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From Empathy to Social Empathy: A Journey in a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Workplace Graduate Certificate

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Certificate

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Our participants were generous with their time during the pandemic while also working on their own degrees, completing a professional development certificate, and working full time. Thank you to all our participants who have graciously shared their time and truth. We have learned so much and are grateful.

Dedication

Francesca Ferrari

I dedicate this work to my husband, Chris Sullivan, and my beautiful children, Matteo and Federica Sullivan. Without your support, I would not have made it. You have encouraged me to continue to push through, always with a smile and with love. Chris, thank you for always having my back and helping me pursue my dreams. Matteo and Federica, you inspired me to continue to learn and become a better person. I will be forever grateful to the three of you.

This work is also in memory of my mom, Lilia Di Battista. She inspired my curiosity to learn new things, learn languages, and explore new cultures. I miss her every day, but I know she has been with me all the steps of the way in my journey.

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Dedication

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore and understand the impact of the Graduate Certificate in Workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI Graduate Certificate) on master's and doctoral students' social empathy (SE) development. The participants in this certificate engaged in several online activities that increased their knowledge of microaggressions, privilege, and unconscious bias while building their social empathy. This certificate provided various tools and skills to its participants so that they might value diversity, look at the world from another's perspective, and start a dialogue to promote social change. This case study involved 19 participants. To answer our research questions, we used different data sources: a pre-course survey given at the beginning of the certificate, a social empathy index administered at the beginning of Unit 2, discussion board postings that were part of the course assignments, and one-on-one Zoom interviews. We identified six overarching themes: (a) slow down, (b) be uncomfortable, (c) self-reflection, (d) perspective-taking (PT), (e) contextual understanding of systemic barriers (CU), and (f) behavioral intentions. This research strongly suggested that the participants' social empathy increased, which was indicated by the exceptional number of behavioral intentions set by them through the online transformative learning experiences of the DEI Graduate Certificate. As Segal (2017) and Mirra (2018) found in their studies, we also found that social empathy development can be developed in a DEI professional development certificate. We recommend university leaders, that is department chairs, professors, and professional development directors, include social empathy development in their curriculums. We agree with the data outcomes of this study in recommending that

university leaders include social empathy development in their curriculums and within

their professional development programs to promote positive social change.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

—Nelson Mandela

The past year, 2021, has heightened not only the need for interpersonal empathy but also the need for social empathy. The disparities related to the pandemic that have impacted Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, and the hate crimes related to the pandemic have reinforced the need for higher education institutions to develop social empathy learning opportunities for students. Segal (2011) states that "social empathy provides a pathway for creating communities and social policies governed by empathy" (p. 268). In 2006, the then senator Barack Obama differed from speaking about the federal deficit to speaking about the empathy deficit during his commencement speech for Northwestern University:

> As you go on in life, cultivating this quality of empathy will become harder, not easier. There's no community service requirement in the real world; no one forcing you to care. You'll be free to live in neighborhoods with people who are exactly like yourself and send your kids to the same schools and narrow your concerns to what's going on in your own little circle. Not only that – we live in a culture that discourages empathy. A culture that too often tells us our principal goal in life is to be rich, thin, young, famous, safe, and entertained. A culture where those in power too often encourage these selfish impulses.

Higher education has been called on to incorporate DEI pedagogy into their state institutions by means of higher education governing bodies and professional

organizations. Mirra (2018) states that "the goal of higher education is to show students how we can live together in diverse societies with vulnerability and care to truly strive to understand those with whom we differ in fundamental ways" (p. 51). This study aimed to show that helping master's and doctoral students develop social and critical civic empathy (CCE) should be a necessary curricular component in higher education. The literature review revealed that "critical civic empathy" (Mirra, 2018) in the field of K-12 literacy education is similar to "social empathy" (Segal, 2011) in the field of social work.

Institutions of higher education play an important role in preparing college students who come from different backgrounds to live and work in a diverse, global society (Hu & Kuh, 2003; Hurtado et al., 1999). According to Mirra (2018), the goal of higher education should be to cultivate justice-oriented teaching. Einfeld and Collins (2008) state that the primary goal of higher education should be to create responsible, moral, and productive citizens. Hurtado (2007) echoes their sentiments, that higher education plays an important role in encouraging "students to develop a sense of social justice and to become responsible citizens" (p. 191). Clearly, this is an overriding call to action for universities.

Hu and Kuh (2003) examine three different ways students experience diversity in college: structural, classroom, and interactional. The structural setting has a focus on the student body demographic, the classroom setting has a focus on how diversity is embraced in the curriculum, and the interactional setting has a focus on how students with diverse backgrounds relate to each other in an impactful way (Gurin et al., 2009; Terenzini et al., 2001). Hu and Kuh (2003) stress the importance of interactional diversity which has strong effects for students in higher education, an encouraging result. The DEI

Graduate Certificate gave opportunities for classroom curriculum and interactional

settings that may better prepare graduate students for our diverse world.

Gap in Literature

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (Hyers, 2015), the

Missouri Department of Higher Education (Erickson, 2020), and the University of

Missouri–St. Louis (UMSL; 2021) each have strategic plans to develop a more equitable

and inclusive education system in the United States. These entities need to focus on

facilitating access while acknowledging that there are discrepancies students face due to

power and privilege based on race, culture, sexual orientation, gender, language, and

socioeconomics. To create equity, institutions should offer professional development

opportunities to support and promote social justice, equity, excellence, and equality.

Brown (2004) calls for action by shifting the approach from a "community of sameness"

to a "community of difference" (p. 80). A community of difference celebrates diversity.

Furman (1998) notes that creating a "culture that recognizes and promotes acceptance of

differences, proactively teaches staff and students to cooperate within difference,

incorporates the metaphor of global community, and attends to members' feeling of

belonging, trust, and safety" (p. 318).

A 2011 meta-analysis on empathy found that among American college students

empathy declined by 40% between 1972 and 2009 (Konrath et al., 2010). There were

13,737 interpersonal reactivity index subscale assessments taken from 72 samples of

college students. Empathetic concern was the subscale that dropped the most, followed

by perspective-taking. Dolby's (2013) article, published by the Association of American

Colleges and Universities, makes the case that empathy building in higher education is at

risk:

> As budgets tighten and the focus of higher education shifts toward skill-
>
> driven courses and outcomes-based competencies, and away from a broad
>
> education in the humanities and social sciences, the ability to develop a
>
> culture of empathy erodes even further. The decline of liberal education
>
> may trigger an even greater decline in empathy. (p. 63)

Goldstein Hode et al. (2018) suggest that it is essential from an ethical point of

view for faculty and staff to "develop a level of cultural competence, awareness, and

sensitivity to work effectively with increasingly diverse student bodies as well as to

prepare students to effectively participate in a diverse global workforce" (p. 347). Gurin

et al. (2009) discuss the critical role of higher education in providing a setting different

from home that is "diverse and complex enough to encourage intellectual

experimentation and recognition of varied future possibilities" (p. 335).

Gurin et al. (2009) identified learning outcomes that are evident when promoting

racial and ethnic diversity in higher education, such as "active thinking skills, intellectual

engagement and motivation, and a variety of academic skills. Democracy outcomes

include perspective-taking (PT), citizenship engagement, racial and cultural

understanding, and judgment of the compatibility among different groups in a

democracy" (p. 334). Perspective-taking is a necessary component of empathy according

to Gurin et al. (2009). The data from Konrath et al. (2010) clearly shows that perspective-

taking has been on a thirty-year decline among college students.

While many helping professional curriculums, such as counseling, social work, and education, have added to the empathy literature, a missing component in the literature is empathy development in all workplaces. We proposed that social empathy development would take place in the (DEI) professional development program as participants critically reflected and engaged in discursive dialogue on unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore and understand the impact of the DEI Graduate Certificate on master's and doctoral students' social empathy development. The research team attempted to link transformative learning activities in the DEI Graduate Certificate to increase participants' knowledge of microaggression, privilege, and unconscious bias. In addition, we also attempted to link how the tools and skills taught in the DEI Graduate Certificate facilitated the development of social empathy by valuing diversity, looking at the world from another's perspective, and starting a dialogue to promote social change. We hope the outcome of this study will influence university curriculum writers to include elements of social empathy development in their courses.

The student participants in the DEI Graduate Certificate at UMSL (Appendix A) engaged in transformative learning activities that helped prepare them to be advocates and leaders around DEI and work effectively around people from diverse backgrounds while making the workplace a more inclusive environment. Appendix A lists the DEI Graduate Certificate overview. The certificate was open to all UMSL master's and doctoral students in September 2021 with expected completion of the course in April 2022. The certificate has three units: (a) foundation of diversity, equity, and inclusion; (b)

obstacles to inclusion; and (c) creating cultures of inclusion. However, for the purpose of

this study, we only focused on Unit 2 of the program: obstacles to inclusion.

Unit 2 contains three modules:

- **Module 4:** Thinking Fast and Slow: Introduction to Unconscious Bias.
  This module defines unconscious bias and how to mitigate its influence on
  our decision-making processes.

- **Module 5:** The Little Things We Say: Introduction to Microaggressions.
  This module introduces microaggressions and their potential harmful
  effects.

- **Module 6:** Margins and Mainstreams: Introduction to Privilege. This
  module discusses privilege in relation to race, gender, social class, sexual
  orientation, gender identity, physical ability, and religion.

These modules offered multiple data sources which are described in Chapter 3.

The curriculum of these modules is connected to the exploration of how social empathy

can increase when participants learn about DEI organizational and societal contexts,

identities, bias, microaggressions, and privilege. Through this learning, participants have

the capacity to further develop and acquire social empathy. Segal (2011) states, "Social

empathy is the ability to genuinely understand people from different socioeconomic

classes and racial/ethnic backgrounds within the context of institutionalized inequalities

and disparities" (p. 541). The purpose of this study was to explore how social empathy

could increase in graduate students through their participation in the DEI Graduate

Certificate professional development course.

The DEI course was created with the intention to help future leaders develop a different way of seeing the world from the lenses it offers and to foster courageous students who will think independently, observe, experience, reflect, learn, dialogue, and act with social empathy. Social empathy should be a critical component of higher education (Brown, 2006; Chwialkowska, 2020; Gambrell, 2016; Hurtado, 2007; Mirra, 2018; Segal, 2011; Warren, 2015; Wilson, 2011; Wong, 2007). Social empathy provides students with

- the skills, vocabulary, knowledge, and tools to become courageous leaders for diversity, equity, and inclusion,
- an environment where they can make connections with other people that are different from them,
- an environment that cultivates cross-cultural understanding and connections,
- an environment where they can challenge the status quo and have the tools to re-shape the workplace, and
- opportunities to become leaders who develop social empathy.

We collaborated with UMSL's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI; https://www.umsl.edu/services/odei/). ODEI offered the DEI Graduate Certificate course to help participants identify and diminish obstacles to DEI and increase social empathy. Participants were engaged in a variety of transformative learning activities, such as discussion board posts, peer dialogues, whole-class discussions, and DEI readings and videos.

Research Questions

- **RQ1**: In what ways do participants engage or resist social empathy through online
  dialogues about unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege?

- **RQ2**: How do different learning modalities influence the learning of social
  empathy?

- **RQ3**: How does the coursework in the DEI Graduate Certificate impact
  participants' behavioral intentions?

Significance of the Study

There are several matters of significance in this research. The literature review did
not find literature on social empathy development for master's and doctoral students nor
did it find literature about the social empathy index being utilized in a professional
development certificate program. The findings of our study may be of value to
universities that are preparing professionals to be more effective in diverse workplaces.
We hope the study's outcomes influence university leaders to include social empathy
development in their curriculums and professional development programs. Segal et al.
(2011) state that teaching social empathy to students in other majors besides social work
should be an area of future research. Additionally, Mirra (2018) states that the
development of critical civic empathy should be the primary goal of education in order to
commit to a more equitable society. Segal et al. (2017) and Mirra (2018) have similar
conceptual frameworks for empathy development. We combined critical civic empathy
and social empathy frameworks to emphasize the importance of empathetic development.

Assumptions

Assumptions of the study are that participants of the course may be predisposed to interpersonal empathy due to their interest in learning more about topics of DEI to improve their personal and professional behaviors. Another assumption is that participants will be vulnerable and honest in their self-assessments. Finally, the research team assumes participants will be open to critical self-reflection and disruptive dialogue with the other participants on the subject matters of DEI. Mezirow (1997) states that it is only through critical self-reflection and disruptive dialogue that transformation can take place.

Structure of the Study

In Chapter 1 we highlighted the importance of the study and introduced the theoretical framework of its three main theories: transformative learning theory (TLT), social empathy theory, and critical civic empathy theory. Chapter 2 is a literary review of the three main theories, and it sets the stage for a paradigm shift that is needed in higher education. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology that we used in the study. We will highlight how the data collection was structured. Chapter 4 will review and analyze the data collected from the pre-assessment survey, the interview at the end of the second unit, select questions from the social empathy index, discussion boards, and individual semi-structured interviews. Chapter 5 contains the conclusion, and we make recommendations based on the data.

Chapter 2: Introduction

In this chapter, we will weave together a review of transformative learning theory, social empathy, and critical civic empathy to show how they support our research

questions. During our research, it became clear that social empathy and critical civic empathy concepts are very similar, and we connected them with the activities that are part of the DEI Graduate Certificate. First, we will review how transformative learning theory has influenced both the social empathy and critical civic empathy frameworks and show how these two models are very similar. Both frameworks start with individual empathy while they take into consideration how additional factors like systemic barriers can and will influence how people look at the world. Second, we will focus on the conceptual model that connects these theories to the research questions. We gathered data from activities in the DEI Graduate Certificate which aim to promote knowledge around microaggressions, privilege, unconscious bias, and social empathy. The activities in the DEI Graduate Certificate promote diversity by encouraging students to look at the world from another perspective, giving a voice to minority groups, and starting a dialogue to promote social change. Third, we will examine how higher education has the potential to help shape future leaders. We hope that the study outcomes from this pilot graduate certificate will provide convincing data to influence university curriculums so that they might foster social empathy and include activities like critical reflection and discursive dialogue.

Literature Review

Transformative Learning Theory (TLT)

Mezirow et al. (2009) state, "Transformative learning may be defined as learning that transforms problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open and emotionally able to change" (p. 22). Problematic frames of reference are defined as not seeing cultural differences or only seeing the

dominant culture in relation to academic, social, and/or political situations. These

problematic frames of reference make it difficult for individuals to empathize with others

who are not from their culture. Transformative learning theory has been influential in

adult education for the last several decades (Brown, 2004, 2006; Dirkx, 1998; Gambrell,

2016; Mezirow, 1997; Mezirow et al., 2009; Wong, 2007). These authors cite

transformative learning theory's critical self-reflection and discursive dialogue as

activities which, along with a disorientating dilemma, transform problematic frames of

reference to more inclusive frames of reference.

Christie et al. (2015) define transformative learning as "independent thought" (p.

22). The authors claim that transformative learning helps to question people's points of

view, it encourages reflection, and it gives the skills to challenge one's own assumptions.

If students are "critically aware," (Christie et al., 2015, p. 22) they will be able to apply

their knowledge to a new situation and question the status quo.

Kitchenham (2008) quotes, "The purpose of communicative discourse is to access

and understand, intellectually and empathetically, the frame of reference of the other, and

seek common ground with the widest range of relevant experience and points of view

possible" (Mezirow, 2006, p. 25). In transformative learning theory, communicative

learning connects empathetically through discourse to the development of social

empathy. Social empathy according to Segal (2011) is a pathway to social justice.

Kitchenham highlights Mezirow's insights regarding the need for empathy to bring about

transformational change and its having been there all the time. In this study, we hoped to

see a positive correlation between transformative learning activities and social empathy,

similar to the findings of Hutchins and Goldstein Hode (2019). They found "some

participants had increased self-awareness and empathy as expressed in their plans to take action or expressed intentions to make changes in their behaviors" (Hutchins and Goldstein Hode, 2019, p. 10).

Empathy development is used in higher education to prepare future professionals for social work (Segal, 2007), counseling (Wang, et al., 2003), K-12 administration (Brown, 2006), K-12 literacy (Mirra, 2018), and engineering (Wang, et al., 2016). Several of these scholars are using some or all of the tenants of transformative learning theory to encourage empathy that leads to more social justice policies and practices.

The two major dimensions of transformative learning theory are critical reflection and discourse through dialogue. These dimensions are outlined by Mezirow (1997), Wong (2007), and Brown (2004, 2006). The purpose of critical reflection, according to Brown (2004), "is to externalize and investigate power relationships and to uncover conscious or unconscious hegemonic assumptions" (p. 84). Willing participation in rational discourse is also part of learner empowerment (Brown, 2004). Our frames of reference and habits of mind are formed consciously and unconsciously. Gambrell (2016) advances critical reflection with the following, "Ideally, critical reflection of beliefs or ideology leads a person to emancipatory action, making the person whose worldview has been transformed aware of the possibility of being an agent of change" (p. 6).

We all have frames of references formed from our cultural and past experiences. Kitchenham (2008) draws attention to culture as a primary contributor to frames of reference when analyzing Mezirow's (2006) work, which says, "Frames of reference are the structures of culture and language through which we construe meaning by attributing coherence and significance to our experience" (p. 26). These frames of reference make up

our preconceived beliefs that lead to actions. Kitchenham's (2008) understanding of

frames of reference relates to conscious and unconscious bias. It is explained that "once

set or programmed, we automatically move from one specific mental or behavioral

activity to another, and we have a strong tendency to reject ideas that fail to fit our

preconceptions" (Mezirow, 2006, p. 26). Habits of mind and points of view are formed

and establish a set of codes that shape our actions and reactions to others unlike

ourselves. Mezirow (1997) notes the changes in frames of reference, "Frames of

reference are transformed through critical reflection on assumptions upon which our

interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based" (p. 7). Critical

reflection learning activities were woven into the DEI professional development course.

      Mezirow (1997) describes sustained discursive dialogue as "critical to making

meaning" (p. 10). Brown's (2004) work of preparing K-12 administrators to be

superintendents uses transformative learning theory. Brown (2004) mentions how "TLT

attempts to explain how their expectations, framed within cultural assumptions and

presuppositions, directly influence the meaning derived from their experiences" (p. 84).

Once adult learners have critically self-reflected, they are ready to engage in discourse

with others. Dialectical discourse brings other's experiences into the realm of

consciousness for learners. Observing, contemplating, and discussing the experiences of

others increases the ability of the learner to empathize.

      According to Mezirow (1997), for learners to change their meaning schemes

(specific beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions),

      they need to engage in critical reflection on their experiences, which leads to a

      perspective transformation which is defined as the process of becoming critically

aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we

perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of

habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and

integrating perspective; and finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon

these new understandings. (p. 9)

Mezirow (1997) states, "Education fosters critical reflective thought, imaginative

problem solving, and discourse is learner centered, participatory, and interactive, and it

involves group deliberation and group problem solving" (p. 10). According to Mezirow

(1997), "Self-reflection can lead to significant personal transformations" (p. 7), and

"critically explored assumptions may be in the autobiographical context of a belief, or

they may be supporting a social, cultural, economic, political, educational, or

psychological system" (p. 7). Mezirow (1997) argues that critical reflection can be an

important component to adult education. According to Brown (2006), critical reflection

helps adults become aware of oppression and how to work toward inclusion (p. 709).

Brown (2004) merges critical inquiry and self-reflection to get leaders to examine their

own personal and professional beliefs.

Table 1 is a summary of the main articles that have shaped our literature review

regarding transformative learning theory.

Table 1

Summary: Transformative Learning Theory Leading to Social Empathy

Sustained dialogue critical consciousness (Dirkx, 1998), Awareness of frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997)	Critical reflection	Discourse/disorientation dilemma
Kitchenham (2008)	Brown (2004, 2006)	Gambrell (2016)
Hurtado (2007, 2015, 2019)	Mezirow (1997)	Mezirow & Associates (2000)
Brown (2004)	Hutchins & Goldstein Hode (2019)	Wong (2007)
Mezirow (1997)		Brown (2004) Hutchins & Goldstein Hode (2019)

Social Empathy

Segal (2011, 2018), Segal et al. (2012, 2017), and Gerdes et al. (2011) define

social empathy as "the ability to understand people by perceiving or experiencing their

life situations and as a result gain insight into structural inequalities and disparities.

Increased understanding of social and economic inequalities can lead to actions that

affect positive change, social and economic justice and general wellbeing" (Segal, 2011,

pp. 266–267).

Segal (2018) defines social empathy as "the ability to understand people by

entering into their situations in ways that reveal inequalities and disparities and then

acting to effect social change. Once we have empathic insights into discrimination,

injustice, or inequality, we are better able to take actions that promote social justice" (p.

117). Segal (2018) outlines how social empathy helps to understand how different cultures, communities, and people have different effects on social systems and how factors like individual empathy are experienced while taking into consideration the influence of socioeconomics and the history of systemic inequality along with welcoming and accepting the importance of social responsibilities. This can also provide people with an understanding of how marginalized people experience life. During the duration of the DEI Graduate Certificate, students were involved in several transformative learning activities that required critical reflection and discourse. We trusted that some of these activities would increase the students' social empathy by encouraging them to look at the world from another perspective, give a voice to minority groups, and start a dialogue to promote social change.

According to Segal (2011), social empathy has two main benefits:

1. to help create more just and equitable policies, and

2. to "keep us from falling into the trap of using misinformation and stereotypes as rationale for unjust social conditions, which will help to promote the best of humanity and ward off the worst" (p. 276).

Figure 1

Social Empathy Model
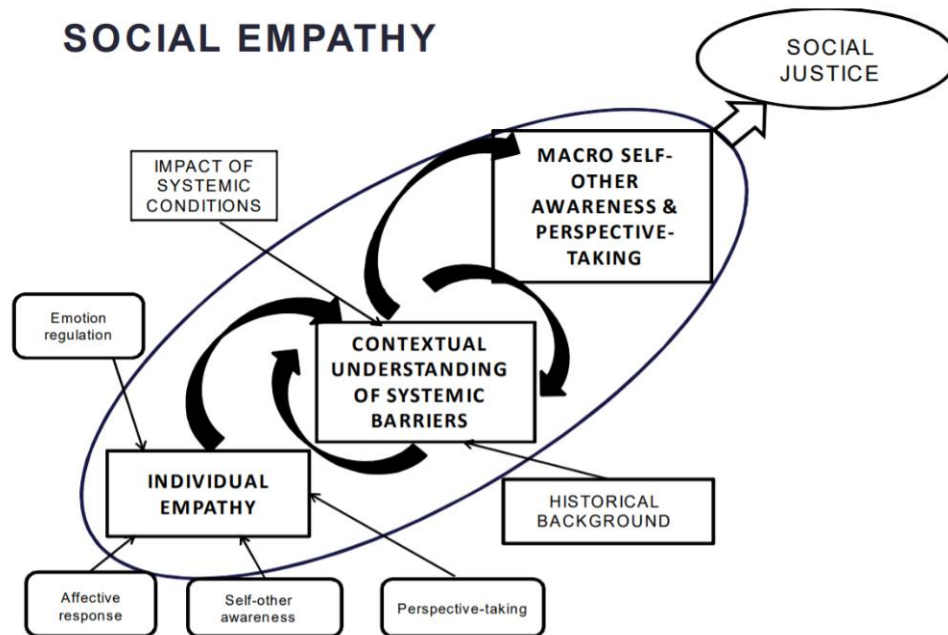
Note. From "Developing the social empathy index: An exploratory factor analysis," by E. A. Segal, M. A. Wagaman, and K. E. Gerdes, 2012, *Advances in Social Work*, 13(3), p. 522 (https://doi.org/10.18060/2042).

Figure 1 illustrates the three main components of the Social Empathy Model (2012) created be Segal et al., individual empathy, contextual understanding, and social responsibility, which all mutually reinforce each other.

Individual Empathy. Individual empathy is influenced by an effective response that involves the "mirroring of another person's actions" (Segal, 2011, p. 441). This includes self-other awareness (SOA), which is the awareness of the difference between self and others; perspective-taking, which is the capacity to understand from "the other's" point of view; and emotion regulation (ER), which involves the ability to have emotional boundaries and feel what other people feel without it being overwhelming. Table 2 highlights some of the main definitions we came across in the literature on empathy.

Table 2

Definitions of Empathy

Author	Empathy definition
de Waal	"Empathy allows one to quickly and automatically relate to the emotional states of others, which is essential for the regulation of social interactions, coordinated activity, and cooperation toward shared goals" (2008, p. 282).
Cobb & Krownapple	"Empathy is the ability to see the world through the eyes of another person by feeling what they're feeling (or trying your best to) and walking a metaphoric mile in their metaphoric shoes" (2019, p. 161).
Obama	"Empathy is the ability to put ourselves in someone's shoes: to see the world through those that are different from us – the child who's hungry, the laid off steelworker, the immigrant woman cleaning your dorm room" (2006).
Mirra	"Critical Civic Empathy (CCE) is about imaginatively embodying the lives of our fellow citizens while keeping in mind the social forces that differentiate our experiences as we make decisions about our shared public future" (2018, p. 7).

