



# Advancing Inclusivity by Caucusing

Hudson, K.D., & Mountz, S.E. (2016). Teaching note – Third space caucusing: Borderland praxis in the social work classroom. *Journal of Social Work Education*, (52)3, 379-384.

## WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

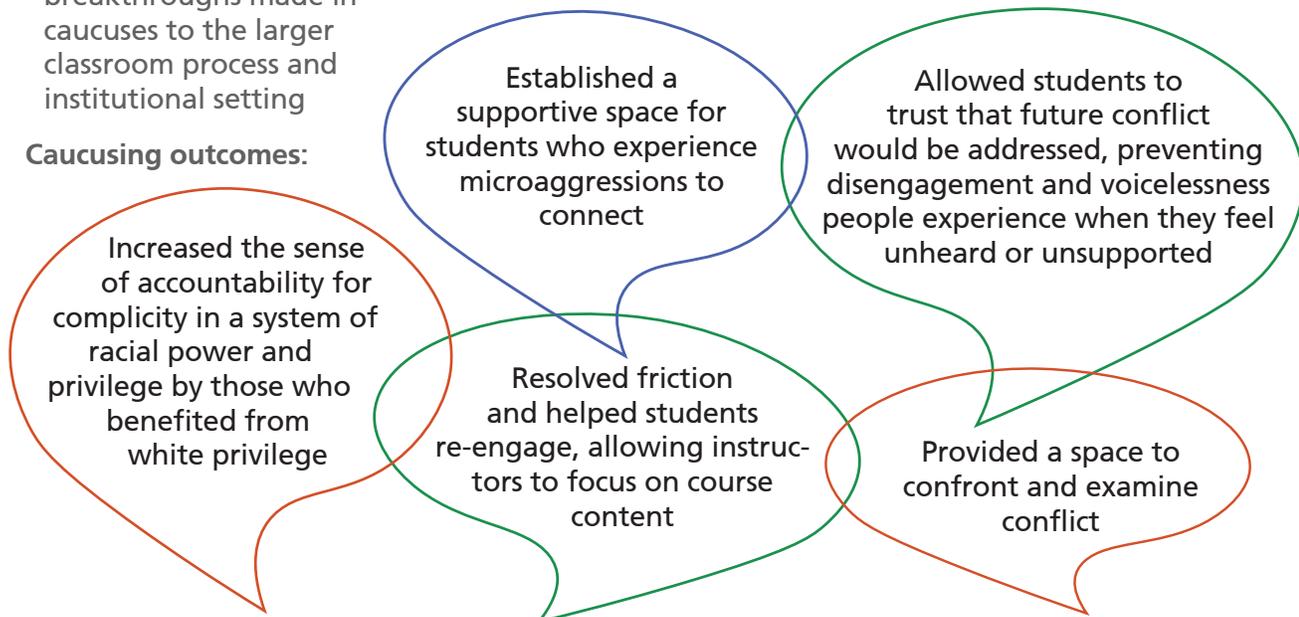
This article discusses the authors' experiences successfully implementing racial identity-based caucusing in an MSW program social justice class at a large public university. Students asked to engage in racial identity-based caucusing due to friction in the classroom related to differential experiences and a lack of understanding of racism and white privilege.

## WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

Racial identity-based caucusing allows participants to discuss oppression and racism within their self-identified racial/ethnic group (people of color or white). A third-space caucus provides a group for participants whose experiences of racial identity fall outside of or in-between this binary. **To facilitate the caucuses, class instructors:**

- Offered three caucus groups: (1) people of color; (2) white; and (3) third space
- Brought in facilitators who identified with the members of a caucus to lead that caucus
- Held each caucus in a separate room to talk about identity and race-specific issues
- Established ground rules set by caucus members and provided structured questions to guide conversation
- Reconvened as a class, with established goals and parameters in place, to apply progress or breakthroughs made in caucuses to the larger classroom process and institutional setting

### Caucusing outcomes:



## WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Child welfare organizations can also implement this approach to third-space caucusing to address privilege and differential experiences and promote social justice. In addition to the outcomes above, third-space caucusing can benefit worker and leader well-being by:

- Allowing a more critical analysis of organizational and individual assumptions and values, especially related to race
- Providing a way to work through social identity-based conflict in the workplace
- Creating accountability and connection across all levels of the workforce