Effects of a Brief Video Intervention on White University Students’ Racial Attitudes

Study done by Soble et al.

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The purpose of this study was to determine whether a brief video intervention could elicit changes in white university students’ racial attitudes about Colorblind Racism, the Affective Costs of Racism to Whites, and Racial Prejudices.
Demographic

- 138 self identified white undergraduate students in a Midwestern predominantly white university
- Aged 18-30
- 59% female
- Majority from middle/upper-middle class suburban backgrounds
- 90% reported their friend group was majority white
- Over half had “moderate exposure” to other races
Colorblind Racism

- Denial, distortion and minimization of racism and the belief that race should not and does not matter.
- Maintains the status quo and perpetuates racial inequality
- Survey: High final score = high level of colorblind racism
Affective Cost

- The emotional consequences of being the dominant group in a white supremacist system
  - White Empathy
  - White Guilt
  - White Fear

- White Empathy and Guilt have been found to manifest in positive attitudes towards diversity and multicultural competence

- Survey: subscales of the three categories. High final score = high level of feeling that “emotional cost”
Racial Prejudice

- Assessment of white’s discrimination index

- Lower levels of prejudice and high levels of multicultural training/understanding = a critical awareness of the institutional and structural forces that create poverty, not the individual’s worth.

- Survey: High final score = high levels of racial sensitivity
The Study

- Proven that education will increase the acknowledgement and understanding of white privilege

- Participants were shown either the experiential video that followed two men’s (one black one white) experiences in a variety of contexts—highlighting racial inequalities
  - Or the control video which had nothing to do with race

- Before and after the video the participants filled out surveys that determined the level of colorblind racism, the scale of white fear/guilt/empathy, and a measure of racial prejudice
Findings

- There was an increase in White Empathy and Guilt and a decrease in Colorblind Racism.

- No change in White Fear or the Racial Prejudice.
  - It promoted racial awareness but did nothing to increase attitudes of personal comfort with diversity in the students’ own lives.

- Future research could focus on students from more diversified schools, if the changes actually lasted, if an interactive piece increased the findings, or a less obvious study.