswick.

My commitment alone is insufficient. I work in a university where others have

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<sup>2</sup> It can, of course, be argued that I wanted to hear contradictory views to support my postmodern orientation.

stakes in the anti-racist focus of social work curriculum. Therefore, it was necessary to secure their commitment prior to my work. This was not difficult. I was appointed to develop anti-racist curriculum. Social work faculty were committed to me doing so. I met with them several times while designing this work to ensure my direction met with their approval and to change direction if necessary. The provision of a research grant from St. Thomas University to facilitate this work, and the willingness of the Social Work Department to support research costs are evidence of commitment. Prior to finalizing my research plans I discussed the proposed work with the St. Thomas Social Work Advisory Committee that represents stakeholders in the social work programme, their commitment was secured and the research design was informed by their comments.

Since completing this study I have noted that interest in the work continues and I have taken steps to ensure its use. I made the results available to different stakeholders, reported progress to the St. Thomas Social Work Advisory Committee and shared initial results with them in September 1998 (Appendix 18). The Aboriginal people and the Human Service Workers who acted as guides, and some of the participants, have asked about plans for continuation. I have had informal initial conversations with colleagues about the next stages for this work. Several other faculty members are actively involved in curriculum and non-curriculum work relating to diverse people so other social work faculty advocate for this work. The re-accreditation of the social work programme, due in 2000 would be less successful if the views of diverse stakeholders were ascertained but

then ignored. I am confident that the research will be part of a process to involve diverse stakeholders in curriculum development.

## SENSITIZING CONCEPTS ENRICHING ANTI-RACIST SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM

In this section I draw upon chapters 7 to 10 to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of sensitizing concepts as units of analysis in research designed to enrich social work curriculum. As already suggested in chapter 7, I propose that their influence can occur in two ways. First, the sensitizing concepts can directly inform anti-racist social work curriculum. Second, they can inform social work educators who develop anti-racist social work curriculum. I begin this section by exploring difficulties with sensitizing concepts as units of analysis.

### Limitations of sensitizing concepts

Sensitizing concepts are rich and they are memorable. They encapsulate complex ideas in a few words. I have found two difficulties with using these concepts as my unit of analysis in this research. First, I have found it difficult to ascertain what is and what is not a sensitizing concept. Second, important ideas of diverse stakeholders about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work were not always expressed in "sensitizing concepts."

Van den Hoonaard considers a sensitizing concept to be a construct drawn from the perspectives of others which alerts researchers to particular lines of thinking that may



differ from their own. The 4 word phrase, "living in a void." that describes the emotions of a New Brunswick refugee is a sensitizing concept. It is a construct drawn from the perspective of the refugee that helps me to understand her experience. Is the statement of the Aboriginal participant "I know what a cherry tomato is and I can read" a sensitizing concept? If I apply van den Hoonaard's (1997) definition of a sensitizing concept to this phrase, the answer is difficult. The phrase is a construct from the perspective of the participant but it is rather more than a single idea. It addresses knowledge (about a cherry tomato) and skills (the ability to read). When I applied my "sensitizing concept checklist" to this statement I decided that the statement had some but not all of the qualities listed. Most of the "sensitizing concepts" had some but not all qualities. Also, not only the number of these qualities but the extent of them was important. I considered some statements to be vivid, some very vivid, and some very very vivid. How many "verys" did I need?

Earlier in this dissertation I stated that my difficulties in determining what was, and what was not a sensitizing concept had led me to create a continuum from the most sensitizing to the least sensitizing of concepts. I made a judgement about when I should term a concept sensitizing and when I should not do so. It is impossible to provide as much transparency to this process as I would like. I can justify why I defined particular concepts as "sensitizing" but each decision was made in a different way. Certainly these decisions would not satisfy the requirements of reliability and validity in quantitative

research. It was also impossible to satisfy qualitative evaluations of credibility described in chapter 6.

The second difficulty is that when I had made my decisions about what I would define as sensitizing concepts I found that many participants' ideas about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods were not included. The concepts "lecture," or "group discussion" were mentioned by 6 main sample participants and 18 students. These concepts are not rich, they are not memorable, they do not alert me to new possibilities. Instead they are the "bread and butter" of university pedagogy. If I just reported sensitizing concepts I would give an incomplete portrait of the views of diverse stakeholders. It is surely more important to inform curriculum by all participants thoughts than just their most sensitizing of thoughts.

I resolved this difficulty by reporting in chapter 7 a summary of all of participants ideas about curriculum content and teaching and learning methods, not just their sensitizing concepts. It is necessary for all of these ideas to be heard if I am not to colonize their knowledge by just selecting and using the bits that interest me.

Therefore, there are two clear limitations with these concepts. First, it is difficult to determine what is and what is not a sensitizing concept Second, these concepts do not represent all the ideas of diverse stakeholders, just the most memorable. Despite these limitations there is value in the sensitizing concepts. In the next section I consider how they can be directly used in anti-racist social work curriculum.

### Sensitizing concepts directly enriching anti-racist social work curriculum

Sensitizing concepts can very simply and directly enrich social work curriculum by providing ready-made curriculum material that social work educators can use in the classroom. These rich sensitizing concepts are often embedded in memorable stories that can help students to understand the concepts and the experiences that they describe.

I have already used some of the sensitizing concepts in my teaching. I have provided social work students with a collage of sensitizing concepts and asked them to construct social work responses that are radical humanist and radical structuralist. Some creative and interesting ideas have emerged. Another use has been case study material. I provided collages of sensitizing concepts drawn from the transcripts of Jewish people to a "Social Work with Oppressed Groups" class. Students took the collages and developed suggestions about roles of non-Jewish social workers in responding to the difficulties indicated by these concepts. For example they considered social work responses that could confront the "we're the richest, we're the smartest" stereotype. I have also invited guest speakers from different stake-holding constituencies to share their stories in classes. Rich and memorable sensitizing concepts often emerge in this process. For example, a Rabbi who visited the class shortly after students had completed this exercise stated that "it is not oppression but tolerance that kills a culture." Classroom discussions often returned to this comment for the remainder of the course.

### Sensitizing concepts indirectly influencing anti-racist social work curriculum

Sensitizing concepts also have potential for indirectly influencing social work curriculum. A social work educator may choose to reflect upon sensitizing concepts (and more general themes shared by participants) and construct a curriculum that is informed but not determined by them. In chapter 8 I reported sensitizing concepts that confirmed my thought foundations. One of these is that "racism is alive and well in New Brunswick." The number and the richness of sensitizing concepts about racism supported my uncontestable foundation of opposition to racism. The sensitizing concepts helped me to understand the meaning of "racism" to diverse people in New Brunswick. This understanding can inform a curriculum that will help students to confront racism.

## CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE ABOUT SOCIAL WORK WITH ETHNICALLY AND RACIALLY DIVERSE PEOPLE

### Introduction

In this section I briefly review the contribution that this study can make to each of the groupings of literature in chapter 4 from which I drew when I designed this research. Also I consider a potential contribution of this study to knowledge about social work research methods.

### Transactional or categorical?

This study confirms my view that transactional approaches are more helpful than categorical approaches. As previously indicated, a transactional approach is compatible

with my symbolic interactionist theoretical foundation. Through the use of sensitizing concepts I am trying to break down the boundary between my own ethnicity and the ethnicities of my research participants so that this boundary is no longer “rigid and stereotypical” (Green, 1995, p. 28).

Participants expressed a plethora of different ideas about social work curriculum for work with diverse people. For example, most expressed clear views that racism existed, but one participant was equally clear that it was diminishing. Those who experienced racism spoke of ways in which it was manifested; one participant spoke of overt acts of violence while others spoke about the polite face of racism in New Brunswick. With such differences in perspective, categories are dangerous.

#### Anti-racist social work.

The research contributes context-specific information to the general literature on anti-racist social work. I defined anti-racist social work as “social work which tries to identify and challenge racial bias so that people from all ethnic backgrounds can access social work that meets their different needs,” (Appendix 19). In chapter 3 I explained that this work includes challenges to oppressive structures as well as competent responses to the different needs of diverse people. The rich data in chapter 8 assists social workers to understand racism as it exists in New Brunswick and to develop practice methods to confront it. Thompson’s (1993) individual level of oppression is illustrated by acts of stereotyping the African refugee as “a student at UNB” or his son as “black monkey.” At

a cultural level, assumptions about appropriate parenting are experienced as oppressive by some refugees and Aboriginal people. Finally, systemic racism within systems that discount work experience and qualifications gained before entry to Canada, illustrate Thompson's "structural" level of oppression. As explained in chapter 10, Young's five faces of oppression are also illustrated through this work.

### Cultural competence

As indicated above, anti-racist social work includes a cultural competence component. The study contributes to transactional literature about cultural competence in social work. Chapter 7 outlines participants' views about "head," "hand," and "self" needed for anti-racist social work. Although participants did not use the phrase "cultural competence" much of what they said would fall within its definition. "Head" cultural competence requires knowledge about differences between diverse people and understanding of difficulties minorities commonly face. Participants suggested that "head" cultural competence would involve knowledge about the history of diverse ethnic groups (from the perspectives of these groups) and knowing when and how to apply concepts found in structural social work literature. "Hand" skills such as cross-cultural communication at a micro level, and working in a community development capacity at a macro level as emphasized by participants, can also help to define culturally competent social work in New Brunswick and thereby contribute to anti-racist social work.

### Teaching and learning methods

This study contributes to the literature on teaching and learning methods for anti-racist social work. Theoretical frameworks such as those of Knowles, Freire and hooks are confirmed as relevant. Many different teaching and learning methods, particularly experiential learning, are valued. New and creative ways are suggested for students to learn to become anti-racist social work practitioners. Many participants stated clearly that book learning had limitations and suggested a number of non-intrusive ways for student social workers to learn about the people with whom they would work. They stressed that teaching and learning methods were needed to enable students to confront their own biases and suggested possibilities. Some of these methods were already incorporated in my anti-racist curriculum but many, such as the use of fiction, are new to me.

### Rural social work

The study contributes to limited Canadian literature about rural social work. It confirms Collier's (1993) notion that no simple blueprint is desirable for work in rural communities and Banks' (1999) view that social workers needed to construct locally specific solutions to locally perceived needs. The narratives of the difficulties faced by the Aboriginal social worker who felt that he needed to be a model citizen or the white social worker who was referred to as "another damn white person taking an Indian job" are graphic. The study also provides practical suggestions to complement Collier's theory. For example, the white social worker explained how she attempted to "blend in."

Others suggested resources for rural social workers such as their union. The study also explains some of the difficulties newcomers face in gaining acceptance in a stable, relatively homogeneous community perceived as "so white, so other." The study contributes to understanding what it is like to live and practice social work with diverse people in New Brunswick thereby adding to the Canadian literature about rural life and social work.

### Social work research

This study adds another example of qualitative social work research literature. Its major contribution may be in the development of ethical principles for qualitative research among diverse people. A number of layers of ethical challenge and dilemma are highlighted and need to be overcome for ethically sound research. Many research texts give insufficient guidance to researchers in this field.<sup>3</sup> This study suggests that the Tri-Council approach is not necessarily the best way forward. I suggest small, local methods of establishing ethical soundness of research (Clews, 1999c).

