

**Additional compilation of quotes from the Hafen and Villescas “Whitelash” article
(emphasis in bold; italics original)**

[Author 1 = Quinn Hafen, PhD Student – now at the University of Wyoming]

[Author 2 = Marie Villescas, MSW Instructor at Colorado State University’s (CSU) School of Social Work]

Statement indicating this study was part of Author 1’s dissertation that granted her a PhD at the CSU School of Social Work: This study is part of my **dissertation**, which analyzes how social work education can identify and dismantle white supremacy within the profession. (p. 11)

Setting & Date: In Spring 2023, we co-taught a practice course with 3rd year B.S.W. students and in Fall 2023, we co-taught a first-year seminar that counted toward general education credits and was open to all freshman and transfer students enrolled in the university. (p. 12)

Exempt from IRB: We sought ethical approval from [University’s] institutional review board to conduct this study drawing on our own personal experiences and student data, including course recordings and content, informal student feedback and course evaluations. Upon review, **the board determined that the study was exempted** because it was “not human subjects research.” (p. 14)

Creating an environment of shame and guilt: Not all white emotionality was related to shame or guilt, instead some white students responded with denial. For example, **we experienced open hostility from some white students who claimed that our discussion of white supremacy was a form of reverse racism** that “*oppresses us [as students].*” **We both found it exhausting and exasperating how students denied the connection between their emotions and the course content**, but we also felt a release of tension when students were “starting to connect that their emotions are not just about them being irritated with people at the front of the room” (Author 1). (p. 19)

Giving one-sided, reductive, slanted history: We’re giving them **accurate information, accurate histories**. We’re pulling the veil back from their eyes even though it is so uncomfortable [to do that] ... They may not fully understand that that’s what left them feeling the way they’re feeling, but I think some of them did. (p. 19)

Creating an environment of shame: We reflected that students in “both classes started to pushback when they’re first starting to feel the shame” (Author 2)... In our processing sessions, we discussed how white students attempted to derail the class from content about racism and white supremacy, instead seeking to center the entire class’s attention on ensuring their own white comfort. (p. 20)

Recreating a literal “struggle session” in the classroom: When we **doubled down and set a firm boundary** that we would not defer to white emotional comfort, we reflected that these students lashed out in an attempt to relieve negative emotions and ease feelings of shame and guilt. (p. 20)

We interpreted the student's response that he "struggles" with negative emotions as a form of avoidance and white centering. Author 2 **set a hard boundary by stating that she had "no way to sugarcoat" it.** Author 1 **reaffirmed this boundary** and sought to refocus attention on the impacts of racial oppression. (p. 20)

Creating an environment of discomfort: After class, Author 1 questioned whether we should have eased the students' discomfort to facilitate learning. Author 2 pointed out that **easing the students' discomfort might be a form of white complicity.** (p. 20)

When we held them accountable to the harm they were inflicting, we observed that students responded with denial, anger, white tears, and demands for emotional comfort. (p. 22)

Anti-White bias: As stated by Bonilla-Silva (2019), white people may "derive satisfaction and even pleasure in domination," therefore they have an affective interest in perpetuating white supremacy [(p.8)]. This critique illustrates that white pushback against discomfort is not an individual and isolated reaction, rather it is inextricably linked to the emotional hegemony of white comfort. (p. 22)

Group-based stereotypes: Author 2 called out the irony of this student's comments during one of our processing sessions: "*The other components of life need to be lessened*" for white people to be able to take on the conversations and learn about race? Is that what I just took away from that? Gosh, that would be really nice. **Could we press the pause button for People of Color, so they don't have to deal with race while they learn about race?** (p. 22)

Creating an actively hostile environment: However, we found that when we named the connection between emotional reactions and racial power dynamics, **white students once again attempted to make themselves into the victim by recentering their own emotions.** For example, in response to Author 1 calling out white centering in Case Example 2, a white student said they would stop participating in group discussions due to discomfort with our teaching approach. Students also used course evaluations as an institutionally protected avenue to reassert white comfort, for example, one student stated, "*I don't feel safe in this classroom. The judgement and rejection come from the teachers' reactions rather than students. This makes me shut down.*" (p. 23)

Unevenly enforced view of "safety" and anti-White bias: While Author 1 was initially taken aback by this statement, Author 2 shared that she gets this type of comment every semester. Author 2 stated, "I can actually predict who's going to write that it's not a safe learning environment, and **the reason that it's 'not safe' is because it's actually not a safe environment for hate.**" In the courses we taught together, we observed that white students demanded they feel safe when engaging in whitelash rhetoric and behavior, however, these demands for safety **obscured the violence enacted on BIPOC.** (p. 23)

Anti-White, anti-male group-based bias: We observed that **students who lashed out behaved as if they were "a mini mob"** (Author 2) engaged in "groupthink" (Author 1). In our experiences, one student engaging in whitelash "leads the way for the whole class" (Author 1).

For example, reflecting on the interaction in Case Example 1, Author 1 noted that, “this student has been acting as a spokesperson for other folks that he says talk to him about their concerns... he’s thinking that he’s doing everyone a favor.” **But “he’s at the center of the whiteness and the maleness”** (Author 2). (p. 24)

Race-based definition of privilege: In reflecting on the racially specific responses to discomfort, we reaffirmed that “[we] want the tension, [we] **want the discomfort among people who hold privilege**” (Author 2). (p. 26)

Anti-White bias and gaslighting: By **pushing students to engage in uncomfortable reflexivity**, we sought to provide students with the skills to **identify their own complicity in the reproduction of whiteness** within social work education. (p. 27)

Binary White vs. BIPOC discrimination: Consequently, we used the phrase “class as container” to describe **how we sought to actively create a boundaried space that minimizes harm to BIPOC**. For example, in the second case example, when white students claimed it was oppressive to grade them on their engagement with content on race and racism, we reflected that “the container wasn’t firm” (Author 2) because we did not immediately set a limit with students that we would talk about their grades at a different time when we did not have a presenter. Reflecting on this instance and others, we noticed that when whitelash escalated it was due to not having firm enough boundaries. (p. 26)

Through our interracial teaching partnership, we re-affirmed that anti-racist pedagogy must not only be focused on subject matter, but also on re-constructing social processes to **center BIPOC learning and validate BIPOC experiences of harm**. We viewed this type of social and emotional learning as **a form of resocialization**, in which both students and instructors **challenged white norms of behavior** and racialized power dynamics. (p. 29)

Anti-White bias: For example, in the first case example, when the white student lashed out to protect white comfort, we perceived that he was also lashing out against the decentering of whiteness. In fact, in direct response to this whitelash, a student of color spoke up during class and re-affirmed that **it “felt really good to her” that we were centering BIPOC learning instead of caving to white comfort**. During a subsequent processing session, Author 2 reflected on this interaction, stating, **It’s really interesting how this very bright, very intuitive person of color** had assumed those things about me and my approach. But yet the **white dudes in the class were attributing oppression** and all kinds of nastiness to me. [Laughs]. (p. 29)