

OUTCOME EVALUATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL DIVERSITY CURRICULUM

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Abstract

The diversity curriculum “We All Smile in the Same Language” was implemented at Camp Lesnaya Skazka in Mari El, Russia. The curriculum aimed to increase knowledge about diversity among campers ages 8 to 16. The evaluation is based on a review of the literature and analysis of a 20-question survey administered pre- and post-intervention. The evaluation sought to determine the impact of the curriculum on diversity awareness and self-esteem in campers ages 9 to 12. While the results were not statistically significant, the analysis contributes to improving the program and provides ideas for future design of international diversity education programs for children.

Mari El is one of many smaller republics that comprise the Russian Federation. It sits some 550 miles east of Moscow. During the time of the Soviet Union, Mari El was closed and has for the most part remained isolated and ethnically homogeneous. However, workers from Tajikistan and their families have recently arrived. The Tajiks have physical characteristics that make them easily recognizable in Mari El and have been the subject of xenophobic jokes and derogatory statements. Such ethnic distinctions and practices of social exclusion are not unusual in Russia.

According to Sevortian (2009) and Ziemer (2011), xenophobic acts that range from hate speech to physical violence have been on the rise in the country since 2000. According to Sevortian (2009), “the number of hate crimes has recently been growing by 20% a year” and they “have become increasingly cruel and often involve weapons and explosives” (p. 20). Sevortian (2009) points to the economic challenges that the country is facing coupled with the increase of immigrant arrivals as explanations, and cites groups such as the “movement against illegal migration” (p. 21) and the skinheads who have targeted populations who are visually different and seen as outsiders. According to Sue (2010), these aggressions

have physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral impacts on individuals. They further fragment entire societies by reinforcing the marginalization of groups who are targeted because of nationality, race, gender, sexual identity, etc.

In response to this issue, an intervention program aimed at encouraging acceptance of diversity and promoting the ideals of inclusion was instituted at a youth camp in Mari El. The program was called "We All Smile in the Same Language" and designed for camp participants (ages 8-16). It was taught from June 15 to August 3, 2014. The diversity program was the first of its kind in the region, and this paper presents findings of an outcome evaluation of its effectiveness. As an initial evaluation, the study sought to determine the degree to which camp participants demonstrated a greater awareness of diversity and improved self-esteem levels immediately after participating in the program. It is the hope that the findings presented will improve the delivery of "We All Smile in the Same Language" and contribute to the design and implementation of diversity education programs for children in general.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Part of being a social worker is using effective, creative, and practical responses to the social issues we are professionally committed to solving. Responding to social exclusion and xenophobia is no exception. "We All Smile in the Same Language" came about because one of the authors (Taylor) was a summer counselor at Camp Lesnaya Skazka in summer 2011. After she was awarded the Davis Project for Peace Grant from the University of Chicago, she returned to Lesnaya Skazka with the program to address xenophobia in the area. She was one of only a few Americans to visit the republic and also most likely the first person of color that the vast majority of the campers, counselors, and Mari El residents had ever seen in person. Although as an African-American she, in her words, "stuck out like a sore thumb" in Mari El, Taylor truly felt like a member of the Lesnaya Skazka family. She hoped, therefore, that camp administrators and campers alike would be more open to learning about diversity awareness and appreciation from a former counselor.

Between March 2014 and early June 2014, Taylor developed the curriculum for "We All Smile in the Same Language." She also constructed the evaluation questionnaire used to analyze program effectiveness. The seven-week program curriculum was utilized in daily classes with groups of children. The curriculum followed the typical 21-day Russian camp session and was taught over two sessions. Every week, a new theme that revolved around defining and understanding stereotypes,

discrimination, and diversity was presented. All curriculum supplies and materials were funded by the Davis Project for Peace Grant, and camp administrators provided a classroom and technical support when needed. Participants did not self-select. Each class session was scheduled by the camp administration. Camp participants in the second and third sessions had the option to opt out of the lessons, but the vast majority opted in. Overall, 54 children participated in the treatment group of the program for this evaluation. Each group came to eight classes over the course of the 21-day session, or about three classes a week. Lessons were taught in English; two camp helpers and one counselor, all fluent in English, translated the courses for class participants (from English to Russian and Russian to English). Handouts and written documents, including the physical copy of the curriculum, were translated by a translator and professor of English at Mari State University. Two or three classes a day were taught, and if needed, counselors from each group would help facilitate activities in class.