### FOUNDATIONAL AND ANTI-FOUNDATIONAL THOUGHT

A major contribution of this study is to the debate in social work education about the relative values of postmodern orientations that celebrate diversity and foundational work that derives from critical theory (Leonard, 1993, 1994, 1995; Lather, 1991; Ristock

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<sup>3</sup> A notable exception is provided by the recent work by Smith (1999). This work is written from a New Zealand perspective and not specifically intended for social workers. Nevertheless, it contains much of value for Canadian social work researchers.



& Pennell, 1996). I argued that if I acknowledge a single foundation. (ie.. the pursuit of anti-racist social work through non-oppressive teaching and learning methods), I can allow sensitizing concepts to come into dialogue with the other thought foundations outlined in chapters 3 and 4 that I am prepared to change. Figure 2 in chapter 8, and chapters 8 to 10 illustrate how sensitizing concepts confirmed, challenged and modified contestable thought foundations. The study makes a contribution to social work theory by enriching understanding about local meanings of key concepts, and exploring the role that sensitizing concepts can make in creating different links between foundational and anti-foundational thinking. It shows that a postmodern valuing of diversity can coexist with foundational thought based on challenging racism.

### Sensitizing Concepts

This study contributes to understanding of the nature of sensitizing concepts and their strengths and limitations in social work education and research. As described earlier, the data analysis refutes the notion that there is a clear category of “sensitizing concepts” that are different from “non-sensitizing concepts.” It suggests that “sensitizing concepts” may give incomplete pictures of research participants’ ideas. Nevertheless, the study shows that sensitizing concepts are of value in social work curriculum to help students to understand issues faced by diverse people. It suggests how to identify sensitizing concepts and has developed a checklist to assist in this identification (Appendix 13).

### Concepts as building blocks for theory

Ford (1975) suggested that concepts can be building blocks for theory. In this study participants explored the meaning of “racism” and “oppression” in their daily lives. Anti-racist social work practice in rural New Brunswick can be informed by the meaning thus attributed to “racism” and “oppression.” It can also be informed by an understanding about New Brunswick rural life and social work practice. In this way these concepts can act as building blocks for locally relevant theory for anti-racist social work practice.

### Contribution to critical theory

The study draws from and contributes to its critical theory parent. It suggests that social change can be promoted when there is a clear understanding about local realities. Only when lived experiences of racism are understood can an anti-racist social work theory develop which challenges this racism. The study also contributes to social change by suggesting a method for enabling those usually silent to have their voices heard when curriculum is developed. This research can be part of a process, and provides a model to extend the role of diverse stakeholders in curriculum development processes.

### Postmodernism

The study also contributes to a postmodern orientation to anti-racist social work theory. It confirms a valuing of the small and unique and develops a story about possible anti-racist social work in New Brunswick. Situated in a particular location, this work seeks no metanarratives but explores diversity of viewpoint. It can contribute to work

written from a postmodern perspective by providing a further example of this work.

Rather than the reflecting the certainty of the modern world with prescriptions about curriculum content, collages of phrases act as possibilities for a social work educator who is developing curriculum or reflecting on teaching and learning methods. A unique curriculum can be created on each occasion an instructor teaches a course. Each of the sensitizing concepts can inform its development. Some of the collages inform about life or social work in this rural province. Other collages of sensitizing concepts, organized around the "head," "hand," and "self," suggest curriculum. A third group of collages suggest how students in the social work programme at St. Thomas University can learn to practice an anti-racist social work that is relevant for the local New Brunswick context.

#### Relationship between postmodernism and foundational thought

The study makes a contribution to the relationship between a postmodernism and foundational thinking by showing how sensitizing concepts can confirm, challenge or modify contestable foundational thought. There are examples in chapter 8 to 10 of ways that sensitizing concepts confirm, challenge, or modify my foundational thought. In chapter 8 I show how my uncontested foundational thinking is confirmed by many participants' in the clear message that racism is "alive and well." My view about the value of experiential learning, and teaching that uses a variety of methods is also confirmed. Chapter 9 outlines ways that contestable foundational concepts were

challenged. My definition of anti-racist social work was not shared by all participants. There was also challenge to the distinction between “heart” and “soul” concepts. Sensitizing concepts challenged an omission in my work, my failure to include curriculum content addressing the views of diverse stakeholders about social workers. I intend to include content that addresses views about social workers in future curriculum. Therefore, a new foundation for anti-racist social work has been created. Sensitizing concepts have also helped me to relate my existing ideas about anti-racist curriculum to the rural New Brunswick context. I referred to this as “contextualizing foundations” in chapter 10.

Therefore, the impact of sensitizing concepts on foundational thinking both enrich this thinking about anti-racist curriculum and suggest how it can be made more locally relevant. The postmodern valuing of diversity is affirmed as different sensitizing concepts from diverse stakeholders are allowed to dialogue with contestable foundational ideas of a social work educator and effect change in the educator’s ideas. This process is congruent with critical theory because it aims to promote change that will enable diverse stakeholders to contribute to the development of curriculum. It offers promise that social workers will have greater competence to engage in anti-racist social work for the benefit of diverse people.

#### Dialogue between sensitizing concepts and contestable thought foundations

The conceptual link between sensitizing concepts and contestable foundational

thought could occur in two ways. When a single sensitizing concept confirmed or refuted a foundational idea, a linear thought process could occur. I reflected on my foundational thought (for example that anti-racist social work should contain radical humanist and radical structuralist components). Next I noted sensitizing concepts that suggested a need for radical humanist and radical structuralist work with diverse people. Then I confirmed my contestable foundational view about the components of anti-racist social work.<sup>4</sup>

More frequently the link was not so clear. Only after reflections on the difficulty experienced by several participants in locating an idea in "heart," "head," "hand," and "soul," did I realize that the metaphors were not useful and consider alternatives. My thinking was not linear. A creative leap of imagination was needed to realize that the fit was not good and to come up with an alternative. Sensitizing concepts inspired me to change an idea that was previously a contestable foundations. Further conceptual or empirical work could investigate the intellectual process by which sensitizing concepts impact on contestable thought.

#### CONCLUSION: WHERE NEXT?

A strength of the work is that it addresses anti-racist social work curriculum, an area of work neglected until recent years and now recognized as important by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. It adds to the small amount of work located in rural communities, particularly Atlantic Canada, and adds voices of people

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<sup>4</sup> I realize, of course that many other variables need to be considered before jumping to such a hasty conclusion.

who live and practice social work, thereby helping us to understand important social work practice issues in rural communities.

Therefore the study has had some success in its three goals. First, at a theoretical level a process for reconciling elements of foundational anti-racism with an anti-foundational valuing of diversity is explored and suggestions are made about how this can occur. Second, at a curriculum level, content as well as teaching and learning methods to promote anti-racism are both suggested. Third, at a political level a process of involving people who have stakes in an anti-racist focus of a social work curriculum is proposed. The study has the catalytic validity informed by critical theory because it can lead to change through development of curriculum that will prepare students to work more effectively with diverse people, while also involving diverse stakeholders in the anti-racist focus of a social work programme in curriculum development processes.

There are also weaknesses. Detailed methodological challenges have been described in the chapters 5 and 6, some of which were not resolved. The problem of students' participation resulted in them only providing questionnaire responses. Few sensitizing concepts from questionnaires emerged in data analysis. Therefore, the voice of students is weak. New ways of encouraging their development must be explored. The problem of attempting to understand sensitizing concepts from diverse participants whose language was not English was only partly resolved; my understanding of their sensitizing concepts was only as good as their ability to translate into my language. The study did

not contain any people of colour who had been in New Brunswick for more than a generation. Participants were generally drawn from the Fredericton area and surrounding rural communities; stakeholders in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme from the Saint John area were poorly represented. These limitations suggest further research that seeks sensitizing concepts from the neglected groups, and in the instance of students, further research that uses different research methods. The study shares the acknowledged limitation of all qualitative work, in that it does not permit generalizations. As indicated, I am suspicious of claims of generalizability.

This study is an account of a work in process to explore the relationship between foundational and anti-foundational thought about anti-racist social work, to develop anti-racist social work curriculum content and teaching and learning methods, and to devise a method for involving stakeholders in the anti-racist focus of social work curriculum developments at St. Thomas University. The process is not complete in any of these areas. As this is an account of a process, credibility requires long descriptions of process and reflexivity. This also makes it difficult to read so I have added summaries which add further to length. No work in any of the three related areas explored in this dissertation should ever be complete. I end by suggesting future directions. I explore plans for the continuing involvement of diverse stakeholders in curriculum development at St. Thomas University. Then I consider possible further work in anti-racist curriculum development. Finally I consider possible future steps for the development of theory.

### Participation of stakeholders in anti-racist curriculum development

Anti-racist social work curriculum developments at St. Thomas University continue. As they do so it is important to continue to listen to diverse voices and be constantly vigilant to gain new insights. It is important to be alert to what is going on in the community so that current local issues can inform curriculum. Much new literature on anti-racist social work is being published in Canada. Many insights have value in rural New Brunswick.

After this dissertation is completed I will, as promised, share the results with stakeholders who were research participants. I will network with them and with social work faculty and the Social Work Advisory Committee to identify the next steps and how these steps can be coordinated with other developments in the social work department. Possibilities could be an extension of this study to include groups such as people of colour born in Canada and residents in the southern part of the Saint John River valley. Further research, using a different design might provide data from students and graduates from the programme. A group of stakeholders could, perhaps, consider how sensitizing concepts could inform future curriculum developments in the social work programme. What emerges from this will depend on others' views as well as mine. That is as it should be. Although I have devoted much time and energy to planning, conducting and writing up this research, a major benefit of working at St. Thomas University is that anti-racist social work is seen as a collective responsibility. Other faculty are involved in their



own initiatives to develop an anti-racist focus. My blueprint for using the results of this work would be disempowering for other stakeholders in and outside of the university. Therefore the next stage will involve a dialogue.

#### Research to inform anti-racist social work curriculum

I have gained some understanding about issues faced by community stakeholders but I need to understand more. Further dialogue with social workers could clarify the issues that they are facing. There are similarities and there are differences in the experiences of diverse groups in New Brunswick. Much more can be learned. Social workers have little involvement with new immigrants and refugees. Participatory action research, perhaps involving immigrant service agencies, Immigration Canada, immigrants, and refugees could consider the next stages. Further research could uncover issues of concern to People of Colour who have lived in the province for generations but were not included as participants in this research. Another research design could be developed to explore in depth the views of social work students about what they think they need to learn to practice anti-racist social work. A project could explore graduates perceptions about the most effective teaching and learning methods for promoting anti-racism. There are many possibilities.

#### Social work theory

At the outset my goal was to conduct research to inform developments in anti-racist social work curriculum. As the work has proceeded the ways that changes in my

theoretical foundations occurred has become of interest. I have illustrated the types of dialogue between sensitizing concepts and thought foundations in chapters 8 to 10 and in this conclusion. More conceptual work is needed to explore further the potential utility of sensitizing concepts at the interface of foundational and anti-foundational thinking and as units of analysis in research.

