Effect of an Introductory Peacebuilding Class

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Abstract

Social justice advocacy is a term in which individuals are both aware of the "injustices and inequities" of certain populations and are engaged in creating a just and equitable experience for other individuals (Bemak & Chung, 2005). This study aimed to measure the effect of an introductory undergraduate Peacebuilding course on students' advocacy for social justice. A Social Justice scale designed by Torres-Harding, Siers, and Olson (2011) was utilized to measure social justice scores both before and after completion of the course. A significant increase in social justice scores was found after completion of the class t(47) = -1.50, p = .07, one tailed, d = .21. Those with more interpersonal empathy were found to favor more government interaction, leading to the identification of changes in attitude amongst political affiliation (Wagaman & Segal, 2014). The class significantly increases Conservative's belief that it is important to talk to others about societal systems of power, privilege, and oppression t(24) = -1.44, p = 0.08, one-tailed, d = 0.29. Though only marginally significant, these results are still valid as per to Ward, Greenhill, and Bakke's suggestion to not utilize the .05 restriction in peace studies but to instead look for good effect sizes. These findings also support Haidt and Graham (2007) who say that conservatives rely upon all five of the foundations of psychological preparedness. These results provide evidence that an introductory peace building class can have a major effect upon different individuals and their social justice attitudes.

Keywords: Peacebuilding, Social Justice, Political Affiliation, Major, Gender

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Effect of Peacebuilding Course on Social Justice

Allen (1997) and Duncan-Andrade (2005) both mention that proponents of teacher advocacy can empower students to become peacemakers in the world through making them more aware of challenges and differences in power dynamics. Social justice has been identified as being critically aware of injustice and having dedication to fight for more equality in society (Bemak & Chung, 2005). One such review that calls for greater social justice is by Hatfield and Rapson (2005) who found anger and frustration to be taken out upon minority groups. They suggest more social justice would be a weapon for peace against this problem. Astin and Sax (1998) found that service learning has a significantly positive effect on personal development. Getting students involved in service learning projects increases their understanding of social problems and also gives them a greater acceptance of different cultures and races. This would help establish a greater sense of social justice and further peace building efforts throughout the world. It has been found that those with more interpersonal empathy have a greater positive attitude toward government intervention (Wagaman & Segal, 2014). This would suggest that Liberals would be more likely to be higher in empathy or social justice attitudes, and that changing someone's attitude toward social justice would likely impact their political ideology as well. Because of this, we looked at how people of different political affiliations change their attitudes after taking a peace building class.

To address the demand for a tool that could increase social justice, a peacebuilding course was designed to influence students and their attitudes (Intercultural Peacebuilding) The class involves investigating case studies on effective methods as well as the practice of mediation. A mediator can be defined as an "acceptable, independent and impartial individual or group who assists people in conflict to amicably resolve their differences" (Moore, 2014). This study investigates the influence a Peace Building class has upon Social Justice attitudes.

Ajzen (1998) hypothesized that you could predict someone's behaviors and attitude based on their perception of the future. He described behavioral control as "one's ability to perform an act." Ajzen said that behavioral control influenced an individual's intention to take action. This could be interpreted as identifying someone's intentions to create peace in the world. Behavioral intentions is defined by Torres-Harding, Siers, and Olson (2012) as "someone's engagement in social action or social justice-related activities." The measurements of these attitudes will be used to better understand the effect an introductory peacebuilding course has on a student.

Method

Participants

48 participants were asked to take a survey consisting of an Intrapersonal Dimension Scale (Lee, 2002), Pro-social Personality Battery (Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, & Freifeld, 1995), and Social Justice Scale (Torres-Harding, Siers, & Olson, 2012). The sample consisted of 36 females and 12 males with an average age of 22.1 years.

Materials

26 Item Intrapersonal Dimension Scale (IDS). Measures how much an individual agrees to intrapersonal statements based on experience in the past week (Lee, 2002). An example question states on a scale from 1 to 7, how strongly they agree with, "I am clear about my thoughts under stress."

