Getting to the Root: Bridging the Micro-Macro Divide Using the Critical Transformative Potential Development Framework

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ABSTRACT   The discussions about the micro-macro divide in social work often neglect to address how this fabricated rift undermines the mission of social work. Social work students are graduating and entering the field without the confidence and skills required for engaging in macro-level practice. This case study offers a radical approach to social work pedagogy that enables educators to dismantle the micro-macro divide while simultaneously inspiring social change agents by applying the critical transformative potential development model (CTPD) (Jemal, 2022). CTPD is a liberatory framework that social workers can use to bridge the disconnect between micro and macro practice and teach about social issues by stimulating critical reflection, instilling a sense of accountability, and inspiring social action. Using CTPD to teach about food insecurity and construct a community-based food project using micro and macro-level tools allowed students to broaden their analysis of the issue and develop a deeper understanding of the connections between micro and macro practice. Using CTPD as a pedagogical tool will not only increase the critical consciousness and potential for action of students, but it will also demonstrate the interconnectedness of micro and macro practice, a first step in envisioning an abolitionist future.

KEYWORDS   critical transformative potential development model, transformative potential, critical consciousness, macro social work, radical social work, food justice

AT THE ROOT OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE is a commitment to social justice. Social work educators are responsible for teaching in a way that inspires a deep understanding of social justice and a passion for social change. There is, however, a perceived separation between micro (direct work with individuals and families) and macro (system-level work, i.e., advocacy and policy) practice among social work students who believe they must choose between the two. The tension created by this fabricated divide undermines the mission of social work (Bussey et al., 2021) and requires an intentional solution that begins in the classroom because "the classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy" (hooks, 1994, p. 12). A radical and abolitionist approach to social work pedagogy enables educators to dismantle the micro-macro divide while simultaneously inspiring social change agents. Education, especially social work education, should be a liberating process, not a tool for social control (Jemal, 2017). The model allows educators to engage in participatory, collaborative, and social justice-focused praxis.

Critical transformative potential development (CTPD) (Jemal, 2022) is a liberatory framework that social workers can use to bridge the disconnect between micro and macro practice and teach about social issues by stimulating critical reflection, instilling a sense of accountability, and inspiring social action. This case study uses the topic of food insecurity to demonstrate how CTPD in social work education can empower students to integrate micro and macro social work. In this case, students' consciousness progressed beyond the personal impact of food insecurity to a broader focus on food justice and inspiring a passion for macro-level engagement. The CTPD framework helped students develop the skills to critically analyze and deconstruct the historical and systemic factors that lead to oppressive conditions like food insecurity (Bussey et al., 2021; Jemal, 2017). CTPD can assist in developing future social workers who are empowered to transform unjust systems rather than only working with clients to cope with oppressive forces in their lives (Jemal, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Micro-Macro Divide

The gap between micro, or "direct," social work practice and macro, or "indirect," social work practice is a fabricated divide that prevents social work from achieving its social justice goals (Bussey et al., 2021; Jemal & Frasier, 2021). Even though social justice is embedded in the social work code of ethics (CSWE, 2022), the focus on individualism and clinical practice in schools of social work has made it difficult for macro-inspired content to reach across the divide. A lack of emphasis on system-level advocacy and intervention throughout social work curricula (Miller et al., 2008; Reisch, 2016) leads to low levels of social justice activism in the field (Apgar, 2021). Students are often required by their social work program to choose between micro and macro social work practice (Bussey et al., 2021), and most choose the clinical path (Harrison et al., 2016).

This divide continues after graduation. The 2019 Social Work Workforce Study reported that more than 4 out of 5 respondents worked directly with individuals, families, or groups (82%), only 6% were engaged on the community level, and only 8% were focusing on macro social work practice (Salsberg et al., 2020). If social work is a field dedicated to creating system-level social change, this data tells a different story. The obligation to choose between micro or macro practice muddies the fields' engagement in social justice work (Bussey et al., 2021). What is needed is an intentional process and pedagogy that emphasizes the development of a deep understanding of a social problem, engagement in critical consciousness and self-reflection, and a commitment to action (Jemal, 2021).