Sensitizing concepts graphically illustrate the views of others and they can “sensitize,” leading to a confirmation or change in thought foundations. Some of the mechanisms for this have been explored here but further conceptual work is needed. Using sensitizing concepts has both strengths and weaknesses. Sensitizing concepts do not provide a full picture of the views of diverse stakeholders in regard to anti-racist social work curriculum. Many valuable ideas were not expressed as sensitizing concepts. Earlier in this dissertation I described sensitizing concepts as “icing on the cake.” They sensitized me to the unusual, the different and the picturesque. Participants could have had ideas about, for example, the way in which lectures could be improved. It is unlikely that these ideas would be expressed in sensitizing terms and therefore would be unreported if sensitizing concepts alone had been analysed. My realization of the incomplete contribution that sensitizing concepts make led me to write an entire chapter that located sensitizing concepts in a context of data. To continue my analogy, I provided the cake in chapter 7, so that I could explore how the icing fitted on the cake in chapters 8 to 10. My work suggested that there is a danger of reifying sensitizing concepts. These

concepts have different numbers and degrees of sensitizing qualities. Further conceptual work could explore this notion.

At a broader level I am excited by the potential of sensitizing concepts (or qualities) forging new relationships between contestable foundational anti-racist and anti-foundational postmodern thinking. I am also interested in exploring further how to combine my foundational, anti-foundational and symbolic interactionist epistemologies. Much more conceptual work is needed. As I reflect on this an internal dialogue continues.

I draw towards the conclusion of this dissertation with a postmodern comment. As I turn the sensitizing concepts on myself, the self is changed. The symbolic interactionist thread in my thinking replies that it is my construction of reality that has changed. I reply that I have a strengthened commitment to improve the condition of oppressed people, and my voice of critical theory speaks. My internal dialogue continues. The work continues.

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**APPENDIX ONE**  
**MEMO**

January 7<sup>th</sup> 1998

To: Dr Leslie Bella, Chair Dissertation Committee  
From: Rosemary Clews

**Dissertation Consultation**

Further to our recent discussions I am writing to outline my plans regarding this dissertation, in particular my intention to consult with the Social Work Advisory Committee at St Thomas University about the research design.

As you know I am hoping to listen to different voices of stakeholders who have a particular interest in the anti-racist nature of the BSW programme at St Thomas University. I plan to dialogue with them in order that we can identify sensitizing concepts in regard to the following the following two questions:

What would be the nature of anti-racist social work in Fredericton, New Brunswick?  
How can the BSW programme at St Thomas University facilitate learning about anti-racist social work most appropriately?

My own voice will be providing the ideological and theoretical framework which underpins the work. Components of my voice include my ideas about the relationship between social work theory and practice, my juggling of postmodern antifoundationalism with the foundationalism of structural social work and my philosophy of social work education ( in particular the notions of "heart, head, hand and soul"). The methodology which derives from this perspective is participatory. I hope that the "products" of the work will be concepts which have developed from these dialogues and a possible process for social work curriculum development in a rural community.

Although I have views about possible constituencies of stakeholders I consider that it would be presumptuous of me to identify "stakeholders who have a particular interest.." without the input of others. This would be an example of the foundational thinking which I am attempting to avoid. I propose to consult with the Social Work Advisory Committee about my provisional selection of constituencies of stakeholders and the methods that I am thinking of using to explore their answers to my questions. I want to do this because it fits with the ideology which underpins my work. I also want to do it because I have not lived and worked in this province for long enough to have clear ideas about my research questions as well as who I should ask and how I should ask my questions

This consultation will not be part of the data gathering stage of my work. I will not be asking the committee their views about answers to my questions but checking out their views about how I propose to go about the work. The Social Work Advisory Committee is an appropriate body to consult with. It has been established "to ensure that the Social Work programme is responsive to various constituencies" and the membership of the committee reflects many different constituencies. The proposed consultation comes well within the terms of reference of the committee.

I have read the Memorial University School of Social Work "Guidelines for Contact with Research Subjects before Human Subjects Approval" effective 15 September 1997 and I consider that my request falls within these guidelines:

1. I do not intend to gather data during these consultations
  2. I will not solicit participation from individuals on the committee
  3. I will not solicit informed consent for any future participation
  4. I will not arrange interview times or other specific arrangements for data gathering
- The purpose of my consultation is to inform individuals who may represent constituencies of stakeholders from whom I will collect data, about the nature of the study and solicit their cooperation. This is compatible with Principle 4

" the following is permissible as long as the four conditions above are adhered to:  
i) The researcher can inform administration and participant collectives of the nature of the study and can solicit their cooperation."

In conclusion, I consider that my research design will be better if I consult with this body than if I do not do so. Naturally I am consulting informally with different people about my research design but because the proposed committee consultation is of a more formal nature I am seeking your approval before I consult the committee.

I will inform the St Thomas University Ethics Committee about my consultation plans. Although I do not stand in a relationship of power in regard to the committee itself there are student representatives on the committee. I will ask the Chair of the Social Work Advisory Committee to inform the student representatives that they are free to leave the meeting for this agenda item or not contribute to the discussions. I will inform the Social Work Advisory Committee that any research plans or modifications to plans will be subject to the approval of my dissertation committee.

Please will you confirm that it is in order for me to proceed with this consultation.

Rosemary Clews

## **APPENDIX ONE**

Date sent: Mon, 23 Feb 1998 10:04:01 -0300  
To: clews@academic.stu.StThomasU.ca  
From: Leslie Bella <lbella@morgan.ucs.mun.ca>  
Subject: Memo of January 6th 1998. "Dissertation Consultation"

I have read your memorandum, and consider that the consultation you describe falls within "The Guidelines for Contact with Research Subjects before Human Subjects Approval" as approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee of the School of Social Work at Memorial University. Therefore, as your research advisor I see no need for submission to our Human Subjects Review Committee before you engage in this consultation, as long as the consultation proceeds as you describe.

Please note that a first draft of this correspondence was emailed to you on January 8th. and contained typographical errors. Therefore, this email replaces that one.

Good wishes in this endeavour.

Leslie Bella.  
Professor.  
Research Advisor to Rosemary Clews.  
February 23rd 1998.

**APPENDIX ONE**

**m e m o r a n d u m**

January 12<sup>th</sup> 1998

To: Rick Myers, Academic Vice President  
From: Rosemary Clews, Social Work

**Research Consultation**

Further to our brief conversation I am writing to provide some information about my planned consultation with the Social Work Advisory Committee.

As you probably know I am in the process of gaining approval for the research proposal for my doctoral dissertation in Social Work from Memorial University. My plan is to dialogue with people who have an interest or stake-holding in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St Thomas University about the development of this focus. Prior to doing so I want to consult with the Advisory Committee, who represent many different people with a stakeholding, to assist me with my research design. Specifically I would like to discuss the following:

1. Refining my research question and the questions I propose to ask research participants
2. Identifying the major stake-holding constituencies
3. Other aspects of my research plans that may be of interest to the Committee

I checked that it was not necessary to obtain ethical approval from Memorial University for this consultation about research design. I did so because it is possible that members of the Advisory Committee may also be research participants. I was advised that this was not necessary. I enclose relevant correspondence about this and I hope that it is in order to proceed with this consultation. You will note that in my memorandum to my research advisor I stated that I would obtain ethical approval for this consultation from this university.

Rosemary A. Clews

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### **Notes from consultation with Social Work Advisory Committee - January 19<sup>th</sup> 1998 Development of an anti-racist focus in our social work programme**

#### **Background**

- C.A.S.S.W. - nationally
- locally
- Our responses - Native BSW, anti-racist developments
- My need - PhD

#### **My process**

- understand the community, pilot courses in anti-racist social work
- research
- consider implications

#### **Plan for today**

##### **Inform**

##### **Enlist help in planning research**

- refining research question
- identifying constituencies of stakeholders
- other feedback

#### **Draft research question, meaning of it**

What sensitizing concepts inform the thinking of people with a major stakeholding in the anti-racist focus of the BSW programme at STU in relation to curriculum content and teaching and learning methods?

#### **Draft constituencies of "major" stakeholders**

C.A.S.S.W. (indirect)  
Social work faculty (to be involved at first and third stage)  
Social Work Advisory Committee (first and ?third stage, possibly some second stage participants)  
Social work students  
? Broader St Thomas University community  
Social work graduates from STU  
Social workers in practice  
Newcomers to Canada  
Native people  
Anglophones who are neither Native nor newcomers to Canada  
Acadian people. plus other Francophones?  
N.B.A.S.W.  
Employers of Social Workers

#### **Criteria for selection of participants from each stakeholding constituency?**

Interest, willingness, understanding/membership of more than one constituency, some people with knowledge of most rural communities, diversity of ethnic group.....

#### **Method of data collection**

In-depth interviews  
Questionnaires for students

Rosemary Clews

## **APPENDIX TWO**

### **AGREEMENT**

I will assist Rosemary Clews to make contact with a possible participant in the research entitled "Teaching and Learning about anti-racist social work at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick". I will not disclose to anyone that I provided this help or the identity of any possible participant

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Signed

**APPENDIX THREE**  
**MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Teaching and learning about anti-racist social work at St Thomas University,**  
**Fredericton, New Brunswick**

I am using a number of words in this questionnaire which have different meanings to different people. Please read the definitions that follow because they show what I mean by these words.

It may be helpful to refer to these meanings when you are answering the questions that follow.

**Social work.** Work that tries to help people, individually or in families, groups or communities, to find ways of solving problems they face and which tries to change features in the larger society which cause or contribute to these problems.

**Ethnic.** People who consider themselves to have a common heritage with others.

**Racial.** Some characteristic or quality that a person possesses (such as skin colour or features) which "identifies" them as being the same as some people and different from others and which leads to white Europeans placing themselves at the top of a hierarchy superior to others.

**Multicultural.** A situation or context in which people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds are present

**Anti-racist social work.** Social work which tries to identify and challenge racial bias so that people from all ethnic backgrounds can have equal access to social work that meets their different needs and interests.

The first sixteen questions allow me to learn something about you. I will compare the answers you give to these questions with those from other people. The answers from everyone will confirm for me that I am hearing from people from a number of different ethnic backgrounds and people who have different reasons for being interested in our teaching and learning about antiracist social work here at St. Thomas University.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred means of contact Phone (please give number) \_\_\_\_\_

Other, please state \_\_\_\_\_



1. Country of birth

Canada \_\_\_\_\_

Not Canada \_\_\_\_\_

(Please name country)

2. If your country of birth is not Canada please state which year you moved to Canada  
\_\_\_\_\_ (for example 1997)

3. Do you consider yourself to be a person of colour?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you consider yourself to be an Aboriginal or Native person?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you consider yourself to belong to an ethnic group which has been disadvantaged because of "race" or ethnicity? (Please see overleaf for my meaning of "ethnic" and "racial".

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (please name ethnic group)

No \_\_\_\_\_

6. What language did you speak most when you were a child?

French \_\_\_\_\_

English \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ (what language?)

