The Impact of Participating in Cross-Cultural Dialogues through the Service Learning Project

The proposed project will examine the impact of a service-learning activity that involved interactions between Stockton University undergraduates and international students from ELS English Language

engagement activity impacted Stockton students' attitudes towards diversity

service.

Background and Aims

The service-learning project described in this research involved

is an intensive English language education program wherein adults from around the world study English

clubs" to help ELS international students practice spoken English. Stockton students led informal meet and greet sessions for their ELS partners, conducted reciprocal interviews of their

and Stockton students asked each other about growing up in their respective countries), and participated in a social activity, together (e.g. see a movie, go out to dinner).

This engagement project not only provided a service to international students

also have benefitted from greater exposure to individuals of diverse cult

individuals that identify with different national, racial, and ethnic groups can reduce prejudice towards

towards African Americans after experiencing collaborative interactions with African Americans;

Germans who got to know Turkish immigrants living in Germany experienced lower prejudice toward

can be explained by increased knowledge about a previously unfamiliar group, reduced anxiety related to

having interactions with diverse individuals, and increased empathy for experiences and perspectives as a result of getting to know someone with different life experiences (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008).

Based on psychological research on the benefits of contact with diverse individuals, I wish to understand how engagement with members of the international community impacted Stockton students. I wish to study this beyond the pedagogical scope of the service learning course (PSYC 3301

Adolescence). This is important to understand because

competence, global engagement, and diversity for cultivating tolerance and counteracting the effects of

ideological isolation and political polarization in the United States. How does engaging with community

members who are different from oneself in terms of race, culture/ethnicity, and nationality impact one's

Objective 1. The first goal of this project is to conduct data analyses of students' self-[...] [...]
essays, journals, and responses to a questionnaire on perceptions of service-learning.

Objective 2. The second goal of this project is to disseminate the findings of this [...] at [...]
conference and a publication. Upon completion of Objective 1, I will submit a presentation proposal to
national or regional conferences focused on community engagement, service-learning, global
engagement, or pedagogical innovation. I will also write a manuscript reporting the findings of [...]
[...] in the form of publication in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal [...]
engagement, or psychology.

Beginning in Fall, 2017, I collected 35 Stockton student essays and reflections with approval from the
IRB. Data collection is proceeding during Spring 2018 and will result in an additional 35 essays and
[...] for a total of 70 participants from Fall and Spring [...]

- How do Stockton students participating in this service feel about their international student
  partners? Do they report positive or negative feelings towards their partners?
- Are Stockton students' knowledge of different groups, anxiety in intercultural communication
  and empathy for diverse individuals impacted by the service-learning experience?
- [...] Stockton students' [...]
  engaging in the service-learning experience?

[...] the findings from [...]

Stockton students will hold predominately positive attitudes towards their international [...] In
addition, Stockton students will express generally positive views towards service-learning and global
engagement. Students will have more positive views towards service [...] at the end of the
compared to at the beginning of the semester, prior to their service. Lastly, I predict that student responses
will address the three impacts identified in previous research: knowledge, anxiety reduction, and empathy.

The proposed project will use the following procedures and methods over Summer, 2018:

Data Analyses. In total, 70 students' responses to essays, journals, and [...]
thematic analysis for content that addresses the research questions of this project. The projection essays
and journals, combined, were 1000 words long for each student. In the thematic analysis, responses will
be examined for words and descriptions pertaining to knowledge acquisition, anxiety reduction, and
empathy. Students' reactions to service-learning, global learning, and their international [...]

23-item questionnaire collected prior to the service project will be compared to perceptions of service-
learning on a 21-item questionnaire at the end of the semester. I will conduct quantitative analyses of
questionnaire items using SPSS statistical software, which is available through Stockton University. Data
will be tabulated and presented in graphical form using Microsoft Excel for [...]

[...] project into a conference poster, workshop, or presentation proposal. Following feedback from the
conference, I will draft a manuscript for publication in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal.

Timeline. The proposed project will be conducted over the course of 14 weeks in Summer 2018:

August, 2018: Conference submission. Manuscript preparation and revision.

Importance or Value

Conversations about globalization, immigration, and human movement have become especially prominent in social and political discourse in the United States. Social science research has demonstrated that exposure to different viewpoints and authentic interactions with individuals of different national, cultural, and racial backgrounds can foster tolerance, willingness to cooperate, and greater understanding between individuals (_____, _____ & _____, 2010; _____, _____ & _____, 2004; _____ _____, _____, 2008; _____ et al., 2008). Finding_____

involved in becoming more comfortable with cross-cultural interactions, generate ideas for future research on how to promote tolerance and cultural competence (_____ & _____) and recommendations for how to organize authentic cultural exchanges with international communities.

Future research in this scholarship_____ project. Two follow-up projects may result. One project is the identification and use of quantitative assessment instruments measuring student empathy, attitudes towards globalization, and cultural sensitivity. Such measures can be assessed before and after the service activity in order to observe changes in attitudes, tolerance, and empathic concern as a result of the service-learning project. A second area of future research will examine the impact of the service-learning project on the community partner at ELS Atlantic City. Opportunities for external funding will also be explored in collaboration with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and other faculty members working on global and community engagement. For example, findings from the proposed project may be included in a grant the impact of service-learning on Stockton students and international partners.

Outcomes

The research_____

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American Journal of Community Psychology or _Teaching of Psychology_. The findings from this project will be submitted as a poster, workshop, or talk presentation to a conference highlighting_____

outlets include the Association of American Colleges & University's Global Engagement Meeting, Campus Compact 2019 National Conference, Culture & Language Across the Curriculum Conference, or the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's 18th Annual Conference.