Pro-social Personality Battery (PPB). 30 item survey covering topics in social responsibility, empathy, moral reasoning, and self-reported altruism (Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, & Freifeld, 1995).

Social Justice Scale (SJS). A 24 item questionnaire developed to measure attitudes toward social justice related to self-efficacy, efforts, social norms, and intentions related to activities and behaviors of social justice (Torres-Harding, Siers, & Olson, 2012). Subscales include attitudes toward social justice (ATSJ), perceived behavioral control (PBC), subjective norms (SN), and behavioral intentions (BI).

RStudio. R version 3. 3. 2 of RStudio was used to run the statistical analysis of the data (RStudio Team, 2016).

Cohen's d visualization. An interactive visualization used to measure and interpret the results of Cohen's d calculation. (Magnusson, 2014).

LSR package. Used to measure Cohen's d from T tests (Navarro, 2015).

Procedure

A diverse group of 46 undergraduate students completed a survey consisting of the IDS, PPB, and SJS which was administered using Qualtrics, an online survey software (Qualtrics, Provo, UT). The survey took about 30 minutes to complete and the results were analyzed.

Results/Discussion

To test the predictability of Social Justice, multiple t-tests were run on important individual questions from the Millennialist Survey. Genders, ethnicities, and political affiliation were compared before and after taking an introductory Peace Building Class.

Social Justice. Students who took the introductory peace building class significantly increased their Social Justice Score after taking the class t(47) = -1.5, one-tailed p = 0.07, d = 0.21 (figure 1). Behavioral intentions increased after taking the class t(47) = -1.7, one-tailed p = 0.05, d = .25 (figure 2). Subjective norms increased after the class was taken t(47) = -1.5, one-tailed p = 0.07, d = 0.2 (figure 3). Perceived behavioral control increased after the class was taken t(47) = -1.5, one-tailed p = 0.07, d = 0.2 (figure 4). Moral responsibility (MR) increased after the class was taken t(47) = -1.3, one-tailed p = 0.09, d = 0.2 (figure 5). Empathy increased after the class was taken t(47) = -1.9, one-tailed p = 0.02 (figure 5).

tailed p = 0.03, d = 0.28 (figure 6). Intrapersonal score (Intra) increased after the class was taken t(47) = -2.5, p = 0.018, d = 0.39 (figure 7).

Political Affiliation

Liberals. The class significantly decreased Liberals' view that, "When people are nasty to me, I feel very little responsibility to treat them well:" t(12) = -1.5, p = 0.078, d = 0.42 (figure 8). According to R psychologist's Cohen's d interactive visualization calculator, with a Cohen's d of 0.42, 66% of the students after taking the peace building class will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 83% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 62% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 7.3 people. This means that if 100 people go through the peace building class, 13.7 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had not gone through the introduction peace building class. Favorable outcome can be described as an individual holding a greater positive attitude toward creating social justice or peace.

The class significantly increases the Liberals' confidence in their ability to work with individuals and groups in ways that are empowering t(12) = -1.44, p = 0.087, d = 0.40 (figure 9). With a Cohen's *d* of 0.4, 66% of the after-class group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 84% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 61% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 7.7 people. This means that if 100 people go through the class, 12.9 more people will have a favorable compared to if they had not gone through the class.

Conservatives. The class significantly decreases Conservatives' belief that, "When people are nasty to me, I feel very little responsibility to treat them well:" t(24) = -1.52, p = 0.07, d = 0.30 (figure 10). With a Cohen's d of 0.3, 62% of the after-class group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 88% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 58% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 10.6 people. This means that if 100 people go through the after-class, 9.4 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had not taken the class.

The class significantly increases Conservatives' belief that it is important to talk to others about societal systems of power, privilege, and oppression: t(24) = -1.44, p = 0.08, d = 0.29 (figure 11). With a Cohen's *d* of 0.29, 61% of the after-class group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 88% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 58% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group will have

a higher score than a person picked at random from the before-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 11 people. This means that if 100 people go through the class, 9.1 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had not taken the class.