7. Please indicate the category which describes the community where you live.

Small rural \_\_\_\_\_ ( 99 or fewer residents)

Rural \_\_\_\_\_ ( 100 and 999 residents)

Small urban \_\_\_\_\_ (1,000 and 9,999 residents)

Urban \_\_\_\_\_ (10,000 or more residents)

8. Are you a social worker?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If you answer "No" please move to Question 13

9. If the answer to Question 8 is "yes" and you are currently practicing please indicate the size of communities where you practice. Tick all relevant categories.

Small Rural \_\_\_\_\_ (99 or fewer residents)

Rural \_\_\_\_\_ (100 to 999 residents)

Small urban \_\_\_\_\_ (1,000 to 9,999 residents)

Urban \_\_\_\_\_ (10,000 or more residents)

10. Are you a social work graduate from St Thomas University?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

11. If the answer to Question 10 is "yes" please state the year when you graduated.

Year \_\_\_\_\_

12. Are you a member of the New Brunswick Association of Social Workers?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you supervise social workers?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

14. Are you a member of a social work union?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you have people who have jobs as social workers in the country where you grew up?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

16. Have you ever been an educator with a multicultural focus or in a multicultural context ?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Now I would like to read about some of your ideas. The questions which follow are included to help me to begin to understand your views about what social work students at St. Thomas University need to learn in order to practice anti-racist social work. I have asked questions about what you think social work graduates need to know, the skills they should possess (what they should be able to do) and the values which should inform their work (what they should believe). Use the lines as guides. You do not need to fill all of the space or answer all the questions. Write more on the back of the question sheets or use other sheets if you wish.

17. Important issues about anti-racist social work for people who graduate from St. Thomas University are \_\_\_\_\_

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18. People who graduate as social workers from St Thomas University should **know** the following if they carry out anti-racist social work \_\_\_\_\_

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19. People who graduate as social workers from St Thomas University should have the following **skills** if they carry out anti-racist social work \_\_\_\_\_

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20. People who graduate as social workers from St Thomas University should have the following **attitudes, beliefs and values** if they carry out anti-racist social work \_\_\_\_\_

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21. Please make any other comments about **what** you think that social work students at St Thomas University should learn or be taught in order to carry out anti-racist social work.

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22. Please let me know **how** you think that social work students at St Thomas University should learn or be taught about anti-racist social work.

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23. Please list any words or phrases that sum up your ideas about social work, anti-racist social work or teaching and learning about social work in a multicultural context.

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24. Bearing in mind everything that you have written and thought about as you have answered this questionnaire please make any other comments about social work or teaching and learning about social work in a multicultural context, anti-racist social work or social work with ethnically and racially diverse people.

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**Are you willing to meet with me for an interview lasting approximately one hour to discuss your ideas?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If we meet I will ask you to tell me about experiences, events and stories which illustrate your answers to these questions. Maybe you could begin to think about this now.

**Thank you very much for answering these questions.**  
**Rosemary Clews**

## **APPENDIX FOUR**

### **CONSENT FORM**

I have read about the research into teaching and learning about anti-racist social work at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick and have been given the opportunity to ask questions about it.

I agree to participate in the research. with the following conditions:

1. I realize that I can withdraw my consent at any time up to one month after my interview
2. I realize that anything that I say in an interview or anything that I write may be used in a research report
3. The research report will not identify me by name as a participant
4. The researcher will not tell anyone that I was a participant
5. The researcher will make every effort to keep confidential the fact that I participated in the research. I understand that the tape may be transcribed by a person other than the researcher who will be required to sign an oath of confidentiality.
6. I realize that someone who reads the report might guess that I participated in the research because they recognize my views in it
7. I realize that reflection upon the content of the questionnaire and interview may evoke thoughts and feelings that I will want to talk about. I have a support network that will enable me to do so.
8. I will be provided with a summary of the research results if I request it
9. I can read a copy of the report at the Harriet Irving Library at the University of New Brunswick, the Department of Social Work at St Thomas University and the library at Memorial University of Newfoundland

Please sign both copies, keep one and return the other with the questionnaire

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX FIVE**  
**LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS - MAIN SAMPLE**

(DATE INSERTED) 1998

Dear (NAME INSERTED)

Possible participation in research about teaching and learning about anti-racist social work at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick

The Department of Social Work at St Thomas University is trying to improve the ways that it helps students to learn about anti-racist social work. We want to improve what students to learn and how we help them to learn. I am a Professor of Social Work at St Thomas University and I am writing to ask if you will help us with this work. You have been selected because I think that you will have views that can help us. I would like to hear about your key ideas in regard to working with people from diverse backgrounds. I am interested in hearing about your ideas, I know that they might differ from other people who have a similar background to you. I would like you to speak for yourself and not try to speak on behalf of others.

The research has three stages. First, I would like you to complete a questionnaire in which you outline your ideas about preparing students for anti-racist social work in multi-cultural Canada. Second, I would like to meet with you to discuss your ideas in more detail. if you agree I plan to tape our conversations . Third, I will send my summary of your main ideas for your comment. At this stage you can also add any other ideas which have occurred to you since you completed the questionnaire and since our meeting. If you agree to participate I estimate that this will take between two and three hours in total.

About twenty people will be taking part in interviews for this research. The final report will be presented as a doctoral dissertation to The School of Social Work at Memorial University under the supervision of Dr. Leslie Bella. Full copies of the report will be kept in the libraries of Memorial University of Newfoundland and St Thomas/UNB and the Department of Social Work at St Thomas University. The report will also be studied carefully by the Social Work faculty at St. Thomas University, your participation will be very important in assisting us to think about what students should learn about anti-racist social work and how we should help them to learn it.

None of those participating will be named in the report, and I will do everything that I can to maintain your anonymity. Nevertheless, it is possible that some readers of the report may guess that you participated because they recognize your ideas in the content. Participants will be able to withdraw at any stage in the research and for a month after their interview.

I hope that you will be prepared to take part in this research. Please make a decision about whether you will do so. If you decide that you do not want to participate please return this letter to me in the enclosed envelope. If you do decide to take part please answer the questionnaire and complete the consent forms, keep one consent form and return the other to me. Please answer the question at the end to indicate if you would be willing to be interviewed about your ideas. If you wish I will send a summary of the main ideas of all participants to you when I have completed the work . You may telephone me at (506) 452-0481 or e-mail me at clews@stthomasu.ca if you would like any more information about this research before deciding whether or not you want to participate. Alternatively, you could contact Brian Ouellette, Chair of the Department of Social Work at St Thomas University or Dr Leslie Bella, School of Social Work, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St John's, Newfoundland A1C 5S7. I hope that you will decide to participate.  
Yours sincerely,

Rosemary A. Clews

**APPENDIX SIX**  
**REMINDER LETTER TO GENERAL PARTICIPANTS**

Dear

Possible participation in research concerning teaching and learning about anti-racist social work at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick

I wrote to you a short time ago to ask if you would be prepared to participate in this research.

As I have not heard from you, I am writing again. If you do not want to participate that is fine, but please will you let me know so that I can make other arrangements.

I enclose a copy of the questionnaire, consent form and the original covering letter. If you decide to participate please will you return the completed questionnaire as soon as possible. If you decide NOT to participate please will you sign below as soon as possible and return this letter in the envelope provided.

Thank you for considering this request,

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Clews

I have decided not to take part in this research

\_\_\_\_\_ Name, please print



## **APPENDIX SEVEN**

### **Teaching and learning about anti-racist social work at St Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick**

I am using a number of words in this questionnaire which have different meanings to different people. Please read the definitions that follow because they show what I mean by these words.

It may be helpful to refer to these meanings when you are answering the questions that follow.

**Social work.** Work that tries to help people, individually or in families, groups or communities, to find ways of solving problems they face and which tries to change features in the larger society which cause or contribute to these problems.

**Ethnic.** People who consider themselves to have a common heritage with others.

**Racial.** Some characteristic or quality that a person possesses (such as skin colour or features) which "identifies" them as being the same as some people and different from others and which leads to white Europeans placing themselves at the top of a hierarchy superior to all others.

**Multicultural.** A situation or context in which people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds are present

**Anti-racist social work.** Social work which tries to identify and challenge racial bias so that people from all ethnic backgrounds can have equal access to social work that meets their different needs and interests.

The first fourteen questions allow me to learn something about you. I will compare the answers you give to these questions with those from other people. The answers from everyone will confirm for me that I am hearing from people from a number of different ethnic backgrounds and people who have different reasons for being interested in our teaching and learning about antiracist social work here at St. Thomas University.

1. Country of birth

Canada \_\_\_\_\_

Not Canada \_\_\_\_\_

(Please name country)

2. If your country of birth is not Canada please state which year you moved to Canada  
\_\_\_\_\_ (for example 1997)

3. Do you consider yourself to be a person of colour?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you consider yourself to be an Aboriginal or Native person?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you consider yourself to belong to an ethnic group which has been disadvantaged because of "race" or ethnicity? (Please see overleaf for my meaning of "ethnic" and "racial").

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (please name ethnic group)

No \_\_\_\_\_

6. What language did you speak most when you were a child?

French \_\_\_\_\_

English \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ (what language?)

7. Please indicate the category which describes the community where you live.

Small rural \_\_\_\_\_ (99 or fewer residents)

Rural \_\_\_\_\_ (100 and 999 residents)

Small urban \_\_\_\_\_ (1,000 and 9,999 residents)

Urban \_\_\_\_\_ (10,000 or more residents)

8. Are you a social work student?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

9. If you are currently practicing as a social worker or in an allied occupation please indicate the size of communities where you practice. Tick all relevant categories.

Small Rural \_\_\_\_\_ (99 or fewer residents)

Rural \_\_\_\_\_ (100 to 999 residents)

Small urban \_\_\_\_\_ (1,000 to 9,999 residents)

Urban \_\_\_\_\_ (10,000 or more residents)

10. Are you a member of the New Brunswick Association of Social Workers?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you supervise social workers?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you have people who have jobs as social workers in the country where you grew up?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

13. Have you ever been an educator with a multicultural focus or in a multicultural context ?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

14. Are you a member of a social work union

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Now I would like to read about some of your ideas. The questions which follow are included to help me to understand your views about what social work students at St. Thomas University need to learn in order to practice anti-racist social work. I have asked questions about what you think social work graduates need to know, the skills they should possess (what they should be able to do) and the values which should inform their work (what they should believe). Use the lines as guides. You do not need to fill all of the space or answer all the questions. Write more on the back of the question sheets or use other sheets if you wish.