Author	Empathy definition
Segal et al.	"Social Empathy (SE) is the ability to more deeply understand people by perceiving or experiencing their life situations and as a result gain insight into structural inequalities and disparities" (2012, p. 544).
Konrath et al.	"Empathy is a cognitive mechanism through which people are able to imagine the internal state of someone else" (2010, p. 181).
Warren, summarizing the work of Baston et al. (1991), Davis (2004), Eisenberg & Miller (1987), & Wispe (1986)	"Empathy is emotional (empathic concern) and cognitive (perspective-taking). Perspective-taking is required to establish empathic concern. Empathy is the piece of the student-teacher interaction puzzle that connects what a teacher knows or thinks about students and families to what he or she actually does when the teacher is arranging learning experiences for students" (2015, p. 171).
Wiggins & McTighe (2005)	"Empathy is the ability to walk in another's shoes, to escape one's own responses and reactions so as to grasp others" (as cited in Wilson, 2011, p. 209).
Holt & Marques	"Empathy refers to one's ability to understand the feelings transmitted through verbal and. nonverbal messages, to provide emotional support to people when needed, and to understand the links between them" (2012, p. 96).

DeTurk (2001) states that "the implication of empathy is that if each of us can think of ways in which we have been both privileged and marginalized, then we might also be able to see others' liberation from oppression as our own struggle" (p. 382). de Waal (2008) defines empathy as something that "allows one to quickly and automatically relate to the emotional states of others, which is essential for the regulation of social interactions, coordinated activity, and cooperation toward shared goals" (p. 282). Wilson

(2011) states the importance of empathy in any profession that requires interpersonal communication. In her study, she states the importance of service learning in higher education, which is to support students' personal development. She stresses the significance of reflection on the service-learning experience from which students "often recognize a change in their perspectives, emotional connections and self-awareness" (Wilson, p. 216).

Holt and Marques (2012) state the meaning of empathy in leadership. According to their research, empathy can be taught via formal and informal education. They encourage business schools and faculty to add to their curriculum sections, stressing the importance of cultivating empathy in leadership. Freedberg (2007) connects empathy with mutuality, "Mutual empathy can be a powerful experience that communicates to the other person a sense of self-worth and importance. The resulting self-regard may release greater energy, allowing more effective interaction in, between, and among people, institutions and environments" (p. 258).

Contextual Understanding of Systemic Barriers. Providing a historical background helps to provide an understanding of the life and experiences of people who are not part of the dominant culture, and it can help create equitable and inclusive policies. According to de Waal (2008), it is hard to identify with the "other." People have the tendency to identify with people who are similar to them; for instance, if they look

like us, come from the same culture or background, are the same gender, speak the same
language, and so on.

       Social Responsibility. Segal (2011) states that "social empathy leads to a desire
to take action and to improve well-being" (p. 271). Several researchers mentioned in this
study, such as Segal (2011) and Mirra (2018) along with ourselves, have been influenced
by Paul Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed. Freire (1970) states that the traditional
education structure is based on supporting the dominant culture or what he calls "the
oppressors" and that in order to give a voice to the oppressed, there is a need for a
structural change of the education system. To give a voice to the oppressed and move
away from the status quo, he argues that the education system needs to focus on the
importance of *conscientização* (consciousness-raising) in order to empower the oppressed
to first recognize that they are oppressed and then to take responsibility to reclaim their
humanity. The dominant culture objectifies and dehumanizes the oppressed, and in the
Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire argues that there should be a collaboration between
teachers and students to create a learning environment where the teachers encourage
critical awareness among the oppressed and give the students tools that can lead to social
change. Freire (1970) describes the dialogue as a "human phenomenon," from which "we
discover something which is the essence of dialogue itself: the word" (p. 75). He sees
"the word" to be an instrument with two dimensions, reflection and action, and that "to
speak a true word is to transform the world" (Freire, 1970. p. 75). Oppressed groups will
need to manage their own culture as well as the culture of the dominant groups. However,
the dominant groups tend to value only their own culture.

Swigonski (1994) states that members of the dominant group will have a view of the world that is "partial and more superficial" (p. 391). The dominant group members will make sure to maintain dominance and preserve the status quo no matter if their view is incomplete and superficial. The subordinate group members' view of the world at times is also completely different because it is in the subordinate's interests to understand the social order and know how to disrupt the status quo, to question, and to make the world a better place. Education will provide the tools to the subordinate group to take action. Swigonski (1994) says, "Without conscious effort to reinterpret reality, without political consciousness, marginalized populations are likely to accept the dominant worldview" (p. 391).

DeTurk (2001) states that "dominant group members control access to social roles and activities" (p. 377) by keeping higher and more powerful roles for themselves so the subordinates will then only have access to lower roles, and "subordinates are encouraged to express submissive traits, whereas dominants are encouraged to develop assertive, 'dominant' traits" (p. 377). The dominant groups often choose not to learn what subordinates experience and feel because by not doing so it will be easier to continue to dominate them. Subordinates learn that honest communication with the dominant groups is dangerous. Dominant groups are not aware of their own impact on others or upon the subordinates' experiences and culture. The subordinate groups know more about the dominant groups. By knowing more about them, first, it will be easier to negotiate and deal with the dominant social power, and second, because the dominant group's communication standard has to be the adopted standard style of communication.

Segal (2011) states that individual empathy is not enough, and it does not allow us to see the big picture and deal with systemic barriers. Social empathy will encourage us to take action and make a difference, to improve social well-being, to look at why there are so many socioeconomic disparities, and to figure out what can be done to change inequity. The social empathy model (Segal et al., 2012, p. 552) in Figure 1 outlines five components of interpersonal empathy and two additional components for social empathy. As we mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, we used six questions from the social empathy index to assess participant perspective-taking so they could understand systemic barriers and do macro self-other perspective-taking (MSP) before they embarked on activities planned in Unit 2 of the DEI Graduate Certificate.

Social Empathy Index (SEI). Each of the social empathy index components will be explained in detail in Chapters 3 and 4 of this study; however, below we list the five components of interpersonal empathy:

1. Affective response is also known as mirroring (Segal et al., 2011). For example, when we see somebody laughing it is contagious and we start laughing without knowing why.

2. Affective mentalizing is when our mind, after hearing about events or stories, builds a picture of the situation and at times prompts a reaction to what is imagined having happened.

3. Self-other awareness happens after the affective response, where we need to work in recognizing that the experience is different from our own.

4. Perspective-taking happens when we step into the shoes of another.

5. Emotional regulation helps us not to become overwhelmed when we deal with other people's feelings and situations.

There are two additional components that allow the move from interpersonal empathy to social empathy:

1. Contextual understanding of systemic barriers is when we truly understand the life experiences from groups that are different from ourselves and we take a step further to understand how history, politics, and the social and economic systems have influenced their experiences.

2. Macro self-other awareness and perspective-taking can help us understand the difference between groups and fully step into another life and experience what it is like to be a member of that group.

To increase social empathy Segal (2011) suggests a "three-tiered approach, developing exposure, explanations and experience with groups who are different from our own" (p. 274). For exposure Segal (2011) suggests that people from different backgrounds should find a way to be "exposed to each other's living situations" (p. 274). One way to accomplish this is with storytelling or visiting with others with open dialogue. We, as educators, can provide a lot of opportunities for our students to be exposed to other people and cultures, or as Segal (2011) calls it, experiencing "cross-exposure" (p. 274). The explanation examines how we are different and considers how the life of others would be if a person was from another culture or socioeconomic background. The last approach is experience, which has the potential to be the most transformative and operates by putting ourselves into other people's lives and understanding how life and opportunities would be different for them.

Model for Social Empathy (Segal, 2007, p. 335):

- Level 1. Exposure

  o Who is different from me?

  o How are they different?

  o Visit places and people who are different.

- Level 2. Explanation

  o What are the differences?

  o How have our lives been different?

  o Why have our lives been different?

  o What would it be like for me to live as a person of a different class, sex, ability, age, sexual identity, race, or national origin?

- Level 3. Experience

  o Imagine your life as a person who is different by class, sex, ability, age, sexual identity, race, or national origin.

By understanding and embracing the connections we have with one another we will be able to have a better sense of perspective-taking. Segal (2018) calls this a "macro perspective-taking that builds on our individual ability of stepping into the shoes of another by applying it to other groups" (p. 176). It is when we move from our individual perspective and we consider what it would be like to have a different background, culture, race, religion, gender, or language. Macro perspective-taking starts with interpersonal empathy, builds on it, and looks at why groups behave differently while considering historical and social events that are part of who we are. Social empathy requires a lot of energy, and we need to be willing to understand the social and historical

context which will help us feel that we are part of the world and that we can have an impact and help make things better.

Critical Civic Empathy

The third theoretical framework we based our study on is Mirra's critical civic empathy. Mirra (2018) talks about critical civic empathy and its three main pillars:

- "It begins from an analysis of the social position, power and privilege of all parties involved.

- It focuses on the ways that personal experiences matter in the context of public life.

- It fosters democratic dialogue and civic action committed to equity and justice" (p.7).

Mirra (2018) focuses her research on how English teachers can make the shift to embrace empathy while teaching and foster civic engagement, citizenship, and respect for others. In her book she gives examples for how English teachers can contribute to change.

Mirra (2018) also gives several examples of how to foster critical civic empathy not only with students but among teachers, promoting and nurturing justice-oriented teaching. Tools like discursive dialogue, classroom discussions, and perspective-taking are great for "encouraging mutual humanization and community social action" (Mirra, 2018, p. 102). Mirra centers her theory on two main aspects that influence empathy: a critical perspective and a civic perspective.

A critical perspective on empathy helps us explore our position in society, examine our position as it relates to privilege, and imagine how people's experiences would be different depending on our position of power or whether we are part of a

marginalized group. The civic characteristic of empathy happens when "making

connections with individuals unlike ourselves [so] that we begin to develop a social

consciousness" (Mirra, 2018, p. 9). Figure 2 has Mirra's (2018) typology of empathy.

Figure 2

Typology of Empathy
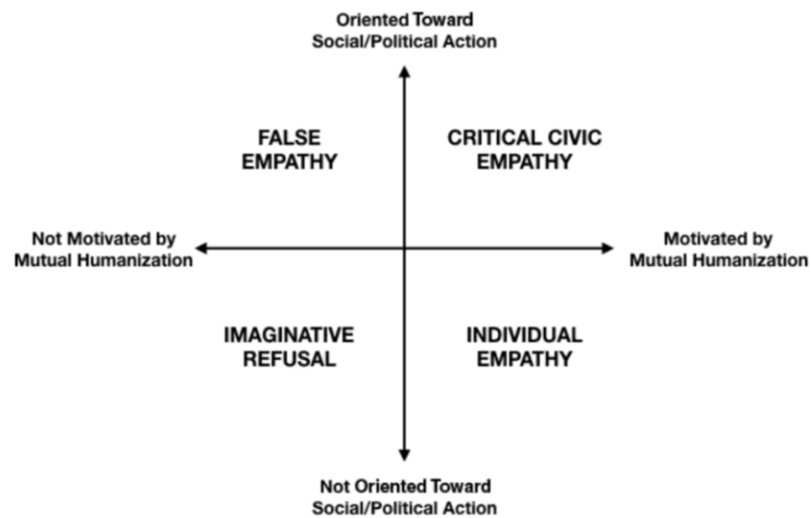
Mirra p. 11 "Typology of Empathy"

Note. From *Educating for Empathy: Literacy Learning and Civic Engagement* (p. 11), by

N. Mirra, 2018, Teachers College Press.

Mirra's critical and civic empathy model strives to give ways to hear different voices. Mirra's (2018) "Typology of Empathy" graph (Figure 2) explains how her theory is structured (p. 11). The horizontal axis lists "mutual humanization" based on Freire's theory where teachers and students learn from each other while they break down barriers that prevent the oppressed to have a voice (Mirra, 2018, p. 11). Mirra (2018) argues that "we cannot fully realize our own humanity unless and until we recognize and honor the full humanity of those who differ from us" (p. 10). The vertical axis is the orientation of social/political action as behavior moves towards social justice. The "imaginative refusal" quadrant is where people, instead of fostering ideas of unity and ideas towards democracy, do not know how to connect and understand others (Mirra, 2018, p. 11). The "false empathy" quadrant represents people who use empathy only to bring together people who think and look alike (Mirra, 2018, p. 11). The "individual empathy" quadrant represents people who walk in someone's shoes with or without giving the support they need (Mirra, 2018, p. 11). For example, someone could empathize with immigrants whether or not they support policies in favor of immigrants. The fourth and last quadrant is "critical and civic empathy," representing people who not only understand the various levels of power but also take into consideration how individual experiences make a difference in how we approach the world and encourage dialogue that fosters social and political action toward social justice (Mirra, 2018, p. 11).

Mirra (2018) gives practical examples on how critical civic empathy can be part of English curriculum. Mirra calls the teacher Jerica a "warrior scholar" because she uses literature to help students understand oppression and gives the tools for students to speak out, like understanding protest and resistance. Mirra (2018) calls the teacher Ashley the

"bridge builder" while she teaches students to use language as a tool to connect with the

dominant group. Both teachers "shared common commitment to mutual humanization

among students and the larger society" (Mirra, 2018, p. 31). Language is a tool that can

help students and teachers understand themselves and the society they live in and assists

them to have the power to reshape their lives and society.

      Mirra (2018) also stresses the importance of teaching debate in schools as a tool

which gives students a voice, fosters empathy, teaches social action, and fosters critical

thinking. In addition, debate can teach students a way to communicate with people who

are different and understand each other's positions.

      Mirra (2018) dedicates a full chapter to the distinction between the twenty-first

century learning model and the connected learning model. We will focus on reviewing

the connected learning model because it focuses on "collective civic advancement and the

ways that technology can support innovative and equitable forms of learning" (Mirra,

2018, p. 77). This model fosters dialogue and collaboration among students and

communities, focusing on equity. The focus is on providing the space for authentic and

relevant learning while stressing civic engagement. This model asks questions like,

"Whose voices are present (and missing) in this activity? How can we introduce

divergent perspectives? How is this subject relevant to society today?" (Mirra, 2018, p.

79).

      Mirra (2018) and Segal et al. (2017) offer similar models on how we can cultivate

justice-oriented teaching in higher education: it offers a safe space for students who are a

part of minority groups and encourages them to share their experiences, and it offers

activities to learn more about others to make it easier for students to understand different

life experiences. "When students learn about diversity, we are producing citizens who can negotiate difference, act, and make ethical decisions in an increasingly complex and diverse world" (Hurtado, 2007, p. 192).

Learning about diversity will support intergroup dialogue, facilitate perspective-taking skills, and foster critical-thinking skills. All these skills are critical for college students, but we cannot stop there. The goal of higher education should not only be to facilitate and attract a socioeconomic, racial, gendered, and religiously diverse student body but also encourage and teach skills to embrace diversity and work together in a diverse and democratic society.

Marques (2008, 2013, 2019a, 2019b, 2020) gives some practical examples of how business schools can teach their students to be agents of change. She states that business education should teach not only values like integrity, transparency, and sustainability but also "values of empathy, consciousness, and appreciation for diversity" (Marques, 2019a, p. 22). Higher education should "walk the talk" when promoting diversity (Marques, 2019a, p. 22). When colleges strive to have a diverse student body, they should also strive to have a diverse faculty and staff. She suggests that role-play exercises about social issues will increase consciousness to develop empathy. The role of business schools should be to "cultivate innovative leaders for a sustainable society" (Marques, 2019a, p. 22).

Freire (1970) argues that dialogue between students and teachers is critical. He states that "dialogue can exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for the men" (Freire, 1970, p. 77). He describes love as an act of courage, and he sees that love shows "commitment to the other men" (Freire, 1970, p. 78), and that means

commitment to the oppressed to see the world from their point of view. Freire observed

that dialogue creates critical thinking and communication that leads to true education

where teachers and students work together.

DeTurk (2001) explored empathy from a social context point of view to

encourage intercultural understanding and to reach a more equitable society. The author

suggests practical approaches in the classroom and stresses the importance of addressing

oppression, privilege, and social dynamics. The author also suggests the importance of

offering opportunities to students to be part of group dialogue "with the aim of increased

mutual understanding, though not necessarily agreement or consensus" (DeTurk, 2011, p.

382).

DEI Graduate Certificate

We gathered data from activities completed in the DEI Graduate Certificate that

aimed to promote knowledge around microaggressions, privilege, and unconscious bias

in order to develop social empathy and support and foster diversity. In the second unit of

the DEI Graduate Certificate, students were introduced to the concepts of unconscious

bias in Module 4, microaggressions in Module 5, and privilege in Module 6. Each of

these topics will be further explained in this section.

Unconscious Bias

Conscious (explicit) and unconscious (implicit) biases occur in the workplace.

Conscious bias is willfully thinking, speaking, and behaving in a biased manner.

Unconscious bias is when automated thoughts, spoken words, and behaviors are biased.

Dasgupta (2004) labels implicit bias as an "equal opportunity virus" that infects both

advantaged and disadvantaged groups (p. 163). Unconscious biases, according to

research cited by Dasgupta, have two acting psychological forces. The first force is that

people tend to prefer groups associated with themselves. The second force is that the

unconscious biases of prejudices and stereotypes often influence people's judgments,

decisions, and behaviors in pernicious ways (Dasgupta, 2004, p. 143). Dasgupta (2004)

quotes, "that advantaged groups typically exhibit more implicit favoritism toward the

ingroup and bias against salient out-groups than do members of lower status or

disadvantaged groups" (p. 163). The author offers hope that unconscious bias can be

decreased. The DEI Graduate Certificate offers opportunities to learn about unconscious

bias through assessment, critical reflection, and dialogue. We proposed that learning

about unconscious bias and strategies to curb unconscious bias in the workplace would

increase social empathy in the participants.

Privilege

Privilege can be visible or invisible. Privilege can be associated with sexual

orientation, socioeconomic status, education, race, and so forth. Privilege associated with

race can be difficult for members of the dominant group to recognize. A reference list

containing scenarios that African Americans cannot count on occurring in society in the

United States may be helpful to White Americans to gain an empathetic understanding of

privilege. Goldstein Hode et al. (2018) utilize McIntosh's (1988) unearned scenarios of

privilege as they attempt to increase participant knowledge of social privilege. This

scenario is one of twenty-six scenarios listed by McIntosh (1988) in their piece, *White*

privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. Scenario number 21 states, "I can go home

from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than

isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared." McIntosh

(1988) explains that these scenarios are embedded invisibly in white culture (the

dominate group). We proposed that learning about privilege through critical reflection

and discursive dialogue could increase social empathy in DEI Graduate Certificate

participants.

       While McIntosh (1988) designed learning about privilege via scenarios. Kay

(2018), inspired by the movie *Freedom Writers,* designed a transformative learning

activity using a version of the "privilege walk." The physical activity has students facing

each other in a circle and asks them to take a step forward if a statement applies to them.

Examples of Kay's (2018) "if statements" include, "If you've lost a loved one to gang

violence, If your ancestors came to the United States by force, If you believe that you

were denied employment because of your race, gender, or ethnicity" (2018, pp. 89–90).

Kay (2018) describes this activity as "shocking students into empathy" (p. 89). Although

the online graduate certificate course did not allow for a physical privilege walk, there

were activities like the privilege self-audit and Christianity checklists that prompted

participants to critically reflect and learn.

Microaggressions

       Sue et al. (2007) state, "racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily

verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional,

that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target

person or group" (p. 273). Microaggressions are toward marginalized groups, like people

of color, LGBTQ+, religious minorities, and so on. Sue et al. (2007) describes three

forms of microaggressions: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations (p. 274).

In Module 5, students were supposed to learn how to answer questions like what microaggressions are, why microaggressions are obstacles to inclusion, and what can be done about them. Students read articles; watched videos; developed skills, vocabulary, and the confidence to be advocates for themselves and others; and learned to look at the world from a different perspective and be an advocate for social change. An essential part of the certificate was for students to feel safe so they could be honest in order to think about past and present situations where they had been on the receiving end or witnessed microaggressions, as well as acknowledge when they may have been the person who committed the microaggressions.

Sue at al. (2019) examine the harmful impact of microaggressions and explain the term "racial macroaggression" as "systemic and institutional form or racism that is manifested in the philosophy, program, or policy" (p. 131). In their study, these researchers developed a new framework that not only provided skills to cope and help survive the harm of microaggression, but also provided "microinterventions" (Sue et al., 2019, p. 131) as strategic tools.

According to Sue et al. (2019) microinterventions have four goals, to: "(a) make the "invisible" visible, (b) disarm the microaggression, (c) educate the offender, and (d) seek external support when needed". These researchers give us concrete and practical examples. For example, they provide what terms to use in different scenarios. Because of the purpose of our study, we focused on the third goal: educate the offender. We hoped that "microinterventions [would] plant the seeds of possible change that may blossom in the future" (Sue et al., 2019, p. 138). The purpose of the DEI Graduate Certificate was to

plant seeds and open students' minds with regard to microaggressions, privilege, and unconscious bias.

We feel that higher education can help students learn tools, and when they see an injustice, they can not only take the steps to recognize it but also understand why and how we can make it better. Segal (2018) states that "social empathy is a mindset, a way of seeing the world and framing your thinking. It is choosing how we want to view the world" (p. 177).

Role of Higher Education

The education system in the United States should focus on facilitating access while acknowledging that there is a discrepancy due to power and privilege on the basis of race, culture, sexual orientation, gender, language, and socioeconomics. In order to facilitate access, institutions should offer courses to support and foster social justice, equity, excellence, and equality. Brown (2004) calls for action in shifting the approach to go from a "community of sameness" to a "community of difference" (p. 80). Furman (1998) talks about creating a "culture that recognizes and promotes acceptance of differences, proactively teaches staff and students to cooperate within difference, incorporates the metaphor of global community, and attends to members' feelings of belonging, trust and safety" (p. 318).

Zhao (2016) calls for a paradigm shift and that educators should adopt a new mindset where differences are not considered a deficit. With their new mindset, educators can see students' strengths and not what students are missing or lacking (Zhao, 2016, p. 730). "A paradigm shift is not an improvement. It is a complete transformation" (Zhao, 2016, p. 730).

Gurin et al. (2009) identified two learning outcomes for promoting racial and ethnic diversity in higher education, "Learning outcomes include active thinking skills, intellectual engagement and motivation, and a variety of academic skills. Democracy outcomes include perspective-taking, citizenship engagement, racial and cultural understanding, and judgement of the compatibility among different groups in a democracy" (p. 334). Gurin et al. (2009) talk about the critical role of higher education in providing a setting different from home and "when it's diverse and complex enough to encourage intellectual experimentation and recognition of varied future possibilities" (p. 335).

Giroux (2009) argues that the role of higher education is not only to provide the skills and knowledge to enter the workforce but also to "educate them to contest workplace inequalities, imagine democratically organized forms of work and identify and challenge those injustices that contradict and undercut the most fundamental principles of freedom, equality, and respect for all people who constitute the public sphere" (p. 673). Higher education plays a significant role in students' lives when they are in a critical growing stage that shapes their identity and while they come to understand their role in society. Giroux (2009) analyzes the impact corporations can have within higher education by providing funds and technology to support critical education that helps shape students' futures as engaged citizens.

Einfeld and Collins (2008) state that "a primary goal of higher education is to create responsible, moral, and productive citizens" (p. 108). To do so, higher education goals "must provide social justice education and foster multicultural competence in their students" (Einfeld & Collins, 2008, p. 105). According to Grigoropoulos (2020), higher

education needs to teach and create "global citizens" (p. 59) who have the skills to tackle systemic obstacles, leading us to become a more just and equitable society.

Higher education has the potential to provide learning opportunities that encourage students' transformative personal growth by teaching skills which lead them to step outside their comfort zone. Ogden (2007) states that "when students are challenged slightly beyond their comfort zones and are not panicked, the results can be transformative" (p. 46). Students with a low tolerance for ambiguity tend not to "step off of the veranda" and look at the new culture from their own comfort and position of privilege (Ogden, 2007, p. 36). Ogden (2007) calls them "colonial students" (p. 36), and describes them as study abroad students who have a hard time adjusting and understanding a new culture and only observe without "experiencing any discomfort" (p. 37).

Hurtado (2007) states that students' growth happens when students find themselves in a new, unfamiliar, and uncomfortable situation where they cannot rely on their previous knowledge, and therefore, they experience disequilibrium. Providing students with the support they need to process and make sense of their new reality is evidence of growth.

"Substantial and meaningful interaction (both informal and campus facilitated) is central to the notion of how diversity affects learning and the development of democratic sensibilities" (Hurtado, 2007, p. 190). One role of higher education should be to provide the skills and the knowledge for students to see themselves as citizens in a democratic world by promoting the importance of understanding and working with people with

diverse backgrounds. As Hurtado (2007) says, we should encourage "students to develop

a sense of social justice to become responsible citizens" (p. 191).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the DEI Graduate

Certificate on master's and doctoral students' social empathy development. We believed

that the activities in the DEI Graduate Certificate would increase social empathy while

providing the tools and skills for participants to value diversity, decenter themselves, and

look at the world from the other's perspective. Participants would also be able to

acknowledge their position of privilege, help give a voice to minoritized and/or oppressed

people, and dialogue to promote social change.

We collaborated with UMSL's ODEI. During the Fall 2021 semester, the ODEI

offered a pilot DEI Graduate Certificate with the goals to identify and diminish obstacles

to diversity and inclusion and provide skills to work with people from different

backgrounds. The Unit 2 content of the DEI Graduate Certificate resembles social

empathy development according to Segal (2018) and Mirra (2018).

Transformative learning theory was the conceptual model utilized for the diversity

training curriculum. Activities in the program included community building; critical self-

reflection; dialogic discourse; six social empathy index questions; class discussion boards

on microaggressions, unconscious bias, and privilege; and individual semi-structured

interviews. Figure 3 offers the conceptual model that connects transformative learning

theory, social empathy, and critical civic empathy theories to this research.