Throughout the class and during the activities, the students were able to voice their opinions about diversity, stereotypes, and other related topics, something they had never had the chance to do before in a class context. When given the opportunity at the end of each session to give feedback concerning the class, the majority of the children stated that they would like to have more diversity classes taught at camp and that it was important for them to learn about such issues as racism and negative stereotypes. After reading the feedback the children had written concerning the curriculum, the camp director was very interested in the program because of the positive experience the children had while learning about diversity awareness and appreciation. As a result, the camp director, along with the rest of the camp administrators, invited Taylor to teach "We All Smile in the Same Language" at Lesnaya Skazka at any point in the future. The curriculum created and used for this program and its impact on youth development is further explored in "Outcome Evaluation of Cultural Diversity Curriculum in Youth Camp" (Kuzminykh, Taylor, Dunbar, Lloyd, Ramirez, & Powell, 2015).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The evaluation team focused its analysis on methods of increasing diversity awareness and instruments to measure diversity knowledge and awareness. Furthermore, it identified survey questions that would measure self-esteem levels and their relationship with diversity awareness. As a result, the team sought to measure how "We All Smile in the Same Language" fostered

the development of diversity awareness and to identify mechanisms for increasing self-esteem in classroom settings.

Diversity Knowledge and Awareness

There appears to be little in the literature that outlines best practices for teaching diversity and related topics to children. Wan (2006), however, proposes using multicultural children's literature to increase children's diversity awareness. The author designed a model that encourages children to read storybooks about similar topics but from different cultures and shows teachers how to promote discussions that address differences and similarities among people and their cultures.

Generally, the literature presents strategies for teaching college-age students that can be restructured for younger populations. Banks et al. (2001), for instance, present 12 principles for teaching in diverse cultures, including helping students develop social skills to interact with those who are different according to racial, ethnic, language, and social markers. More recently, Lee et al. (2012) offer recommendations for designing university courses rich in diversity, which included creating opportunities for internal reflection, purposeful interactions with fellow students, collaborating, and promoting discussions from different perspectives.

Cramer et al. (2012) highlight the three models of experiential exercise included in social work education to increase students' knowledge about human diversity: experiencing, self-discovering, and learning. In these models, students assume the role of members of society who are discriminated against so as to experience life from their point of view, use tools to identify and reflect on biases, view documentaries or go on field trips to expand their knowledge of different populations. "We All Smile in the Same Language" utilized multicultural books both in class and in a separate PowerPoint presentation where the instructor read books in English while a camp participant read from the PowerPoint presentation in Russian. In addition, camp participants watched a documentary about racial discrimination in America and participated in activities that simulated discrimination in real life.

There is a limited amount of applicable research on diversity awareness measures. However, a review of academic articles shows a number of normed measures for working with adults in the United States. Carrillo, Holzlab, and Thyer (1993) analyzed existing diversity measures over three decades. Some of the measures the authors discuss are the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, Hardee, & Batts, 1981), Bem Sex Role Inventory (Beere, 1979), and the Acceptance of Others Scale (Fey, 1955).

Additional research by Pohan and Aguilar (2001) studied educators' personal and professional beliefs about diversity and developed two empirical measures. The 25-item Professional Beliefs about Diversity Scale consists of items measuring diversity with respect to seven facets: (a) race/ethnicity, (b) gender, (c) social class, (d) sexual orientation, (e) disabilities, (f) language, and (g) religion. The 15-item Personal Beliefs About Diversity Scale identifies the following seven diversity issues: (a) race/ethnicity, (b) gender, (c) social class, (d) sexual orientation, (e) disabilities, (f) language, and (g) immigration.

In general, diversity measures such as the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory created by Gertrude Henry (1986) have been normed in many studies. However, literature pertaining to measuring diversity is limited to the Western world. Kulik and Roberson (2008) found that diversity skills in academic settings are typically measured with a standardized self-assessment. The authors suggest that in order to improve evaluation of diversity awareness, participants' skills must be assessed with means other than self-report because of respondent bias due to social desirability. More recently, a study by Fehr and Agnello (2012) created a survey for students to assess teachers' diversity knowledge based on Henry's Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory. The researchers included questions related to more contemporary diversity issues such as immigration, languages, and sexual orientation, among others. The implementers developed 21 demographic items, 20 six-point Likert scale items, and eight open-ended items.

Self-Esteem

There are various interventions for enhancing children's self-esteem: community-based programs (Bourne, 2003), games (Plummer & Serrurier, 2006), group music (Choi, Lee, & Lee, 2010), art activities (Coholic, 2010), and group counseling using adventure-based principles (Wagner & Elliott, 2014). Teaching strategies to increase children's self-esteem have not been extensively addressed by the literature.