The Critical Transformative Potential Development Framework

Alexis Jemal conceived the critical transformative potential development framework (CTPD) (Jemal, 2022) as a five-pronged model for addressing inequity and social injustice. The five prongs are affinity, awareness, accountability, agency, and action. CTPD is influenced by Marxist theory, Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological systems theory, critical consciousness (Freire, 1970), and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). The use of the term "critical" is intentional, as it implies an understanding of how macro-level processes have micro-level consequences (Jemal, 2022). Transformative consciousness and transformative action are foundational to CTPD. Consciousness and action impact an individual's "transformative potential," that is, if and how a person will engage in social change (Jemal & Frasier, 2021, p. 713).

Transformative consciousness is an awareness of and need to think critically about power, oppression, and inequality (Jemal & Bussey, 2018; Jemal & Frasier, 2021). The goal is to move the participant from a non-critical place of denial and/or blame, where they either do not see the root causes of issues or blame the victim, to the critical level, wherein they have a firm understanding of all the forces that may be impacting an individual or social problem (Bussey et al., 2021; Jemal & Frasier, 2021).

The other arm of transformative potential is transformative action, defined as "individual and community action to dismantle inequity at one or more levels of the socio-ecosystem" (Bussey et al., 2021, p. 144). Transformative action aims to create active engagement in social action that addresses inequity and oppression (Bussey et al., 2021; Jemal & Frasier, 2021). CTPD begins with relationship building and critical self-reflection and includes pathways of accountability and agency on the journey to transformative action (Bussey et al., 2021; Jemal, 2021, 2022). CTPD helps social workers engage in liberatory practice and get to the root cause of social inequity by engaging in critical consciousness. The five prongs of CTPD build upon one another but are not designed as a linear process; there can be movement between the phases where growth can occur simultaneously, sequentially, and/or cyclically (Jemal, 2022).

Affinity

Before engaging in social justice work, students must explore their own lives and experiences of privilege and oppression through self-awareness and self-reflection (Bussey et al., 2021; Jemal, 2017). The affinity pathway is designed to build and strengthen relationships. These connections tap into the group's collective energy in a collaborative effort to create social change and personal growth (Jemal, 2022). Tools for developing affinity include active listening, reflective journaling, and community-building exercises. Through collaborative relationship building and conversation, collective consciousness can be raised.

Awareness

Affinity with self and others can develop transformative consciousness (TC). TC "refers to the degree of awareness of systemic, institutional, and historical forces that both promote and limit opportunities for specific groups" (Bussey et al., 2021, p. 143). The awareness prong aims to engage students in a process of understanding their own experience of power, privilege, and oppressive systems (Jemal, 2022). If social work students do not engage in this process of analysis, meaning-making, and self-reflection, they are likely to perpetuate the very same oppressive behaviors they are being tasked to address (Jemal, 2021, 2022). As educators, we should encourage students to engage in this level of praxis, where they move between an understanding of theory, practice, their own experiences, and how they inform one another.

TC is a useful tool within social work education because it encourages students to actively engage in the educational exchange rather than passively memorize and regurgitate information. It incorporates components of popular education (Freire, 2021) in that it requires active participation in asking students to examine, question critically, and analyze their lives and positionality (Finn, 2020). Tools for developing awareness include critical dialogue and reflection, encouraging courageous conversations, and working collaboratively. The next prong requires developing a sense of responsibility.

Accountability

CTPD was developed in response to the concern that critical consciousness does not always lead to action, hence the need for accountability and agency (Bussey et al., 2021). Accountability requires exploration and reflection, an understanding of one's motivation to practice, and the history of the field. This also includes knowledge of how social work and the profession continue to perpetuate inequity, oppression, and social control (Bussey, 2020; Bussey et al., 2021). The goal of these transformative conversations is to move students from non-critical to critical engagement by addressing issues related to the whitewashing of social work history (Wright et al., 2021), white supremacy in the field of social work, underlying systemic social injustice, and the opportunity to brainstorm solutions (Jemal, 2017).

Viewing the classroom as a radical space (hooks, 1994) can be a tool for developing accountability. Social work educators can explore a social problem through the CTPD framework, empowering students to connect the issue and policies to their lives and the greater community. This leads to a greater exploration of the students' positionality in the world (Bussey et al., 2021; Jemal, 2022). It is possible for social work educators to create learning environments wherein students can explore how their social position, power, or lack thereof, shapes their experiences and access in society.

