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Want to change perspectives on social justice? Academic courses and social movements matter

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Want to change perspectives on social justice?
Academic courses and social movements matter

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Coatesville Head Start Preschool

Philadelphia Head Start Preschool

West Chester University of Pennsylvania



ECCEL Program

- A field experience in psychology course that focused on intersections of classism, racism, and sexism and trained students in using psychology tools for community-engaged work with families facing poverty and racism.
- Students met as a full class one evening per week to discuss theory and research and worked in small teams one day per week to provide psychology services to families at Head Start preschools.

ECCEL Class Meetings

- Working with children
 - Emotional recognition
 - How to best help children (playlistening, dealing with crying children)
 - Development deficiencies
- Racism, classism, and oppression
 - Implicit biases
 - How to confront racism and classism
 - Understanding white privilege

ECCEL Fieldwork



Social Justice Questionnaires

- Social Justice Questionnaires were used to track students' perspectives during their time with ECCEL
- The Social Justice Questionnaires were distributed to students for completion at three time points during their enrollment.
- Pre-course, Mid-course, & Post-course
- Measures
- White Privileges Attitudes Scale (Pinterits, Poteat, & Spanierman, 2009) in its original form as well as an adapted form designed to measure attitudes about middle class privilege
 - Likert-type scale Ex: “Our social system promotes White privilege” and “I intend to work towards dismantling White privilege.”
- Coping with Discrimination Scale (Wei, Alvarez, Ku, Russell, & Bonett, 2010).
 - Likert-type scale Ex: “I try to stop discrimination at the societal level” and “It’s hard for me to seek emotional support from other people”

Academic Course Impact on Social Justice Perspectives

- Hypothesis- students will grow across their time participating in this course in their awareness of White and middle class privilege and in terms of their understanding of and strategies for coping with discrimination.

Black Lives Matter Movement

- Black Lives Matter arose in response to the killing of Trayvon Martin in 2013
- The murder of George Floyd in May 2020 was linked to a new stage
- Protests across the US
- Widespread engagement in challenging conversations about race
- This also coincided with the pandemic
- COVID-19 brought to light further racial disparities
- National polls indicated increased concern about racism



Social Movement Impact on Social Justice Perspectives

- Hypothesis- 2020 will have had an impact on students' perspectives on privilege and discrimination—possibly changing students' views on further dimensions of these issues.

Participants

139 Participants

- 87% Female
- 36% BIPOC
- 101 Enrolled 2017-2019
- 38 Enrolled 2020

Pre vs. Post course results

A repeated measures MANCOVA revealed significant change in student ratings from pre- to post-course time points for subscales concerning awareness of White privilege, willingness to confront White privilege, willingness to confront middle class privilege, and interest in advocating for education about discrimination.

Tests for Key Variables (n = 98)

Variable ^a	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	p-value	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power
Confront WP	.07	.07	.63	.429	.007	.63	.123
Cost Anti-Racism	.12	.12	.70	.405	.008	.70	.131
Aware WP	.85	.85	5.29*	.024	.055	5.29	.624
Remorse WP	.03	.03	.09	.764	.001	.09	.060
Confront MCP	.75	.75	5.47*	.022	.057	5.47	.638
Cost Anti-Classism	.05	.05	.07	.791	.001	.07	.058
Aware MCP	.88	.88	3.72	.057	.040	3.72	.480
Edu Advocacy	1.76	1.76	4.67*	.033	.049	4.67	.571
Internalize	.42	.42	2.30	.133	.025	2.30	.323
Resist	.50	.50	.90	.345	.010	.90	.156
Detach	.22	.22	.54	.464	.006	.54	.113

Awareness and Action

For all variables for which there was significant change, the change indicated beneficial growth across the course in terms of awareness and action.

