DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

Challenging Our Assumptions: First-Year Students' Understanding About Diversity & Social Justice

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Challenging Our Assumptions

- H.S.+/FY students ability to engage in conversations around diversity & social justice.
- H.S.+/FY students ability to reflect on their own identities.

Reviewing the Literature

- **Positive Impact of Curricular / Co-Curricular Diversity Experiences on Reducing Racial Bias**
  - Anthony (1993)
  - Astin (1993)
  - Chang (2002)
  - Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin (2002)
  - Hyun (1994)
  - Inkelas (1998)
  - Katz & Ivey (1977)
  - Lopez (2004)
  - McPhee, Kreutzer & Fritz (1994)
  - Milem (1994)
  - Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini (1996)
  - Springer, Palmer, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Nora (1996)
  - Stake & Hoffman (2001)
  - Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora (2001)

Meta-Analyses: Denson (2009) & Engberg (2004)

Reviewing the Literature

- **Positive Impact of Intergroup Dialogue Initiatives (Zuniga, Lopez & Ford, 2014)**
  - Beliefs regarding social inequality
    - Lopez, Gurin & Nagda (1998); Nagda, Gurin, & Lopez (2003)
  - Communication
    - Diaz (2009); Gurin (1999); Gurin, Nagda & Lopez (2004); Lopez, Gurin & Nagda (1998); Nagda & Zuniga (2003)
  - Capacity to engage others across intergroup differences
    - Nagda & Zuniga (2003)
  - Commitment to taking up action for social justice
    - Nagda, Kim, & Truelove (2004); Zuniga, Williams, & Berger, (2005)

Reviewing the Literature

- **Impact of Singular Diversity Workshops on First-Year Students**
  - Increases positive attitudes towards diversity
    - Springer, Palmer, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Nora (1996)
  - Should be interactive, shorter, and leveraging participant experiences
    - McCauley, Wright & Harris (2000)

Project Description

- **What we assessed**
  - 60 Minute Diversity & Social Justice Lesson Plan
    - Standardized lesson across all Chicago Quarter courses
- **Why we assessed this**
  - Mission critical content
  - Foundational knowledge for Liberal Studies courses
  - Desire to impact knowledge and attitudes for positive student interaction across differences

Project Description

- **Engberg (2005) highly recommends qualitative research be conducted with diverse teams**
- **Collaborative Approach**
  - Interdisciplinary
    - New Student & Family Engagement: First-Year Students
    - Center for Intercultural Programs: Diversity & Social Justice Content
    - Student Affairs Assessment Office: Methodological Support
  - Multiple Social Identities of Team

Methodology

- **Sample:** Chicago Quarter classes. N=168 freshmen
- **Methods**: Qualitative analysis of reflection journals.
- **Rubric:** Assessed learning and themes in 3 domains:
  - 1) Ability to **define** at least one core concept.
  - 2) Ability to connect core concept to **personal social identity**.
  - 3) Qualitative codes to **capture themes**
- Inter-Rater Reliability found substantial agreement between coders

  (k=.70, p<.001).

Results

- 70% of students assessed demonstrated achievement towards learning outcomes.
- Domain 1: **Knowledge of Concepts**
  - 69% accurately defined at least once core concept.
- Domain 2: **Application of Concepts**
  - 54.4% accurately applied at least one core concept to their own social identity.
- Domain 3: **Themes**
  - 31% of the students demonstrated an accurate understanding of more than one core concept explored in the Common Hour, even though the assignment only required them to reflect on one core concept.
- Relationship between **concepts** and Domain 3 **themes**:
  - **Diversity and Social Identity**:
    - Related to **inaccurate or partial understanding** of multiple concepts.
  - **Privilege and Oppression:**
    - Related to **accurate** reflections on **multiple core concepts**.
    - Related to an **internalized sense of responsibility**.

Implications

- **Implication #1: Valuing a multi-conceptual, intersectional approach**
  - Multi-conceptual
    - Collins (2008)
    - Sue (2001)
  - Intersectional Identities
    - Abes, Jones & McEwan (2000)

Implications

- **Implication #2: Value of intrapersonal development**
  - Growth for students with both privileged or oppressed social identities
    - Hardiman & Jackson (1997)

Implications

- **Implication #3: Value of exploring systems of privilege and oppression**
  - Increases in internalized responsibility mirrors other research findings
    - Nagda, Kim & Truelove (2004); Zuniga, Williams, & Berger (2005)
  - Congruent with DePaul's mission & the Vincentian Question – "What must be done?"

Implications

- **Implication #4: Leverage this experience to create opportunities for deeper learning.**

TAXONOMY OF SIGNIFICANT LEARNING

Fink, D.L. (2003). Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Future Collaboration Opportunities

Cultural Competence Development
& Diversity Workshops

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