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A Theoretical Model of Student Learning in an Academic Service-Learning Course: Diversity and Civic Outcomes

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Abstract

A qualitative-quantitative mixed-methods longitudinal research study was conducted to measure differences in civic and diversity outcomes in a cross-sectional sample of 138 undergraduate students. The quantitative results indicate that students improve their social justice attitudes, awareness of White racial privilege, racial-cultural-ethnic identity, and interests in multicultural work from the beginning of the semester. The qualitative findings replicate and extend the quantitative results. Career development and opportunities for growth were detected as unexpected themes that emerged from the data. The use of the mixed-methods approach provided an opportunity to conceptualize how students reformulate their diversity attitudes and acquire civic skills in an academic service-learning course. Implications for teaching and learning are discussed.

Keywords: Academic Service-Learning, Diversity and Civic Outcomes, Multicultural Education