	M	Time 1	Time 2		t	df	p-value
		SD	M	SD			
Confront WP	3.99	.63	3.99	.75	-.13	97	.896
Cost Anti-Racism	2.50	.87	2.48	1.08	.20	97	.845
Aware WP	3.55	.57	3.60	.65	-.94	97	.350
Remorse WP	3.40	1.17	3.32	1.31	.64	97	.523
Confront MCP	3.82	.61	3.93	.70	-1.6	97	.113
Cost Anti-Classism	2.38	.86	2.50	1.07	-1.14	97	.166
Aware MCP	3.22	.55	3.28	.64	-.94	97	.347
Remorse MCP	2.62	.95	2.95	1.07	-3.14	97	.347
Edu Advocacy	3.49	.93	4.22	1.08	-7.81***	94	.000
Internalize	2.96	.79	2.70	.90	2.79**	94	.006
Resist	2.48	.67	3.03	.91	-6.14***	94	.000
Detach	2.13	.88	3.82	1.35	-11.78***	94	.000

2017-2019 vs. 2020 Part 1

Students enrolled in the ECCEL course in 2017-2019, and those who were enrolled in 2020 were demographically similar.

	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		t	df	p-value
	M	SD	M	SD			
Age	21.43	3.28	21.39	1.50	.06	137	.955
Gender Identity	.09	.29	.18	.39	-1.57	137	.119
BIPOC	.37	.48	.32	.47	.45	136	.651
Income	50.08	16.99	52.68	16.65	-.80	136	.425
Confront WP	3.94	.73	4.18	.68	-1.71	138	.089
Cost Anti-Racism	2.49	.90	2.79	.94	-1.72	138	.087
Aware WP	3.52	.66	4.12	.75	-4.63***	138	.000
Remorse WP	3.37	1.23	3.84	1.26	-2.02*	138	.045
Confront MCP	3.82	.60	4.08	.60	-2.26*	137	.025
Cost Anti-Classism	2.37	.88	2.68	.86	-1.88	138	.063
Aware MCP	3.19	.64	3.49	.86	-2.25*	138	.026
Edu Advocacy	2.61	1.01	3.03	.95	-2.26*	138	.025
Internalize	3.48	.93	4.26	1.24	-3.92***	132	.000
Resist	2.95	.80	2.73	1.09	1.24	131	.216
Detach	2.46	.69	3.37	.97	-6.05***	132	.000
Confront WP	2.19	.88	3.56	1.38	-6.73***	132	.000

Variable ^a	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> - value	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power
Confront WP	1.3	1.34	3.664	.058	.028	3.66	.476
Cost Anti-Racism	1.2	1.22	1.745	.189	.014	1.74	.259
Aware WP	10.26	10.26	39.136***	.000	.238	39.14	1.000
Remorse WP	6.48	6.48	5.493*	.021	.042	5.49	.643
Confront MCP	2.55	2.55	7.012**	.009	.053	7.01	.748
Cost Anti-Classism	1.21	1.21	1.701	.194	.013	1.70	.253
Aware MCP	2.01	2.01	5.624*	.019	.043	5.62	.653
Edu Advocacy	4.13	4.13	4.540*	.035	.035	4.54	.561
Internalize	18.46	18.46	17.639***	.000	.124	17.64	.986
Resistance	1.01	1.01	1.303	.256	.010	1.30	.205
Detachment	19.563	19.56	32.103***	.000	.204	32.10	1.000

2017-2019 vs. 2020 Part 2

A GLM suggested that pre-course scores for the 2017-19 and 2020 cohorts differed significantly in terms of awareness of White privilege, remorse about White privilege, awareness of middle class privilege, willingness to confront middle class privilege, remorse about middle class privilege, interest in advocating for education about discrimination, interest in resisting discrimination, and detachment from discrimination.

Discussion

Results suggest that academic courses can influence social justice perspectives, but social movements *may* influence them more.

- These results are to be considered moving forward
- Teaching, research, and activism work might be integrated for the best results

Results suggested that students who identified as BIPOC showed greater awareness of White privilege and were more likely to confront it. Yet they also identified a greater potential cost to confronting White privilege.

- This highlights the importance of those of us who are White allies stepping up to confront White privilege and not just leaving that to those who identify as BIPOC.