Dalgas-Pelish (2006) evaluated the impact of a four-lesson self-esteem enhancement program for 5th and 6th graders and found that girls showed greater changes than boys in the self-esteem score. Children who have friends showed significant changes between the pre- and post-tests. Moreover, children with lower socioeconomic status had lower scores at both pre- and post-testing. Butler and Gasson (2005) provided a review of the most common scales to measure self-esteem levels among children. They identified a set of common principles among the scales: (i) self-report, (ii) a focus on assessing self as "me" instead of "I", (iii) a focus on psychological notions about self, (iv) an assumption of variability, and (v)

an assumption that self-esteem is quantifiable. The evaluators found that the seven most common scales to measure self-esteem among children and adolescents are the (1) Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale, (2) Marsh's Self-Description Questionnaire, (3) Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale, (4) Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (Bracken, 1992), (5) the Self Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967, 1975, 1981, 2002), (6) Self Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985), and (7) the Self Image Profiles (Butler, 2001). Finally, Butler and Gasson (2005) argued that one of the limitations of these scales is their inability to be generalizable across cultures outside of the United States because most are developed there, with Western norms and cultural perspectives. Johnson (2013) also studied extreme responding patterns for the Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale and the Basic Self-Esteem Scale. The study concluded that the Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale is more sensitive to respondents' self-protective alterations (rejecting negative information about themselves) than the Basic Self-Esteem Scale.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Study Design

The evaluation team chose a quasi-experimental design using pre-test and post-test data from a waitlist group and a treatment group. Post-test data completed by a comparison group was also analyzed. The survey was normed with one child from the same age group as the sample population for translation consistency and age appropriate comprehension.

Study Population. The camp participants were divided into groups by age: 8 to 10 year olds, 11 to 13 year olds, and 14 to 16 year olds. A total of 440 out of 442 participants (see Table 1) took the survey at least once during the three 21-day camp sessions, with different children attending each session. A breakdown of the total campers who took the survey is as follows:

- Session 1: 115 students completed the survey as a post-test comparison group. None of the students in Session 1 participated in the program.
- Session 2: 145 students, ages 9 to 16, completed the pre- and post-survey. 25 of those students did not receive the intervention.
- Session 3: 133 students, ages 9 to 16, completed the pre- and post-survey. 24 of those students did not receive the intervention.

Sample and recruitment strategies. From the total camper population, the researchers evaluated the youngest group of children, so

participants included in the evaluation were close in age. The breakdown of groups evaluated is as follows:

- Comparison Group: Session 1 (58 students), ages 10 to 12. Of the 58 participants in the comparison group, only 48 were analyzed using the t-test.
- Waitlist Group: Sessions 2 and 3 (60 students), ages 9 to 12. Of the 60 participants in the waitlist comparison group, only 21 were analyzed using the t-test.
- Treatment Group: Sessions 2 and 3 (54 students), ages 9 to 12. Of the 54 students in the treatment group, only 28 were analyzed using the t-test.

Data collection and consent. Primary data were collected through self-administered surveys in the presence of the evaluator. The data collected from the surveys were input into a usable format by one member of the team following the third session. Verbal consent from the children, their parents and guardians, and camp administration staff was obtained prior to the study.

Table 1: Group Demographics

	GENDER			AGE
	FEMALE PERCENTAGE (N)	MALE PERCENTAGE (N)	INDETERMINATE PERCENTAGE (N)	MEAN (SD)
CAMPER POPULATION (N=442)	58% (254)	42% (183)	1% (5)	12.2 (1.5)
COMPARISON GROUP (N=48)	62.7% (30)	37.3% (18)	-	11.2 (0.71)
WAITLIST GROUP (N=60)	45% (27)	53.3% (32)	1.7% (1)	10.40 (0.69)
TREATMENT GROUP (N=54)	61% (33)	39% (21)	-	11.2 (0.71)

Methods and Measures

The hypothesis of the evaluation team was that the program would increase knowledge and positive attitudes about diversity and self-esteem. The variables of analysis were operationalized as age (independent variable), knowledge about diversity (dependent variable), and attitudes towards diversity (dependent variable).

A self-created survey was used to measure participants' awareness of diversity and their self-esteem. The survey included 20 scale questions and two open-ended questions (see Appendix A). Participants were also asked to list their age, gender, and religion. The scale questions were coded with an ordinal scale with "Never" coded as 1 and "Very Often" coded as 5. For the purpose of this evaluation, the team categorized eight questions relating to self-esteem and ten questions relating to diversity. As a result, a composite score for diversity awareness and self-esteem was created. Two of the scale questions from the survey were excluded because they were not clearly related to the measures. The two open-ended questions were not included in the analysis. The evaluators categorized the test scores into low, medium, and high scores. The highest possible score for the self-esteem questions evaluated was 40, with the score ranges as follows: low: 8-18; medium: 19-30; high: 31-40. The highest possible score for the diversity questions evaluated was 50, with the score ranges as follows: low: 10-23; medium: 24-37; high: 38-50.