The class significantly decreases Conservative's beliefs that when they are right about something, they do not waste much time listening to other people's arguments: t(24) = -1.58, p = 0.06, d = 0.32 (figure 12). With a Cohen's d of 0.32, 63% of the after-class group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 87% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 59% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the before-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group, we need to treat 9.9 people. This means that if 100 people go through the class, 10.1 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they not taken the class.

Majors

ICS (Intercultural Studies). The class significantly increases an ICS major's belief that when they have a job to do, it is impossible to look out for everybody's best interest: t(25) = 2.17, p = 0.019, d = 0.43. With a Cohen's d of 0.43, 67% of the after-class group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 83% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 62% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 7.1 people. This means that if 100 people go through the class, 14 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had not taken the class

The class significantly increases an ICS major's belief that there are two sides to every question and they try to look at both sides: t(25) = -2.67, p = 0.0065, d = 0.52. With a Cohen's *d* of 0.52, 70% of the after-class group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 79% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 64% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the before-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 5.8 people. This means that if 100 people go through the class, 17.4 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had not taken the class

The class significantly increases an ICS major's belief in the importance of trying to change larger social conditions that cause individual suffering and impede on well-being: t(25) = -1.57, p = 0.06, d = 0.31. With a Cohen's d of 0.31, 62% of the after-class group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 88% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 59% chance that a person picked at random from the after-

class group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the before-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 10.3 people. This means that if 100 people go through the class, 9.7 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had not taken the class

The class significantly increases an ICS major's intentions to talk with others about social power inequalities, social injustices, and their impact on social forces on health and wellbeing: t(25) = -1.57, p = 0.065, d = 0.30. With a Cohen's d of 0.3, 62% of the after-class group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 88% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 58% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the before-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 10.6 people. This means that if 100 people go through the class, 9.4 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had not taken the class

Psychology. The class significantly decreases a Psychology major's belief that "When people are nasty to me, I feel very little responsibility to treat them well:" t(6) = -1.55, p = 0.086, d = 0.59. With a Cohen's d of 0.59, 72% of the after-class group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 77% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 66% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the before-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 5 people. This means that if 100 people go through the class, 20.1 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had not taken the class

The class significantly decreases a Psychology major's belief that "When you have a job to do, it is impossible to look out for everybody's best interest:" t(6) = -2.7, p = 0.017, d = 1.03. With a Cohen's d of 1.03, 85% of the after-class group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 61% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 77% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the before-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 2.7 people. This means that if 100 people go through the class, 37.5 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had not taken the class

The class significantly decreases a Psychology major's belief that when they know they are right about something, they don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments: t(6) = -2.27, p = 0.03, d = 0.86. With a Cohen's d of 0.86, 81% of the afterclass group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 67% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 73% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 3.3 people. This means that if 100 people go through the class, 30.7 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had not taken the class.

The class significantly increases a Psychology major's belief that it is important to talk to others about societal systems of power, privilege, and oppression: t(6) = -1.54, p = 0.086, d = 0.59. With a Cohen's d of 0.59, 72% of the after-class group will be above the mean of the before-class group (Cohen's U3), 77% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 66% chance that a person picked at random from the after-class group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the before-class group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the after-class group compared to the before-class group we need to treat 5 people. This means that if 100 people go through the class, 20.1 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had not taken the class

Males. The class significantly increased males' intentions to talk with others about social power inequalities, social injustices, and the impact of social forces on health and wellbeing: t(11) = -2.6, p = 0.01, d = 0.75. With a Cohen's d of 0.75, 77% of the treatment group will be above the mean of the control group (Cohen's U3), 71% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 70% chance that a person picked at random from the treatment group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the control group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the treatment group compared to the control group we need to treat 3.8 people. This means that if 100 people go through the treatment, 26.3 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had received the control treatment.