Figure 3

Conceptual Model
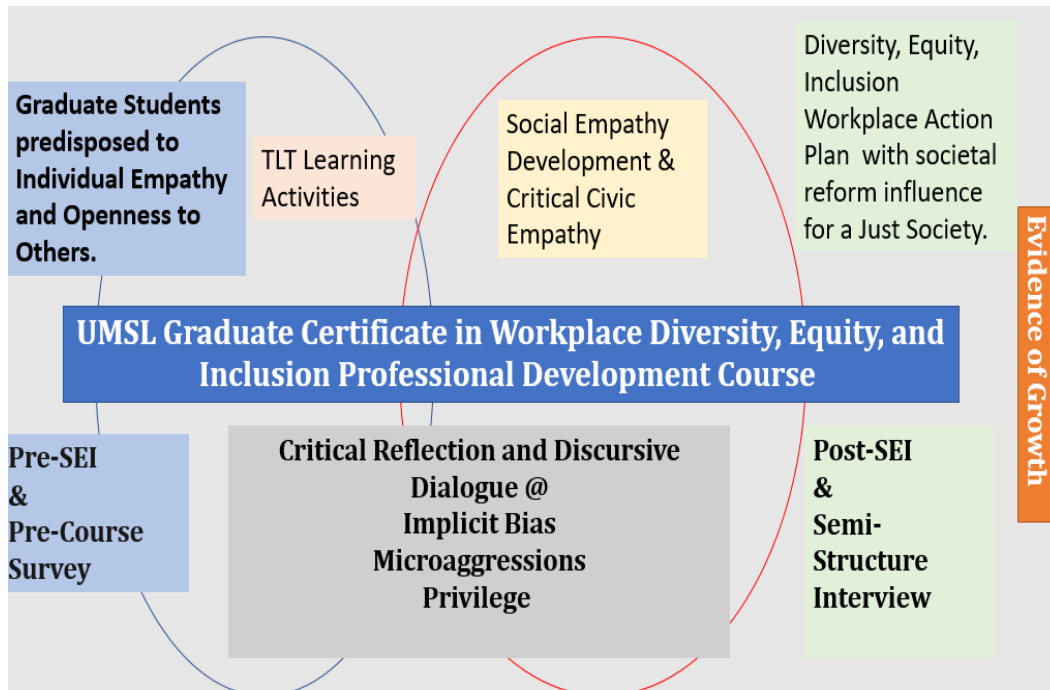
Note. F. Ferrari & L. Woodrum, 2021.

While we should foster either social empathy or critical civic empathy in our classrooms, we should give the majority dominant group the tools to examine their own privilege and the tools to find out more about others. At the same time, we should give the tools and support to the minority groups to share their own experiences in a safe place, offering an environment where it is possible to reflect and figure out a way to respond to the people that dehumanize them. Both Segal (2018) and Mirra (2018) believe that empathy will grow when we encourage people to meet others who are different from their own group, to connect and interact with them, and to learn about their world and experiences. Our study will focus on Unit 2 of the DEI Graduate Certificate and the activities planned in the modules related to social empathy.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study took an in-depth look at the development of social empathy through a new DEI Graduate Certificate initiative at UMSL. The study rigorously observed the possible links between social empathy development and the impact of DEI education and was informed by social science. A qualitative single case study methodology was applied to a small number of participants to glean a rich description of the phenomena (Creswell, 2015). According to Creswell (2015), case study methodology is best suited for investigating an impact within a program. We applied the case study methodology to understand how learning about the DEI terms of unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege affected social empathy in graduate students. Yin (2018) cited the relevance of qualitative case study methodologies for studying complex contemporary circumstances (p. 4). With a qualitative single case study design, we addressed the following research questions:

- **RQ1**: In what ways do participants engage in social empathy through online dialogues about unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege?

- **RQ2**: How do different learning modalities influence the learning of social empathy?

- **RQ3**: How does the coursework in the DEI Graduate Certificate impact behavioral intentions?

This was an instrumental case study focused on a specific issue (Creswell, 2015). This also was an exploratory case study, and "the purpose of the study, as well as the criteria by which an exploration will be judged" (Yin, 2018, p. 28). This single

exploratory case study applied social empathy (a social work theory) and critical civic

empathy (an education theory) to DEI workplace professional development.

      The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the DEI Graduate

Certificate course on graduate's and doctoral students' social empathy development. The

research team's premise was that the DEI Graduate Certificate course work would

increase students' knowledge of microaggressions, unconscious bias, and privilege,

fostering social empathy development while providing a wide variety of tools and skills

to promote inclusion, look at the world from another perspective, give a voice to minority

groups, and start a dialogue to promote social change.

The Case Study

      The study's participants took part in a variety of activities based on transformative

learning theory. Participants' familiarity with empathy and social empathy was measured

by the answers to the pre-course survey and by the answers to specific questions on the

social empathy index. Segal (2007, 2011, 2018) and Segal et al. (2010, 2011, 2012, 2017)

validated the social empathy index as an instrument that measures the following

components of social empathy: affective response, affective mentalizing, self-other

awareness, micro perspective-taking, emotion regulation, contextual understanding, and

macro perspective-taking. The social empathy index components used in this study were

perspective-taking, contextual understanding of systemic barriers, and macro self-other

awareness perspective-taking. These components were relevant to the curriculum in Unit

2 of the DEI Graduate Certificate. The qualitative components of the study were

comprised of a pre-course survey, six specific social empathy index questions, online

peer discussion boards, and individual semi-structured interviews. The data sources listed

in Table 3 are the data collection methods, relation to research questions, and type of

analysis.

Table 3

Data Sources, Collection, Research Quest Relation, and Analysis

Data source	Collection procedure	Research question	Data analysis
Pre-course survey	At the beginning of the course with study consent form	RSQ 1 RSQ 2 RSQ 3	Qualitative thematic analysis and descriptive statistics
Interpersonal social empathy index and (SEI) questions 4, 13, 15, 27, 28, 30	At the beginning of Module 2	RSQ 2 RSQ 3	Frequency data and descriptive statistics of closed responses
Three discussion boards	Asynchronous entries	RSQ 1 RSQ 2 RSQ 3	Qualitative thematic analysis
Post semi-structured interviews	On Zoom	RSQ 1 RSQ 2 RSQ 3	Qualitative thematic analysis

The DEI Graduate Certificate focused on preparing individuals to be advocates

and leaders on DEI issues, working more effectively with people from diverse

backgrounds and making workplaces more welcoming and inclusive for everyone.

Purposeful sampling was used as a specific pool of participants was chosen. Prospective

participants had to be a current UMSL student working on a master's or doctoral degree.

Students made a conscious choice to participate in the DEI professional development.

According to Creswell (2015), purposeful sampling can be a specific program to help

understand a phenomenon, such as the impact of an educational program. The study took

place within the course which went from September 2021 to January 2022. This course

was a pilot graduate certificate for a professional development opportunity. The course

was facilitated by Dr. Marlo Goldstein Hode, who also served as a dissertation committee

member for this project.

The ODEI office in collaboration with the Graduate School advertised the

program for 6 weeks prior to the start of the certificate on September 13, 2021. The

offices emailed a flyer to all master's and doctoral students at UMSL. The cost of the

program was $150. Students who consented to participate in the study were incentivized

with a gift certificate. All UMSL master's and doctoral students were welcome to

participate in the course and study. In total, $n = 19$ out of 39 students who registered for

the certificate course agreed to be in the study.

Research Design

Students who agreed to participate in the study completed the discussion boards

(course requirement listed in the certificate syllabus, Appendix A), the social empathy

index assessment, and an individual semi-structured interview. First, all participants in

the course completed a pre-course survey. Data from students who consented to

participate in our study was extracted for analysis. Then, participants completed the

social empathy index assessment. All students in the course completed the first unit of the

course, building a foundation which helped set the stage for engaging in the challenging

topics of Unit 2, obstacles to inclusion, which was the focus of this study. Each module

consisted of a short video lecture to introduce the content followed by an activity, self-

reflection questions, and an online discussion forum to engage with other students about what was learned. These online discussion boards were a central part of the course design and formed the largest data points for this study.

Participant Observer

We also engaged in the course as participant observers. As participant observers we were students as well as researchers in the course (Yin, 2018, p. 124). This allowed us to be deeply familiar with the course content and engaged in the learning.

Participant-observation case study methodology was used by the research team. Dr. Goldstein Hode facilitated the participant-observation roles of each researcher to minimize the adverse effects for the course participants and the study. For example, access to data was only granted to the research team for Unit 2. The research team was expected to participate fully in all course activities. Additionally, the research team was not allowed to schedule class meetings or adjust course expectations, or to incorporate access that was not granted by the IRB (Institutional Research Board) approval (Yin, 2018). The research team was committed to continuing their DEI course learning. To learn and experience firsthand the content of the DEI certificate, we took the role of participant observer throughout the duration of the course. We participated in all of the activities: posted on discussion boards, attended the Zoom orientation and Zoom meetings, read articles, watched PowerPoint presentations and videos, and engaged in various learning activities in each module. Creswell (2015) states that "as a participant, you assume the role of an 'inside' observer who actually engages in activities" (p. 214).

Our familiarity with the course content provided additional opportunities for follow-up questions during the interviews that may not have been accessible had we not

taken the course. Our familiarity with the certificate content and activities helped us formulate engaging follow-up questions.

A pre-course survey that was part of the certificate and the transformative learning theory online assignments that were discussed in the discussion boards were primary data sources. The course assignments were pivotal to the course. The study's data points were the pre-course survey, the answers to the six questions of the social empathy index assessment, the discussion boards, and the individual semi-structured interviews.

The Social Empathy Index was finalized in 2012 and is a forty-item, self-reported, Likert scale instrument that combines five components of the Empathy Assessment Index and two components of social empathy.

Segal et al. (2017) described the first part of the instrument (Items 1–22) which measures interpersonal empathy as five components (pp. 124):

1. affective response

2. affective mentalizing

3. self-other awareness

4. perspective-taking

5. emotion regulation

The second part of the instrument (Items 23–40) has two components:

1. contextual understanding of systemic barriers (CU), and

2. macro self-other awareness perspective-taking (MSP).

This study focused on perspective-taking, contextual understanding of systemic barriers, and macro self-other awareness perspective-taking. In Chapter 4 we describe each component of these six social empathy index questions and analyze the data.

Research Questions

The research questions were:

- **RQ1**: In what ways do participants engage in social empathy through online dialogues about unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege?

- **RQ2**: How do different learning modalities influence the learning of social empathy?

- **RQ3**: How does the coursework in the DEI Graduate Certificate impact behavioral intentions?

Data Source

The participants of the course took part in a variety of activities based on transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1997). As cited in Chapter 2, transformative learning theory is a widely accepted adult learning method cited by Wong (2007), Dirkx (1998), Mezirow (1997), Mezirow et al. (2009), Brown (2004, 2006), and Gambrell (2016). We proposed that transformative learning theory is the theoretical framework best used to transform individual empathy into social empathy.

Thirty-nine master's and doctoral students enrolled in the DEI Graduate Certificate. Nineteen students agreed to be part of our study; however, 15 students participated in the individual interviews. The listed section was our data sets.

1. Participants took a pre-course survey through Qualtrics. The pre-course survey included demographic information and general empathy questions. This survey can be found in Appendix 2.

2. The social empathy index (SEI) (Segal et al., 2012). This assessment allowed us to assess the social empathy components of the participants. The social empathy index is a forty Likert scale assessment. The social empathy index can be found in Appendix 3.

At the proposal stage, we planned on assessing the social empathy index pre- and post-Module 2. The social empathy index Qualtrics link was sent with the pre-social empathy index survey, and 12 participants took it; however, when we sent the link to assess the post-social empathy index at the end of Module 2, it was found that only four participants had taken the assessment. We sent three individual emails to each participant and calendar invites to them via UMSL's Outlook platform as reminders to take the pre- and post-social empathy index; however, it seemed the participants were overwhelmed due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the end of midterms for their academic programs, and the assignments in the DEI Graduate Certificate. After discussing the results with our committee, we decided to only include the six components of the social empathy index ($n = 12$) surveys in our dataset.

3. The weekly scaffolded discussion boards were initially on community building, continued to evolve into critical self-reflection, then to discursive dialogue (Mezirow, 1997) activities on DEI, and then specifically focused on microaggressions, unconscious bias, and privilege. These discussion and dialogue data pieces were analyzed using *In vivo coding*. According to Saldaña and Omasta

(2018), In vivo coding honors the heritage and culture of the participants by using

their words.

4. Fifteen semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2015) were conducted by the two of

us. The semi-structured interview questions are listed in Appendix E. According

to Percy et al. (2015), semi-structured interviews are based on the researchers'

pre-knowledge and give the option to ask more follow-up and "tell me more"

questions (p. 79). Saldaña and Omasta (2018) state that In vivo coding methods

were used to keep participant voice at the center of their data.

5. As participant observers, we took notes on our own experiences and thoughts as

we engaged with the other students in discussions. We also used our own

experiences in the course to inform our analysis of the data from the interviews

and discussions.

Data Analysis

Data sets listed in Table 3 were analyzed using In vivo coding, descriptive

statistics, and thematic analysis. The pre-course survey was analyzed using descriptive

statistics and In vivo coding. The social empathy index Likert scale assessment was

analyzed for frequency and description. After removing the posts by students who had

not consented to be in the study, the discussion board posts were analyzed using In vivo

coding, looking for themes. The initial themes that emerged included slow down, be

uncomfortable, self-reflection, discursive dialogue, perspective-taking, contextual

understanding of systemic barriers, and macro self-other awareness perspective-taking.

The research team analyzed the one-on-one interviews and the discussion boards using In

vivo coding, specifically looking for codes in the participant responses that included an

increased knowledge of unconscious bias, microaggression, and privilege; an

understanding of modalities as a catalyst for learning; perspective-taking; the start of

dialogues to promote social change; and themes. Transcripts were analyzed using

thematic analysis, looking for patterns across discussion posts and individual semi-

structured interview responses.

We refined the protocol for the post-semi-structured interviews based on the

acquired data after the first two interviews were completed by each researcher. According

to Yin (2018), case study methodology, an iterative process, allows for interview

question revisions based on early data. Merriam (2009) describes semi-structured

interviews that allowed participants to define their meaning. The research team asked

follow-up questions as each interview progressed. Six questions from the social empathy

index Likert scale social empathy assessment were answered online by participants using

Qualtrics. Data from the social empathy index assessment was analyzed for frequencies

and descriptive statistics.

Pre-Course Survey

The pre-course survey was constructed and disseminated by the instructor to all

the students in the DEI Graduate Certificate course. A copy of the pre-course survey is

included in Appendix C. The instructor collaborated with us, incorporating specific

questions into the course that were relevant to this study. These questions were:

- How would you describe empathy?

- Have you heard of social empathy? If so, how would you describe it?

In addition to these specific questions, the survey inquired about the participants'

previous knowledge of the following topics: unconscious bias, microaggressions,

privilege, and inclusion. This was accomplished through direct questioning and

hypothetical questions which assessed participant comfort level when addressing DEI

interactions in the workplace. The research team utilized only the pre-course survey data

of students that agreed to be in the study.

　　　The data from the pre-course survey was comprised of a combination of

categorical and continuous scales (Creswell, 2015). "The categorical scaled questions

included demographic, attributes, and character data points" (Creswell, 2015, p. 164).

The continuously scaled questions included DEI topics and they asked participants to

utilize a Likert scale (Creswell, 2015). In order to "engineer the data," we transformed

these qualitative data into quantitative data (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018 p. 26). "This single

exploratory case study collected both quantitative ratings, closed-ended prompts, plus

written responses to related, open-ended follow-up prompts" (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018,

p. 26). Saldaña and Omasta (2018) described this process as paradigmatic corroboration

which "occurs when the quantitative results of a data set do not simply harmonize or

complement the qualitative analysis but corroborate it" (p. 26). The quantitative data is

described and analyzed as descriptive statistics in Chapter 4. Creswell (2015) defined

descriptive statistics as a way to describe participant responses to each question in a

database and determine overall trends (p. 616). "The descriptive statistics indicated

general tendencies in the data" (Creswell, 2015, p. 180).

　　　We analyzed the data from the pre-course survey using In vivo coding and

descriptive statistics. In vivo coding produced like codes and themes. Descriptive

statistics corroborated the findings in the discussion board dialogues and interview data

sets.

Social Empathy Index (SEI)

The social empathy index was given to the participants prior to the beginning of Unit 2 of the DEI Graduate Certificate course. The social empathy index has been validated as a tool used to assess social empathy and empathy characteristics, specifically in the field of social work. Literature revealed that the social empathy index has not been used in other fields of study. We explored the use of the social empathy index as an assessment tool. The social empathy index is a categorical Likert scale using a "quasi-interval scale" (Creswell, 2015, p. 164) with six scales. "Participants were asked to rate how closely the items reflected their feelings or beliefs on a 6-point Likert-type scale, which allows for participants to rank items from a low of *never* (1) to a high of *always* (6). Higher scores indicate higher levels of self-reported interpersonal empathy and social empathy" (Segal et al., 2017, p.106). Questions 4, 13, 15, 27, 28, and 30 were used from the social empathy index. These questions were chosen because of their relevance to perspective-taking, contextual understanding of systemic barriers, and macro self-other perspective-taking.

Semi-Structured Interview and Discussion Board Analysis

Interview Analysis. We recorded a total of 515 minutes (116 pages) from the interviews that average 34 minutes and 33 seconds per person. The shortest interview was 18 minutes and the longest was 66 minutes.

Below are the steps we followed:

1. The fifteen interviews were conducted between the end of December 2021 until mid-January 2022.

2. All interviews were recorded and transcribed with the features offered by Zoom.

3. After saving all transcriptions and videos on the university secured shared drive, we reviewed the transcriptions and added punctuation. The Zoom transcription feature has some limitations regarding accents and recognizing pauses. When the transcriptions were not clear, we rewatched the videos and recorded verbatim.

4. When reviewing the data to add punctuation, we became familiar with the data.

5. After reading the interviews several times to get familiar with the content, we each highlighted important sentences separately. The first coding cycle method used for this project was In vivo coding to value the participants' voices.

6. We used the comment feature on Microsoft Word to make notes and start naming the codes.

7. After reviewing the data three times, we reviewed all the memos and organized them into themes using an Excel spreadsheet. The initial coding was done individually; however, we met regularly to review the process together and discuss the findings.

8. The next step was analyzing the data, which Saldaña (2016) called "theming the data" (p. 198).

9. After theming the data, the research team moved to the next step that Saldaña (2016) describes as meta summary and meta synthesis, which are "methodological approaches that collect, compare and synthesize the key findings" (p. 204).

Discussion Boards Analysis. The three discussion boards were retrieved from the DEI course Canvas site. There were 94 pages of data. In this section of the DEI course, students were given specific instructions on how to complete the assignments followed by prompts for posting to the discussion forum. Descriptions of the assignments and discussion prompts can be found in Appendix H. After posting, each student was asked to read and reply to at least two fellow students and follow up when appropriate.

The discussion board analysis followed the same structure as the interviews. The familiarization of the data process was more straight forward than the interviews because the students had very detailed instructions on the assignment and had time to write and review the posting. The analysis of the discussion boards was faster and easier to interpret.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is defined by Lincoln and Guba (1986) as the validity term for qualitative research. This research possessed triangulation, reflection, and had a rich, thick description due to the study's multiple data sources. The discussion board dialogues reflected the meaning of each participant. This case study enlisted multiple opportunities for participants to use their own language from the open-ended pre-survey questions, the three discussion boards, and the individual semi-structured interviews.

Triangulation

Conducting case study research, Yin (2018) recommended using multiple sources of evidence. Multiple sources of data enriched the results of the study. Creswell (2015) stated that in qualitative research it is imperative that we use triangulation. "Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or

methods of data collection" (Creswell, 2015, p. 259). As mentioned earlier, we used several data sources: a pre-survey, components of the social empathy index, discussion boards, and individual semi-structure interviews. Having multiple data sources allowed for data triangulation. Yin (2018) calls this "convergence of multiple sources of evidence" (p. 129). Figure 4 shows how multiple data sources in our study have contributed to our research findings.

Figure 4

Convergence of Evidence
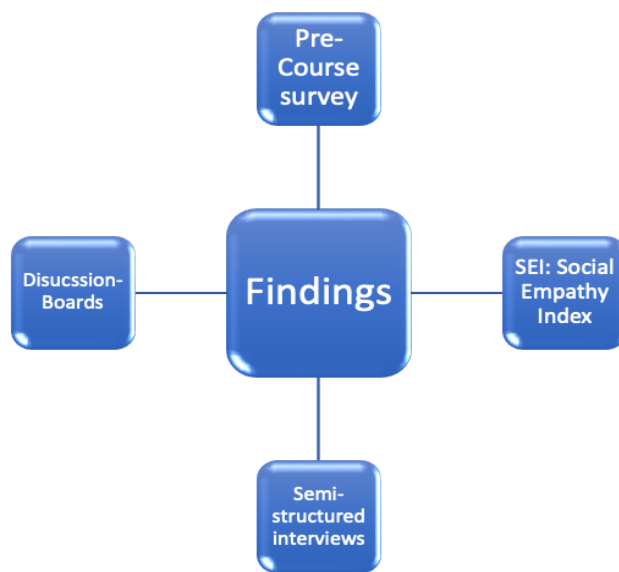
Note. From *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed), by R. K. Yin, SAGE Publications, 2018, p. 129.

Study Limitations

The limitations of this research study are the number of participants, the cost of the certificate, the participants' time, the impact of the pandemic, and the course length. The certificate course was a pilot program and of the 34 students enrolled to pursue the DEI Graduate Certificate, 19 students agreed to participate in the study. The last data points collected were the individual semi-structured interviews. Fifteen participants completed the interview data component.

The UMSL master's or doctoral students were working adults, so in addition to course work that needed to be completed for their degree, they were required to complete course material for this certificate, take the social empathy index, and participate in an interview at the end of the second unit. All of these tasks took place during a spike in the Covid-19 cases in the region where this study took place. The effects of the pandemic were cited by multiple participants as a potential limitation. Another important consideration is that one of the two research team members has a dual role as UMSL's director of the Graduate Business Programs and the administrative director of the Doctor of Business Administration Program. The researcher's organizational connections were disclosed to the participants, and it was not a limitation for graduate and doctoral business students.

Participants self-reporting the social empathy index and the pre-course survey may be a limitation. The level of trust between participants and us as researchers grew over the course of the four months. Teaching assistant permissions for the Canvas course were granted to us only for Unit 2. This allowed access to the Unit 2 students' course data. At the end of Unit 2, the Canvas permissions for teaching assistants were turned off.

This allowed the research team to continue their participant observer role. The research

team secured a generous contribution from two endowment funds of the committee

members. After the final data of the 15 interviews were completed, the research team

disseminated electronic gift cards as a token of gratitude. The participants did not expect

the gift cards and were appreciative.

Researcher Positionality

We acknowledge our identities and experiences have impacted the study.

Mauthner and Doucet (2003) discussed the importance of "the social location of the

researcher as well as how our emotional responses to respondents can shape our

interpretations of their accounts" (p. 418). Discussing DEI topics during a pandemic

seemed to bring an emotional component during interviews. Positionality means being

aware of our own social and emotional location. Mauthner and Doucet (2003), in their

study, highlighted the importance of taking into consideration how our homelife and

academic, personal, social, and economic status will have a vast impact on research

studies from the beginning of the study, during the study, and to the end of the study.

Being aware of the social and emotional location was a critical component of reflexivity.

Mauthner and Doucet (2003) state that even though researchers talked about how critical

positionality was in qualitative research, consideration was also essential for quantitative

researchers to address during their studies.

I, Francesca, identify myself as a cis woman who is Southern Italian, middle

class, trilingual, a mother, an immigrant, and a higher education professional. While I

bring 20 years of higher education experience, my limitations are that my higher

education experience has only been with graduate business students. I bring my

experience as an immigrant and non-native English speaker. My personal, social, and economic locations influenced the research topic, data collection, research methods, data analysis, and results.

I, Lisa's position as a researcher is multifaceted. Merriam (2009) described a researcher as the primary instrument (p. 15). As an instrument, I had an impact on all parts of the research process. Keeping this in mind was important to disclose as my positionality. I am a white cisgender college educated female. I grew up in a two-parent household with only one parent having earned a high school diploma. I recognize my white, upper middle-class existence has an enormous amount of privilege. I have been working in K-12 public schools for over twenty years.

 We believe that as a research team we kept each other accountable, worked together to name our positionality, and did our best to be reflexive.

It is important to understand that we brought a critical constructivist epistemological perspective to all parts of the study. "Critical constructivists emphasize reflection, imagination, social consciousness, and democratic citizenship, and is recommended as a central theoretical referent for all educational practitioners" (Bentley et al., p. 12, 2007). As qualitative researchers, we agree with Merriam (2009) who is "interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, and how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 5). When analyzing qualitative data from participants of this study, we were interested in their experiences and their meanings that informed their social empathetic behaviors.

As we attempted to recognize their positionality, efforts were made to be reflexive during all phases of research. By identifying our own social, emotional, and intellectual

responses to the participants and the data, we recognized our assumptions and biases that influenced research decisions (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). Yin (2018) talked about the importance of reflexivity in qualitative studies and says that the researcher's perspective unintentionally impacts the participants' responses which then influences the researcher's questions.