15. Important issues about anti-racist social work for people who graduate from St. Thomas University are \_\_\_\_\_

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16. People who graduate as social workers from St Thomas University should **know** the following if they carry out anti-racist social work \_\_\_\_\_

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17. People who graduate as social workers from St Thomas University should have the following **skills** if they carry out anti-racist social work \_\_\_\_\_

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18. People who graduate as social workers from St Thomas University should have the following **attitudes, beliefs and values** if they carry out anti-racist social work \_\_\_\_\_

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**19. Please make any other comments about what you think that social work students at St Thomas University should learn or be taught in order to carry out anti-racist social work.**

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**20. Please let me know how you think that social work students at St Thomas University should learn or be taught about the matters you mention in answer to the previous questions.**

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**21. Please list any words or phrases that sum up your ideas about social work, anti-racist social work or teaching and learning about social work in a multicultural context.**

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**22. Bearing in mind everything that you have written and thought about as you have answered this questionnaire please make any other comments about social work or teaching and learning about social work in a multicultural context. anti-racist social work or social work with ethnically and racially diverse people.**

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**23. Please write about any experiences, events or stories that illustrate your answers to the above questions. Use extra sheets if you have more to say.**

**Thank you very much for answering these questions.  
Rosemary Clews**

**APPENDIX EIGHT**  
**LETTER TO STUDENT PARTICIPANTS**

Dear

Possible participation in research concerning teaching and learning about anti-racist social work at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick

The Department of Social Work at St Thomas University is trying to improve the ways that it helps students to learn about social work anti-racist social work. In order to develop our curriculum content and teaching and learning methods I am contacting a number of people who might have ideas which can assist us. Students are an important constituency of people who have an interest in our BSW programme. I would like to know your key ideas about what you need to learn in order to practice social work in an anti-racist manner. If you agree to participate I will want you to complete a questionnaire. I estimate that it will take about half an hour to do so. If you do decide to participate please do not sign the questionnaire or talk to me about your answers.

The final report will be presented as a doctoral dissertation to The School of Social Work at Memorial University under the supervision of Dr. Leslie Bella. The report will also be studied carefully by the Social Work faculty at St Thomas University.

None of those participating will be named in the report and I will do everything that I can to maintain your anonymity. Nevertheless, some readers of the report may think that they can identify you as a participant because they recognize your views in it. Copies of the main results of the research will be left with Jeananne, our secretary. Please ask for a copy if you would like to read it. The main dissertation will be lodged at Memorial University of Newfoundland and copies will be placed in the Harriet Irving Library and the Department of Social Work at St Thomas University

If you would like more information about the research please contact me by e-mail at clews@stthomasu.ca, by phone at 452 0481 or in person. Alternatively please contact Brian Ouellette, Chair of the Social Work Department or Dr. Leslie Bella, School of Social Work, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, A1C 5S7. I hope that you will decide to participate but please do not tell me if you decide to do so. If you decide to participate please return the completed questionnaire and one signed copy of the consent form in the envelope, seal it and give it to Jeananne.

Thank you,

Yours sincerely

Rosemary A. Clews

**APPENDIX NINE**  
**CONSENT FORM - STUDENT PARTICIPANTS**

I have read about the research into teaching and learning about anti-racist social work and have been given the opportunity to ask questions about it.

I agree to participate in the research. with the following conditions:

1. I realize that I cannot withdraw my consent after I return the questionnaire
2. I realize that anything that I write may be used in a research report
3. The research report will not identify me by name as a participant
4. The researcher will not tell anyone that she guesses that I was a participant
5. The researcher will make every effort to keep confidential the fact that I participated in the research.
6. I realize that someone who reads the report might guess that I participated in the research because they recognize my views in it
7. I realize that reflection upon the content of the questionnaire may evoke thoughts and feelings that I will want to talk about. I have a support network that will enable me to do this.
8. I will be provided with a summary of the research results if I request it
9. I will be able to read a copy of the report at the Harriet Irving Library at the University of New Brunswick, the Department of Social Work at St Thomas University and the library at Memorial University of Newfoundland

Please read both copies. keep one and return the other with the questionnaire. Do not sign.

COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES SHOULD BE PLACED IN THE BOX IN THE SOCIAL WORK OFFICE



**APPENDIX TEN**  
Sent September 28<sup>th</sup> 1998

To: Judy and Laurel  
From: Rosemary

Please read in theory (class):

Thanks to those of you who completed the questionnaires about anti-racist social work education. If you intend to complete one but have not yet done so please do so within the next two weeks. Judy and Laurel have extra copies in case you have mislaid the original. Alternatively you could get an extra copy from Jeananne. If you want to talk to me before deciding whether to participate please call to see me. Do not let me know your decision but if you do complete a questionnaire please insert it in the envelope provided and deposit in the box in Jeanannes's room.

Thanks,  
Rosemary

## **APPENDIX ELEVEN** **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Note: *Words in italics are intended to explain the interview process to the reader. As indicated in the proposal I expect to deviate from this format. This is a guide to help me and others to be clear about the general content of each interview.*

### **Introductory**

I would like to tape our conversation. It will help me to remember your views. (*If relevant*) Somebody will be writing up a transcript of our conversation. You can have a copy of this transcript. This person who types up the interview will sign an agreement that they will keep anything that they learn about you confidential. I will listen to the tape several times. I will keep it for as long as I am thinking about what you and other people tell me. This may be up to five years. At the end of this time I will wipe the tape clean. Are you willing for the interview to be taped?

### **General Questions**

1. Thank you for filling in the questionnaire. What did you think about it?

Was it straightforward to fill in?

Do you have any general comments about it?

2. Were there things that you would have liked to tell me that the questionnaire did not include? (*If, "yes"*) What?

3. (*For immigrants and newcomers*) Is there anything like social work in (*name culture*)? . How is it carried out? Are people paid to help others? Have you noticed/ Are there (*word choice influenced by length of residence*) any differences in the way that helping by social workers<sup>1</sup> in Canada differs from helping in (*name culture*)? How is it the same?

4. Can you tell me any about any incidents or any stories that explain your ideas about social work or teaching and learning about social work for work with people from different backgrounds?

5. In your opinion what are the most important qualities for social workers?

6. Is there anything else you can tell me to help me understand your ideas about this?

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<sup>1</sup> From this stage on the term "social work" will be used if it is a meaningful term to the participant. If not terminology will be used that is compatible with the cultural background of the participant; for example the terms "helping" or "healing" may be used.

I am trying to understand important ideas, perhaps words or phrases, that sum up your views about anti-racist social work in multicultural Canada.

If any word or phrase comes to mind as we are talking please tell me. If there is a word or phrase that seems to me to sum up what you are saying I might mention this to you. Is there anything that comes to mind at the moment?

*(If relevant) When we were talking you mentioned ..... Will you tell me some more about that? (Pause)*

How important is..... to you?

*Dialogue about the completed questionnaire*

*Pass participant a copy of their completed questionnaire.*

Next I would like to look at your answers to the early questions.

*Go through 1 to 16, and seek clarification if necessary.*

I have explained given one meaning of a number of words. Some people do not use these words and some give different meanings to them. I would like to know if these are terms that you use and the meaning that you give to them.

*Take each in turn "ethnic", "racial", "multicultural" and discuss meaning.*

Are there other words that you use when you are considering anti-racist social work? *If yes, explore the meaning of each in turn.*

Are there other words that you use? *If yes What are they, and what do they mean?*

A lot of my ideas are influencing the questions which I have asked. I would like you to tell me when a question seems strange or if it does not mean a lot to you. This will help me to question my own assumptions. If there are other important questions, or answers to questions about anti-racist social work that occur to you as we are talking please let me know.

*Then go through the answers to each of the questions. Ask open ended and probe questions: who, what, when, where and why to clarify. The emphasis throughout will be on the participant's view but point out my assumptions and ask for the participant's comment on these and other assumptions which they identify.*

*For example, these assumptions include:*

*That "people who work as social workers..." need to have a particular knowledge base. I will present the opposing view that "knowledge" can blind social workers to unique qualities of those they help. I will ask each participant for an opinion about this.*

*When I have completed a reflection with the participant on the answers to their questions and their views about the assumptions behind the questions I will explore other views which have not been discussed. For example, if an immigrant participant had not mentioned the "radical structuralist" dimension of social work I might say: "Some people think that it is important for helpers to assist people to understand that Canadian*

systems favour some people rather than others, particularly people who have always lived in this country. For example, when I first came to Canada I could not get credit because I did not have a credit rating, I could not get a credit rating because nobody would give me credit. Rules about credit had developed with people who have always lived in Canada in mind. Some people think that social workers should try to change rules like this? Others think that this is not the job of social workers. What do you think?"

Is there anything else that you can tell me which will help me to understand your ideas about what students should learn about anti-racist social work? Do you have any other comments about how they should learn it? (*Last questions*)

### Conclusion

*I will tell the participant about what will happen next.*

" I am very grateful that you shared your time and your ideas with me. As I explained the next stage will be to type up the interview. I will listen to the tape several times. Then I will write to you and let you know what I think are your key ideas. Then we can either meet again or you can write to me with your comments. Feel free to telephone or e-mail if you would like to talk to me before I contact you. Do you have any questions or comments?..... Thanks again."

Rosemary A. Clews

**APPENDIX TWELVE**

**RESEARCH CONCERNING TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT ANTI-RACIST SOCIAL WORK AT ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY, FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK**

**CONSENT TO AUDIO-TAPING OF INTERVIEW**

I agree that my interview with Rosemary Clews, which is part of this research, should be recorded on an audio-tape. I give my permission on the following conditions:

1. Only Rosemary Clews and any person employed to transcribe the tape will hear the contents.
2. Anyone who transcribes the tape of the interview will sign an oath of confidentiality.
3. The tape will be kept in a secure place.
4. The tape will be wiped clean after research reports and any publications based on it have been completed, or five years from the date of this interview, whichever comes sooner.
5. I can withdraw my consent to use the material on this tape for one month after the tape has been recorded.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dated

**APPENDIX THIRTEEN**

**PERSONAL CHECKLIST FOR IDENTIFICATION OF SENSITIZING  
CONCEPTS**

DATA (Questionnaire or Interview) \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICIPANT \_\_\_\_\_

CONCEPT \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

REFERENCE: (examples - 1. general "know", or 2.rural "heart")  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CRITERIA: (Tick those appropriate and provide detail about those ticked)

PARTICIPANT SAYS SO \_\_\_\_

UNFAMILIAR USAGE \_\_\_\_

VIVID \_\_\_\_\_

JARGON \_\_\_\_\_

NARRATIVE \_\_\_\_\_

MATCHED PAIR \_\_\_\_\_

EMOTION \_\_\_\_\_

BODY POSTURE \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER NON-VERBAL \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX FOURTEEN**

**AGREEMENT OF TRANSCRIBER**

Research into teaching and learning about anti-racist social work at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

I undertake that I will not divulge anything that I have learned during the process of transcribing interview data and the reflections of the interviewer in this research

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dated

**APPENDIX FIFTEEN**

**FOLLOW-UP LETTER**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching and learning about anti-racist social work

Thank you again for sharing your ideas about this subject in the summer.

As agreed, I now enclose major excerpts from our conversation together. I may want to quote material I am sending in the research report.

Please will you check through what I have sent to you and let me know if you would like to change any of it. Alternatively, if you have any new ideas I would be delighted to hear them.

Please send any comments in the enclosed envelope. If you would like to meet please phone or drop a note in the envelope to let me know.