Agency

A person with a sense of agency perceives themselves as having the ability to cause or influence action. However, to have the confidence to act, one must develop the skills to do so (Bussey et al., 2021), or they will have little agency and will not feel empowered to engage in social change efforts or social action (Bussey et al., 2021; Jemal, 2022). Social work educators can introduce skills related to program development, community asset mapping, community organizing, advocacy, and policy analysis. Students should be engaged in an educational process that provides macro-level practice skills, encouraging them to be innovative and creative in their responses to social problems (Bussey et al., 2021). Connecting to the radical roots of social work history and social change movements is critical (Bussey et al., 2021), as students often need a reminder of what is possible. Once they are provided with practical tools and examples, their motivation to create social change will follow.

Action

Transformation action, the final phase in CTPD, ultimately leads to increased transformative potential. Transformative action "proceeds from recognizing that awareness and analysis alone are not enough to create meaningful change" (Bussey et al., 2021, p. 149). Grounded in anti-oppressive practice, transformative action implies working with, and not for, communities (Bussey et al., 2021). It also implies engagement on multiple levels where micro issues (individual suffering) and macro causes (structures responsible for creating suffering) are addressed (Jemal, 2022). Transformative action can expand a student's notion of what a social work intervention could look like, moving beyond a short-term fix to a sustainable system-level intervention that enhances the ability of people to understand and address their own needs (NASW, 2017). Social action includes direct action organizing, letter-writing campaigns, program development, mass demonstrations, engaging the media, hosting town halls, petition drives, educational initiatives, and teach-ins.

CTPD is a useful pedagogical tool for engaging social work students in critical praxis that centers their experience while connecting them to the bigger picture. Moving from a micro

worldview to a more macro approach gives social work students the skills and confidence to create social change and transform systems. Through transformative consciousness and transformative action, students enhance their transformative potential (Jemal & Frasier, 2021) and become social change agents who have an authentic desire to fulfill the mission of social work on all practice levels.

METHODOLOGY

The case study is a qualitative approach used to study phenomena within contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2008) and can be used as a tool for learning (Baskarada, 2014). Case study methodology helps educators, researchers, and practitioners explore data that strengthens their work and informs practice and policy (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This case study demonstrates how using CTPD to learn about food insecurity and food justice enabled students to develop a deep awareness of a social problem, develop the confidence to engage in social action, dismantle the micro-macro divide, and start to envision more radical solutions to social problems. This paper tells the story of Angela, who represents a composite of undergraduate social work students who participated in a semester-long class project. She developed an understanding of the root cause of social inequity, engaged in critical consciousness, and connected this work to micro social work practice.

CASE STUDY

I was teaching a course focused on groups, organizations, and communities as a context for practice and intervention on the micro and macro levels. The class consisted of 35 undergraduate students, most of whom identified as women, and included three men and one non-binary student. At a large public university in the northeast, the class was diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Many students had transferred from a community college into the social work program. Almost all the students, including Angela, were interested in clinical social work.

I met Angela on the first day of class and noticed a disgruntled look on her face. I smiled at her and empathized, "8:30 am on a Monday is a struggle for me too." She seemed to sit back in her chair more easily and said, "Well, it's just this class. I know it is mostly about macro social work, and that makes me a little nervous." A 22-year-old, cis-gender, heterosexual, Afro-Latinx junior in the program, Angela was a transfer student from a community college and lived off-campus with her family. Angela's parents had her when they were both teenagers, and she is the oldest of four siblings, with a significant age gap between Angela and her little sisters. Angela is also a first-generation college student enrolled in the course as a program requirement.

Starting From a Place of Non-Critical Engagement

Angela knew she wanted to be a clinical social worker and "help people live better lives." This desire to help others was a common theme raised by many of Angela's classmates when asked about why they were interested in social work. When discussing social problems, Angela often referenced individual "bad choices" and did not articulate an understanding of how a person's environment could impact their experience. Angela had a solid understanding of the many issues social workers would encounter in their careers but often expressed a belief that some of the larger issues, like gender inequality, patriarchy, racism, discrimination, and oppression, were "too big" to change. Angela and many of her classmates believed they would be the most effective at working with

clients on an individual level. In particular, Angela wanted to focus on the individuals she "could help, not the systems that will never change."

Developing Affinity through Relationship Building

Early in the semester, Angela presented as shy and soft-spoken, especially when engaging with her classmates on identity-related issues. Discussing power, privilege, and positionality was new to Angela. Through active listening and participatory activities like think-pair-share, we delved into topics that valued each student's life experiences. Because we collaboratively established community agreements early on, students felt comfortable sharing their stories. This intentional relationship-building allowed Angela to begin to let down her guard, and as a result, her level of comfort and curiosity increased.