The class significantly increased males' belief that they possess an ability to work with individuals and groups in ways that are empowering: t(11) = -2.1, p = 0.027, d = 0.62. With a Cohen's d of 0.62, 73% of the treatment group will be above the mean of the control group (Cohen's U3), 76% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 67% chance that a person picked at random from the treatment group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the control group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the treatment group compared to the control group we need to treat 4.7 people. This means that if 100 people go through the treatment, 21.2 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had received the control treatment.

The class significantly increased males' belief that they are capable of influencing others to promote fairness and equality: t(11) = -1.48, p = 0.08, d = 0.43. With a Cohen's d of 0.43, 67% of the treatment group will be above the mean of the control group (Cohen's U3), 83% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 62% chance that a person picked at random from the treatment group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the control group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the treatment group compared to the control group we need to treat 7.1 people. This means that if 100 people go through the treatment, 14 more

people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had received the control treatment.

The class significantly increased males' confidence in their ability to talk with others about social injustices and the impact of social conditions on health and well-being: t(11) = -1.39, p = 0.09, d = 0.40. With a Cohen's d of 0.4, 66% of the treatment group will be above the mean of the control group (Cohen's U3), 84% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 61% chance that a person picked at random from the treatment group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the control group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the treatment group compared to the control group we need to treat 7.7 people. This means that if 100 people go through the treatment, 12.9 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had received the control treatment.

The class significantly increased males' belief that there are two sides to every question and try to look at both of them: t(11) = -1.8, p = 0.048, d = 0.53. With a Cohen's d of 0.53, 70% of the treatment group will be above the mean of the control group (Cohen's U3), 79% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 65% chance that a person picked at random from the treatment group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the control group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the treatment group compared to the control group we need to treat 5.6 people. This means that if 100 people go through the treatment, 17.8 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had received the control treatment.

The class significantly decreased males' belief that when they have a job to do, it is impossible to look out for everybody's best interest: t(11) = 1.9, p = 0.038, d = 0.57. With a Cohen's d of 0.57, 72% of the treatment group will be above the mean of the control group (Cohen's U3), 78% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 66% chance that a person picked at random from the treatment group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the control group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the treatment group compared to the control group we need to treat 5.2 people. This means that if 100 people go through the treatment, 19.3 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had received the control treatment.

Females. The class significantly decreased females' belief that when people are nasty to them, they feel little responsibility to treat them well: t(35) = -1.74, p = 0.04, d = 0.29. With a Cohen's *d* of 0.29, 61% of the treatment group will be above the mean of the control group (Cohen's U3), 88% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 58% chance that a person picked at random from the treatment group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the control group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the treatment group compared to the control group we need to treat 11 people. This means that if 100 people go through the treatment, 9.1 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had received the control treatment.

The class significantly increased females' belief that regardless of what a person has done to us, there is no excuse for taking advantage of them t(35) = -2.33, p = 0.01, d = 0.39. With a Cohen's d of 0.39, 65% of the treatment group will be above the mean of the control group (Cohen's U3), 85% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 61% chance that a person picked at random from the treatment group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the control group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the treatment group compared to the control group we need to treat 8 people. This means that if 100 people go through the treatment, 12.6 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had received the control treatment.

The class significantly increased females' belief that it is important to try to change larger social conditions that cause individual suffering and impede well-being: t(35) = -1.5, p = 0.067, d = 0.26. With a Cohen's d of 0.26, 60% of the treatment group will be above the mean of the control group (Cohen's U3), 90% of the two groups will overlap, and there is a 57% chance that a person picked at random from the treatment group will have a higher score than a person picked at random from the control group (probability of superiority). Moreover, in order to have one more favorable outcome in the treatment group compared to the control group we need to treat 12.4 people. This means that if 100 people go through the treatment, 8 more people will have a favorable outcome compared to if they had received the control treatment.