Thanks again for your assistance with this project. I will keep in touch to let you know about the progress.

Good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary A. Clews



## **APPENDIX SIXTEEN**

### **Request for Learning and Teaching Development Grant**

**Applicant: Rosemary Clews, Assistant Professor of Social Work**

**Purpose of Grant: To develop curriculum materials for anti-racist social work**

**Amount requested: \$813**

#### **Background**

The Social Work Programme at STU is accredited by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW). The Department of Social Work was granted accreditation of the BSW programme for the maximum possible seven years in 1993 but the accreditation team suggested that the Department should devote attention to addressing issues of ethnic and racial diversity in the curriculum. I was appointed to the Social Work Faculty in 1996 with a mandate to develop this area of work.

It is widely recognized by social work educators in Canada that there is a dearth of Canadian curriculum material for teaching and learning about ethnic and racial diversity in social work.. In 1991 CASSW sponsored a national study which reported that although "most Schools recognize ethnic, cultural and racial diversity as a reality they have yet to respond adequately to today's multicultural and multiracial issues"(Task Force, p. ii). Since this time Schools have attempted to strengthen this area of work. I am a member of a CASSW sub-committee which was set up to promote this work. At present we are attempting to establish a regional network of Canadian social work educators to enable us to learn about the materials which we are each developing and adapt them to our own situations.

I have developed a course in anti-racist social work and I have taught it on two occasions. I have found that the small amount of Canadian material which is available generally has been developed for social work in an urban context. It has been necessary for me to draw upon social work curriculum materials from Britain and the US (Dominelli, 1997; Devore and Schlesinger, 1996). On occasion I have adapted curriculum materials from Canadian racism awareness training courses to our structural social work model here at STU (Bishop, 1994). It is apparent to us all in the department that we need to develop our own materials.

#### **Rationale**

It would be totally inappropriate for us to develop our curriculum materials without

involving local stakeholders from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds who have an interest in the development of our anti-racist focus (Clews, 1996). We realize that there is likely to be Euro-Centric bias in curriculum materials which are developed without the involvement of diverse people who will be working with our social work graduates, as colleagues and as clients.

Since I arrived at STU I have been networking with a number of people from ethnic, racial and linguistic minority backgrounds. These informal contacts have informed the development of the anti-racist focus in our curriculum. Now I would like to explore more systematically diverse views about what social work students should learn in order to practice in a culturally sensitive and an anti-racist manner.

#### **Reason for request**

I plan to interview a sample of twenty four people from diverse backgrounds who have a stake-holding in the developing anti-racist focus of our social work programme. I will be asking these people about what they think social workers should know, the skills which they should develop and the values that should inform their work. I am requesting a small grant to enable me to carry out this work.

#### **Use of interview data**

The ideas of the participants will be discussed in the Department of Social Work. They will inform the anti-racist curriculum development in our programme.

#### **References**

Bishop, A. (1994). Becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Clews, R. (1996). Antiracist social work practice and education: Contributions from newcomers. Paper presented at Annual Conference of Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. Brock University ON.

Devore, W. and Schlesinger, E. G. (1996). Ethnic Sensitive Social Work Practice. New York: Collier MacMillan.

Dominelli, L. (1997). Anti-racist social work (Second Edition). Basingstoke, Hampshire, England: MacMillan Press Ltd.

Task force on multicultural and multiracial issues in social work education. (1991). Social work education at the crossroads: The challenge of diversity. Ottawa: C.A.S.S.W.

**Budget****Personnel Costs**

A student research assistant will be hired to transcribe the audio tapes of the interviews. It is estimated that each interview will be approximately one hour long and take between three and four hours to transcribe. A budget of \$25 per interview is requested to provide payment of between \$6 and \$7 per hour for this work.

There will be 24 interviews giving a total cost of **\$600**

**Transportation**

There will be a small cost of travel.

This is estimated at 200 kms @ 20c per km = **\$40**

**Services of Interpreters** **\$75**

**Audio tapes 24 @ \$2** **\$48**

**Stationery and other incidentals** **\$50**

**TOTAL** **\$813**

**Rosemary A. Clews**

**April 16<sup>th</sup> 1998**

**St. Thomas University**

Fredericton, New Brunswick  
Canada E3B 5G3

Department of Social Work  
Tel: (506) 452-0540

Fax: (506) 452-0611

April 16, 1998

Dr. Ian Fraser  
Chair, LTD Committee  
St. Thomas University  
Fredericton, NB

Re: Rosemary Clews

Dear Ian:

I am writing on behalf of the Social Work Department, in support of Prof. Rosemary Clews' request for funds from the Learning and Teaching Development Committee. The Social Work Department has unanimously supported Prof. Clews' study in the area of anti-racist social work practice. This is an area in which the department has been weak, and we look forward to her development of curriculum materials, and to her identification of useful teaching and learning methods.

Your committee should be aware that the information she gleans will not only assist her in her course, but will assist all members of the Social Work Department to incorporate anti-racist material into our courses. We also anticipate that the material she will develop will be of interest to other applied programs in the country.

At this point, our departmental funds have been allocated and are depleted, and we hope you will seriously consider Prof. Clews' request. Thank you for your continued support of innovative and high quality teaching at St. Thomas.

Yours sincerely,



Brian Oueillette  
Chair, Social Work Department  
St. Thomas University

cc: Social Work Department

**St. Thomas University**

Fredericton, New Brunswick  
Canada E3B 5G3

Department of Social Work  
Tel: (506) 452-0540

Fax: (506) 452-0611


May 6, 1998

Prof. Rosemary Clews  
Department of Social Work  
St. Thomas University  
Fredericton, NB  
E3B 5G3

Dear Rosemary:

Congratulations on being awarded the sum of \$500.00 from the St. Thomas Learning and Teaching Development Committee. The Social Work Department has agreed to pay up to \$300.00 towards the costs incurred in the research you are conducting for your PhD dissertation. Best wishes with this research.

Yours sincerely,



Brian Ouellette  
Chair  
Social Work Department

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**APPENDIX SEVENTEEN**

**ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY**

**HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH**

**APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL**

**1. Name of investigator:**

Rosemary Clews, Assistant Professor of Social Work, St Thomas University and  
Doctoral candidate, School of Social Work, Memorial University of  
Newfoundland

**2. Title of investigation:**

Hearing stakeholder voices: Towards developing concepts for anti-racist social work  
curriculum  
at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

**3. Proposed start date:**

As soon as possible

**4. Anticipated date of completion of data collection:**

October 1998

**5. Institutions involved in the study:**

St. Thomas University, Fredericton. New Brunswick.

Memorial University of Newfoundland School of Social Work.

The research proposed has been approved for a dissertation which will be submitted in  
part-requirement for the degree of PhD in Social Work. advisor Dr. Leslie Bella<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Appendix One contains confirmation of approval of Dissertation Proposal.

## **6. Summary of research:**

The purpose of the research is to enable social work faculty at St Thomas University to hear and develop their understanding about the ideas of a non-probability purposive sample<sup>2</sup> of people who have a stake<sup>3</sup> in the anti-racist focus of the St. Thomas social work programme<sup>4</sup> The research data will be key ideas of research participants regarding anti-racist social work curriculum content and teaching and learning methods. Research participants will complete questionnaires and/or be interviewed about their ideas<sup>5</sup>.

Twenty four people who live or work in the St John River Valley area of New Brunswick and who have a stake in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme will be selected to participate in the research. The criteria for selecting participants for this research are residence or work in the St. John River Valley of New Brunswick, a willingness to be involved in the research, a stake in the curriculum and/or methods of teaching and learning for anti-racist social work practice at St. Thomas University and diversity of reasons for having this stake. One third of this sample will be drawn from people who self-define as Aboriginal, one third from other "ethnic, racial and linguistic minorities" as defined below, and one third will be drawn from other constituencies of stakeholders<sup>6</sup>. In addition all current third or fourth year social work students at St. Thomas University will be invited to complete a questionnaire<sup>7</sup>. There will be no deception of participants. No children will be participants. Dependent people (social work students) and people from different cultures will participate in the research. Participants

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<sup>2</sup> I am following Robson's definitions of these terms. The sample is non-probability because no attempt will be made to specify the probability that any person will be included in the sample. It is purposive because the investigator, with advice from consultants, will use her judgement to select a sample of participants who have different reasons for their stake in the anti-racist focus of the social work programme (Robson, 1993, p. 140 - 141).

<sup>3</sup> It will not be necessary for participants to have a knowledge of the social work programme at St. Thomas University, or even of social work, in order to participate in this research. It will be necessary for the participants to have a stake in the outcome of the education of student social workers at St. Thomas University.

<sup>4</sup> Appendix Two contains an Abstract

<sup>5</sup> Research methods with different participants are described below.

<sup>6</sup> These stakeholders will include social workers, social work supervisors, members of the professional association (New Brunswick Association of Social Workers), representatives from social work unions and people who live and work in larger and in smaller communities in the St John River Valley. Another important constituency of stakeholders, social work faculty at St. Thomas University, have been consulted about the research design and will but will not participate in the research. The research data will inform future curriculum developments.

<sup>7</sup> Appendix Three contains research instruments and documents for social work students

will be informed about the research process before consenting to participate<sup>8</sup>. Questionnaires will be mailed to most participants and there will be follow up interviews with participants who express a willingness to be interviewed. If the consent of interview participants is given, interviews will be recorded on audio-tapes<sup>9</sup>.

The questionnaire and interview data from the twenty four participants as well as the student questionnaires will be analyzed in order to understand key ideas that have a bearing on the development of anti-racist social work curriculum and teaching and learning methods. Interviews will be transcribed. Qualitative methods will be employed to analyze the data (Rubin and Rubin 1995; van den Hoonaard, 1997). After the analysis interview participants will be advised about the key ideas which have provisionally been identified. They will be invited to comment and to correct errors. Social work student participants will not be interviewed because of the ethical difficulties outlined below. Student questionnaire data will be analyzed but, because the identity of students will not be known to the investigator, students will not have an opportunity to comment on the data from their questionnaires.

#### **7. Rationale:**

Changes in the ethnic and racial diversity of the Canadian population pose increasing problems for social workers as they attempt to respond with competence to the difficulties experienced by those who seek help from them. The voices of ethnic and racial minorities give a clear message that currently social work is often unhelpful and is sometimes harmful for them. In 1991 the "Crossroads Report", commissioned by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (C.A.S.S.W.), considered issues of diversity (Task Force, 1991). It concluded that these issues had been inadequately addressed in Canadian Schools of Social Work. The report challenged Schools to consider ethnic and racial bias in issues ranging from structure and culture to selection processes for faculty and students, methods of teaching and learning and the social work curriculum. New Educational Policy Standards which placed diversity in a central position were approved by the General Assembly of C.A.S.S.W. in 1995. New "Standards for the Accreditation of Social Work Programmes" which reflect these policy changes are proposed and will be brought to the General Assembly of C.A.S.S.W. in June 1998. Since the publication of the "Crossroads Report", a number of developments have taken place in some Schools. In other Schools fewer changes have occurred. The proposed research represents one way in which St. Thomas University Department of

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<sup>8</sup> Appendix Four contains research instruments and documents which will be sent to the participants who are not Aboriginal and unknown to the investigator prior to the research. They will not be used for current social work students.