This growing consciousness was evident following a class discussion when Angela shared that she was starting to reflect critically on her childhood. Angela disclosed that when she was young, her parents did not have a lot of support or resources. As a result, they struggled to meet her emotional and financial needs. Her parents were more well-established and secure when her siblings were born almost fifteen years later. Before our class discussions, she had thought it "just is what it is." However, due to what she was learning in class, she started to critically examine her parents' experiences and their influence on her.

This critical examination continued outside the classroom as Angela began engaging in discussions with her parents, asking them what it was like to start a family at age sixteen, what individual and social forces impacted their decision, and their experience of teen parenting. Angela was moving towards critical consciousness through these discoveries, as were her classmates. One remarked, "Oh, ok, so if I were to apply a social work perspective to this, we can see how a macro experience of teen parenthood and the lack of resources available to them had a micro-level impact on Angela." Another student wondered aloud, "Why don't we have more programs for teen parents?" Angela was moved to share her analysis after a classmate shared her story of being an undocumented student and another disclosed a history of neglect. Through these "shared narratives" Angela was able to experience her positionality, feel less isolated, and make connections that are key to relationship and affinity building (Jemal, 2022).

Developing Awareness Through Critical Consciousness-Raising

As we progressed through the semester and were grounded in our relationships with one another, the class delved into the concept of food insecurity. We used collaborative concept mapping to explore our relationships to food and our ideas about hunger and food insecurity. Students were asked to work together to brainstorm about food and hunger and create visual representations or maps of their thoughts and ideas. We then shared the visuals with the entire class and explored the results. Before this exercise, the students expressed their belief that food insecurity was a result of poor decision-making on behalf of an individual. When challenged to think of food insecurity as a macro issue, the students struggled to understand how a food system could be racist and discriminatory and could not view a social problem like food insecurity through a larger societal lens. The process of creating the concept map allowed them to let go of previously held notions and enabled them to step back and see the bigger picture; to make deeper connections to policies and systems.

To understand the issue, we examined how food insecurity is defined and measured. Through lecture, research, and dialogue, we collaboratively explored the prevalence rates of food insecurity in the United States, breaking this information down further to understand the impact on college students and those at our specific university. We found articles that discussed the experience of social work students and food insecurity and reviewed data from peer-reviewed articles, grey literature, a university-specific campus-wide survey, and various government websites. The class was shocked to learn that so many college students were food insecure, and we used this information to discuss our relationships with food. Beginning the lesson with definitions and statistics allowed the students to develop a foundational level of awareness of the issue.

Through this discussion, Angela realized that at different points in her life, she, too, had been food insecure though she never defined it as such. Angela's awareness was raised through a process of critical dialogue, self-reflection, and analysis (Jemal, 2022). Starting at the most basic micro-level enabled Angela to begin to understand the relevance of a social problem in her own life and how this awareness could impact her work with others.

Once Angela and her classmates had a foundational understanding of food insecurity, we began diving deeper. The students had no knowledge of the concept of a "food desert," so I used this as an opportunity for continued consciousness-raising. I defined a food desert and played a short video clip of Malik Yakini, the Executive Director of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, defining "food apartheid," a term coined by food justice activist Karen Washington. As I watched their reactions to the video, I saw a wave of understanding flood the room. One student shouted, "That is what a social justice approach looks like, right?" Another student remarked, "Now I know what you mean when you talk about radical social work; that is what this kind of approach would be." Before this point, everyone understood food insecurity and what it meant to be hungry to some degree. Still, they had not yet understood that food insecurity and hunger were not inevitable human conditions. They were beginning to grasp what it meant to be radical, to understand the root causes of social problems, and to be cognizant of the historical context. They were also starting to realize just how thin the veil between micro and macro practice was.

Angela was moved by the work of activists like Leah Penniman of Soul Fire Farm and Ron Finley, known as the "guerilla gardener," not only because of the work they were doing around food justice but because "they look like me." We watched Finley's TED Talk and other online videos featuring Penniman's work on racism in the food system, food sovereignty, and food apartheid. During the subsequent class discussions, I asked the class to close their eyes, envision a farmer or gardener, and share the first image that came to mind. Most, if not all, students thought of "old white ladies or old white men." I encouraged them to take some time to think about why that was the case. Taking a deep dive into the food justice movement allowed students to see a reflection of themselves, people who looked like them, came from similar backgrounds and worked actively on the community level to create change. One student smiled and said, "Everyone we learned from so far had some type of lived experience; one way or another, they could not access the type of food they wanted, and it didn't matter where they lived or how educated they were. But they did not just go to a food bank or get food stamps. They took action." Again, the line between micro and macro continued to fade.