Ethical Issues

Confidentiality is an extremely crucial factor in learning about DEI in the workplace. Trust is an important aspect of this work. The research team kept participant names confidential by assigning pseudonyms. Participant pseudonym assignments and interviews were stored in the university's secured network drive. Pseudonyms were used for data collection and analysis. Anonymity was assured through the pseudonym data storage process through the university's multi-secured e-drive system. Only the two of us listed on the participant consent form had access to the pseudonym-linked data. Both of us are FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) compliant.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore if social empathy increased in graduate students through participation in a DEI Graduate Certificate professional development course. This study explored participants' gain in knowledge of unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege related to social empathy development. The first two chapters introduced the current social empathy and critical civic empathy literature which was developed in the fields of social work and English K–12 teacher education. The conceptual frameworks that we used to explore the data were social empathy, critical

civic empathy, and transformative learning theories. These theoretical influences of our

study were discussed in Chapter 2. Study methodology, participant selection, research

design, data sets, and analysis were detailed in Chapter 3.

The research questions were:

- **RQ1**: In what ways do participants engage in social empathy through online

    dialogues about unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege?

- **RQ 2**: How do different learning modalities influence the learning of social

    empathy?

- **RQ3**: How does the coursework in the DEI Graduate Certificate impact

    behavioral intentions?

In this chapter, we outlined the data collection methods. Pseudonyms were used to

maintain participant confidentiality. First, data from the pre-course survey was reviewed

by each of us separately and then together as a team. After data familiarity was solidified,

we discussed and agreed on the overarching themes. Second, data from the social

empathy index assessment was reviewed by each of us and then together as a team. In the

social empathy index, we focused on six main questions that matched our specific

research questions. After data familiarization was complete, we identified patterns. Third,

discussion board data familiarization took place individually and then together as a team.

After data familiarization was accomplished, codes were selected by us. Fourth, interview

data familiarization was achieved. After data familiarization, we applied the discussion

board codes to the interview data set. Six codes were identified after analyzing all the

data sets: (a) increased knowledge of unconscious bias, (b) increased knowledge of

microaggressions, (c) increased knowledge of privilege, (d) increased knowledge of tools

and skills to value diversity, (e) the ability to look at the world from another's

perspective, and (f) the ability to start a dialogue to promote social change (social

empathy). The themes were categorized into two types: looking inward and looking

outward. The looking inward themes we discovered were slow down, self-reflection, and

being uncomfortable. These themes were connected by participants who looked inwardly

at themselves and outwardly to their interactions with others who were unlike

themselves. The outward looking themes we discovered were perspective-taking,

contextual understanding of systemic barriers, and behavioral intentions. These themes

were connected by participants applying their individual learning outward into society.

Results from this study may influence the application of social empathy development

through future DEI professional development courses.

Participant Demographics

      Participants in this study, highlighted in Table 4, were graduate students at UMSL

from the fall of 2021 through the spring of 2022 who took a DEI professional

development course. The full description of participants can be found in Chapter 3.

Table 4

Participant Demographics

Variables	Category	Percentage
Gender	Female	84%
	Male	11%
	Transgender	5%
Age	Range	22–53
	Mean	33.42
Ethnicity	White/Caucasian	72%
	Black/African American	22%
	Asian	6%
Discipline	Education	47%
	Business	21%
	Arts and science	32%
Degree	Master's	26%
	Doctoral	74%

Pre-Course Survey Results

The pre-course survey (offered in Appendix C) was administered to participants at the start of the certificate. The instructor collaborated with us and added two specific questions for this study: (a) How would you describe empathy? and (b) Have you heard of social empathy? If so, how would you describe it? The answers to these two questions, the participants' demographic data, and their hopes, challenges, and questions were collected to ascertain their awareness and knowledge level of course content. All participants ($n = 19$) completed the pre-course survey. A small number of participants allowed descriptive statistical analysis and qualitative analysis.

All 39 students in the DEI certificate course took the pre-course survey; however, only the data from nineteen participants in our study were used in this research. The pre-course survey contained the participants' demographic data, their hopes and challenges, and their prior knowledge or awareness of empathy, social empathy, diversity in the workplace, unconscious bias, microaggressions, privilege, and inclusion. Three hypothetical workplace questions asked participants to rank their competence level with the following: speaking up, evaluating DEI policies, evaluating DEI practices in the workplace, taking action when they have been a witness to discrimination or harassment, and describing whether they have experienced discrimination or harassment.

Hopes and Challenges

The first question on the pre-course survey asked participants to share what they hoped to get out of the certificate. Participant responses of hope included: self-improvement, to increase positive relations with others that are not like themselves, to improve a present or future workplace in a DEI sense, and to gain knowledge of tools and strategies to utilize when fostering a more inclusive self and environment. Interpretation of this data showed that participants were willing to do the learning in the areas of self-improvement, in the workplace, and to gain skills.

- **Remi, age 25:** "I am hoping to meet other students and colleagues and widen my perspective of what diversity and inclusion mean. I am also hoping to learn how to better serve my community and learn to be a better ally as I am a straight/white woman."

Listed are examples of participants' hopes about the DEI certificate:

- **Mae, age 53:** "an understanding of how to make a stronger community based on DEI principles."

- **Una, age 35:** "I am hoping to gain a better diversity perspective than just my environment."

- **Ally, age 30:** "I hope to challenge my biases and learn how to have 'uncomfortable' conversations about DEI issues."

The second question asked participants to name any potential challenges with working through the DEI certificate topics. Participants reported that time was the most concerning challenge. This data showed that anticipated challenges ranged from biases to none. Responses to anticipated challenges were interesting because participants stated one of the course topics, bias, could be a difficulty. Biases were already on the minds of some participants. The marked differences in the anticipated challenges were interpreted by us as the comfort levels participants had of the DEI topics.

- **Dana, age 35:** "Feeling confident that I learn all of the strategies and tools necessary to navigate this space. I would also like everyone in the course to be able to speak passionately and honestly, but not offensively; and that doesn't always work when intertwining different backgrounds and dynamics."

- **Matt, age 36:** "I think my biggest challenge will be trying to understand other perspectives. I know that coming from a European country originally, I have had to learn a lot about racism and xenophobia in America over the last few years and I hope to be able to understand that, and other forms of diversity further."

- **Tom, age 41:** "Nothing stands out as potential challenge other than time management with my other responsibilities."

Prior Knowledge of Empathy and Social Empathy

As discussed in Chapter 2, individual empathy as defined by Mirra (2018, p. 11) and Segal et al. (2017, p. 28) does not include social action or behavioral intentions. However, Mirra and Segal et al. concur that empathy is needed to develop critical civic empathy (Mirra, 2018, p. 11) and social empathy (Segal et al., 2017, p. 28). It was important to have baseline data on participants' understanding of these two concepts which were important components of our study. The baseline data showed evidence that all participants had a correct understanding of empathy. Researcher's assumptions were correct that participants who choose to engage in the DEI Graduate Certificate course understood and probably possessed empathy. We concluded that the empathy data showed that participants had the capacity to develop social empathy. However, the data showed that no participants were able to define social empathy in the pre-course survey. Examples of these data points are listed in Table 5 for empathy and Table 6 for social empathy.

Table 5

Pre-Survey Empathy Prior Knowledge

Empathy prior knowledge	Participant
"I always think of it as putting yourself in someone else's feeling, truly taking time to reflect on their point of view or the potential point of view of others."	Cece, age 41
"Place yourself in another person's emotional position and have the same or similar emotional response."	Sage, age 38

Empathy prior knowledge	Participant
"We were always told as children that empathy was being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes. I believe that empathy is being able to feel for other people as they would feel for themselves."	Trixi, age 23
"The ability to sense and understand another person's emotions and perspective."	Ally, age 30
"Understanding how someone feels even if you have not experienced the same thing."	Mae, age 53
"I would describe empathy as being able to understand what a person is truly going through while not feeling bad for them but understanding."	Remi, age 25
"I think it is understanding how others are experiencing life every day, from their point of view, as best as possible."	Matt, age 36
"Understanding the emotions of someone else."	Dave, age 23
"The ability to understand and connect with others on an emotional level."	Suci, age 37
"Being able to put yourself in another's shoes. To imagine their experiences and how their mind works and better understand where they are coming from and why they think/do the things they do."	Ava, age 31
"Being able to understand someone's situation even though you have not gone through it or fully understand their viewpoint. You don't need that to have emotional response to injustices."	Una, age 35
"I think of empathy as apart from sympathy in that you are able to see from alike shared experiences rather than just recognizing challenges from a place of unshared experiences."	Tom, age 41
"I believe empathy is the ability to relate to others regardless of shared or similar experiences."	Cat, age 35
"Understanding and being cognizant of others' circumstances."	Dana, age 35
"I would describe empathy as the ability and capability of truly understanding the feelings of another person."	Thalia, age 39

All participants seemed to have a correct general understanding of empathy. A few example quotes from our participants confirmed that they had prior knowledge of empathy and were able to describe it in the pre-course survey. Participants used common language to describe individual empathy: being in someone else's shoes and putting yourself in someone else's feelings. A couple of quotes that summarize how participants described individual empathy are listed in Table 5.

Individual empathy was a criterion for actionable empathy development according to Mirra (2018) and Segal et al. (2017). Examples of participants' inferring the definition of social empathy as prior knowledge are found in Table 6.

Table 6

Pre-Survey Social Empathy Prior Knowledge

Social empathy prior knowledge	Participant
"I have not heard of this term."	Mae, age 53
"I have not, but I would imagine it has something to do with understanding cultural groups that are different from your own or different from the majority culture."	Ava, age 31
"No, but I would guess that it is the same as it would be for personal empathy, but you have it on social media with folks you've never met."	Una, age 35
"I have not heard of social empathy, but I will surely do my research on it."	Thalia, age 39
"I believe this is understanding how others encounter everyday life."	Matt, age 36

Social empathy prior knowledge	Participant
"Not really, but I would imagine it would be putting oneself in trying to understand how another social group (that I am not part of) would feel in a given situation and sharing that emotional response to the best of my ability."	Sage, age 38
"I have not heard of social empathy but I would describe it as a collective group of people coming together to realize that a different group may be having different outcomes and problems socially; and understanding that each person/community had different lived and learned experiences and we can come together to truly understand one another to make society and our social interactions better."	Remi, age 25
"Being able to connect to a specific community on an emotional level."	Dave, age 23
"I have not heard of the term social empathy, though I imagine it to mean something about having understanding and feeling for the social and societal context that someone is going through."	Trixi, age 23
"Hear of, yes … I have never dug deeply into the topic in an official capacity. I guess I would describe it as attempting to better understand people by thinking about or going through what they have been through in their life … sort of jumping over the hurdles they have jumped over to better understand their reactions, feelings an lifestyle."	Cece, age 41
"Yes. I would say it is the ability to identify and understand other people in life situations."	Suci, age 37
"Social empathy involved having compassion for groups of people who are different from us."	Alasteir, age 30
"Not really. I would imagine it is similar to empathy but rather than on an individual level, it is on a group level."	Tom, age 41
"I have not specifically heard of this term."	Cat, age 35

Social empathy prior knowledge	Participant
"I would describe social empathy as being aware and cognizant of people's social backgrounds (race, religion, gender, etc.)."	Dana, age 35

Nine participants said they hadn't heard of social empathy. Six participants tried inferring the definition of social empathy. No participants were successful in inferring the correct meaning of social empathy. While it wasn't necessary for participants to accurately define social empathy, we wanted to assess the participants' prior knowledge of social empathy. Mirra (2018) and Segal et al. (2017) have different terms for social empathy with identical definitions and similar conceptual models. Participant responses to the social empathy question showed an openness for growth.

Question 56 of the pre-course survey asked participants to rank on a Likert scale (*extremely knowledgeable*, *knowledgeable*, *moderately knowledgeable*, *slightly knowledgeable*, *not knowledgeable at all*) their knowledge or awareness of the importance of diversity in the workplace and in education, microaggressions, unconscious bias, and privilege and inclusion based on social identity groups of race, gender, disability, and so forth. The participant responses are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Pre-Course Survey—Knowledge or Awareness

	Extremely knowledgeable	Very knowledgeable	Moderately knowledgeable	Slightly knowledgeable	Not knowledgeable at all
The importance of diversity in the workplace and education.	1	10	4	0	0
Microaggressions	0	9	4	2	0
Unconscious Bias	2	6	7	0	0
Privilege based on social identity groups (i.e. race, gender, religion, disability, etc.)	0	10	5	0	0
Inclusion	0	9	5	1	0
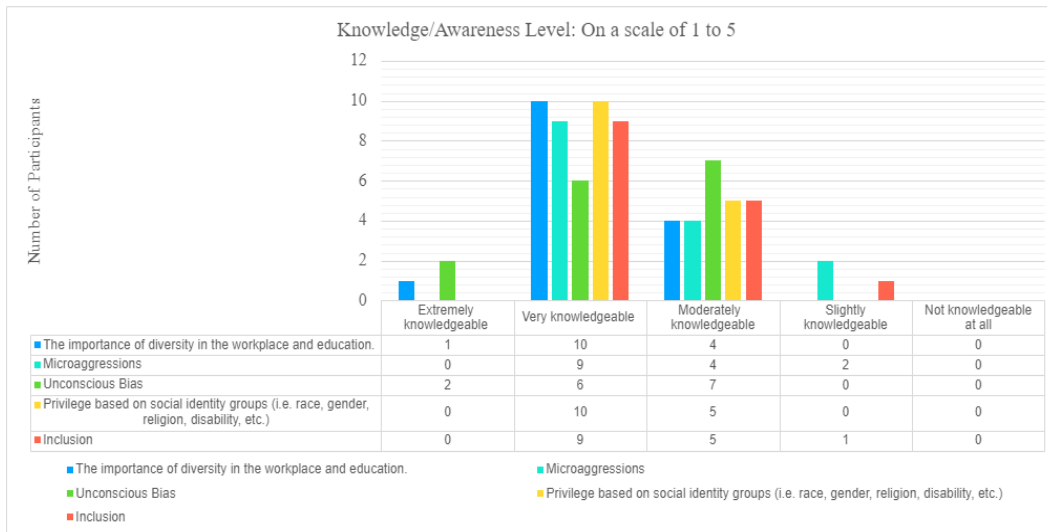
Figure 5 shows how most participants ranked themselves as very knowledgeable about the importance of diversity in the workplace and education. At the beginning of our study, one of our assumptions was that students who signed up to take the DEI course had a predisposition to be open to learning more about DEI topics to improve their personal and professional behaviors.

The data summary in Figure 6 shows that most participants felt confident that they already had a good knowledge base about unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege. This data indicated that participants may have done some previous learning on these topics and their significance. In Chapter 5 we will examine if and how this knowledge changed when providing a wide variety of tools and skills to value diversity, to look at the world from a different perspective, and to start a dialogue to promote social change. Self-reported levels of competence were ranked using a Likert scale of *extremely incompetent*, *moderately incompetent*, *slightly incompetent*, *neither competent nor*

incompetent, *slightly competent*, *moderately competent*, and *extremely competent* for

three action orientated scenarios. Results are reported in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Pre-Course Survey—How Competent Do You Feel to Do the Following?
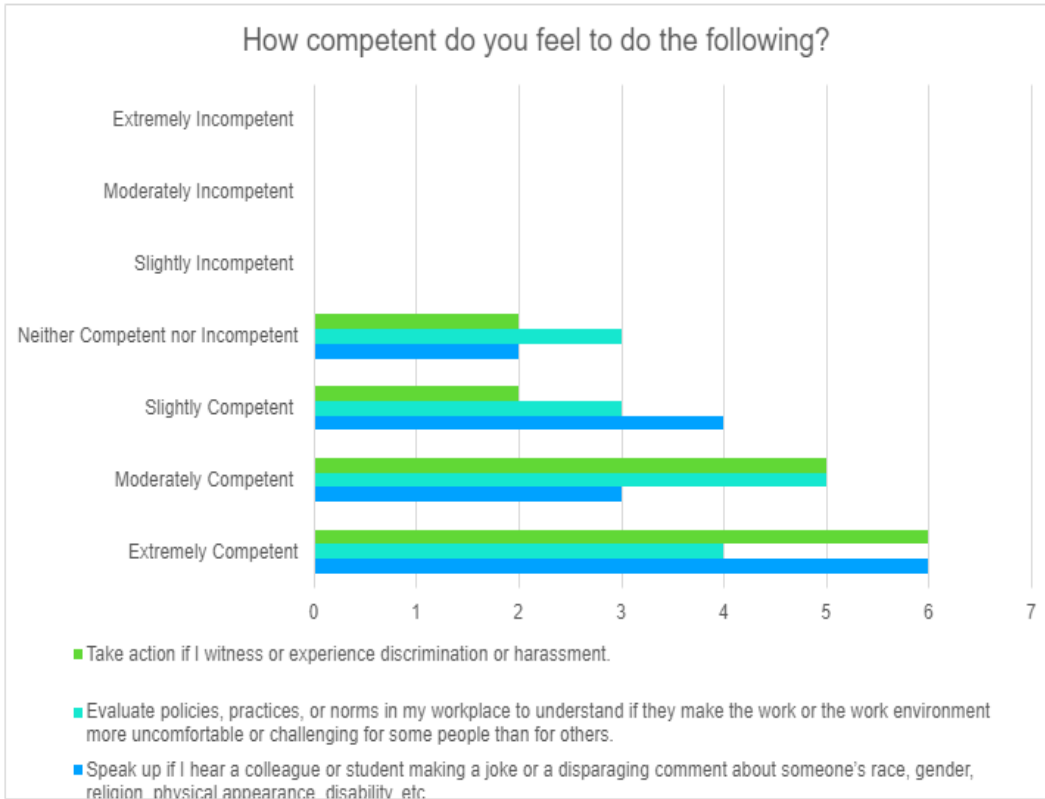
In this section of the pre-survey, participants were asked to answer three questions that are summarized in Figure 6. For Item 56 ("Evaluate policies, practices, or norms in my workplace to understand if they make the work or the work environment more uncomfortable or challenging for some people than for others"), participants reported similar levels of a sense of competence with regard to knowledge about policies and practices in the work settings. While one measured how confident participants were in taking action if they witnessed or experienced either discrimination or harassment, the other measured the level of confidence in speaking up in response to hearing a person making an inappropriate joke or making an inappropriate comment. Participant responses were between *somewhat* to *definitely comfortable* in speaking up and taking action.

Chapter 5 will analyze the pre-survey data showing participants' interests and their predisposition to have some knowledge on the topics and how they were interested in learning more.

Social Empathy Index (SEI)

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the social empathy index is a tool developed to assess the social empathy of social work professionals. In this study, we used the social empathy index prior to the start of Unit 2 in the DEI Graduate Certificate program to acquire a baseline of perspective-taking, conceptual understanding of systemic barriers, and macro self-other awareness perspective-taking. These three components of social empathy were established by Segal et al. (2017) as social worker attributes which result in positive social change. These six social empathy index questions mirrored the curriculum of the DEI Graduate Certificate, scholarly empathy definitions, critical civic empathy definitions, and social empathy definitions. Answers were self-reported using a six-tier

Likert scale ranging from *always*, *almost always*, *frequently*, *sometimes*, *rarely*, to *never*.

Social Empathy Index results are displayed in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Social Empathy Index (SEI) Results

	4. I can consider my point of view and another person's point of view at the same time. (PT: Perspective Taking	13. I can imagine what it's like to be in someone else's shoes. (PT: Perspective Taking)	15. I consider other people's points of view in discussions. (PT: Perspective Taking)	27. I believe that people who face discrimination have added stress that negatively impacts their lives. (CU: Contextual Understanding of Systemic Barriers)	28. I am comfortable helping a person of a different race or ethnicity than my own. (MSP: Macro Self-Other Awareness Perspective Taking)	30. I can understand people who are different from me by learning from them directly. (MSP: Macro Self-Other Awareness Perspective Taking
■ Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Sometimes	1	2	0	0	0	0
■ Frequently	5	3	2	0	2	2
■ Almost Always	5	7	7	2	1	5
■ Always	1	0	3	10	7	5

Figure 7 shows the majority of participants fell in the *frequently* to *almost always* range when considering their personal point of view and others' point of view at the same time (PT). Participants ranked their ability to imagine similarly to being in another's shoes (PT). Participants ranked their ability to consider other people's points of view in discussions higher than the other two perspective-taking questions. Participants ranked their belief that discrimination adds stress and impacts the lives of people that are discriminated against as *always* and *almost always* which is a contextual understanding of systemic barriers. Participants ranked the importance of learning directly from others unlike themselves in the top three scales (MSP).

The synthesis of the pre-course survey results with the additional data sets conveyed a high level of knowledge and competence with DEI topics by these self-reports. The data demonstrates a continued openness and willingness for continued learning. Data will be analyzed and discussed in Chapter 5.

Discussion Boards Analysis

Introduction

Unit 2 of the DEI course was divided into three modules: unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege. Each module was structured to allow students to first gain general knowledge, then self-reflect, and finally to engage with fellow students through discussion board postings. Each module was organized and followed the same format and is highlighted in Figure 8:

- answer essential questions related to the topic,
- engage in activities,
- watch instructional videos, and

- reflect and engage in discussion boards.

Figure 8

Discussion Boards Funnel
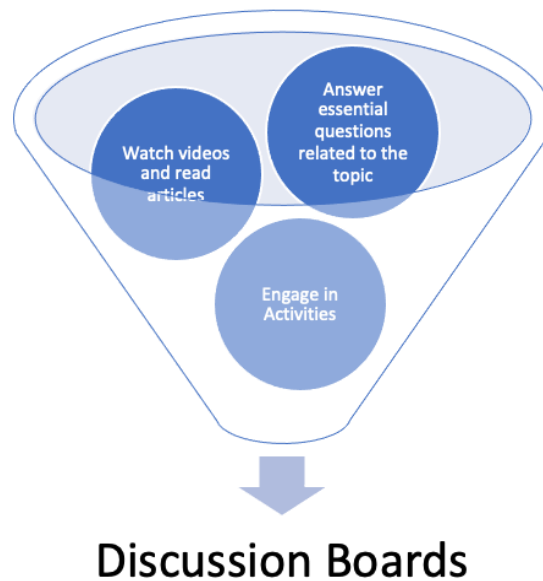
Discussion Boards

Note. F. Ferrari & L. Woodrum, March 2022.

The three discussion board assignments were retrieved from the DEI Canvas course site. In this section of the DEI course, students were given specific instructions on how to complete the assignment or posting. After posting, each student was asked to read and reply to at least two fellow students and follow up when necessary.

The discussion board analysis followed a similar structure as did the analysis for the interviews. After downloading the discussion boards from Canvas, we read them several times to get familiar with the content. We then separately highlighted important sentences. The first coding cycle method used was In vivo coding. Also, for this analysis we used the comment feature on Microsoft Word to make notes and name the codes.

After reviewing the data three times, we re-examined all the memos and organized them into themes using an Excel spreadsheet. The initial coding was done separately; however, we met regularly to review the process and discuss the findings. The next step was "theming the data" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 198). After theming the data, the research team moved to the next step that Saldaña (2016) described as meta-summary and meta-synthesis, which are "methodological approaches that collect, compare and synthesize the key findings" (p. 204).

The spreadsheet for the analysis of the discussion boards contained four tabs. The first tab listed unconscious bias, the second microaggression, the third privilege, and the fourth included the data summary. The spreadsheet within each tab had a list of participants' quotes. The discussion board comparisons are highlighted in Figure 9.

Figure 9

Discussion Boards Comparison
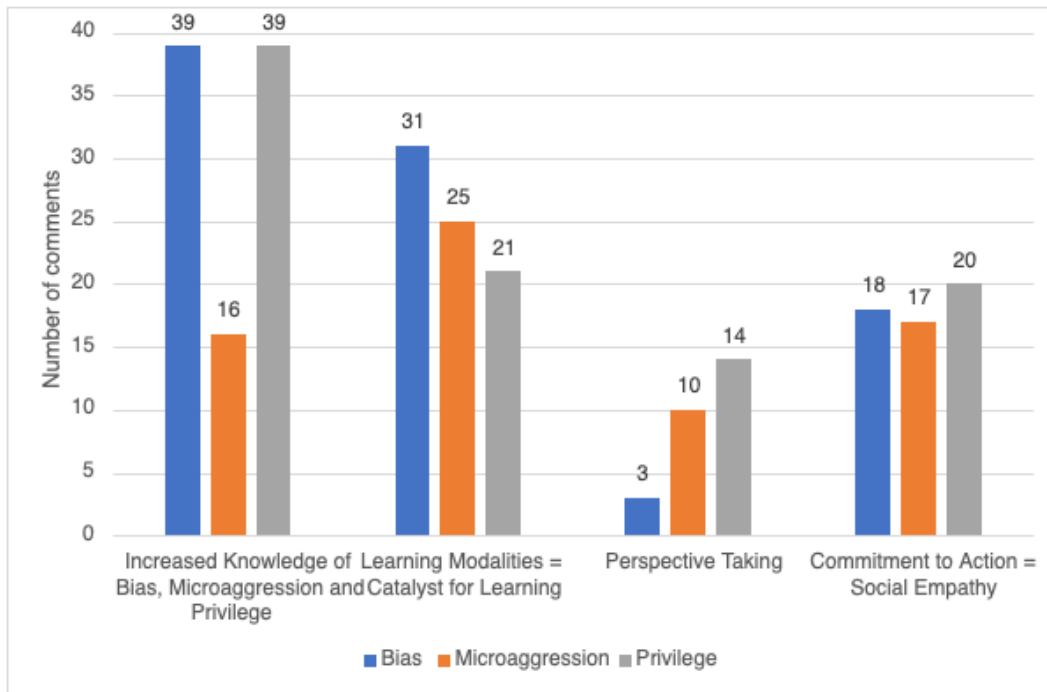
As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, after reviewing and analyzing

the entire dataset, we identified six codes and frequencies:

- increased knowledge of unconscious bias, *n* = 39,

- increased knowledge of microaggressions, *n* =16,

- increased knowledge of privilege, *n* = 39,

- learning modalities that influence the learning of social empathy, *n* = 97,

- the ability to look at the world from another's perspective, *n* = 27, and

- behavioral intentions (social empathy), *n* = 55.