Reliability and Validity

The evaluators tested for inter-reliability of the questions grouped to evaluate self-esteem levels and awareness of diversity. The Cronbach's Alpha for both self-esteem and diversity questions was .997. Due to the high level of reliability and validity of the instrumentation, the research team expects the survey could be conducted in similar interventions in the future.

PROGRAM EVALUATION RESULTS

The mean difference between pre-test and post-test and between the waitlist group and treatment group was not proven statistically significant (see Table 2). The average score for participants in the comparison group was in the "medium range" level for both diversity (M=21.42, SD=3.95) and self-esteem (M=28.6, SD=6.40). For the waitlist group, diversity scores before the intervention were M=27.33, SD=5.39 and after intervention were M=29.06, SD=5.28. Self-esteem scores before intervention were M=23.38, SD=2.17 and after intervention were M=22.95, SD=2.20. No significant difference was noted for diversity scores or self-esteem

($t(59)=-.918, p=.374$ and $t(59)=.583, p=.567$, respectively). Lastly, for the treatment group, the averages were very similar for participants in the comparison and waitlist groups. Diversity score averages before intervention (M=21.09, SD=3.65) were almost identical to those after intervention (M=21.29, SD=3.65). The same is true for self-esteem scores, which before intervention were M=28.04, SD=6.32 and after intervention were M=28.6, SD=6.40. Comparing means for diversity ($t(53)=-.406, p=.688$) and self-esteem ($t(53)=-.038, p=.970$) further illustrated the point discussed above regarding significance.

The evaluators tested whether post-test scores from each group were associated with the gender of the participants. Gender proved to be associated with the diversity scores in the waitlist group ($b = -5.54, t(26-2-1) = -2.41, p = .02$), with males scoring lower than females. Self-esteem scores in the treatment group were also associated with gender ($b = -3.66, t(37-2-1) = -2.86, p = .007$), with males scoring lower than females. It should be noted that the significance values for gender may have been impacted by running the logistic regression along with religion. Because of this, the team cannot definitively say whether gender had a strong impact on the participants' scores. However, it is important to acknowledge that this finding is consistent with the research of Dalgas-Pelish (2006) that found that girls had more significant changes than boys in self-esteem scores after interventions were implemented.

Table 2: T-tests for Outcomes by Group

	COMPARISON GROUP	TREATMENT GROUP	WAITLIST GROUP
DIVERSITY KNOWLEDGE			
SCORE MEAN PRE-TEST (SD)	-	21.09 (3.65)	27.33 (5.39)
SCORE MEAN POST-TEST (SD)	21.42 (3.95)	21.29 (3.65)	29.06 (5.28)
T-TEST (P VALUE)	-	-0.406 (0.688)	-0.918 (0.374)
SELF-ESTEEM			
SCORE MEAN PRE-TEST (SD)	-	28.04 (6.32)	23.38 (2.17)
SCORE MEAN POST-TEST (SD)	28.60(6.40)	28.60 (6.40)	22.95 (2.20)
T-TEST (P VALUE)	-	-0.038 (0.970)	0.583 (0.567)

A repeated measures ANOVA test was conducted for self-esteem and diversity comparing the treatment and waitlist groups. No significance was found for increased self-esteem scores when camp participants that received the intervention ($t(28) = 1.80, p = .083$) were compared with camp participants that did not receive it ($t(21) = .58, p = .567$). No significance was found between the awareness of diversity in the waitlist group ($t(15) = -.918, p = .374$) and the treatment group ($t(22) = .439, p = .665$) at the end

of camp either. The team noted that a follow-up survey for the waitlist and treatment groups would be valuable for better understanding the impact participation in the program had on campers' self-esteem and diversity awareness.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The program "We All Smile in the Same Language" aimed to increase knowledge about diversity and promote inclusion among camp participants ages 8 to 16. The evaluation team expected to find that participants developed a greater appreciation of diversity and increased their self-esteem after completing the program. It hoped to identify mechanisms to improve the program due to the possibility of its future replication. However, based on the lack of statistically significant results from the analysis, the evaluation team is unable to draw any definitive conclusions about whether the curriculum had an impact on the participants' awareness of diversity and self-esteem.