Over the next few weeks, the class learned about the history of Black farmers and sharecroppers and watched a clip from the film *Gather* that addresses the food sovereignty movement among Indigenous people in the United States. We explored how slavery and colonization continue to impact food-related issues today. These conversations provided a historical context for the current

state of the food system and helped the students connect the past and the present, the micro and macro, the systems and the individuals. As Angela walked out of the classroom that day, she turned to me and said, "This class is teaching me things I didn't think I needed to know." Angela and her classmates were beginning to have a new understanding of a social problem and were not content to just sit with the data; they wanted to know "why and how this continues."

Understanding Accountability Through Making Connections

To explore issues related to power and privilege, especially in social work, I asked the students to read an article on the whitewashing of social work history to better understand racism within social work education and the profession overall. During our class discussion, Angela realized that she had an idealistic vision of the field of social work and took for granted that social workers have not always had a positive impact on the populations they serve. This awareness led to a conversation about the profession as a tool for liberation or social control. The students were full of questions and, recognizing their lack of consciousness on this topic, asked me for more resources on the history of social work. They understood that to become competent social workers, they had to understand the field's history and their individual roles in creating social change.

Developing Agency Through Skill Building

Moving from awareness to action requires developing macro-level practice skills. A lack of ability to engage on this level could stand in the way of achieving transformative potential (Jemal, 2022). For example, students would tense up whenever I said "policy" in class. In particular, I could see Angela begin to lose focus as she reached for her phone. The students held the belief that policy work was beyond their skill set. To help increase student agency, I introduced a series of macro-level skill-building exercises, using the New Jersey Food Desert Relief Program (NJFDR) as a tool for engagement. The food desert relief program addressed the food security needs of communities in New Jersey and created a database of food desert community designations. Angela raised her hand and said, "Wait, why did they use that term? Why didn't they use 'food apartheid'? Don't they know that food deserts don't occur naturally?" I smiled and said, "Let us begin there." Using the NJFDR Program as an example policy allowed us to develop skills around policy analysis and community asset mapping.

We began the module with a conversation about the traditional interventions for individuals and families experiencing food insecurity. Most students were familiar with food stamps, food pantries, and soup kitchens. Illustrating her understanding of larger systemic issues that impact the individual, Angela looked at me and said, "Those are great and all, but they seem pretty temporary; they help the individual but not the whole community living under food apartheid, nor do they address the root causes." In small group discussions, students were instructed to review the program and research some less traditional responses to food insecurity. I provided examples, including the People's Kitchen Collective, the Black Panther's free breakfast program, and other community food projects that did not rely on the welfare model of care. We also discussed what interventions might work in the communities designated as food deserts in the Food Desert Relief Program. Students examined the Food Desert Relief Act and created a community asset map for the municipality of their choice. Learning these skills set the students up for the final group assignment.

Gaining Confidence to Act

As part of this continued discussion, I asked the students to work in small groups to design creative intervention models for addressing food insecurity in their chosen municipality. Angela and her team designed a community garden where community members would not only have access to healthy food but also learn how to grow their own herbs and vegetables and receive education about nutrition and healthy eating. They intentionally incorporated a social justice component into the program because, during their research, they realized that not all community gardens were social justice focused. The stated mission of their community garden was to "Build community and learn about land, relationships, and activism."

While the action project aimed to have the students move beyond the traditional micro/individual-focused interventions, something else happened. Students came into the last remaining classes sharing that they had engaged in social action on their own, beyond the requirements of the class assignment. Angela told me she had contacted her high school to inquire about volunteering to start a community garden program. She was interested in creating a place to grow healthy food and educating the predominantly BIPOC school about the history of farming and other political education topics. She also contacted Soul Fire Farm, a nonprofit Afro-Indigenous centered community farm, to inquire about their farming intensive. Another student started volunteering at a local urban farm. One student contacted the People's Kitchen Collective in California to determine how the program could be duplicated. These steps demonstrated a newfound passion for community-level work and a recognition that, as individuals or in community, they had the power to create change.

Many students, including Angela, had never reviewed a policy or community in such detail and realized that it "was fun and not as intimidating as I thought." Their questions and critiques of the program were evidence of a level of confidence and agency they did not have a few weeks prior. I intentionally introduced them to food insecurity at the most individual micro level so that when we approached this module, the students had a deep understanding of the social problem and an ability to critique and analyze the gaps in the program.