The descriptive statistics represented numerically were impressive considering the *n* = 19

discussion board participants. The small number of participants mentioned multiple

learning points and behavioral intentions. These data points showed that even though

self-awareness and competence of DEI knowledge and its significance was self-reported

as high, participants had marked growth. They were continually willing and open to

improve their DEI knowledge and skills moving toward social empathy.

Unconscious Bias

The instructor introduced the topic for each module by listing the learning goals:

- What is unconscious bias, and why does it matter?

- How do unconscious biases play out in our daily lives?

- What is the impact of unconscious biases on individuals and society as a whole?

- What can we do about unconscious biases?

In this module, participants engaged in an activity called "Who does what?" where they

were asked to match nine pictures with nine jobs and then reflect on the activity. After

learning about unconscious bias, the students were asked to reflect and post on the

Canvas discussion board. The directions for the discussion board assignment are listed in

Appendix H.

Microaggressions

The learning goals for the module on microaggression module were:

- What are microaggressions, and why do they matter?

- Do intentions matter?

- Why are microaggressions an obstacle to inclusion?

- What can we do about microaggression?

In this module, students were asked to take the microaggressions quiz and then engage in the "Do-over" activity. The discussion board assignment for this module was divided into two parts, described in Appendix H.

Privilege

For the module on privilege, the learning goals were:

- What is privilege, and why does it matter?

- Why is it so hard for some people to talk about privilege?

- How does privilege play out in our daily lives?

- What is the impact of privilege on individuals and society as a whole?

- How does privilege create obstacles to inclusion?

- What can we do about privilege?

In this module, in addition to the activities and videos, students were encouraged to take a privilege self-audit. This was a thought-provoking activity that sparked many conversations during the interviews. The instructor provided guidance on managing the audit results and offered tools to help manage a possible sense of guilt or shame. The directions for the discussion board assignment regarding privilege are in Appendix H.

Findings for Each Code

Code 1: Increased Knowledge of Unconscious Bias (frequency n = 39). In the Who does what? activity, participants were asked to match nine pictures with nine jobs. Discussion board data showed how participants used their frame of reference while acknowledging biases and making assumptions. As participants engaged in the activity, they relied on their own experiences.

- **Ava, age 31:** "I decided to answer off of my life experience."

- **Una, age 35:** "I associate a Pastor with a Black man and if it would have said Minister, then I would have chosen one of the White men. I know that is a part of my biases speaking but it wasn't hard for me to do."

- **Sage, age 38:** "If I recognize the student's name, I could certainly make errors based on similarity bias, the halo effect, etc."

As participants engaged in the activity, they relied on their own experience. A couple of students mentioned that they felt uncomfortable during the exercise, while some said they had to take a step back and slow down and be more intentional to avoid making a snap judgment.

These quotes illustrate participant learning in the area of unconscious bias. Participant learning in the area of unconscious bias totaled $n = 39$ specific instances for $n = 19$ participants. We were encouraged that the data showed significant learning even though participants had previously reported high levels of knowledge, awareness, and competence. This learning demonstrated that participants were working on their individual empathy capacities. Table 7 has a sample of the quotes; however, Appendix I has a more comprehensive list of quotes.

Table 7

Discussion Board Code 1: Increased Knowledge of Unconscious Bias

Example quote	Participant
"The activity almost made me uncomfortable with myself because I just had to go off of assumptions and looks to make my guesses. It makes me really want to become more insightful in the people around me."	Dave, age 23
"To combat my fast brain, I tried to look at the image itself to guide my decision-making process to be more objective."	Cat, age 35
"I did not want to put people in stereotypical categories."	Dana, age 35
"The activity was difficult for me. I found myself taking time to be thoughtful as I make a lot of assumptions based on dress apparently, mannerisms, body language, etc."	Suci, age 37
"I decided to answer off of my life experience."	Ava, age 31

Code 2: Increased Knowledge of Microaggressions (frequency n = 16). For

the discussion board posting assignment, participants were asked to think about a past

situation, then describe and reflect on it, share the past situation with a cohort, and then

say what they would do now with the new knowledge. The microaggressions "bucket

effect," was introduced in this module, which was described by one of the participants as

how "microaggressions add up and can bubble over time" (Matt, age 36).

- Tracey, age 23: "Trying to think about times when I felt a microaggression and

  when I felt that I perpetuated one. And I think both are important to do together. It

  kind of talks about intersectionality."

Examples of increased knowledge of microaggressions are listed in Table 8.

Self-reflection and being uncomfortable was evident in the data when participants

were learning about microaggressions. Some of the postings were very personal.

Consequently, we decided not to share overtly personal direct quotes.

Table 8

Discussion Board Code 2: Increased Knowledge of Microaggressions

Example quote	Participant
"I would insist that no matter how you grew up, you have to adapt to the current climate in life ... and that means no more comments like that."	Cece, age 41
"I ignored her remarks, but I should have addressed it very politely yet firmly. I am fairly conflicted avoidant that way."	Ally, age 30
"I agree that microaggressions add up and can bubble over time."	Matt, age 36

Code 3: Increased Knowledge of Privilege (frequency n = 39). The module on

privilege sparked a lot of great discussion not only on the discussion board but also

during the interviews. Some participants expressed a sense of shame and discomfort and

mentioned a sense of negativity connected to the concept of privilege. The privilege self-

audit activity introduced new knowledge about different forms of privilege that not only

focused on race, sexuality, and gender but also on religion, size, age, citizenship, and

being able-bodied.

- **Steph, age 22:** "My understanding of privilege changed 180 degrees. I didn't

  know the real definition of privilege until watching the video."

- **Una, age 35:** "I have privilege, and I never thought I had it."

Participant data showed that learning about privilege was the most frequent with $n = 39$

statements noted by $n = 19$ participants.

Several students mentioned that this module was the most challenging because it

was often associated with guilt and shame. Also, during this module, students learned not

only about different and new privileges that they might not have been aware of but also

new skills and tools on how to manage privileges and how to talk about them. Several

students have mentioned that their understanding of privilege changed dramatically after

completing this module.

- **Tracey, at 23:** "I hadn't really thought of youth as a privilege before."

- **Tom, age 41:** "I assumed privilege was around economy and race. Learning about

  Christian and citizenship privilege was new."

- **Cat, age 35:** "Checklists: I really thought that was a great resource to be self-

  reflective and then also to challenge other people."

Table 9 illustrates the impact of learning about privilege. Participants noted in the

discussion board data and the interview data that learning about privilege was the most

impactful compared to unconscious bias and microaggressions. This data showed

participants continuing their journey towards social empathy. They were not stopping at

the individual empathy phase.

Table 9 depicts the statements in the transformation to social empathy.

Table 9

Discussion Board Code 3: Increased Knowledge of Privilege

Example quote	Participant
"My understanding of privilege changed 180 degrees. I didn't know the real definition of privilege until watching the video."	Steph, age 22
"To be privileged is to be born into a group of people with special rights/advantage/immunity. This has probably been the most enlightening topic thus far, and I would suggest this program with an emphasis on this topic."	Steph, age 22
"I appreciated that there was a variety of the types of privilege that was not just based on gender, race, and sexual orientation."	Cat, age 35
"I feel like I am continuously learning new ways that privilege has impacted not only my life but the lives of many other minorities in the US."	Sage, age 38
"I have always thought of privilege as something to be guilty and embarrassed of. I have never had it explained less negatively in the context of being 'not my fault.'"	Suci, age 37

Code 4: Learning Modalities That Influence Learning of Social Empathy

(frequency n = 97). The tools that participants mentioned during interviews and

discussion are identified as being intentional, using a slow or fast brain, being mindful,

active listening, listening to their story, continuing to learn, and being patient with others

and themselves. The "Check-list" activity was eye-opening for many participants, and we

identified several quotes on the discussion board that are listed in Table 10. Also, several

participants mentioned that the tools they had been gathering went from learning more

about inclusive language to include talking with other people and creating a more

inclusive environment. Through discussion board postings and interviews, participants

mentioned the importance of learning how to manage privilege and new knowledge and

how to have difficult conversations while creating a more inclusive environment.

Table 10

Discussion Board Code 4: Learning Modalities That Influence the Learning of Social

Empathy

Example quote	Participant
"I found those check-lists to be eye-opening as well to just how many things I do not have to actively think about that others do daily, and I think regular review and thought about these things using the resources given to us is a great way to begin to stay on top of and accountable for my ally-ship work that comes along with my privilege."	Trixi, age 23
"My awareness of privilege is ever-evolving. I always find new areas where I have privilege and have to negotiate what that means and vice versa. There are places where I do not have privilege, and I have to fight or stand up for myself."	Cece, age 41
"My 'fast brain' would immediately pick a category but my 'slow brain' would say, well what if x, y, z?"	Evie, age 28
"I agree that patience plays a bigger part than we might realize, and it is something we often don't have enough of. I think being patient and thoughtful would help most of us a lot."	Matt, age 36
"Admitting to being in the wrong can be a really difficult skill to learn and practice but it's super important."	Ally, age 30

Code 5: The Ability to Look at the World From Another's Perspective

(frequency n = 27). The discussion board posts around this code had several interesting

quotes taken from the privilege assignment, such as "I will continue to look for ways to

use my privilege to literally or figuratively open doors for others" (Mae, age 53). Several

participants expressed that getting these new tools would help them have conversations

that could lead to positive changes. Some participants shared that knowing more about

their privilege and being intentional in learning more about others would help them look

at things from different perspectives. Table 11 offers some quotes from the study's

participants. Appendix I has additional quotes around this code.

Table 11

Discussion Board Code 5: The Ability to Look at the World From Another's Perspective

Example quote	Participant
"There are many things that I could do to try and override my biases, one that I have been doing a lot is placing myself in their shoes."	Dave, age 23
"She was very gracious and patient with me and answered my question, but she absolutely had no responsibility to do that and would have been perfectly justified to tell me she did not appreciate that question or that she did not want to answer it nor bear the burden of educating me on cultural issues."	Tracey, age 23
"I will, however, also look at ways to combat the artificial construct of White privilege, which I think has influenced how and why we all tend to unconsciously, or in some cases consciously, take advantage of our privilege without consideration of how to help others access what we have."	Mae, age 53
"As we learn more about the different types of privilege, I think we can gain more empathy for others, but I don't think you have to have both compassion and empathy to	Evie, age 28

Example quote	Participant
address privilege. I don't think we have to fill both those roles at the same time to make a difference!"	
"I think it might be interesting to pick one of these check-lists a week and really analyze my privilege and how that privilege or lack thereof affects me and others."	Ava, age 31

Code 6: Behavioral Intentions to Promote Social Change = Social Empathy

(frequency n = 55). During the discussion board analysis, participants expressed their

plan to take action and promote social change by being intentional, mindful, and patient,

using self-reflection, and acknowledging that we all have bias and privilege. Several

participants shared the intention of using their privilege to help others and support social

change. It was encouraging to read from the comments that participants acknowledged

that learning about DEI concepts is an ongoing process and to make a difference we all

need to keep trying. Table 12 lists some of the participants' quotes on starting or

continuing dialogues to promote and support social change, and Appendix I has

additional quotes from the discussion board assignments.

Table 12

Discussion Board Code 6: Behavioral Intentions to Promote Social Change

Example quote	Participant
"Looking back, I understand now that BIPOC are constantly being asked to educate others specifically white people on issues, racism, etc., that they experience (this is called emotional labor) and it can be challenging and triggering."	Remi, age 25

Example quote	Participant
"Being mindful and patient. Understanding that everyone is different and may use different methods to achieve the same outcome."	Dana, age 35
"This module has been a great loop back around to the work that I did back then. I think it is important that you never think you are done … but that you always revisit, calibrate, and adjust your knowledge of microaggressions."	Cece, age 41
"I follow the individuals lead and if they mention something from their past, I take that as an opportunity to further the conversation."	Suci, age 37
"As a result of learning more about privilege, I will commit to exploring these areas with people in my circles. I will challenge my colleagues to think about privilege, work through aspects of privilege with my students, and seek new opportunities to learn from the world and people around me. I also will put myself in different situations with a variety of people to keep learning and growing."	Cat, age 35
"I will also begin to review my environment and try to address challenges that pose barriers to entry or success for others."	Mae, age 53

Interview Analysis

Introduction

All study participants were repeatedly invited to attend an interview. We sent individual messages to participants over the course of several weeks, attempting to schedule interviews. The interview methodology is detailed in Chapter 3. Fifteen participants scheduled and participated in semi-structured interviews, accumulating 116 pages of data. The protocol was revised after the first two interviews. We noticed redundancies in a few questions, and these questions were revised. The revised interview protocol is listed in Appendix E. The interviews took place after Unit 2 and while the

participants were on winter break. Due to the timing of the interviews, course activities

were described in brief in the calendar invitation and/or listed in the chat feature of Zoom

to refresh the memories of the participants before the interviews. After data

familiarization, coding, and theming, we summarized the data into the same six codes as

we did for the dialogue of the discussion boards. Data from the interviews was authentic

and genuine, and it allowed us to connect with the participants and ask more in-depth

questions. Interview questions focused on exploring more about how the course increased

participants' skills and tools, how assignments had or had not impacted their DEI

knowledge in the workplace, and what their future behavioral intentions were. During the

interviews, we explored to determine if the new knowledge had changed the way

participants connected with people from different backgrounds and what steps they were

considering to create a more welcoming and inclusive workplace. The interview data

analysis listed in Table 10 is synthesized in Chapter 5.

Figure 10

Interviews—Significant Codes and Frequency of Appearance
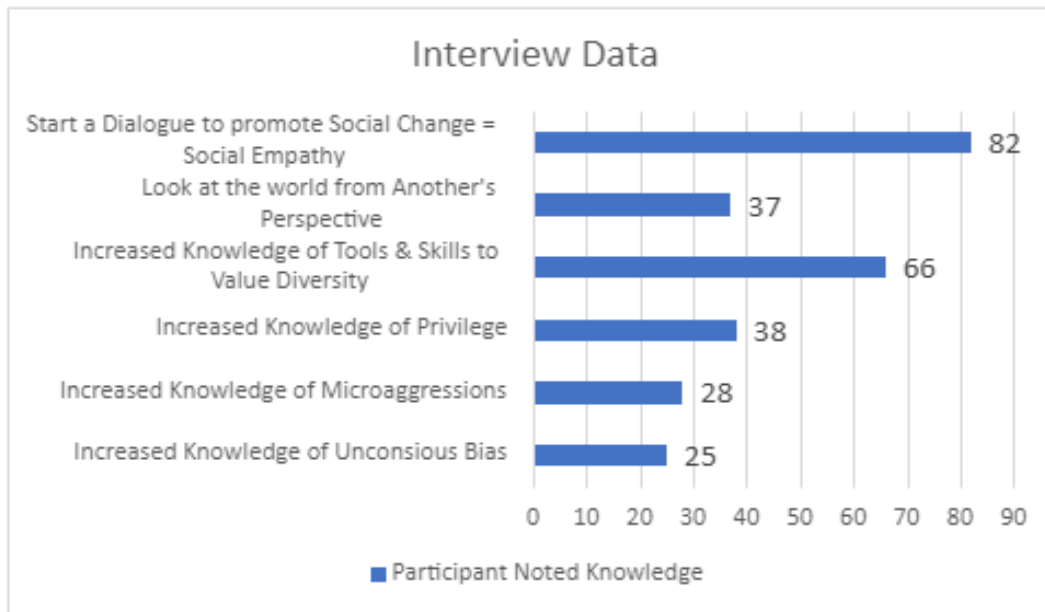
Finding Each Code in the Interview Data:

Code 1: Increased Knowledge of Unconscious Bias (frequency of occurrence n = 25). Increased knowledge of unconscious bias was the least noted by participants. We asked participants to name the impact of learning about unconscious bias both personally and professionally. Participant quotes describing increased knowledge of unconscious bias can be found in Table 13 and frequency of occurrence in Figure 10.

Table 13

Interview Code 1: Increased Knowledge of Unconscious Bias

Quotes of participants increased in knowledge of unconscious bias	Participant
"It challenged my thinking a lot and I appreciated that activity and thinking through it myself, but then also having the opportunity to like kind of debrief with my fellow DEI students."	Cat, age 35
"How to recruit and retain people of various backgrounds."	Tom, age 41
"We actually took the time to understand and reflect, which I thought was very helpful."	Suci, age 37
"And like making me aware that unconscious bias exists, and I've been aware, but it was nice to have the reminder."	Ava, age 31

Code 2: Increased Knowledge of Microaggressions (frequency of occurrence

n = 28). Increased knowledge of microaggressions was the second least noted by

participants. We asked participants to name the impact of learning about

microaggressions both personally and professionally. Participant quotes describing

increased knowledge of microaggressions can be found in Table 14 and frequency of

occurrence in Figure 10.

Table 14

Interview Code 2: Increased Knowledge of Microaggressions

Quotes of increased knowledge of microaggressions	Participant
"It was definitely a struggle to construct like a learning curve, but it was actually a struggle and most of the other things it's more like Oh, I feel like I've been ignorant, but this time it was just like I wanted a black and white answer and there wasn't one."	Matt, age 36
"The thought process because it did form a discussion about am I, creating or am I putting a microaggression on someone."	Dana, age 35
"Identify and to stop before I speak or before I have certain actions, just to make sure that I'm not excluding somebody."	Thalia, age 39
"Opening my eyes to non-racial microaggressions."	Cece, age 41

Code 3: Increased Knowledge of Privilege (frequency of occurrence n = 38).

Increased knowledge of privilege was noted most often by participants even when

answering interview questions about unconscious bias and microaggressions. Participants

described learning about privilege to be the most impactful, both personally and

professionally. Participant quotes can be found in Table 15 and frequency of occurrence

can be found in Figure 10.

Table 15

Interview Code 3: Increased Knowledge of Privilege

Quotes of participants increased knowledge of privilege	Participant
"Check lists: I really thought that was a great resource to be self-reflective and then also to challenge other people."	Cat, age 35
"It made me more conscious about what my different privileges are of course, being white, being a male, how I can use those privileges to help others."	Dave, age 23
"Assumed privilege was around economy and race. Learning about Christianity and citizenship privilege was new."	Tom, age 41
"Transformative: I really found the checklists to be eye opening."	Sage, age 38
"Diversity programs I've been in have taught that white privilege is bad, or any type of privileges are very bad and negative. That you should be ashamed of having it. So, I think it was very impactful to me to hear that everybody has some kind of privilege. And it's okay to move forward, you know, grow with it."	Suci, age 37
"I really liked the self-audit. Education privilege: I think every privilege audit I've seen has always left that out."	Remi, age 25

Code 4: Increased Knowledge of Tools and Skills to Value Diversity

(frequency of occurrence n = 66). As noted by the participants, the tools and skills to

value diversity were the second highest noted learning outcomes of the DEI topics.

Participants described feeling more confident and willing to engage in DEI conversations

when responding to interview questions about DEI tools and skills. Quotes about

participant learning can be found in Table 16 and frequency of occurrence can be found

in Figure 10.

Table 16

Interview Code 4: Increased Knowledge of Tools and Skills to Value Diversity

Quotes of increased knowledge of tools and skills	Participants
"I think it gives us the tools to be able to really talk about it, engage in a thoughtful dialogue around privilege."	Dana, age 35
"It's very self-reflective which I enjoy, and it is actually useable information that can be applied with joy."	Thalia, age 39
"I have my diversity statement in my classroom to show that I am a safe person to talk to."	Cat, age 35

Code 5: Look at the World From Another's Perspective (frequency of

occurrence n = 37). Increased ability to look at the world from another's perspective

(empathy) was noted 37 times by the 15 interview participants even though high

competency rates about empathy were noted before they started Unit 2. Participant

responses were a mix of knowledge both of personal and professional perspective-taking.

Quotes of increased perspective-taking can be found in Table 17 and frequency of

occurrence can be found in Figure 10.

Table 17

Interview Code 5: Looking at the World From Another's Perspective

Quotes of looking at the world from another's perspective	Participants
"I really have to stop and just look at other people's perspective in a bigger way than what I have done before."	Thalia, age 39
"Looking at the situation from a different point of view and different mindset." T	Cat, age 35
"Being conscious of other people's differences and ways of thinking and their actions … so cultural competence."	Dave, age 23
"I think empathy is very important because you can understand where they're coming from and then also those that are different, how they do things, especially being maybe in a country that's not their native country."	Sucy, age 37
"I got to be empathetic because meeting people where they're at, not where I think they should be."	Cece, age 41

Code 6: Starting a Dialogue or Behavioral Intentions to Promote Social Change With Frequency of Occurrence (frequency of occurrence n = 82). Participant answers included 82 data entries about starting dialogues or behavioral intentions to promote social change. Deeds and dialogues are defined as social empathy by Segal et al. (2017) and critical civic empathy by Mirra (2018), which is explained in Chapter 2. Participant quotes that describe behavioral intentions can be found in Table 18 and frequency of occurrence can be found in Figure 10.

Table 18

Interview Code 6: Starting a Dialogue or Behavioral Intentions to Promote Social Change

Quotes of dialogues or behavioral intentions	Participant
"I would say being at an academic institution it actually pushes me to say things now as opposed to just kind of allowing things to be, but always learning how to do that in a respectful but foreign way."	Thalia, age 39
"I don't want to say challenging my coworkers. I don't think that's the right word, but just bringing things to the forefront of conversation."	Cat, age 35
"I'm focusing on museums and so there's been a large push in the museum world to incorporate DEI. The work environment but also the way we collect and how we make policies in the curatorial sector."	Dave, age 23
"Know sort of giving multiple stories. Those individuals that look like me, so I'm ready to have experiences with folks who don't and to not just see Their color or my passion."	Una, age 35

Types of Themes

In this section we will synthesize all data points. The data collected before the participants began learning in Unit 2 were the pre-course survey and the answers to the six questions of the social empathy index. This is important to note as this was prior knowledge to the learning done on the topics of unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege. The data collected in the midst of Unit 2 learning were the discussion board dialogues. The data collected after the learning happened in Unit 2 were the individual semi-structured interviews. Due to the timing of the participant learning, we synthesized the discussion boards and interview data sets more systematically when we generated the overarching codes and themes. The data from these two data sets mirror each other. We kept the purpose of the study in mind while synthesizing the data. The purpose of the study was outlined in Chapter 1, to influence university leaders to incorporate social empathy development into their curriculums.

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, we reviewed and analyzed the entire dataset, identifying six themes:

Inward looking

- slow down

- be uncomfortable

- self-reflection

Outward looking

- perspective-taking

- contextual understanding of systemic barriers

- behavioral Intentions

Bias Check

While reviewing the data in our study, we looked at the possible biases that could affect the review and data analysis. During the familiarization with the data, we first reviewed and coded separately and then together as a team. During our research, we collected data from different data sources. Participants could think and elaborate on their answers in the pre-survey, the social empathy index, and the discussion boards; however, participants were more spontaneous and personal during the interviews. Also, during the interviews, we were able to ask additional questions to understand participants' points of view in a more in-depth way.

Overall, the data we collected supported our research questions; however, we acknowledge that the participants were open to learning more about DEI topics because they chose to register and take the DEI Graduate Certificate.

Conclusion

This study explored how social empathy may increase through participation in a DEI Graduate Certificate course. It explored gaining knowledge of unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege related to social empathy development. The research project was intended to provide future leaders with different ways of seeing the world using the lenses of DEI and by providing the tools, skills, and courage to question systemic inequality which is ingrained in our society.

To answer our research questions, we used different data sources. We used a pre-course survey given at the beginning of the certificate, administered the social empathy index at the beginning of Unit 2, utilized course discussion board assignment postings and one-on-one Zoom interviews. We made sure to organize and familiarize ourselves

with the data by reviewing it multiple times before conducting the analysis. We worked

individually and then together as a team to identify patterns to code the data.

When we themed the data, participants demonstrated that learning about DEI

topics increased their ability to look at the world from another's perspective, their skills

to start dialogues, and their ability to set behavioral intentions to promote social change,

which is also known as social empathy. We found two main theme types in the data:

inward looking and outward looking. Inward looking themes showed individual growth

of participants which included: slowing down, self-reflection, and being uncomfortable.

These individual empathy attributes increased sequentially as participants journeyed

through the DEI course work. As participants continued the work, these inward-looking

themes became outward-looking themes: contextual understanding of systemic barriers

and behavioral intentions. These two outward looking themes were cited by Segal et al.

(2017) and Mirra (2018) as social empathy and critical civic empathy. The complete

analysis can be found in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 5, we will review our original research model and compare it with the

analysis of the collected data. We will also examine how this study may influence the

application of social empathy growth through DEI professional development courses, and

we will recommend best practices and possibilities for future research in the field.

Chapter 5

Introduction

This single qualitative case study explored social empathy development of

graduate and doctoral students who were taking a DEI workplace certificate course. The

study consisted of participants ($n = 19$) in the pilot DEI workplace certificate course

offered fall of 2021 and continuing to the end of the spring 2022 semester. Data collected

was from a pre-course survey, answers to six questions from the social empathy index

assessment, dialogue from discussion boards ($n = 19$), and individual semi-structured

interviews ($n = 15$). Table 4 in Chapter 3 shows how we answered our three research

questions from the data we collected. The two primary data sources used to answer our

research questions were the discussion boards and the interviews.