Discussion

The results of the introductory peacebuilding course show a significant impact on student's attitudes toward social justice. We see the class having a large effect on the students. Males tend to change more than females and we can also see different changes in attitudes between political affiliations and college major. We believe this study sets the framework into investigating which skills are taught within the introductory peacebuilding course that are having such an effect on these students. It is important to highlight the low sample size for some of the demographics; however, finding significance with low sample size is promising as it shows we may find greater significance through the gathering of more participants.

Future studies should control for how long students have attended the university, change in geographic location, influence from other classes, as well as exposure to other cultures and traditions. Many of the students come from diverse backgrounds which may play an impact on student's acceptance of outside viewpoints. A greater sample size would also help us identify more accurate results. In future research, we hope to control for more factors and investigate deeper into what is influencing these changes in attitudes and peacebuilding intentions.

The increase of intrapersonal score shows that people feel more confident in themselves. This helps them to have confidence that they are making a difference in the world. Behavioral intentions and control were shown to increase which shows that people feel like they have the control to act on their beliefs in creating a more peaceful world. This attitude may be useful for helping individuals take control and follow through with behaviors that they believe in. Self reported altruism was found to not significantly change. This could show that people are not willing to sacrifice for others if it means giving they might lose something themselves. This could be a large factor in encouraging others to follow through with social justice behaviors. When people protest for civil rights, it is easier for someone to protest alongside a large group of individuals. This is because if laws are broken, the blame is dispersed among the group and not on an individual. You find altruism in those that stand out on their own, making a difference while taking a full responsibility for one's actions. Since altruism does not increase among students who take an introductory peacebuilding course, it may explain that students are more motivated to make a group action toward peace rather then trying to fight for change on their own.

According to the results of Torres-Harding, Siers, and Olson (2012), the increase of the subscales social justice, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and behavioral intentions would be negatively correlated with racism, neosexism, and global belief-in-a-just-world. This can be interpreted as those that score higher in these subscales are less likely to deny minorities fair treatment. Taking this introductory peacebuilding class shows an impact on giving individuals an understanding that the world is unfair and unjust due to the conditions of systematic oppression in society. The introductory peacebuilding class broadens an individual's awareness of problems in society while increasing their desire to make a difference in their society.

Future research could investigate if taking an introductory peacebuilding class decreases racist and sexist attitudes. Although this study involved a diverse sample, participants came from a highly LDS population. More research could focus on whether these conditions apply to other sects of Christianity and religions. This study furthers our understanding of what motivates individuals to partake in peacebuilding behaviors. We encourage the implementation and future research of peacebuilding courses which are taught in university programs.

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Figure 1 Attitudes Toward Social Justice Before (ATSJ Score1) and After (ATSJ Score2) Introduction Peacebuilding Course



Figure 2 Behavioral Intentions Before (BI Score1) and After (BI Score2) Introduction Peacebuilding Course



Figure 3 Subjective Norms Before (SN Score1) and After (SN Score2) Introduction Peacebuilding Course



Figure 4 Perceived Behavioral Control Before (PBC Score1) and After (PBC Score2) Introduction Peacebuilding Course



Figure 5 Moral Responsibility Before (MR Score1) and After (MR Score2) Introduction Peacebuilding Course



Figure 6 Empathy, Before (Empathy 1) and After (Empathy 2) Introduction Peacebuilding Course



Figure 7 Intrapersonal Score, Before (Intra Score 1) and After (Intra Score 2) Introduction Peacebuilding Course



Figure 8 Decrease Liberals view that "When people are nasty to me, I feel very little responsibility to treat them well" (Reverse Scored) Question = V65, Time taken survey = V136



Figure 9 Increase liberals confidence in ability to work with individuals and groups in ways that are empowering.



Figure 10 Decrease in Conservatives belief that "When people are nasty to me, I feel very little responsibility to treat them well." (Reverse Scored)



Figure 11 Increase in Conservatives belief that it is important to talk to others about societal systems of power, privilege, and oppression.



Figure 12 Decreases Conservative belief that when they are right about something, they don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments (Reverse Scored).