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

Scott Tharp, Center for Intercultural Programs
Toni Fitzpatrick, New Student & Family Engagement
Rebecca Pinchuck, Division of Student Affairs
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)
  - McPhee, Kreutzer & Fritz (1994)
  - Milem (1994)
  - Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini (1996)
  - Stake & Hoffman (2001)
  - Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora (2001)

Reviewing the Literature

• **Positive Impact of Intergroup Dialogue Initiatives** (Zuniga, Lopez & Ford, 2014)
  – Beliefs regarding social inequality
  – Communication
  – 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
  \( k=0.70, p<0.001 \).
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.
Future Collaboration Opportunities

Cultural Competence Development & Diversity Workshops
Scott Tharp, Center for Intercultural Programs
dtharp1@depaul.edu

First Year Student Success & The Chicago Quarter Program
Toni Fitzpatrick, New Student & Family Engagement
afitzpa9@depaul.edu
References


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