The codebook in Appendix J gives an excellent summary of the six main codes

and themes that emerged, and it also helped us tackle the analysis of the data for each

research question.

As we analyzed the data, it was helpful to revisit Segal's (2011) definition of

social empathy which is "the ability to genuinely understand people from different

socioeconomic classes and racial/ethnic backgrounds within the context of the

institutionalized inequalities and disparities" (p. 541).

During our data analysis, we saw that participants learned several concepts while

engaging in activities related to unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege. There

was clear evidence that participants were not only learning new ideas but also increasing

their social empathy.

This chapter will review the findings highlighted in Chapter 4 from the lens of our

three research questions. We will start with the research questions that have guided us

through our research journey, summarize our results, and conclude by looking at ideas for

future research.

RQ1: In What Ways Do Participants Engage in Social Empathy Through Online

Dialogues About Unconscious Bias, Microaggressions, and Privilege?

The first research question was: in what ways do participants engage in social empathy through online dialogues about unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege?

The unit about unconscious bias introduced the slow and fast brain concept. Because participants mentioned this concept several times in both the discussion boards and interviews, we decided to explain the meaning of this concept briefly here. This concept was introduced in one of the PowerPoint presentations in the unconscious bias module. In this module, participants learned how to make sense of different situations by slowing down and "think about your thinking" (also known as the slow brain) and avoiding taking cognitive shortcuts that are also called unconscious bias (or fast brain) (Goldstein Hode, 2021). Bias relies on experience, media, and stereotypes, and it is often triggered when we are pressed for time. Participants learned what to do to override the fast brain/unconscious bias by first recognizing that it is possibly happening due to a lack of time or because of multitasking. Second, by using mindfulness to help slow down and be in the moment, it helps the slow brain kick in and to help think what we are thinking. It helps us ask questions about the situation and attain a different perspective.

Overriding unconscious bias takes effort and time as well as mindfulness. Also, it requires being open and accepting feelings of discomfort, and it can be mitigated by more exposure to new people, cultures, and ideas. The data analysis of the answers to the first research question has highlighted common themes among the codes, such as slowing down, self-awareness or self-reflection, and being uncomfortable. During the analysis

and interpretation, it was clear how these three themes were connected and depended on each other.

Slowing Down

Participants have distinctly shown that they were engaging in social empathy because they were open to learning about unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege and because they showed that they were applying these new concepts into their daily life. In the discussion boards and interviews, participants gave examples of their strategies to override unconscious bias, manage privilege, and avoid microaggression. Slowing down encourages us to ask questions and take the time to be more self-aware while often grappling with a sense of being uncomfortable.

The following quotes clearly show that participants were engaging in the process of slowing down:

- **Sage, age 38:** "I try to recognize when I start a sentence, or I have a thought that, like oh wait a minute like what is this based off like is this based off really 'A' bias that maybe I hadn't considered."

- **Cat, age 35:** "To combat my fast brain, I tried to look at the image itself to guide my decision-making process to be more objective."

Self-Awareness/Self-Reflection

There are a lot of clear examples in the data of how self-awareness and self-reflection played a considerable role in the participants' learning. Mezirow (1997) states that it is only through critical self-reflection and disruptive dialogue that transformation can occur. Also, Gambrell (2016) said that critical reflection leads a person to be "an agent of change" when a person's worldview has been transformed (p. 6). According to

Mezirow (1997), "Self-reflection can lead to significant personal transformations" (p. 7).

Some participants had noticeably increased their self-awareness and voiced their

intentions to change their behavior because of what they were learning. This is evidence

of social empathy.

- **Cat, age 35:** "To be honest, I have committed many microaggressions in the past. I know this and own it."

- **Steph, age 22:** "I was one of those people who would be angered when called privileged. I never understood how some people would be understanding of being called privileged and always wondered what I wasn't understanding."

- **Mae, age 53:** "Primary takeaway is that we need to consider the intersection of various types of privilege, a lot of the times we focus on white privilege."

- **Evie, age 28:** "In my experience talking about privilege, people tend to get very defensive. Jumping to 'I didn't have it easy' and putting up a wall. I think us bringing these tools into these conversations can at least get others thinking about it."

- **Sage, age 38:** "I feel like I am continuously learning new ways that privilege has impacted not only my life but the lives of many other minorities in the US."

- **Sage, age 38:** "'Managing Privilege' focuses on being a good listener and not silencing, talking over, or trying to speak for others."

- **Steph, age 22:** "My understanding of privilege changed 180 degrees. I didn't know the real definition of privilege until watching the video."

The full list of quotes from the participants on this topic is in our codebook in Appendix

I.

Be Uncomfortable

Another indication that shows how the new learning in this unit prompted transformative learning experiences that led to social empathy was the sense of being uncomfortable with the topics as expressed by several participants. In this case, being uncomfortable was a positive sign of the realization that something was incorrect, and to make a difference, change would need to happen.

During our analysis, we did not find any evidence of participant resistance to learning or engaging in activities leading to social empathy. A couple of considerations are that participants in the study have clearly shown that the DEI Graduate Certificate was a priority to them and it stayed this way throughout the course. The participants chose to be part of this certificate, which suggested that they started this journey with an open mind.

The Who does what? activity and the privilege self-audit were the two activities that challenged the participants the most. In these two activities, it seemed that participants were able to slow down and think about the impact of their thinking or actions. Thanks to these two activities, several participants expressed the importance of acknowledging and empathizing with others.

- **Mae, age 53:** "It's all about paying attention to the individual. And emphasizing their lived experience, their intersection of multiple identities and how society impacts."

- **Cece, age 41** "How much easier it is for me to navigate spaces and how you know I am the gender that everyone assumes I will be. That one kind of came to light,

more than any of the others, as I looked at my abilities: I can walk anywhere I want to go into that level of ability privilege."

Participants expressed surprise after they learned about different forms of privilege that focused on race, sexuality, gender, disability, religion, age, education, body size, and citizenship. Before the unit on privilege, several participants associated privilege with a negative connotation. Some mentioned that they were associating privilege with guilt and shame.

- **Suci, age 37:** "I think my whole life and any kind of diversity program I've been in has taught that white privilege is bad or any type of privileges is bad and very negative and that you should be ashamed for having it. So, I think it was very impactful to me to hear that everybody has some kind of privilege everybody has some kind. And it's okay to move forward, you know, grow with it."

After doing the privilege self-audit, some participants were surprised not only by learning about all the privileges that exist but also by their knowledge, attitudes, and feelings toward understanding how to manage privilege. The concept of managing privilege was one that several participants mentioned in both discussion boards and interviews.

- **Dave, age 23** "It made me more conscious about what my different privileges are of course, being white being a male, how I can use those privileges to help others."
- **Sage, age 38**: "I really found the privilege checklists to be eye opening."
- **Cece, age 41:** "My awareness of privilege is ever evolving. I always find new areas where I have privilege and have to negotiate what that means and vice

versa. There are places where I do not have privilege, and I have to fight or stand

up for myself."

RQ2: How Do Different Learning Modalities Influence the Learning of Social

Empathy?

The second research question was: how do different learning modalities influence the

learning of social empathy?

The interviews showed that the discussion boards, activities, Zoom meetings, and

videos were the main modalities for learning. During the interviews, the discussion

boards were mentioned eight times, Zoom meetings seven times, activities/homework

seven times, and only one participant mentioned journal articles. As a side note, the

journal articles were generally in the additional resources section in each module. When

we asked the second research question regarding the modality of learning, most of the

participants appreciated the diversity of modalities and tools offered.

Discussion Board and Assignment/Activities

We discussed the modalities of the discussion boards and assignments/activities

because the three discussion boards were around the assignments. Appendix H lists the

discussion board assignments for the modules on unconscious bias, microaggression, and

privilege. Discussion board assignments were due on Wednesday evening so that

classmates could read the posts and comment on at least two other posts. The discussion

board assignments were very detailed and structured and required participants to either

self-reflect on an activity done in the unit or think about a past experience.

For the unconscious bias assignment, participants were asked to reflect first on the

Who does what? activity, connect it to a work-related activity or task, and then reflect on

possible mistakes that could have been easily made due to a stressful situation. After reflecting on that situation, participants were asked what they could do in the future to override their biases.

For the microaggression discussion board, participants were first asked to share a story either of when they witnessed a microaggression aimed at somebody else or when they experienced a microaggression. In the second part of the assignment, participants were asked to continue on their self-reflection journey, articulate their actions' impact, and describe what they could have done or said differently. This assignment specifically suggested addressing the importance of acknowledging and empathizing with another person.

For the assignment on privilege, participants engaged in discussing if their learning and understanding about privilege had increased and how to manage their privilege. While analyzing the discussion boards and interviews to answer our second research question regarding the modalities that influence social empathy, we noticed some common interconnected themes: slowing down, being intentional, and self-reflection. Participants also expressed how they embraced the learning of some technical tools and techniques to change the way they approach situations while considering unconscious bias, microaggression, and privilege.

Discussion boards allowed participants to self-reflect and engage in transformative learning while acquiring the skills to be gracious with themselves and to grapple with a sense of being uncomfortable. Participants expressed the importance of allowing people to grow and be gracious with each other and giving space to people to

make mistakes and learn from them. This requires patience and a willingness to feel uncomfortable and be honest with yourself.

There was also a sense of acknowledgment and acceptance of ongoing learning to improve.

- **Tracey, age 23:** "Continually going back and looking at the privilege checklists. I found those checklists to be eye opening as well to just how many things I do not have to actively think about that others do daily, and I think regular review and thought about these things using the resources given to us is a great way to begin to stay on top of and accountable for my ally ship work that comes along with my privilege."

- **Tracey, age 23:** "It is important to remind yourself that discussions around privilege are not an attack but an attempt to equalize the playing field and an opportunity to reflect on and be held accountable for the work that I do or need to do as an ally."

- **Cece, age 41:** "The information in this module reaffirmed many of my thoughts on privilege. It was interesting to think that every person has privilege in some way."

- **Dana, age 35:** "I think it gives us the tools to be able to really talk about it, engage in a thoughtful dialogue around privilege."

- **Thalia, age 39:** "I like the diversity of different tools that are used from the videos from you know various discussions, tangible resources that we can also take back to."

- **Mae, age 53:** "I will continue to look for ways that I can use my privilege to literally or figuratively open doors for others."

Participants also expressed the importance of exposure to different people and cultures. With new knowledge and tools, participants expressed a willingness to be open to both having and navigating difficult conversations. With the help of the knowledge from the DEI Graduate Certificate, participants were more equipped to help and meet people where they are and support their emotional growth.

- **Cece, age 41:** "I think if the conversation is conducted well, people will turn around and see there is no reason to get defensive. Being a little uncomfortable is ok, and everyone has to go through that."

- **Cat, age 35:** "I love that you are arming yourself with this week's content to have hard conversations with people about privilege."

Participants have also referred to the bucket effect in the discussion boards. This concept was brought up in a PowerPoint during the microaggression unit, where microaggressions are each compared to a drop of water going into a bucket that eventually will get full and heavy.

- **Fran, age 40:** "This could have added to the cumulative effect of the microaggressions they experienced every day and added extra stress to them."

- **Tracey, age 23:** "I am sorry to have added another 'drop' to her 'bucket.'"

- **Matt, age 36:** "I agree that microaggressions add up and can bubble over, over time."

Zoom Meetings

During the time we conducted our research, participants had the opportunity of meeting on Zoom twice. The first time was during orientation, and the second time was during mid-October. During the first meeting, we had the opportunity to meet some but not all of the students enrolled in the course. We talked about our research and informed the students that they would receive additional information by email regarding our study, the time commitment, and to get their consent to participate in the study. Also, during the Zoom orientation meeting, Dr. Goldstein Hode reviewed the syllabus and expectations and rules for participation. Participants have shared that the Zoom meetings were enjoyable and allowed them to have honest conversations with each other.

During the second Zoom meeting, students in the class (not all the participants in the study) were able to engage in a couple of class activities with smaller groups in breakout rooms. The attendance was not very high because it was in the middle of the day and most of the students in this certificate work during the day. During the interviews, several students indicated that they wished to have additional Zoom meetings throughout the certificate because during the online meetings students were able to connect. One element to consider is that the DEI course started in Fall 2021 when the pandemic was forcing many people to still work from home. We conducted our interviews during winter break (end of December 2021 to the end of January 2022) when Covid-19 cases were at peak level in the St. Louis area. We believe that participants expressed the need to meet additional times on Zoom because of the lack of social interaction due to stress and isolation from the two years of dealing with the pandemic.

- **Thalia, age 39**: "I like the Zoom session for sure. Those are definitely exciting and engaging to see different people's perspective."

Videos and PowerPoint Presentations

The DEI course provided a variety of learning modalities: voice-over PowerPoint with captions to introduce the content for each unit and YouTube videos. Four out of the 15 participants mentioned that they enjoyed the PowerPoint presentations and YouTube videos. All videos and presentations were less than 12 minutes long, making them easy to watch and learn from. Again, it was clear from the interviews that participants were looking to connect with other people in either discussion boards or Zoom meetings.

- **Mae, age 53:** "I do appreciate the discussion boards for keeping us connected."

- **Tracey, age 23:** "The videos are very synced and well done."

RQ3: How Does the Coursework in the DEI Certificate Impact Behavioral Intentions?

The third research question was: how does the coursework in the DEI Graduate Certificate impact behavioral intentions? We will discuss the participant noted behavioral intentions disclosed in the discussion board dialogues and interviews. As early as the first peer dialogues on unconscious bias there was evidence of critical participant self-reflection. Participants discussed being mindful before making assumptions about others, slowing down their thinking to be more objective, and being thoughtful of others who are not like themselves. The discussion boards provided a supportive environment where participants shared their vulnerabilities, like when their unconscious biases, microaggressions, and privileges tripped them up and how they would try to diminish the negative effects of each going forward. The participant quotes found in the codebook are

evidence of their behavioral intentions. The catalyst for these behavioral intentions is the transformative learning that took place during the course. The name for these behavioral intentions according to Segal et al. (2017) is social empathy. Mirra (2018) calls these behavioral intentions critical civic empathy.

- **Cat, age 35:** "Looking at the situation from a different point of view and different mindset."

- **Mae, age 53**: "It's all about paying attention to the individual. And emphasizing their lived experience, their intersection of multiple identities and how society impacts them."

- **Suci, age 37:** "Evolving and open-mindedness is a key component to any change for the betterment of society and the world at large."

The entire set of codes, subcodes, and themes can be found in the codebook in Appendix I.

Perspective-Taking (PT)

The synthesis of all the data sources showed the theme of perspective-taking, that participants reflected on their previous actions with others not like themselves. The processing of past experiences while completing the activities in the course, discussions with their peers, and formulating responses to the interview questions gave evidence that participants had the ability to look at the world from another's perspective (PT). Participants not only expressed their increased abilities to take on the perspective of another in this course but noted this as empathy. Participants used these transformative statements: "it helps me," "since I realized," "try to override," "understand where they are coming from," and "made me a little bit more aware" to express their growth.

- **Dana, age 35:** "Being mindful and patient. Understanding that everyone is different and may use different methods to achieve the same outcome."

- **Ally age, 30:** "I am definitely trying to be more thoughtful in my actions and my conversations."

- **Steph, age 22:** "I also think that there may be some benefit to teaching privilege to young kids. I think that it goes hand-in-hand with the concept of 'treat everyone the way you want to be treated' because something as simple as needing wheelchair accessibility is often a struggle."

- **Dave, age 23:** "There are many things that I could do to try and override my biases, one that I have been doing a lot is placing myself in their shoes."

Participants' commitment to consciously consider the perspective of others in personal and workplace interactions was evident in their stated behavioral intentions. Participants' behavioral intentions ranged from commitments of using the tools gained in the course, being mindful in using their slow thinking when working with others not like themselves, to bringing others on their own journey in a non-judgmental way. Additionally, participants pledged continued learning in perspective-taking endeavors.

- **Tracey, age 23:** "Creating a minute in time that is a space to be intentionally mindful and set my intentions for the hiring process, such as setting my focus on certain qualifications, can help hopefully curb some of these unconscious biases from slipping into the process."

- **Mae, age 53:** "I will begin to review my environment and try to address challenges that pose barriers to entry or success for others."

Participant quotes reflecting the theme of perspective-taking can be found in Appendix I.

Contextual Understanding of Systemic Barriers (CU)

The theme of contextual understanding of systemic barriers as defined by Mirra (2018, p.104–105) and Segal et al. (2017, p. 122) brings perspective-taking to a systemic level. The understanding of another's perspective combined with the understanding of social, political, and economic systems that are barriers to non-majority groups is contextual understanding of systemic barriers. Mirra (2018) calls the contextual understanding of systemic barriers a process for the "majority group to deconstruct their own privileges to get to know individuals from other groups" (p. 105). Segal et al. (2017) calls for the majority group to understand the systemic barriers with the addition of a historical context (p. 122).

The participants' uncomfortable contexts around privilege dissipated over the time of the course, giving way to understanding and making commitments for continued individual growth and work to decrease systemic barriers within their personal and professional spheres of influence. The commitment to continue personal growth and understandings of political, social, and economic systemic barriers to minority populations is both evidence of critical civic empathy and social empathy. Participants demonstrated their newly acquired understanding about systemic barriers with statements like: "challenged me to change," "makes them feel seen/acknowledged," "more cognizant," "recognizing intersection of multiple identities," and "continue to reuse checklists." These participant quotes reflect the theme of contextual understanding of systemic barriers with social empathy behavioral intentions. Participant quotes supporting the theme of managing privilege in relation to contextual understanding of systemic barriers are listed in Appendix I.

Macro Self-Other Awareness Perspective-Taking (MSP)

The theme of macro self-other perspective-taking was described by Segal (2018) as a contextual understanding of systemic barriers combined with a cognitive process of what it might be like to live as a member of another group (p. 122). According to Mirra (2018) and Segal et al. (2017), the ability to see self-other in a "macro" sense means we can "step more fully into the experiences of others that are different from us" (Mirra, p. 105; Segal et al., p. 122). Mirra (2018) leans on Warren's ideas to "listen to students and adopt students social and cultural perspectives in order to interrogate their own instruction and make it more culturally sustaining" (p. 105). The participant quotes that reflect the theme of behavioral intention related to the theme macro self-other perspective-taking can be found in Appendix I.

Positioning in Relation to Previous Research

This study answers the call from Mirra (2018) and Segal et al. (2017) to apply the theories of critical civic empathy and social empathy to another field of adult learning. Both Mirra (2018) and Segal et al. (2017) quote Obama's graduation addresses in 2006 and 2013 when he reminded those in attendance that the country has an "empathy deficit." Part of this speech can be found in Chapter 1 of this study. Obama's plea for empathy development in the form of a more equitable and inclusive educational environment has been echoed in higher education by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (Hyers, 2015, the Missouri Department of Higher Education (Erickson, 2020), Konrath et al. (2010), and UMSL (2021) which can be found in Chapter 1 as well. This study brings social empathy development into a workplace DEI Graduate Certificate.

This study integrated three theories to explore the development of social empathy in graduate students. The formative theories of this study were critical civic empathy, social empathy, and transformative learning theory, which are described fully in Chapter 3 and briefly here. Transformative learning theory was the influencer of critical civic empathy and social empathy. Segal et al. (2017) and Mirra (2018) lean on transformative learning theory to deliver their actionable empathy development. "Transformative learning theory may be defined as learning that transforms problematic frames of reference to make a more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open and emotionally ability to change" (Mezirow et al., 2009, p. 22). This statement is directly related to critical civic empathy and social empathy. As discussed in the results section of this chapter, unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege are problematic frames of reference. Participants' quotes showed evidence of social empathy development when transformative learning activities were used to study DEI concepts.

Revised Conceptual Model

Based on the findings of this study, we revisited the conceptual model presented in Chapter 2. The original model stated the process. The revised conceptual model, Figure 11, places the DEI themes found in the data that lead to social empathy. The data was consistent through the discussion boards and interview data sets. The study of unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege gave way to evidence of personal growth for participants. As participants were engaged in learning about these three DEI concepts, transformations started occurring through self-reflection, discursive dialogue, and comfort levels. According to Mezirow (1997), adult learning must have these three distinct components to be transformational. As participants continued learning, actionable

empathy ensued through perspective-taking and there was conceptual understanding of systemic barriers and macro self-other awareness perspective-taking which culminated into social empathy.

Figure 11

Revised Conceptual Model
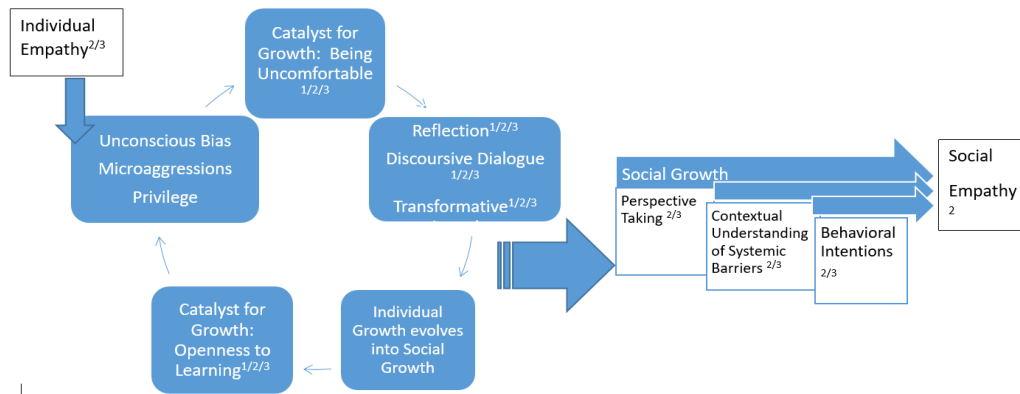
1 (Mezirow, 1997)   2 (Segal, 2017)   3 (Mirra, 2018)

Note. F. Ferrari & L. Woodrum, June 2022.

Participant behavioral intentions found in the data show commitments related to social empathy. There were 82 behavioral intentions given by 19 participants. It would be interesting to conduct a follow-up study to investigate how many behavioral intentions were carried out.

Significance of Findings

As we proposed in Chapter 1, empathy development in the workplace is worth exploring. We proposed that social empathy development may take place in the DEI professional development program that had participants critically reflect and engage in discursive dialogue on unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege. The findings of this research strongly suggests that participants' DEI behavioral intentions increased due to their transformative learning experiences in the course. The data point we honed in on to capture participant behavioral intentions was the code "start a dialogue to promote social change" which defines social empathy. There were 55 such dialogues cited by participants ($n = 19$) in the discussion boards data. There were 82 such dialogues cited by participants ($n = 15$) in the interview data. Additionally, participants strengthened their resolve toward social change in the mirrored responses between the discussion boards and interview data. These significant findings of increases in social empathy may influence colleges and universities to include social empathy development in other degrees besides social work and K-12 education programs. Furthermore, this study has significance in exploring social empathy development in other professional development programs.

Limitations, Positionality, and Bias

Several limitations of the study were anticipated by us. Participants were inclined to have empathy due to voluntary participation in the DEI certificate. To take the course, students had to be a graduate or doctoral student. Most of the participants worked full time during the DEI course. Several of the participants had participated in additional DEI training either at UMSL or through their employers. All participants were emotionally vested in DEI initiatives prior to the start of Unit 2 which was the content of our study. Additionally, participants and ourselves were in year two of the Covid-19 pandemic. Unit 2 DEI course work, data collection, and interviews all took place during a COVID-19 peak in the St. Louis area. The pre-course survey question about what challenges the participants had completing the course resulted in the most common response being "time." The challenge of time was evident in the fact that participants were graduate or doctoral students who were working full time and taking the additional certificate course.

We acknowledged our identities and experiences having impacted the study. We kept each other accountable, worked together to name our positionality, and did our best to be reflexive. As qualitative researchers we agree with Merriam (2009) who said she was "interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences" (p. 5). When we analyzed qualitative data of the participants, we were interested in their experiences and their meanings that informed social empathetic behavioral intentions.

We have attempted to recognize our biases while collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing the data. Research design and participant bias was minimal if nonexistent because the DEI course was designed and facilitated by the instructor. All UMSL graduate and doctoral students were invited to take the course and participate in the

study. Data collection bias was minimized as we looked diligently for dissenting participant statements. Procedural bias was diminished as we continually invited students in the course to enlist as study participants. Additionally, we communicated multiple times with the participants to gather more interviews. We sought advice from the course facilitator and the dissertation committee to keep research bias in check.

Implication for Practitioners

This study supports the application of social empathy growth of the participants during the completion of the DEI Graduate Certificate. We explored applying K-12 literacy teacher education and social work theories to professional development for graduate and doctoral students. Sharing the findings with other DEI offices in the University of Missouri system may be one application. Additionally, school districts wanting to increase knowledge in DEI may find this data useful. The UMSL DEI office may wish to offer this course in full or in part to members of the greater St. Louis community to help attain the goal of higher education, which is to encourage students to develop a sense of social justice and become responsible citizens (Hurtado, 2007). Participants in this study suggested this course be taken by anyone "open" to learning about unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege. In addition, most participants offered that the content of this course would be applicable to undergraduate students. About half of the participants thought it would be a good idea for this course to be credit bearing. The research team agrees with many participants that increasing the scope of social empathy development to other departments would be of value.