<sup>9</sup> Appendix Five contains a copy of the Consent form for audio-taping of interview.



Social Work is attempting to respond to the challenge of diversity and prepare students to practice social work in an anti-racist way.

### **8. General research process**

Most will be contacted by letter to explain the nature of the research and to request their participation in it. Included with this letter will be a slip for people who do not want to participate, two copies of a Consent Form and a Questionnaire. Potential participants will be invited to complete the questionnaire and return it to the investigator in a stamped envelope addressed to her. They will be asked to return the slip if they are unwilling to participate. The final question on the questionnaire asks if the participant is willing to be interviewed. Those who answer in the affirmative will be contacted and an interview will be arranged. Before audio-taping, participants will sign a form to confirm their willingness for this to occur.

The qualitative interviews will vary but will generally follow the format in the interview schedule<sup>10</sup>. Interviews will be transcribed by someone who will sign an oath of confidentiality. Interviews will be transcribed by a person hired by the researcher. This person will sign an oath of confidentiality.<sup>11</sup> Raw research data will be the possession of the participant for a month after it is collected, during this time participants can withdraw their consent to participate. At the end of this period the researcher can use the data on the conditions outlined in the Consent Forms. Participants will be asked to comment on a summary of their ideas and correct inaccuracies. Research data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and will be destroyed no later than five years after it is analyzed.

This process is compatible with the S.S.H.R.C. Ethics Guidelines for Research With Human Subjects. Numbers in parenthesis in the following paragraphs refer to paragraph numbers in the S.S.H.R.C. Section E.

### **9 Issues of Informed Consent**

Taken together the explanatory letter, Consent Forms, and explanations within the Questionnaire

indicate the purpose, usefulness, expected benefits and expected risks (9). The letter invites participants to inquire about the research from the investigator and offers two resource people other than the investigator who can be contacted about it (10) (16). There will be no coercion, constraint or undue inducement. The investigator will not be present when the subject makes a decision about participation. No payment will be made for participation (11). The Consent Forms advise participants that they are able to withdraw consent at any point during the research process and up to one month after the data has been collected. (12) (16). Children will not participate in this research. (13) (41) (42)

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<sup>10</sup> Appendix Six

<sup>11</sup> Appendix Seven

The Consent to Participate in Research Form indicates possible limits to confidentiality that result from the context in which the research will be conducted (14). Informed consent will be obtained in writing from participants. A separate Consent Form will be signed to agree to audio-taping of interviews (15). Any oral descriptions of the research will be similar to those contained in the Consent Forms. It is possible that other words will be used if the participant is not clear about the meaning of some of the terms contained in the Consent Forms. Participants will retain copies of each Consent Form (17).

## **10. Deception**

There will be no deception. (18, 19, 20, 21)

## **11. Risks and Benefits**

### **11.1 Possible risks of the research are as follows:**

#### **Risk to psychological well-being of participant**

There is a small possibility that a discussion about anti-racist social work curricula may invoke painful memories for participants about racism or some other form of injustice.

The following actions will be taken:

- People will not be invited to participate if the investigator knows that they are particularly vulnerable to psychological damage resulting from this research.
- Potential participants are advised about this risk in the Consent to Participate in Research Form and are asked to confirm that they have a support network that will enable them to process any distress that may be caused
- Distress (although still unlikely) is most likely to occur during the interview stage of this research.

If during the course of the interview a participant becomes distressed the investigator will immediately discontinue the interview, offer crisis counselling to the participant and suggest that the participant draws upon her/his support network for further comfort. In the event of this occurring the person concerned will no longer be considered a participant in the research and data already collected will be destroyed. If a support network is not available for the person the investigator will discuss with the participant possible sources for counselling. If none is available the researcher will offer counselling herself. As a qualified counsellor and social worker with post-graduate training in mental health social work and critical incident stress debriefing as well as twenty years of experience as a social work practitioner in multi-cultural communities the investigator is well qualified to do provide this counselling.

#### **Other risks to physical, humane, proprietary and cultural values (22)**

None envisaged

#### **Previous relevant research experience of investigator (23)**

As well as experience as a social worker and as a counsellor the investigator has had experience of interviewing in cross-cultural research when sensitive subject matter was discussed (Clews, 1977, 1993, 1995a, 1995b).

**Attempt to bring change in behaviour or attitudes (24)**

None intended

**Third party risks and obligations (25) (35)**

No risks envisaged

**Steps to minimize risks (26)**

Outlined above

**11. 2. Benefits envisaged**

Participants' views about anti-racist curriculum content and teaching and learning methods will inform social work faculty at St. Thomas University. This should encourage curricular developments that reflect the viewpoints of diverse stakeholders and, ultimately social work graduates from St. Thomas University who practice social work in a culturally sensitive manner.

The sharing of the research data through conference presentations and publications may be of benefit for others who are not from the immediate context where the research took place. The process of gathering data will demonstrate a respect for people who have diverse views about social work, social work education and giving and receiving help.

**12. Privacy**

Potential participants can maintain total privacy by deciding not to participate (27). There will not be probing of "personality and private affairs", except when they relate to views about anti-racist social work curriculum content and teaching and learning methods (28). Informed consent will be obtained before research participation begins (29). The investigator will continue to consult with people with knowledge about the ethnic background of research participants so that the research reflects sensitivity to cross-cultural differences in views about privacy in regard to the research process, the research may enhance understanding about some of these differences (30). Limits to confidentiality and anonymity are clearly indicated on the Consent to Participate in Research form. In particular participants will be advised that a person who transcribes the data will have access to information about participants and that this person will be required to sign an oath of confidentiality. Each participant will be informed that the "rural" character of the context where the research occurs may result in some who read research reports recognizing ideas that they link to particular people, and guessing the identity of participants<sup>12</sup>(31)(33). Participants will be told that their names will not be mentioned in the research reports and that they will be able to check the accuracy of information that will be included in reports (32). Any data which could identify a particular participant will not be published (34). Institutional records will not be used (36).

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<sup>12</sup> Appendices 2 and 4 . point 6

### **13. Research on a dependent population (37 - 40)**

Current students have an important stake in curricular developments and methods of teaching and learning. The investigator is in "a relationship where a power differential could operate to their disadvantage as subjects". She is a professor of third and fourth year social work students. A number of safeguards will be taken so that the identity of student participants is not known to the investigator. The research process outlined in the following paragraph will occur.

The investigator will give information about the research in a regular meeting attended by all third and fourth year social work students. After this she will leave an envelope in the mail box of each of these students. The envelope will contain a modified version of the questionnaire, a letter to the potential student participant and two copies of a modified Informed Consent Form. The questionnaire will be enclosed in an envelope labelled "Teaching and learning about anti-racist social work - Student Questionnaire". Students who decide to participate will be asked to complete the questionnaire and place it and one copy of the signed consent form in the envelope. They will be asked to seal this envelope and return it to the social work secretary. Students will be asked to not sign the questionnaire. If 10 or fewer students return completed questionnaires within 2 weeks of the note being placed in their mail boxes, the investigator will place a reminder in each student mail box. Students will not be interviewed. This process has been discussed and agreed within the Social Work Department (38). It addresses issues of possible coercion of students by the investigator. The data gathered through questionnaires will not be as rich as interview data but an additional indication of the viewpoints of students will be obtained through interviews with recent graduates of the social work programme.

### **14. Research on children. Research in the humanities, acquisition and use of cultural properties.**

Not applicable (41 -42 and 43 -45).

### **15 Research process for people from other cultures, countries and ethnic groups - Modifications to method and additional ethical considerations (56 - 60)**

A number of modifications to the research process will be made for these participants to comply with paragraphs 56 to 60 of the Ethics Guidelines. Much of the content of these paragraphs is not relevant to this project. Unless an amendment is indicated below the research process will follow the process outlined in Section 8 above.

#### **14. 1. Aboriginal participants**

Eight Aboriginal people will be invited to participate in the research. Aboriginal people have an important stake in the anti-racist focus of social work programmes because, whether they live on or off-reserve, each Canadian Aboriginal person has a greater probability of encountering social workers than each Canadian non-Aboriginal person. Social work practice often reflects a failure to attend to the reality of the racism which Aboriginal people face (Adams, 1995; Carniol, 1995; Monture-Angus, 1995).

Two Aboriginal people have worked with the investigator to identify eight Aboriginal people who fit the criteria for selection, to modify the research process so that it is compatible with Aboriginal traditions and to identify risks and potential damage that might result from the investigation. The investigator and her Aboriginal consultants have agreed to the following changes in the research process for Aboriginal consultants to demonstrate respect for cultural values. The investigator will contact the potential participants already known to her by letter to ask if they are willing to participate, the general research process will be followed. If people contacted are not willing to participate the investigator, in consultation with her Aboriginal consultants, will select participants in replacement.

The two Aboriginal consultants will contact the Aboriginal participants not known to the investigator to tell them about the investigator and the proposed work and to answer questions. If each potential participant is agreeable the consultants will take the investigator to introduce her. The investigator will explain her work and leave a letter, a questionnaire and two consent forms with the participant. Later the consultants will contact each of the potential participants to ask if they are willing to participate. If so the investigator will make arrangements to interview. The consultants have expressed a willingness to provide assistance if a participant or the investigator consider that cultural differences are preventing the investigator from understanding ideas which are being expressed. The Aboriginal consultants will sign an agreement that they will not divulge the identity of participants<sup>13</sup>. This process is compatible with Aboriginal oral traditions and traditions of personal rather than written initial contact. This process is compatible with the principles laid down in paragraphs 56 - 61 of the S.S.H.R.C. Ethical Guidelines.

1. It enables the investigator to give an account of herself (and for others to give an account of her) that is acceptable to potential participants before they give consent to participate in the study.
2. It enables the investigator to explain the use that she will make of the research and provides people who can mediate if communication is not effective.
3. It has provided an opportunity for people from the same culture to evaluate risks and benefits and work with the investigator to minimize the risk in the research design.

#### **14.2 Newcomers to Canada and participants from ethnic, racial and linguistic minority groups in the St John River Valley.**

Eight non-Aboriginal people who define themselves from ethnic, racial or linguistic minority groups will be participants. The voices of these people should be heard in this study. Recent immigrants from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe may have norms and beliefs about the nature of giving and receiving help that differ greatly from views of

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<sup>13</sup> Appendix Seven

newcomers who arrived several years or several generations ago<sup>14</sup>. These voices are also likely to differ greatly from the different views expressed by Aboriginal people. There are also likely to be different views amongst recent newcomers to Canada. The perspectives of temporary residents such as students may differ from people who intend to make Canada their permanent home. Immigrants who have lived in Canada for many years will be likely to have different views from those of recent newcomers.