Implications

Although the results were not statistically significant, the evaluators could recognize a shift in the attitudes and language surrounding diversity and self-esteem among students who took the course. The participants seemed interested in learning more about diverse populations from around the world and applying what they learned in class to their real lives. Nonetheless, if "We All Smile in the Same Language" is to revise its curriculum, future research about teaching strategies for increasing levels of diversity and self-esteem knowledge, specifically in homogeneous communities, will be necessary.

Likewise, the evaluation team can develop a better survey based on normed peer-reviewed scales. Though the survey was found to be reliable, the evaluators would like to explore how findings from the literature can further enhance measurement. Furthermore, the evaluation post-test was administered immediately upon concluding the program. This timing may have limited participants' ability to process or utilize the new information they gained during the program.

In addition, the evaluators would like to consider other demographic information, such as family income level or participant age, that may have an influence on diversity and self-esteem levels and potentially prove beneficial to analysis. Because the participants were young, it may be too early to see any significant change in their self-esteem and diversity awareness.

Sample size was another limitation of the intervention. The team evaluated a small sample size, making it difficult to generalize the study findings to broader populations. Missing data for students also had an impact on the small sample size. The study sample was also not randomized; the participants were given the option to select whether they wanted to participate in the program once they were at the camp.

Also, evaluators can encourage camp administrators to promote interaction at camp between participants of different ethnic groups to help model the lessons taught during "We All Smile in the Same Language." In future implementations of the program, it would be advantageous to include lessons that discuss ethnic relations specifically, since this issue applies to this region. The instructors were not aware that children were separated based on ethnic groups and that cross collaboration was not encouraged in the classes. Minority ethnic group campers were in a different group that did not receive the intervention. Implementing the program in an environment with little diversity limited the opportunities for participants to utilize their new knowledge, which is possibly associated with survey outcomes.

Finally, the team would recommend a follow-up with all participants post-intervention to observe whether their responses changed significantly once they had been exposed to the outside world. Time could have an impact on participants' diversity awareness. This was the first time this curriculum had ever been taught, leaving room for improvement in the future.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1A: Evaluation Questionnaire: Understanding What You Think Survey

READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS. TO WHAT EXTENT DO THEY APPLY TO YOU? CHOOSE ONE ANSWER IN EACH LINE AND MARK THE RESPECTIVE BOX.	NEVER (1)	RARELY (2)	SOME-TIMES (3)	OFTEN (4)	VERY OFTEN (5)
1. I THINK I AM THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE AROUND ME					
2. I THINK I AM DIFFERENT IN SPECIAL WAYS THAN THE PEOPLE AROUND ME					
3. I THINK I AM DIFFERENT IN WAYS THAT CAUSE PEOPLE TO MAKE FUN OF ME					

4. I HAVE THE CHANCE TO LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT THAN ME					
5. I ENJOY LEARNING ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT FROM ME					
6. I LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN OTHER COUNTRIES					
7. I WONDER ABOUT HOW PEOPLE IN OTHER COUNTRIES DO THINGS					
8. I WONDER WHY PEOPLE DO NORMAL THINGS IN A DIFFERENT WAY THAN I DO					
9. I AM PROUD OF WHO I AM					
10. I AM PROUD OF BEING RUSSIAN					
11. I THINK ABOUT WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO BE FROM SOME PLACE OTHER THAN RUSSIA					
12. I THINK IF I WAS A DIFFERENT GENDER MY LIFE WOULD BE BETTER					
13. I THINK IF I WAS A DIFFERENT RELIGION MY LIFE WOULD BE BETTER					
14. I THINK IF I WAS A DIFFERENT RACE MY LIFE WOULD BE BETTER					
15. I THINK IF I WAS A DIFFERENT GENDER MY LIFE WOULD BE WORSE					
16. I THINK IF I WAS A DIFFERENT RELIGION MY LIFE WOULD BE WORSE					

17. I THINK IF I WAS A DIFFERENT RACE MY LIFE WOULD BE WORSE					
18. MY FRIENDS AND I TALK ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT THAN WE ARE IN A TEASING WAY					
19. MY FRIENDS AND I TALK ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT THAN WE ARE IN A CURIOUS WAY					
20. I THINK I CAN CHANGE THE WORLD TO MAKE IT A BETTER PLACE					

Do you know what "diversity" means? Yes or No (circle one)
 If you circled yes, please write what "diversity" means

Do you know what "stereotypes" are? Yes or No (circle one)
 If you circled yes, please write what "stereotypes" are

How old are you? _____ Are you: girl or boy Your group number? _____
 What is your religion? _____

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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