Future Research Directions

This single exploratory case study looked at the potential of a DEI workplace course to increase social empathy. It would be beneficial to repeat the study with graduate students, preferably not during a pandemic. The pandemic seemed to fuel emotions both from us and the participants. In addition, it would be interesting to explore the behavioral intentions over time of the 15 participants that were interviewed. Furthermore, applying the study to a new context of in-person professional development may produce different data. As the UMSL Cultural Center (https://www.umsl.edu/global/engagement/centers.html) states on its website, UMSL is the most culturally and ethnically diverse campus in Missouri. If this study was conducted at University of Missouri–Kansas City, University of Missouri, or at the Missouri University of Science and Technology, would the data be as rich? Based on the findings, the research team would partner in the future with other community members to recreate the study.

Conclusion

This three-year dissertation journey has been filled with a heighted need for social empathy. The first semester spotlight was on the southern border of the United States. The world witnessed children being taken from their families when the only crime was seeking refuge from war and oppression. During the second semester, the pandemic hit, showing us and emphasizing how marginalized populations are not treated equally in the world. The pandemic disparities continued throughout the time of the dissertation program. In addition to these events, marginalized populations are still killed and imprisoned more than the white majority. The ills of social media against marginalized

populations grows stronger. The time to develop social empathy is now. The research

questions were positively answered by the data. The main types of themes found in the

data were inward looking, to slow down, self-reflect, and be uncomfortable, accompanied

by outward looking themes, such as perspective-taking, and the contextual understanding

of systemic barriers and behavioral intentions. Participants engaged in discursive online

dialogues about unconscious bias, microaggressions, and privilege. Numerous quotes of

participants demonstrate how they found multiple modalities to positively influence their

social empathy development. If even a few halves of the 82 behavioral intentions were to

be carried out, social empathy development is worthwhile. The conceptual model

developed in this study can help university leaders make curricular decisions to make

workplaces more inclusive environments.

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Appendix A

Graduate Certificate in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Syllabus

Graduate Certificate in DEI in the Workplace Course Overview
Unit 1 – Foundations of Diversity & Inclusion **Module 1: Creating a Learning Community** This module sets the tone and expectations for participation in a peer-learning environment, as well as gives participants a safe and fun way to start to get to know one another. **Module 2: Overview of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)** This module takes a novel approach to introducing the concept of diversity by exploring the myriad of meanings that the word invokes in organizational contexts. To help participants move beyond the idea that diversity is simply about "doing the right thing" in regard to people who are "different," this module provides a holistic, multi-level framework for understanding the importance of diversity in organizations, society, and our daily lives. **Module 3: Diversity and Identities** This module helps raise participants' awareness about how they define and view their own identities and how that in turn influences how they relate to others.
Unit 2 – Obstacles to Inclusion **Module 4: Thinking Fast and Slow: Introduction to Unconscious Bias** This module provides a research-based and accessible overview of unconscious bias—something all of us have—and some ways to mitigate its influence on our decision-making processes. **Module 5: The Little Things We Say: Introduction to Microaggressions** This module takes a nuanced and balanced approach to introducing this somewhat controversial concept and its potentially harmful effects. **Module 6: Margins and Mainstreams: Introduction to Privilege** This module presents an intersectional approach to the concept of privilege, one that focuses on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical ability, and religion. This approach allows all participants to explore those aspects of their personal identity that afford or deny them unseen and unearned privileges.

Unit 3 – Creating Cultures of Inclusion
Module 7: What's Culture Got to Do With It? Introduction to Cultural Competence
Cultural competence is the ability to understand, communicate, and work with people from different cultural backgrounds. This module provides a framework for developing cultural competence as well as tools to better understand one's own cultural background and that of others.

Module 8: Building Blocks for Inclusion & Action Planning
The content in this module provides a framework and resources for building a culture of inclusion through our individual actions: inclusive attitudes, inclusive practices, and inclusive language. The culmination of this module is a personal action plan for implementing inclusive practices.

Module 9: DEI in the Workplace Strategies & Issues
In this module, participants will explore why some DEI initiatives fail, as well as learn about strategies that have been effective in different types of industries.

Note. M. Goldstein Hode, *Graduate Certificate in DEI Syllabus*, UMSL, Fall 2021 and

Spring 2022.

Appendix B

Course Calendar (Fall 2021–Spring 2022)

UNIT 1–BUILDING A FOUNDATION	DUE DATES
Module 1–Creating a Learning Community	**September 13–19**
DO: The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) online assessment–approximately 20 minutes	**September 13–16**
POST: Introduction discussion forum	**September 15**
POST: Community norms & guidelines discussion forum	**September 15**
READ & REPLY: to both discussions ensuring each person receives at least two replies.	**September 15–19**

Zoom Meeting from 12–2:00
•Meet & greet your facilitator and other course-takers
•Get familiar with the course layout and expectations
•Gain strategies for successful course completion
   1. Group results of the IDI (individual results will be given in individual meetings)
      •Q & A
	September 17

Module 2–Introduction to Diversity	**September 19– October 3**
WATCH: What is diversity? (9 minutes)	**September 24**
DO: What is diversity? activity	
WATCH: Why should I care about diversity? (6 minutes)	**September 29**
POST: Module 2 online dialogue	**September 29**
READ & REPLY: Module 2 online dialogue	**September 29– October 3**
Module 3–Diversity & Identities	**October 4–10**

WATCH & DO: Diversity at the interpersonal level (video 7 minutes plus embedded activity)	**October 6**
POST: Module 3 online dialogue	**October 6**
READ & REPLY: Module 2 online dialogue	**October 6–10**
UNIT 1 ASSIGNMENT: Diversity statement assignment Using the resources in Canvas, write a diversity statement for a syllabus, an organization or academic department, or a personal statement for a job application.	**October 15**
UNIT 2–OBSTACLES TO INCLUSION	
Module 4–Introduction to Unconscious Bias	**October 18–24**
DO: Who does what? activity **WATCH:** Fast and slow thinking (video 13 min.)	**October 20**
POST: Module 4 online dialogue	**October 20**
READ & REPLY: Module 4 online dialogue	**October 20–24**
Module 5–Introduction to Microaggressions	**October 25–31**
WATCH: The little things we say (video 14 mins.) **DO:** Microaggressions quiz	**October 27**
POST: Module 5 online dialogue	**Oct. 27**
READ & REPLY: Module 5 online dialogue	**Oct. 27 – Oct. 31**
Module 6–Introduction to Privilege	**November 1–7**
WATCH: Margins & mainstream: An introduction to privilege (video 9min.) **DO:** Privilege inventory & checklists (activity) **READ:** Managing privilege (reflection)	**November 10**
POST: Module 6 online dialogue	**November 10**
READ & REPLY: Module 6 online dialogue	**November 10–12**
UNIT 2 DISCUSSION: Zoom meeting 12–1:30 pm **Time & date may change based on student availability.	**November 16**
UNIT 3–CREATING CULTURES OF INCLUSION	

**Modules will be available for people who want to work over winter break.	
Module 7–Introduction to Cultural Competence	**January 18–28**
WATCH: Cultural competence part I (video 6 mins.) **WATCH**: Cultural competence part II (video 8 min.) **DO:** Cultural self-assessment (activity embedded in video)	**January 26**
POST: Module 7 online dialogue	**January 26**
READ & REPLY: Module 7 online dialogue	**January 26–30**
Module 8–Building Blocks for Inclusion	**January 31– February 6**
WATCH: Building a culture of inclusion (video 15 min.) **DO**: Personal action planning (activity)	**February 2**
POST: Module 8 online dialogue	**February 2**
READ & REPLY: Module 8 online dialogue	**February 2–6**
Module 9–DEI in the Workplace Strategies & Issues	**February 7–20**
READ: Articles in Canvas	**February 16**
POST: Module 9 online dialogue	**February 16**
READ & REPLY: Module 9 online dialogue	**February 16–20**
DO: The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) online assessment –approx. 20 minutes	**February 7–20**
UNIT 3 DISCUSSION: Zoom meeting 12–1:30 **Time & date may change based on student availability.	**February 23**
Final Assignment	**February 28– March 25**
POST: Proposal into Canvas	**March 18**
PEER FEEDBACK: Submit structured feedback	**March 18–25**
COURSE CLOSING: Zoom meeting 12–1:30 **Time & date may change based on student availability.	**April 15**

Appendix C

Pre-Course Survey Questions

The research team will use Dr. Goldstein's Qualtrics pre-course survey to assess knowledge regarding diversity, microaggressions, privilege, bias, and empathy (see below sample questions). Demographic questions will include name, gender, age, race, zip code, academic focus, and whether you are a graduate or doctoral student.

Prior Knowledge and Experience of Empathy:

- How would you describe empathy?

- Have you ever heard of social empathy? If so, how would you describe social empathy?

Appendix D

SEI: Social Empathy Index

Please respond to the following questions by selecting the choice that most closely

reflects your feelings or beliefs.

| Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Frequently | Almost | Always |

1. When I see someone receive a gift that makes them happy, I feel happy myself.

2. Emotional stability describes me well.

3. I am good at understanding other people's emotions.

4. I can consider my point of view and another person's point of view at the same

   time.

5. When I get angry, I need a lot of time to get over it.

6. I can imagine what the character is feeling in a good movie.

7. When I see someone being publicly embarrassed, I cringe a little.

8. I can tell the difference between someone else's feelings and my own.

9. When I see a person experiencing a strong emotion, I can accurately assess what

   that person is feeling.

10. Friends view me as a moody person.

11. When I see someone accidentally hit his or her thumb with a hammer, I feel a

    flash of pain myself.

12. When I see a person experiencing a strong emotion, I can describe what the

    person is feeling to someone else.

13. I can imagine what it's like to be in someone else's shoes.

14. I can tell the difference between my friend's feelings and my own.

15. I consider other people's points of view in discussions.

16. When I am with someone who gets sad news, I feel sad for a moment too.

17. When I am upset or unhappy, I get over it quickly.

18. I can explain to others how I am feeling.

19. I can agree to disagree with other people.

20. I am aware of what other people think of me.

21. Hearing laughter makes me smile.

22. I am aware of other people's emotions.

23. I believe adults who are in poverty deserve social assistance.

24. I confront discrimination when I see it.

25. I think the government needs to be a part of leveling the playing field for people from different racial groups.

26. I believe it is necessary to participate in community services.

27. I believe that people who face discrimination have added stress that negatively impacts their lives.

28. I am comfortable helping a person of a different race or ethnicity other than my own.

29. I can take action to help others even if it does not personally benefit me.

30. I can understand people who are different from me by learning from them directly.

31. I believe the government should protect the rights of minorities.

32. I believe that each of us should participate in political activities.

33. I believe people born into poverty have more barriers to achieving economic well-being than people who were not born into poverty.

34. I feel it is important to understand the political perspectives of people I don't agree with.

35. I think it is the right of all citizens to have their basic needs met.

36. I believe the role of government is to act as a referee, making decisions that promote the quality of life and well-being of the people.

37. I have an interest in understanding why people cannot meet their basic needs financially.

38. I believe that by working together, people can change society to be more just and fair for everyone.

39. I believe my actions will affect future generations.

40. I believe there are barriers in the United States.

Appendix E

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol and Questions

The interviews will be completed, recorded, and transcribed using Zoom. The transcripts

will be held in the UMSL multi-identification secured OneDrive.

We appreciate you making the time for this interview.

I will be recording the interview to interpret and share the data with Lisa/Francesca. The

transcript will be held in the UMSL multi-identification secured OneDrive.

This interview will not take longer than 45 minutes.

What would you like your pseudonym to be in the research project?

As a reminder, our research project is concentrated on Unit 2, which covers: unconscious

bias, microaggressions, and privilege. Here (add the list in the Zoom chat) are some of

the activities that we worked through:

Unconscious Bias:

Activity–Who does what?

Video–Thinking fast and slow

Discussion boards

Reflection

Additional resources: Mindfulness resources

Microaggressions:

Do-over activity

Video–The little things we say

Discussion boards

Additional resources: Microaggressions chart, webinar on racial bias and

microaggressions

Privilege:

Privilege self-audit

Managing privilege

Checklists (middle-upper class, Christian, White, able-bodied, male, heterosexual, cis-

gender, United States citizenship, youth, adult, thin)

Video–Margins and mainstreams

Discussion boards

Additional resources: Online privilege, 100 points of privilege, 21-day racial equity

challenge, learning about allyship

Questions with Revisions:

1. What are your goals in taking this DEI course?

2. Were there any unconscious bias assignments that were impactful on your

    learning and why? What assignments weren't impactful? + / - for each activity

3. How has your learning about unconscious bias impacted your interactions with

    others different from yourself?

4. Were there any microaggression assignments that were impactful on your learning

    and why? What assignments weren't impactful and why?

5. What did you take away from the module on microaggressions? Are you more or less likely to recognize microaggressions in the workplace? What are you going to do differently as a result of this learning?

6. Were there any privilege assignments that were impactful on your learning and why? What assignments weren't impactful and why?

7. After learning about privilege were there any personal privilege(s) that were new for you and how might you attempt to manage them?

8. How do you think the material of this course has changed your perspective or increased your understanding and empathy toward people from different backgrounds? Can you share some examples?

9. How do you think that this course prepares you to make your workplace more welcoming and inclusive? Small or big action steps?

10. In what ways did the course meet, not meet, or exceed your expectations so far?

11. We already talked about some tools within the course. What tools had the biggest impact on your learning tools and why?

12. Who would you recommend this course to and why? Who wouldn't you recommend this course to and why?

13. What else would you like to share with me?

Appendix F

Definition of Terms

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

Case Study: a social science research method, generally used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and in its real-world context (Yin, 2018).

Conscious Bias: Explicit or conscious bias is willfully thinking, speaking, and behaving in a biased manner (Dasgupta, 2004).

Critical Civic Empathy (CCE): "is about imaginatively embodying the lives of our fellow citizens while keeping in mind the social forces that differentiate our experiences as we make decisions about our shared public future" (Mirra, 2018, p. 7).

DEI Graduate Certificate: Graduate Certificate in Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity: "Diversity has four components in the workplace: demographics, managing differences, business case (benefits being harnessed), and equity and inclusion organizational structure" (Goldstein Hode, 2021, 2:58).

Empathy: the ability to put yourself into another person's shoes (Obama, 2006).

Equity: the quality of being fair and impartial.

Higher Education: education beyond high school, in this context we use the term "college."

Inclusion: the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups.

Microaggression: Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace, daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group. Microaggressions can be toward a variety of marginalized groups (Sue et al., 2007).

Micro-intervention: ways to make the invisible visible, disarm mircroaggressions, educate the offender, and see external support (Sue et al., 2019).

ODEI: Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Perspective-Taking (PT): looking at the world from another's perspective which is required to establish empathetic concern (Warren, 2015).

Privilege: the unearned advantages that an individual receives by identifying with or being born into a specific group (McIntosh, 1988).

One-on-one Semi-structured Interview: Researchers meet individually with study participants and ask the same open-ended questions (Creswell, 2015).

Social Empathy Index (SEI): SEI measures general interpersonal empathy and social empathy (Segal, 2018).

Social Empathy: "the ability to understand people by perceiving or experiencing their life situations and as a result gain insight into the structural inequalities and disparities" (Segal, 2018, p.119).

Transformative Learning Theory (TLT): "learning that transforms problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open and emotionally able to change" (Mezirow et al., 2009, p. 22).

Triangulation: determining the convergence of the data collected from different sources

of evidence, to assess the strength of a case study finding and also to boost the construct

validity of measures used in the case study (Yin, 2018).

UMSL: University of Missouri–St. Louis

Unconscious Bias: Implicit bias or unconscious bias is when the automated thoughts,

spoken words, and behaviors are biased (Dasgupta, 2004).

Appendix G

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activity

Department of Doctoral Studies

College of Education

One University Boulevard

St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499

Telephone: 314-516-xxxx

Fax: 314-516-xxxx

E-mail: xxxxx@umsl.edu

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Social Empathy Building

Participant_____

HSC Approval Number _____

Principal Investigator Lisa Woodrum (doctoral student) PI's Phone Number 314-602-xxxx

Summary of the Study

This is a brief description of the project:

This is a research project, conducted by Lisa Woodrum and Francesca Ferrari at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. Your participation in the study is voluntary. If you do not want your data used, please notify Lisa Woodrum at xxxx@umsystem.edu.

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the impact of the Graduate Certificate in Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) on master's and doctoral students' social empathy.

The research team believes that the activities in the DEI certificate will increase knowledge around microaggressions, privilege, conscious and unconscious bias, and social empathy, while providing a wide variety of tools and skills to value diversity, look at the world from another's perspective, give a voice to minority groups, and start a dialogue to promote social change. The researchers hope the study outcome will influence university curriculum writers to include elements of social empathy into their courses.

This research study starts in the Fall 2021 semester and concludes by the end of January, 2022. The certificate program continues through April, 2022. In addition to the DEI certificate assignments, participants will be asked to complete three additional activities. These three additional study activities for research participants are: Pre-Social Empathy Index (at the beginning of Unit 2), Post-Social Empathy Index, and an Individual Semi-Structured Interview at the end of Unit 2.

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Lisa Woodrum and Francesca Ferrari. To participate you must be a master's, doctoral, or graduate certificate student at UMSL and at least 18 years old.

2. Your participation will involve: The research uses pre-course survey data, Unit 2 discussion board posts in Module 4, 5, 6, and whole class Zoom discussions which are DEI course requirements. There are three additional data activities that will be

used for the study. These activities are Pre- and Post-Social Empathy Index, and

the Individual Semi-Structured Interviews.

Pre- and post-Social Empathy Index will assess empathy and social empathy.

Post-Unit 2 Semi-Structured Individual Interviews: The research team will meet

individually with each participant for semi-structured interviews recorded via Zoom at an

agreed upon date and time in December.

All participant activities are uploaded to One Canvas with the interview taking

place via Zoom. Researchers will send the Qualtrics Pre- and Post-Social Empathy Index

via email to participants.

- Pre-Social Empathy Index

- Post-Social Empathy Index

- Individual Semi-Structured Interview

The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately one hour

and 45 minutes in total, approximately 30 minutes for the Pre-social empathy index, 30

minutes for the Post-social empathy index, and 45 minutes for the individual semi-

structured interview.

All participants will be eligible to participant in a raffle for ten $100 gift cards at

the end of the study.

Table G1

Institutional Research Board Data Source

Data source	Participant time commitment
Pre- and post-social empathy index (SEI)	30 minutes for pre-SEI 30 minutes for post-SEI
Individual semi-structured interview	30 to 45 minutes

1. There are no known risks associated with this research other than the potential for mild boredom or fatigue using the computer to complete the pre- and post-social empathy index and individual semi-structured interview. There is also a loss of confidentiality risk. Section number 7 notes how this risk will be minimized.

2. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

3. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or withdraw your consent at any time. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw. If you choose to not participate or withdraw from the study, your name will NOT be included in the $100 gift card raffle.

4. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. Your name and email address will be required to send the Pre- and Post-Social Empathy Index, and communicate about the Semi-Structured Interview. However, your name will not remain linked with your responses., A pseudonym will be assigned and will be stored in a separate file so that we can verify you have participated. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this study. A data file with no identifiers will be stored on the university's secure

network drive. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or

program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human

Research Protection) that would lead to disclosure of your data as well as any

other information collected by the researcher.

5. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study or if any problems

    arise, you may call the Investigator, Lisa Woodrum (xxxx@umsystems.edu / 314-

    602-xxxx) or Francesca Ferrari (xxxx@umsystem.edu / 314-805-xxxx) or the

    Faculty Advisor, (Dr. Keith Miller 217-555-xxxx). You may also ask questions or

    state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of

    Research, at 516-5897.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. If

you do not want to have your written assignments used, send an email to Lisa Woodrum

at xxxx@umsystem.edu.

Appendix H

Discussion Board Assignments: Unconscious Bias, Microaggressions and Privilege

Unconscious Bias Assignment

To contribute to this dialogue, please start by answering any or all of the questions below and/or anything else related to the module. Then, read and reply to at least two of your colleagues. Be sure to read replies that people write in response to your post and reply if needed.

1. What insights did you gain (if any) from the "Who does what?" activity?

2. Which of your work-related tasks might be prone to errors based on unconscious bias if you were under stress or not able to be mindful?

3. What changes could you make in the way you do things that might help to identify and override biases?

Microaggression Assignment

Part 1: Think of one specific time when you experienced (aimed at you) or witnessed (aimed at someone else) a microaggression, but you did not respond to it as well as you would have liked or did not respond at all.

1. Below, tell the story of what happened, how you responded (or why you didn't), and the result.

2. Then, take what you learned from this module to craft a more effective response and consider the strategies in the handouts on page 7.

When choosing your example, remember that not everything that is hurtful or offensive is a microaggression. Microaggressions are based on race/ethnicity/national origin, gender/gender identity/sexual orientation, disability, body size, religion, and so forth.

3. Write out the new response **as if you were talking to the person who said the microaggression**. Feel free to make up names.

Write out the words that you could say in that situation either as a third party who overhears or as the person being spoken to. Write it out as if you were talking to the person who said the microaggression. Feel free to make up names. For example, "Jan, I think you meant that as a compliment, but I'm afraid I just can't take it that way because I've been slapped with that stereotype more times than I can count and it's just exhausting, and so forth." [You'll need to write more than that.]

Part 2: After engaging in this module, many people realize that they have unintentionally committed many microaggressions. This is hard to accept, especially when our intentions are good. However, as we learned, our good intentions may have the opposite impact. So what can we do? First and foremost is being able to recognize and articulate why the impact of what you said or did may be different than your intention. You can still have your own truth, but it is critical to acknowledge and empathize with the other person's experience.

What better way to do that than in the safety of this learning community?

1. Please share a microaggression that you have committed in the past. You can explain your intention, but then try to imagine and articulate what the impact may have been.

2. In hindsight, what might you have said instead that would have more accurately

    expressed your intention without sending unintentional messages that served to

    minimize, marginalize, "other," or offend the other person?

After you post, see how your colleagues approached their scenarios. Let them know if

you think their approach would be effective or if you have a concern or a different

suggestion.

Privilege Assignment

1. In what ways, if any, did your understanding of privilege as a concept change or

    evolve as a result of what you learned in this module?

2. Describe any areas of privilege discussed in this module that you had not

    previously thought about.

3. What are some things that you might do as a result of gaining new insights about

    privilege?

Appendix I

Discussion Board and Interview Code Book

Codes 1–2–3: Increased knowledge of bias, microaggressions, and privilege (that lead to

social empathy).

First, we indicated the codes and then we indicated subcodes and themes in parentheses.

The second column lists discussion board quotes, and the third column lists interview

quotes.

Table I1

Code 1–2–3 Discussion Boards and Interviews

Codes: increased knowledge of bias, microaggressions, privilege	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
Subcode unconscious bias (Theme: slow down and pay attention to the decision-making process)	"To combat my fast brain, I tried to look at the image itself to guide my decision-making process to be more objective" (Cat, age 35).	"I try to recognize when I start a sentence or I have a thought that, like oh wait a minute like what is this based off like is this based off really 'A' bias that maybe I hadn't considered" (Sage, age 38).
Subcode unconscious bias (Theme: uncomfortable. It will bring learning and mindful/ insightful)	"The activity almost made me uncomfortable with myself because I just had to go off of assumptions and looks to make my guesses. It makes me really want to become more insightful to the people around me" (Dave, age 23).	"The way I do things is perceived differently, which makes somebody uncomfortable, and I didn't think of things like that before so to something so tiny that I thought was definitely the right thing to do" (Matt, age 36).

Codes: increased knowledge of bias, microaggressions, privilege	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
Subcode unconscious bias (Theme: fast and slow brain concept)	"My 'fast brain' would immediately pick a category, but my 'slow brain' would say well what if x, y, z?" (Evie, age 28).	"It's kind of helped slow me down it's also made me pay a lot more attention to other people's potential unconscious bias" (Cece, age 41).
Subcode unconscious bias (Theme: be uncomfortable)	"The activity was difficult for me. I found myself taking time to be thoughtful as I make a lot of assumptions based on dress apparently, mannerisms, body language, etc." (Suci, age 37).	"The interesting thing is it's like when it's your boss, how do you kind of call that out?" (Tom, age 41).
Subcode microaggressions (Theme: bucket effect)	"I agree that microaggressions add up and can bubble over, over time" (Matt, age 36).	"Trying to think about times when I felt a microaggression and when I felt that I perpetuated one. And I think both are important to do together it kind of talks about intersectionality" (Tracey, age 23).
Subcode microaggressions (Theme: being uncomfortable)	"To be honest, I have committed many microaggressions in the past. I know this and own it" (Cat, age 35).	"Having to do some internalizing and kind of examination of myself. I feel like microaggressions may have been mor difficult" (Tom, age 41).
Subcode privilege (Theme: being open to learning and self-reflection)	"My understanding of privilege changed 180 degrees. I didn't know the real definition of privilege until watching the video" (Steph, age 22).	"I would say just knowing that everybody has some area of privilege, and we just have to identify what that is, but then, how do I use my privilege" (Thalia, age 39).

Codes: increased knowledge of bias, microaggressions, privilege	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
		"I assumed privilege was around economy and race. Learning about Christian and Citizenship privilege was new" (Tom, age 41).
Subcode privilege (Theme: being uncomfortable)	"I was one of those people who would be angered when called privileged. I never understood how some people would be understanding of being called privileged, and always wondered what I wasn't understanding" (Steph, age 22).	"Primary takeaway is that we need to consider the intersection of various types of privilege, a lot of the times we focus on white privilege" (Mae, age 53).

"I really found the checklists to be eye opening" (Sage, age 38).