Moving Toward Critical Engagement

By the end of our semester together, Angela and her classmates had developed an awareness of the systemic and institutional factors underlying social problems. Although we focused on food insecurity for this project, many students could apply what we had learned to other areas of interest. It became apparent in Angela's written assignments and verbal communication that she had developed a deep understanding of how oppression, discrimination, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism affected the lives of the individuals she hoped to work with on a clinical level. Furthermore, Angela recognized that regardless of what area of social work practice she wanted to focus on, she needed to view individual issues through a critical, intersectional, power-conscious lens. Through CTPD, Angela was able to increase her transformative potential and truly understand what it meant to apply a social justice framework to a social problem.

Angela began looking into an internship at a coalition where she would be doing policy and advocacy work on issues of gender-based violence in the state. While she still wanted to work one-on-one with clients, she had developed a passion for macro social work and recognized that she could not practice on one level but neglect the other. The micro and macro were no longer separate entities, or, in Angela's words, "One could not exist without the other." When she asked me for a

recommendation letter for the dual Master of Social Work/Master of Public Policy program, I knew she had developed a real passion for macro practice.

Angela and many of her classmates have enrolled in a few of my other classes, and I have watched their confidence in engaging in macro-level discussions grow. Many students will apply to the MSW program. They recognize that when they do, in most cases, they will have to choose either a clinical or macro concentration. However, now they also acknowledge that they will need to build a social work career with a firm understanding of the intersections between micro and macro practice.

As the professor, I am not removed from the processes by which my students' journey through the CTPD framework. I am engaged with them along the way. My hope is that through growing social work students who are cognizant of the radical potential of social work and of the need to get to the root of a social problem, I, too, am engaging in transformative action.

DISCUSSION

Using the critical transformative potential development framework, I could actively work with students to dig down to the root of a social problem through critical reflection and participatory praxis. As a pedagogical tool, CTPD allowed Angela and her classmates to shift from non-critical levels of consciousness and action to critical levels. This shift bridged the macro-micro divide and ignited a passion for macro-level social work that did not exist before this class. Social work educators can benefit from applying the CTPD framework in their classrooms and embedding it into social work curriculums. This framework and its transformative potential may serve as the vehicle for future social workers dedicated to creating individual and system-level change.

This case study has its limitations. Case study methodology lacks generalizability because the sample is limited; therefore, this case study may only be applicable in this context. In addition, within each class, each student brings their own intersectional identities that may impact group cohesion and a sense of community. In a future class, it would be useful to measure the development of critical consciousness or its impact on engaging in social action.

There are also considerations related to the amount of decision-making power a professor or facilitator has. Those with limited input into curriculum development will have to work to incorporate the framework into an existing syllabus. This requires a level of creativity in adapting the model to fit the setting. Additionally, if a professor or facilitator were interested in using CTPD as a pedagogical tool, it would be necessary to either have existing knowledge or seek out skills for engaging in critical dialogue, consciousness-raising, popular education techniques, and other participatory and liberation-based learning tools. Using CTPD as a pedagogical tool requires flexibility and depth that may only be available to some instructors.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATORS

Using critical transformative potential development in the classroom and in designing curricula challenges social work educators to reflect critically on the mission of social work. In other words, it can assist in helping educators to rethink how they approach social justice-oriented education. Given the current socio-political climate, reinvesting in methods of critical-radical social work, like

CTPD, can assist social work educators in preparing students to uphold their professional responsibility to help bring about system-level change and challenge inequity on all levels.

Social work educators can benefit from applying the CTPD framework in their classrooms and embedding it into social work curriculums because of the focus on creating transformative potential and its applicability to any social work-related issue. Social work educators are responsible for inspiring students who are not intimidated by macro practice and understand that levels of practice are not separated. Social work educators can and should model ways to hold themselves accountable and ensure that we all understand the work that is required to create transformational, system-level change.

CONCLUSION

What I am suggesting in this paper is not something new or innovative; it is a radical remembering of the roots of social work and a re-envisioning of a transformative future. At its core, social work is a radical profession committed to social justice and liberation. Social workers have the potential to create long-lasting and sustainable social change, but it must begin in the classroom. If the field aims to be committed to social justice and liberation, we must all work to achieve those goals. CTPD is a step in that direction.

AUTHOR NOTE

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