Social Work Educators’ Role in Preparing Students: Transformational and Feminist Perspectives

Connect Session – Women’s Council

Presenters:
Dr. Jean East (University of Denver)
Dr. Frances Bernard Kominkiewicz (Saint Mary’s College)
Dr. Nada Elias-Lambert (Texas Christian University)
Dr. Shannon R. Lane (Adelphi University)
Dr. Kim S. Downing (Elizabeth City State University)

Overview and Purpose:
The Council on the Role and Status of Women in Social Work Education

• Promote feminist perspectives in social work education

• Develop and Promote Women Leaders and Scholars who embody feminist perspectives

Jean East, Ph.D.
Leadership models

• What is transformational leadership?
  Leadership that promotes processes that (1) recognize leadership is everywhere, in everyone, (2) work is a shared and collective process, (3) deep change is as important as getting work done and (4) inspired by values.

• What is feminist (feminisms) leadership?
  Leadership that values a relational model of reciprocity, acknowledges power relationships, privilege and intersectionality and builds partnerships for change.

Head – Heart – Soul: Heart Centered – Sharp Focus
Personal is Political

• Identities…. Acknowledgement …. Issues
• Courageous – Vulnerable
• Spiritual – Worldly
• Focus …. Openness to emergence

Jeann East, Ph.D.

Infusion and Integration of Feminist Leadership Models into the Curriculum:
The Development of the Intercultural Leadership Course

• Social Work Elective and Intercultural Minor course
• Idea – Gladys Muhammad - President of the Social Work Program Advisory Board
• Role of Community Leaders
• Student Role
• Alumnae Role

Frances Bernard Kominkiewicz, Ph.D., L.C.S.W
Infusing and Integrating Feminist Leadership Models into Existing Syllabi

• Feminist Connections
• All Women’s College
  Social Work Program Advisory Board Members
  Community Strengths
  Sisters of the Holy Cross
  Mission of College and Social Work Program

• Syllabi Review
  Faculty
  Students
  Social Work Program Advisory Board

• CSWE
Feminist Leadership - Literature

• Kark, Preser, and Zion-Waldoks (2016)
  Discuss feminist leadership from a management education perspective, but use case studies from the students’ field and classroom experiences.
  They also discuss “transformational learning” and social change.

• Haber-Curran and Tillapaugh (2015)
  Discuss “transformative learning” in the classroom as applied to leadership education and how freedom and empowerment are among the themes that emerged when theming.
  These concepts can be directly connected to application of feminist theory in the classroom.

Feminist Leadership - Literature

• Dentith and Peterlin (2011)
  Further discuss infusing feminist theories and pedagogy into leadership preparation programs and relate this to social justice.
  Also describe the syllabus used in their leadership curricula.
Leaderful Practice

- Alternative approach to traditional model of leadership
- Leadership occurring collectively among people in social interaction
- Everyone shares experience of serving as a leader
- Leaders serve:
  - At the same time
  - All together
  - “Full” of leadership
- Students and early career faculty can be involved

Elements of Leaderful Practice

Four C’s
- Compassionate
- Concurrent
- Collaborative
- Collective

Nada Elias-Lambert, PhD, LMSW

#CSWEwomen
@swkfeminist
corsw.wordpress.com
Leaderful Practice

“Everyone’s talent is allowed to shine through and contribute to team goals. People can bring their whole selves to work and feel at home contributing to the greater good.”

~Joseph Raelin

Leaderful Actions

1. Advocating in ways that include rather than exclude others
2. Facilitating open group discussion, problem solving, and decision making
3. Seeking creative local actions and solutions as a means to global actions and solutions
4. Making yourself dispensable so that change continues without you
Grand Challenges: Achieve equal opportunity and justice—how can we infuse feminist leadership?

• Images of social work in historical and contemporary leadership roles
• Building feminist leadership models into existing courses and curricula: Case study

Shannon R. Lane, LMSW, PhD
Washington, DC, October 5-6, 2017
The Ohio State University, October 27-28, 2017
Yeshiva University, November 2-3, 2017
Adelphi University, December 8, 2017
University of Connecticut, March 2-3, 2018
Role models

Creating new networks

Shannon R. Lane, LMSW, PhD

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@swkfeminist
corsw.wordpress.com
Women of Color and Leadership

Sojourner Truth delivered a poem, Ain’t I a Woman, in 1851 at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio.

“That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?”

Kim S. Downing, Ph.D., LCSW, ACSW

Women of Color and Leadership

Alice Walker coined the term, Womanism and her quote “Womanist is to is to feminist as purple is to lavender” perfectly describes the underrepresentation of issues related to African American women in feminist dialogue. Womanism is not just focused on women of color, but the analysis (just like the color purple) is deeper and richer.

Kim S. Downing, Ph.D., LCSW, ACSW
Women of Color and Leadership

Kimberle’ Crenshaw examined intersectionality and feminism. Utilizing Intersectionality Theory, which she introduced in the 1980s, she studied how different power structures interact in the lives of minorities, specifically black women.

Kim S. Downing, Ph.D., LCSW, ACSW

Women of Color and Leadership

As feminist continue to advocate for integration of content in social work education, we must remain cognizant of the need to look at additional perspectives and theories that highlight different experiences.

Whereas Caucasian women face repressive male elite attitudes that are ingrained in American culture and views of leadership, their gender is often the primary factor fueling the discrimination which they face.

In contrast, an understanding of intersectionality provides an awareness of the reality that discrimination is a multi-faceted element in the lives of women of color. In addition to gender, race and social status are two elements that affect women of color in how society perceives them, their leadership and their access to opportunities.

Kim S. Downing, Ph.D., LCSW, ACSW
Women’s Council Breakfast:  
APM Saturday mornings  
#WCBreakfast2017 (this morning)  
#WCBreakfast2018 (join us next year!)

References:


References