"I didn't see somebody not being overweight as privileged before even though that wasn't me" (Matt, age 36). |
| Subcode privilege (Theme: self-reflection) | "I have examined my privilege many times over and understand it fairly well. However, I feel like it is always good to be reminded of areas in which I have privilege so that I can continue to examine my own privilege and to think of different ways in which privilege shows up in our lives" (Fran, age 40). | "Check lists: I really thought that was a great resource to be self-reflective and then also to challenge other people" (Cat, age 35).

"I have privilege and I never thought I had it" (Una, age 35). |

Codes: increased knowledge of bias, microaggressions, privilege	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
Subcode privilege (Self-reflection)	"I feel like I am continuously learning new ways that privilege has impacted not only my life but the lives of many other minorities in the United States" (Sage, age 38).	"I hadn't really thought of youth privilege before" (Tracey, age 23). "Learning more about thin and pretty privilege" (Remi, age 25).
Subcode privilege (Theme: self-reflection)	"'Managing Privilege' focuses on being a good listener and not silencing, talking over, or trying to speak for others" (Sage, age 38).	"I'm using people's correct pronouns. It's really important and validating who they are as people" (Ally, age 30).
Subcode privilege (Theme: being uncomfortable)	"In my experience talking about privilege people tend to get very defensive. Jumping to 'I didn't have it easy' and putting up a wall. I think us bringing these tools into these conversations can at least get others thinking about it" (Evie , age 28).	"This was a touchy one for me, and you know, once again, you don't realize so you get put in the context and it goes back to what I kind of said before about feeling like I've done something wrong, or you know it's bad" (Suci, age 37).

Code 4: Provide a Variety of Tools and Skills to Value Diversity

We indicated first the code then the sub code and then the theme in parenthesis. Quotes

from participant discussion boards are listed in the second column. Quotes from

participant interviews are listed in the third column.

Table I2

Code 4 Discussion Boards and Interviews

Code: provide a variety of tools and skills to value diversity	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
Subcode unconscious bias (Theme: self-reflection)	"I am working on being more intentional about asking people I don't know what their role is in an organization or their connection to a project rather than presuming" (Mae, age 53). "I do not want to put people in stereotypical categories" (Dana, age 35). "I am a big proponent of increasing exposure to counter stereotypes" (Sage, age 38).	"I really try to be more cognizant, and I try to pay more attention" (Cece, age 41). "Shutting up and listening is really important, but it's the hardest one" (Ally, age 30). "I'm a little bit more conscious, I guess, I would say when I'm interacting with people" (Dave, age 23).
Subcode unconscious bias (Theme: self-reflection)	"I did notice how my own past experiences influenced some of my choices" (Tom, age 41). "My tactic for addressing people whose pronouns are not yet ingrained in my mind and don't match their presentation is to use their first name" (Mae, age 53).	"Making me think about things that maybe I have said or done" (Ava, age 31). "Slowing down and thinking before making assumptions" (Matt, age 36). "I've always tried to be as conscious as I can about diversity, equity, and inclusion and I think it's very important to recognize how much I don't know" (Tracey, age 23).

Code: provide a variety of tools and skills to value diversity	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
Subcode unconscious bias (Theme: discursive dialogue)	"I am sure there is bias that I am not overriding at times, despite my best efforts. Just have to keep trying" (Matt, age 36). "I love mindfulness! We don't even have to take time to center ourselves with a meditation, but can allow ourselves to be present in the here and now and focus on what we are doing so that we are able to override those biases" (Fran, age 40).	"We must be mindful and appreciative" (Mae, age 53). "Being open to being wrong in that need to be perfect" (Una, age 35).
Subcode microaggressions (Theme: self-reflection)	"I typically did not say anything back in fear of retaliation, or something worse happening" (Dave, age 23). "As a woman, I am used to this kind of thing, and I did not even realize that this was a microaggression until my male friend pointed it out by saying it was" (Tracey, age 23).	"It was nice to see like the lists of what can count as microaggressions" (Ava, age 31).
Subcode microaggression: (Theme: being uncomfortable)	"This could have added to the cumulative effect of the microaggressions they experienced every day and added extra stress to them" (Fran, age 40).	"Slowing down and reflecting" (Sage, age 38). "I know that discussion boards are great tools" (Cat, age 35).

Code: provide a variety of tools and skills to value diversity	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
Subcode microaggressions (Theme: self-reflection)	"Admitting to being in the wrong can be a really difficult skill to learn and practice but it's super important" (Ally, age 30).	"Internalizing and self-examination: having to do some internalizing and kind of exam myself, I feel like microaggressions may have been more difficult" (Tom, age 41).
Subcode privilege (Theme: being uncomfortable)	"I think privilege is something that most people are negative towards, but they really just don't know what privilege entails" (Steph, age 22). "I have no issues labeling something as privilege and identifying the was in which I have privilege" (Cat, age 35).	"It actually made be grateful for what I'm doing in terms of accommodating people from different backgrounds or different abilities" (Ally, age 30).

Code: provide a variety of tools and skills to value diversity	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
Subcode privilege (Theme: self-reflection)	"I found those check-lists to be eye opening as well to just how many things I do not have to actively think about that other do daily, and I think regular review and thought about these things using the resources given to us is a great way to begin to stay on top of and accountable for my ally-ship work that comes along with my privilege" (Tracey, age 23). "My primary takeaway is that we need to consider the intersection of various types of privilege" (Mae, age 53).	"I like the checklist, the videos. I really liked the fact that they were short to the point. That was great for time and efficiency, but they were still informative" (Remi, age 25). "I liked the checklists of privilege a lot" (Ava, age 31).
Subcode privilege (Theme: online dialogue)	"I feel like this module gave me some tools to help in dialogue with others about privilege. I have recently had discussions with people who get very defensive when talking about privilege so I'm hoping I can use some of this to have better conversations around it" (Evie, age 28).	"You probably don't always take the time to like kind of get into those questions. And so, I think that it makes me a little bit more open to like ask questions that may feel tough" (Tom age 41). "Conversation as a tool to increase knowledge and Take Action" (Matt, age 36).

Code: provide a variety of tools and skills to value diversity	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
Subcode privilege (Theme: self-reflection)	"My awareness of privilege is ever evolving. I always find new areas where I have privilege and have to negotiate what that means and vice versa. There are places where I do not have privilege, and I have to fight or stand up for myself" (Cece, age 41).	"I would say exceeded my expectations in terms of and making it more introspective. I didn't expect as much self-analysis" (Matt, age 36). "It's very self-reflective which I enjoy, and it is actually usable information that can be applied with joy" (Thalia, age 39).

Code 5: Look at the World From Another's Perspective

First, we indicated which code, then the subcode, and then the theme in parenthesis. The

second column lists discussion board participant quote examples for each code. The third

column lists participant interview quote examples for each code.

Table I3

Code 5 Discussion Boards and Interviews

Code: look at the world from another's perspective	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
Subcode empathy (Theme: perspective-taking [PT])	"There are many things that I could do to try and override my biases, one that I have been doing a lot is placing myself in their shoes" (Dave, age 23).	"I'm pretty sure there have been times that I have unconsciously, so it always kind of helps me to look in a more empathetic way" (Thalia, age 39).
	"I have since realized that not only am I devaluing their commitment to their religion and its practices, I am being unfair in putting them in a position of having to choose between an important religious ritual and a friend's request" (Sage, age 38).	"Being conscious of other people's differences and ways of thinking and their actions and so cultural competence" (Dave, age 23).
	"I will however also look at ways to combat the artificial construct of White privilege, which I think has influenced how and why we all tend to unconsciously, or in some cases consciously, take advantage of our privilege without consideration of how to help others access what we have" (Mae, age 53).	"I keep taking a lot of these courses for the personal experiences, because there are things that I should do and say, again, that are unconscious that I can't remember what Marlo called it, maybe your fast brain?" (Sage, age 38).
	"I do think that there is value in moving out of the way for others to have	"Looking at the situation from a different point of view and different mindset" (Cat, age 35).
		"I think empathy is very important because you can understand where they're coming from and then also those that are different, how they do things, especially being

Code: look at the world from another's perspective	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
	their voices heard" (Cat, age 35). "All of these things have put me into their shoes" (Dave, age 23). "I also think that there may be some benefit to teaching privilege to young kids. I think that it goes hand-in-hand with the concept of 'treat everyone the way you want to be treated' because something as simple as needing wheelchair accessibility is often a struggle" (Steph, age 22). "But where everyone has a little privilege, that also means that others do not" (Cece, age 41).	maybe in a country that's not their native country" (Suci, age 37). "It's made me a little bit more aware about creating conversations with other people" (Tom, age 41). "Being able to put yourself in their shoes" (Suci, 37). "Thinking of empathy taking it from other people's perspectives" (Ally, age 30). "Thinking about it from someone who may have an eating disorder and how that may have attached him and how traumatizing that maybe" (Dana, age 35).
Subcode social empathy (Theme: responsibility to manage privilege = contextual understanding of systemic barriers [CU])	"After my terrible, distasteful joke a while back… mentioned above, my principal challenged me to do some work and take time to deep dive into my statement and why it was hurtful to my coworker" (Cece, age 41). "The money aspect I think is often overlooked and when it is compounded with being from a minority group in society, it can be difficult for others to even understand	"Your family but also friends, that we have different races to really kind of make them feel seen by acknowledging those questions about their experience" (Tom, age 41). "Hopefully, it will make me more cognizant of the fact that not everybody has those privileges going forward" (Sage, age 38). "I'm self-identifying all these different ways and

Code: look at the world from another's perspective	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
	the privilege they experience. The freedom and choices that come with money are astounding" (Matt, age 36). "I will continue to look for ways that I can use my privilege to literally or figuratively open doors for others" (Mae, age 53). "I think it might be interesting to pick one of these check-lists a week and really analyze my privilege and how that privilege or lack thereof affects me and others" (Ava, age 31). "She was very gracious and patient with me and answered my question, but she absolutely had no responsibility to do that and would have been perfectly justified to tell me she did not appreciate that question or that she did not want to answer it nor bear the burden of educating me on cultural issues" (Tracey, age 23).	other people are also self-identifying all those different ways" (Tracey, age 23). "It's all about paying attention to the individual. And emphasizing their lived experience, their intersection of multiple identities and how society impacts them" (Mae, age 53). "Just bringing it back to the front of my vision is something that I constantly need to do, because I can easily push some of that back because it's hard work, you know to think about" (Cat, age 35).
Subcode social empathy (Theme: behavioral intentions = macro self-other Awareness	"I agree with your comment about US citizenship privilege. I recently read a book for a class that does a wonderful job of humanizing the experience of	"These are their experiences, this person's age, and these are their experiences, their culture" (Remi, age 25).

Code: look at the world from another's perspective	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
perspective-taking [MSP])	undocumented immigrants. It is called Dear America: Notes from an Undocumented Immigrant" (Fran, age 40).

"I am sorry to have added another drop to her bucket" (Tracey, age 23).

"After engaging in this module and seeing some of the comments from others, I now believe that when I am being 'chivalrous' that I might actually be committing microaggressions" (Matt, age 36).

"I have gotten in the habit of not asking super personal questions when I first meet them. I figure our acquaintance will either deepen to a point where personal questions are Ok, or we'll move on, and it was none of my business anyway" (Ally, age 30).

"I struggle with where the line is between speaking for someone who is choosing not to because of fear or embarrassment or genuine indifference and standing up for them in a positive way. As a result, I too often end up | "I think that reading about other people's experiences with microaggressions is really eye opening. Definitely just be considered intersectionality. Especially if you're like a person of color or if you're a different gender" (Ally, age 30).

"Acknowledging those differences enough to see that they have different needs and conversations are going to be different" (Matt, age 36).

"It did help me start picking up on things that I would not have picked up before and that made me actually think how somebody else might feel" (Suci, age 37).

"I was saying before I really have to meet to stop and just look at other people's perspective, in a bigger way than I have done before" (Thalia, age 39).

"I think this course really helped me understand and fee equipped to recognize that, like you said, but also to say something and not say it |

Code: look at the world from another's perspective	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
	doing neither" (Sage, age 38). "As we learn more about the different types of privilege, I think we can gain more empathy for others, but I don't think you have to have both compassion and empathy to address privilege. I don't think we have to fill both those roles at the same time to make a difference!" (Evie, age 28). "That's so concerning how many times she might not have been called back if she had a different name that didn't have a stereotypical association with white men" (Matt, age 36).	accusatory like. Once again, it's no one's fault, they just aren't thinking or maybe were raised that way. To have that kind of non-judgmental and then you can explain it better" (Suci, age 37). "This course has really helped me identify separating people from circumstances" (Matt, age 36). "Diversity is also about adapting to space or group and ensuring others can show up" (Mae, age 53).

Code 6: Start a Dialogue to Promote Social Change

We indicated first the code, then the subcodes, and then the sub themes in parentheses.

The second column lists discussion board participant quote examples for each code. The

third column lists participant interview quote examples for each code.

Table I4

Code 6 Discussion Boards and Interviews

Code: start a dialogue to promote social change	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
Subcode empathy (Theme: perspective-taking [PT])	"Being mindful and patient. Understanding that everyone is different and may use different methods to achieve the same outcome" (Dana, age 35). "I think that I would like to have some sort of marker (like an object) to remind me to be mindful of my surroundings and conscious of the people I interact with" (Cat, age 35). "Take the time and truly be in the moment. Listen and understand" (Suci, age 37). "Evolving and open-mindedness is a key component to any change for the betterment of society and the world at large" (Suci, age 37). "The course has helped me to be more compassionate and understanding of people and non-judgmental. It challenges my thinking whenever things come up" (Thalia, age 39).	"Being intentional about things" (Mae, age 53). "I will say to be more cognizant. Just a bit more mindful to everyone, and again understanding that everyone benefits from something or another in all of that along with receiving by you as an individual myself" (Dana, age 35). "I want to know and learn how to evolve as it evolves and just keeping myself update on the changes" (Thalia, age 39). "It helped me to be more compassionate and understanding of people and non-judgmental. It challenges my thinking whenever things do come up" (Thalia, age 39). "Just made me think about all the different ways that like I self-identify. Because I didn't really think about that, before and if I'm self-identifying all these different ways other people are also self-identifying all those

Code: start a dialogue to promote social change	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
		different ways" (Tracey, age 23). "I'm definitely trying to be like more thoughtful in my actions and my conversations" (Ally, age 30). "I wanted to be able to confront my own biases" (Ava, age 31). "I almost wish the concept of empathy was highlighted more. Because I think it's a really critical point in this work. It's not outwardly discussed in the modules this idea of empathy" (Cece, age 41).
Subcode social empathy (Theme: managing privilege = contextual understanding of systemic barriers [CU])	"I feel like these conversations help me to identify the blind spots and 'unconscious' biases in myself I was not aware of. Once I become conscious of these implicit beliefs, I can hopefully recognize them in my thoughts and actions and begin trying to override them" (Sage, age 38). "Especially when doing any type of advocacy, it is important to use terms that advocate for a better future, rather than wrap a person into stereotypes" (Dave, age 23).	"Let me educate myself and then maybe, I can take something to the table and say hey why don't we look into this for employees to do" (Dana, age 35). "And I would say being at an academic institution now it actually pushes me to say things now as opposed to just kind of allowing things to be, but always learning how to do that in a respectful but foreign way" (Thalia, age 39).

Code: start a dialogue to promote social change	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
	"Creating a minute in time that is a space to be intentionally mindful and set my intentions for the hiring process, such as setting my focus on certain qualifications, can help hopefully curb some of these unconscious biases from slipping into the process" (Tracey, age 23). "I will also begin to review my environment and try to address challenges that pose barriers to entry or success for others" (Mae, age 53). "If your privilege can uplift and provide a platform for others, I do believe that is where a person with privilege can shut up and let others be heard" (Cat, age 35). "Perhaps teaching privilege at a young age will create a generation of architects and engineers and teachers and teachers and social workers (and many more professions) that are more mindful of those different from the privileged 'norm'" (Steph, age 22). "Be more compassionate and open minded.	"I can use my privilege in a powerful way as soon as I get my doctoral degree than kind of using that status to do the work to do whatever it needs to be done to bring you know awareness to people who might not necessarily be at that place but then also kind of providing people with the resources on hey if you want to get there" (Thalia, age 39). "Having that in the forefront of my mind is going to constantly make me challenge myself, maybe think about things differently approach things in a more unique way and talk to them as a teacher, I talked to students all the time, talk to them with these thoughts in mind another thing too I have even implemented is to learn from this course is just have a diversity statement. I committed myself to making that a point to have that in my classroom so all students can see, I had a very large print and I hung up on the wall" (Cat, age 35). "I'm focusing on museums and so there's been a large push in the museum world

Code: start a dialogue to promote social change	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
	Sometimes people with less privilege do things we think are wrong or don't make sense, but they are trying to navigate the system to the best of their ability and that might look different from how others operate" (Ally, age 30).	to incorporate DEI. The work environment, but also, and the way we collect and how we make policies in the curatorial sector" (Dave, age 23).
	"As a result of learning more about privilege, I will commit to exploring these areas with people in my circles. I will challenge my colleagues to think about privilege, work through aspects of privilege with my students, and seek out new opportunities to learn from the world and people around me. I also will put myself in different situations with a variety of people to keep learning and growing" (Cat, age 35).	"And hopefully it will make me more cognizant of the fact that not everybody has those privileges going forward" (Sage, age 38).

"I think this course really helped me understand and feel equipped to recognize that, like you said, but also to say something and not say it accusatory like. Once again, it's no one's fault, they just maybe aren't thinking or maybe they were raised that way or however it may be. So to have that kind of non-judgement and then you can explain it better" (Sage, age 38). |
| | "I follow the individuals lead and if they mention something from their past, I take that as an opportunity to further the conversation" (Suci, age 37).

"I try my best to use my privilege when it comes to being able to advocate and get loud on topics that are important to me. But I | "We kind of lacked the full picture as a whole person, the whole experience, especially at the graduate level. So, I wanted to make sure that I can bring things, important things like diversity and inclusion into education, especially in places that might not exist like chemistry. There's a severe lack of diversity in |

Code: start a dialogue to promote social change	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
	also step back when it is not my place to claim privilege, and just support others" (Cece, age 41).	stem in general" (Matt, age 36).
	"The language used learning ways of how to integrate it (DEI) in my work with clients with people in my workplace, with colleagues and different things of that nature. So, really learning, but then also applying what I've learned to and continuing to learn as well" (Thalia, age 39).	"Helpful for coming up with ideas about how to improve the workplace and giving people the confidence to start those conversations" (Ally, age 30).
	"It is important that we who experience one or more types of privilege start to think about how to accommodate others who don't" (Mae, age 53).	"Where you use your privilege, for good, bad, and ugly. I tend to use my privilege to advocate for more resources for my students. I tend to use the fact that I am like a well-educated socially savvy white woman to my advantage when it comes to asking for more or donations" (Cece, age 41).
	"Help people who might come short where I have this privilege; use it for a purpose of bettering a community rather than just myself" (Dave, age 23).	
	"It may have also led other white skinned people to think it was okay to use that word, which could have a domino effect and cause a much larger usage of the word and a much larger problem" (Fran, age 40).	

Code: start a dialogue to promote social change	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
Subcode social empathy (Theme: behavioral intentions = macro self-other awareness perspective-taking [MSP])	"To slow down and look for the story of their lives, to get 'off script' and connect with the customer" (Ally, age 30). "I think if I were to approach this again in the future, I would simply ask the person where they were from, or even better, where they were a local. This could open the dialogue up for a variety of heritages and identities, all while honoring the various backgrounds that people have in relation to their heritage and identity" (Cat, age 35). "I now try to be mindful and never open up a conversation that way. I follow the individuals lead and if they mention something from their past, I take that as an opportunity to further the conversation" (Suci, age 37). "Looking back, I understand now that BIPOC are constantly being asked to educate others specifically white people on issues, racism, etc. that they experience (this is called emotional labor) and it can be challenging and	"I will say to be a bit more mindful of everyone, and again understanding that everyone benefits from something or another in all of that, along with receiving by you as an individual" (Dana, age 35). "The language used learning ways how to integrate it in my work with clients with the people in my workplace, with colleagues and different things of that nature so really learning but then also applying what I've learned and continuing to learn as well" (Thalia, age 39). "I don't want to say challenging my coworkers I don't think that's the right word, but just bringing things to the forefront of conversations" (Cat, age 35). "I'm using my educational privilege to give back almost directly or indirectly, and I thought that was really impactful" (Dave, age 23). "I just like the idea of always making people feel welcome, and you

Code: start a dialogue to promote social change	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
	triggering" (Remi, age 25). "I think people need to come to grips with the term (privilege) and better understand that everyone has it. Will people get defensive, perhaps, but so often the people who are on the defense are the ones with the most privilege" (Cece, age 41). "And I would say being at the institution now at an academic institution now it actually pushes me to say things now as opposed to just kind of allowing thing to be, but always learning how to do that in a respectful, but foreign way. I can use my privilege in a powerful way as soon as I get my doctoral degree than kind of using the status to do the work to do whatever needs to be done to bring you know awareness to people who might not necessarily be at that place but then also kind of proving people with the resources on how to get there" (Thalia, age 39). "Especially when doing any type of advocacy, it is important to use terms that advocate for a better	know, trying to reach out to those people who may not seem like they're feeling like they're part of the group" (Tom, age 41). "I want to know when they are hurting other people when they are making other people feel not respected, and so I like that discussion and communal element of people saying, 'Oh well, this is something that people do that that I don't like'" (Sage, age 38). "I want to be going forward generally sharing my access to education to people in society that didn't have access to education" (Matt, age 36). "You really have to learn how to like humble yourself and listen to more marginalized groups" (Ally, age 30). "This is something I've never thought about and I can now be more empathetic. I can imagine being someone who has to think about this every day. So yes, for understanding, I think that was most important as far as like actions" (Ava, age 31.

Code: start a dialogue to promote social change	Discussion board example quotes	Interview example quotes
	future rather than wrap a person into stereotypes" (Fran, age 28).	
	"I think that awareness of these scenarios have caused you to think more about your interactions with men, which is understandable. I do hope that you will continue to speak up if you feel uncomfortable" (Cat, age 35).	
	"I have since learned how often Black women are asked questions about their hair or asked if people can touch their hair and how demeaning this is as othering" (Tracey, age 23).	

Appendix J

Diversity 101: Learning Community Norms and Guidelines

Participating in Diversity 101 means being part of a learning community. The only way that this learning process will be effective is if you take responsibility both for your own learning as well as that of the group. Here are a few norms and guidelines that you are asked to follow to help make this a productive and worthwhile experience for everyone.

Respect deadlines. In order to simulate a full group discussion on the discussion boards, it is imperative that you try your best to post no later than the weekly deadlines as listed in each module.

Demonstrate respect for differences. We all come to the table with differing experiences and viewpoints, which means that we have so much to learn from each other! In order to get the most out of this opportunity, it is important that we do not shy away from differences. Rather, we should show respect for differences by **seeking to understand**, **asking questions, clarifying our understanding, and/or respectfully explaining** our own perspective. This way, everybody comes away with a new way of seeing the issue.

Respect confidentiality. Some of the topics/issues we discuss may be sensitive and/or personal. While it is totally okay to talk about the things you are learning with your colleagues, please do not share what other participants post without their explicit permission.

Assume good intentions. If someone says something that bothers you for any reason, assume that they did not mean to be offensive and ask them to clarify what they meant,

then explain the impact it had on you. If someone tells you that something you wrote

bothered them, assume that they are not attacking you, but rather that they are sharing

something that might be important for you to know.

Be generous. Your weekly posts are not simply requirements for participation, they are

your contributions to group learning. Please be generous to your peers by being

thoughtful, open, and honest.

Be inclusive. It is important to be intentional about making sure we "see" each other in

an online community by making sure that everyone has at least one response and replying

to people who ask us questions. So, if you are unsure who to respond to, try looking for

posts that have not yet received a reply.

Be substantive. Your peers will get more out of a reply that goes beyond "I agree" or "I

like your post." Explain why their post resonates with you. **Conversely, try NOT to**

avoid responding to posts with which you disagree or do not understand. Ask

questions, seek clarification, or explain your differing view. This is how we all learn.

Be organized. Although this is a voluntary course, your timely participation is required

to make it work. Past participants have suggested making reminders in your Outlook

calendar to help keep up with posting deadlines. I highly recommend this strategy.

However, I will send a "friendly reminder" as the deadline approaches. I will send

another if you miss a deadline. If you get such messages from me, I hope you will forgive

my "nagging" and remember that I am just trying to keep us all moving along together so

that we all get the most out of it. And if you need an extension, just let me know.

Be patient. Be patient with yourselves and **expect some discomfort in this learning**

process. Be patient with each other and understand that we all come to this from different

starting points and perspectives. Try to meet people where they are. And please be patient with me. My work is to try to move everyone along as a group and as individual learners. If my "pushing" ever strikes you the wrong way, please tell me.

Here are some additional "netiquette" tips to help reduce miscommunication online:

Write in digestible chunks. Lengthy paragraphs are difficult for readers to digest. Keep your paragraphs short and your writing concise.

AVOID YELLING. When you write in uppercase letters in online communication, it is usually interpreted as yelling.

Add some emotion :-) Sometimes it helps communicate the tone of your message when you add an emoticon. However, only do so as necessary for it can end up being annoying to readers if you have too many (which is probably the opposite of your intention).

Sarcasm does not translate. It is very difficult to be effectively sarcastic in online communication. Sometimes an emoticon will do it, but it is best to avoid the potential pitfalls of misunderstood messages.

Language matters. Choose your words carefully. Avoid using disrespectful words like dumb, stupid, or ridiculous. Be kind.