Two of these eight participants from the “ethnic, racial and linguistic minority” constituencies will be participants who have French as a first language. The Crossroads Report noted that “at St. Thomas Acadians are invisible” (p. 13), this is of concern because in 1991, 34% of the New Brunswick population reported themselves to be Francophone<sup>15</sup>. One Acadian and one non-Acadian Francophone will be included in the sample of participants<sup>16</sup>. International students, newcomers to Fredericton and established immigrants will be included among the other six participants in this group. At least two of these participants will be people who have arrived in Canada in the last two years. The final selection of participants will be based upon the criteria outlined in Section 8 above.

The investigator will request assistance from the International Students office at the University of New Brunswick, local agencies which provide advice and language instruction for newcomers and ethnically and racially diverse people as well as ethno-specific social groups in order to select participants. At a later stage the investigator will ask these consultants to will help her to resolve any communication difficulties that arise. Anybody who provides assistance or suggestions about the selection of participants will be required to sign an agreement similar to that signed by the Aboriginal consultants<sup>17</sup>. The investigator will carry out a process with most of these potential participants similar to that with general research participants outlined above.

#### **14.2.1. Recent newcomers with a first language other than English or French**

The investigator will endeavour to interview two people who have a first language other than English or French who have arrived in Canada within the last two years. She will enlist the support of an agency which provides language instruction to newcomers to

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<sup>14</sup> The countries of origin of recent newcomers differ greatly from those of newcomers who arrived in Canada five or more years ago.

<sup>15</sup> A distinction is not made between Acadian and non-Acadian francophones in Census data.

<sup>16</sup> Non-Acadian Francophones sometimes express the view that they are silenced in New Brunswick because of the presence of Acadian Francophones who are often considered to be the only Francophones in the province.

<sup>17</sup> Appendix Seven

identify volunteer potential participants who fit these criteria<sup>18</sup>. A member of staff from the agency will advise these newcomers about the research and ask for volunteers. The investigator will select two potential participants at random from volunteers who fit the criteria for selection and will arrange to meet these potential participants. If the potential participant, the investigator, or anyone who has suggested a possible participant, thinks that the investigator and potential participant will experience difficulty in communicating, an interpreter acceptable to the participant will be present during this initial meeting. During this meeting the investigator will emphasize the voluntary nature of participation and, because the command of English of a potential participant will not be sufficient for understanding and completing the Questionnaire and Consent Form, she will ask if the potential participant knows of someone who can be of assistance. If the participant does not know of anyone who can assist the participant the investigator will arrange for someone acceptable to the participant to assist. Any person who is selected by the investigator will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement.

The investigator will provide a stamped envelope addressed and ask potential participants to return either the completed questionnaires and one copy of the Consent Form, or a note indicating an unwillingness to participate. If any potential participant does not return the completed questionnaire after a follow-up this potential participant will be replaced by another.

The meeting with each potential participants should enable the investigator and potential participant to evaluate whether they will be able to communicate sufficiently well to interview. If they think that functional communication is probable the interview will proceed. If the participant or investigator think that they would experience difficulty in communicating permission will be sought from the participant to have an interpreter present. If this occurs the participant and investigator will mutually agree the identity of the interpreter. If the potential participant is not willing to work with an interpreter in these circumstances another potential participant will be selected.

### **15.2.2 Francophone participants**

French is a minority language in the St John River Valley area and it is important that the views of Francophone people inform curriculum developments. French and English versions of the questionnaire, letter and consent form will be sent to people who have been selected because they are Francophone<sup>19</sup>. The French versions will be translated from the English versions for non-student participants. Participants will be invited to complete whichever version they choose. The investigator has a command of French

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<sup>18</sup> Appendix Eight contains relevant documents

<sup>19</sup> This will demonstrate respect for the French language and show that the investigator recognizes that it should not always be expected that people from minorities should be required to accommodate to the dominant language.

which is sufficiently strong to enable her understand most of the probable written responses. She will check anything that she is unclear about with Francophone participants at the interview stage. The interviews with Francophones will be conducted in English, and perhaps a little French if required. The investigator does not have a sufficiently strong command of French to conduct interviews in French. If the parties are unable to communicate the investigator will arrange for an interpreter to join them if the participant agrees to this. If this occurs the interpreter will sign a confidentiality agreement. The researcher considers that it is unlikely that she will find it necessary to use the services of an interpreter with Francophone participants..

Questionnaires will not be translated into other languages. The investigator would not be able to understand the completed questionnaires and a great deal of meaning would be lost if the questions were translated from English to French and the answers from French back to English.

Rosemary Clews  
May 7<sup>th</sup> 1998



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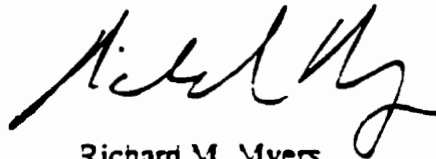
May 22, 1998

Prof. Rosemary Clews  
Social Work Department  
St. Thomas University  
Fredericton, N.B.

Dear Rosemary:

The Senate Committee on Research met yesterday, May 21, and after evaluating your proposal in light of SSHRC guidelines on research on human subjects, approves your project.

Sincerely,



Richard M. Myers  
Chair, Senate Committee on Research

RM/bg

**APPENDIX EIGHTEEN**

**M E M O**

**May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1998**

**To: Dr. L. Bella, Advisor  
From: R. Clews, Doctoral student**

**Dissertation - Human Subjects Approval**

Further to your e-mail note of April 27<sup>th</sup> 1998 I enclose the approval from the Human Subjects Review Committee at St. Thomas University together with three copies of the associated documentation. Please will you submit this to the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee at the School of Social Work on my behalf.

Thank you

Rosemary Clews



# Memorial

University of Newfoundland

School of Social Work

Rosemary Clews,  
Social Work Department,  
St Thomas University,  
Fredericton,  
NB, E3B 5G3

June 8<sup>th</sup> 1998

Dear Ms Clews:

The Human Subjects Committee met today to review your proposal concerning Hearing Stakeholder Voices, and the addendum forwarded to us by FAX on June 5th 1998. The committee approves this proposal as submitted, and wishes you well in your study.

Please note that if you change your research design you should submit any changes to our committee, and that extensive changes may necessitate a new review.

Sincerely:

---

Leslie Bella,  
Chair,  
Human Subjects Review Committee

cc: Leslie Bella, Frank Hawkins

## **APPENDIX NINETEEN**

### **GLOSSARY**

**ABORIGINAL PEOPLE:** Unless I indicate otherwise (for example when I am quoting from census data) I am referring to people who self-define as Aboriginal.

**ANTI-FOUNDATIONALISM:** The idea that there should be no foundations to thinking.

**ANTI-RACIST SOCIAL WORK:** Social work which tries to identify and challenge racial bias so that people from all ethnic backgrounds can access social work that meets their different needs.

**CONSTITUENCY OF STAKE-HOLDERS:** People who have a particular reason for a stake. For example, social work students at St. Thomas university form a constituency that have stakes because of their student status.

**CONTESTABLE IDEAS:** Ideas that are open to challenge.

**CULTURALLY COMPETENT SOCIAL WORK:** Social work that responds capably to people from all ethnic groups. A capable response may sometimes recognize an inability to assist this group.

**CULTURALLY SENSITIVE SOCIAL WORK:** Social work which is responsive to the cultural differences between people.

**\*CULTURE:** A System of beliefs, values, norms and lifestyles which are shared by some people and not shared by others.

**DIVERSITY:** Difference between people. can be any difference unless qualified by adjectives. for example "ethnic and racial diversity." In this dissertation "diversity" means ethnic and racial diversity unless otherwise indicated.

**\*ETHNIC:** People who consider themselves to have a common heritage with others.

**FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY:** A location where Aboriginal people reside (previously known as Indian Reserve).

**FOUNDATIONAL IDEAS:** Ideas and assumptions that are at the root of beliefs and thinking. In this dissertation my foundational ideas relating to anti-racist curriculum are found in chapters 3 and 4.

**IDEAL TYPE:** "Theoretical constructs which have been simplified to their key characteristics for use in analysing social interaction." (Dominelli, 1997b, p. 29).

**\*MAJORITY GROUP:** A group whose culture and values are transmitted through formal institutions such as schools, media and social agencies.

**\*MINORITY GROUP:** A group that experiences unequal treatment and limited access to the opportunity structure in the economic, social and political spheres based on ethnic, cultural or racial background.

**\*MULTICULTURAL:** A situation or context including people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds.

**NEWCOMER:** Person who was not born in Canada.

**OPPRESSION:** The exercise of different forms of power to keep a group down. (Distilled from Bishop, 1994).

**OVERLAPPING CONSTITUENCIES OF STAKEHOLDERS.** Occasions where some members of a constituency are also members of other constituencies. For example, some social work faculty may also be members of a social work union.

**PEOPLE OF COLOUR:** People who define themselves in this way.

**POSTMODERNISMS:** "Epistemologies which deny that human reason is impartial and transcendental, and in doing so, resist the tendency to create all-encompassing descriptions and explanations of social life." (Ristock & Pennell, 1996, p. 116).

**\*RACE:** "Race refers to an arbitrary classification of populations conceived in Europe, using actual or assumed biological traits (eg skin colour and other physical features) to place populations of the world into a hierarchical order, in terms of basic human qualities, with Europeans superior to all others." (Task Force, 1991, Glossary).

**\*RACIAL:** "Some actual or assumed biologically determined characteristic (such as skin colour or features) which "identifies" people as being the same "race" as some and different from others and which leads to world populations being placed in an order with Europeans superior to others." (Task Force, 1991, Glossary).

**RELIABILITY:** In this dissertation the term means accuracy.

**RURAL:** The opposite end of the continuum from urban. An area which has a small number of people and a low population density (see definition of urban).

**SENSITIZING CONCEPT:** "A construct which is derived from the research participants' perspective, uses their language or expression, and sensitizes the researcher to possible lines of enquiry." (van den Hoonaard, 1997, p. 1).

**SOCIAL WORK:** Human service work that tries to help people, individually or in families, groups or communities, to find ways of solving problems they face and that tries to change features in the larger society which cause or contribute to these problems.

**ST. JOHN RIVER VALLEY:** North and South East and Central New Brunswick where English is the dominant language.

**STAKE-HOLDERS:** People who have an interest or concern in some issue or question, in this instance the anti-racist focus of the social work programme at St. Thomas University.

**URBAN:** The opposite end of the continuum from rural. Statistics Canada defines urban areas as built-up areas with populations of 1000 or more and a population density of 400 or more per square km. I use the variables of size and population density when I refer to urban and rural but, prefer to think of a continuum from urban to rural rather than discrete categories. Thus I am defining New Brunswick as a "rural" province even though some of the centres of population are "urban" according to the Statistics Canada definition.

**VALIDITY:** "The integrity and value of the research; achieved through accountability both to the participants and to those who will be affected by the outcomes." (Ristock & Pennell, 1996, p. 50).

**NOTE:** \*I HAVE DRAWN UPON THE GLOSSARY OF THE "CROSSROADS REPORT" FOR THESE DEFINITIONS.

## **APPENDIX TWENTY**

### **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

**BSW: Bachelor of Social Work**

**CASSW: Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work**

**CASW: Canadian Association of Social Workers**

**PAR: Participatory Action Research**