



Teaching Anthropological Concepts of Race in Higher Education: Insights and Challenges at a Predominately White Institution

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Abstract

Racial, ethnic, and nationalistic discrimination are pressing concerns in today's uncertain political climate. Racism is the belief that humans can be divided into distinct races that are biological fact and can determine many traits of individuals. This concept, while persistent, has been refuted by biological and social science, which indicates that the cultural conception of race is neither a biological reality nor determinant. The discipline of anthropology is well positioned to explain nuances in biological and cultural diversity, but employing the most effective strategies to teach these important, and sometimes controversial, concepts is crucial. Patterns and Efficacy in Teaching Concepts of Race in Anthropology (PETCRA) surveyed nearly 300 undergraduate students in introductory anthropology courses at a predominantly white institution in the United States. Students were given two surveys, before and after instruction, to determine their perception of race. The pre- and post-instructional surveys asked students simple conceptual questions about race, about their own experience of race, and demographic information; the post-survey included questions about the instruction in this subject area. While many students started with racist perspectives, statistically significant numbers of students adopted a more anthropological view after instruction. Including videos with lecture resulted in statistically significant improvement in students' answers. Student racial identity development is discussed as an important component for understanding this complex topic, especially within predominantly white institutions. This research underscores the importance of evidence-based pedagogical choices in diversity instruction.

Introduction

Concepts of race and ethnicity are undeniably some of the most important ideas confronted within the discipline of anthropology.¹ The American Anthropological Association (1998), along with many other professional groups and independent scholars, have publicly denounced race as a biological reality, yet racism (the belief in race as a valid concept) and racism (discrimination based on racial identity) remains a point of social friction in large parts of the United States (Moses 2004, Smedley & Smedley 2005) and in many parts of the world. Globalizing and dislocating forces have led to settlement of disparate peoples away from their historic homelands; racialized conflict over immigration and population movement has resulted in political and physical violence in countries across the globe. Racism structures many immigration policies and sentiments around the globe, which impedes full integration and full incorporation of minority and immigrant groups into communities of power. Recent tumultuous political debates and changes, paired with an increasingly diverse world, has made even research and education over issues related to race, ethnicity, and diversity contentious, especially within the United States (Flaherty 2017).

Human variation and racial identity are often unfairly or improperly treated within the educational space, likely due to the sensitivity of teachers and students to the complicated issues surrounding ethnic identity, racism, and inequality (Bhattacharyya & Murji 2013, Hart & Ashmore 2006, Holly Jr 2006, Shanklin 2000). Proper and engaging instruction in the concept of race as a historical and cultural construct can help combat internal and externalized racism that

maintains structures of inequality (Lieberman & Kirk, 2004; Macias, 1996; Martin, 1996). The research program presented here uses a case study to look at how the concept of race is being taught and learned in the American collegiate space, with an aim to describe best teaching practices. The concept of race in the United States is particularly contentious, as the concept within American contexts arose from scientific racism in efforts to justify the slave trade of Africans and decimation of indigenous communities across the continent. The concept of race in the United State crystallized around concepts of inherent, immutable, biological differences and hierarchies; in other regions of the world, the term and implications of race is much more fluid and performative in nature (Kottak 2014:219–226).

Texas A&M University (TAMU) is a public university in the United States of America with an large number of undergraduates—in the spring semester of 2015, 41,866 students were enrolled just at the College Station campus (Data and Research Services 2015: 3); a majority, over 65%, of these students are identified as “White Only” by the University (Data and Research Services 2015: 9). As a research (R1) institution within the South Eastern Conference (SEC), TAMU has many cultural similarities to other large state-schools in the southern United States. These institutions are particularly important to study in order to understand how programs of racialism are perpetuated in higher education as many of these universities, including TAMU (Fechter 2015, Southern Poverty Law Center 2013), struggle with discrimination and minority group acceptance/matriculation rates. Recently, TAMU’s racial tensions were publicized after a group of black high school students were called pejorative terms by a white undergraduate student (Cardona 2016, Watkins 2016, Wright 2016, Young 2016). The incident is not unlike other discriminatory acts against minority students in higher education that has garnered national attention in the past several years (“Campus Racial Incidents” 2016, Griggs 2015, Hartocollis and Bidgood 2015, Izadi 2015).

TAMU has publicly stated its responsibility towards supporting a diverse learning community in the creation of an office, reports, and academic space for diversity studies through the Associate Provost for Diversity (Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity, 2013; Wilkins, 2014). However, the Department of Student Life Studies in a 2015 study found that 31% of surveyed undergraduates “strongly” felt that race/ethnic discrimination was a problem. More strikingly, although 64% of students who identified as African American/Black agreed that discrimination based on ethnic background occurs at TAMU, 70% of white respondents indicated that no ethnic discrimination was occurring on campus (2015, 27). Within this context, anthropologists have an important responsibility to ensure that anthropological concepts of race are taught well in order to combat the implicit racialism and racism that still plagues even the younger generations (Hutchings 2009).

While anthropological studies have assessed the cultural situation of classrooms and higher education (Ancis, Sedlacek, and Mohr 2000, Macias 1996, Puchner, Szabo, and Roseboro 2012) as well as the reflexive experience of teaching about race (Hart and Ashmore 2006, Holly Jr 2006, Lieberman and Kirk 2004), no quantitative studies have critically assessed *how* and *how well* anthropological concepts of race are being taught. Anthropology departments, especially at institutions that lack a dedicated space for racial and ethnic studies, hold the responsibility for many universities’ requirements for cultural and diversity education. As such, with race and ethnicity being controversial and sometimes difficult topics to address, it is crucial to understand what perspective students bring to the classroom, what they take from anthropological instruction in race and ethnicity, and what teaching practices can best combat racist views.

Patterns and Efficacy in Teaching Concepts of Race in Anthropology: Design and Demographics

Patterns and Efficacy in Teaching Concepts of Race in Anthropology (PETCRA) analyzed different sections (with different instructors) of the same introductory anthropology course, asking students to complete a pre-instruction survey and a post-instruction survey. Students who take the class can come from any major; the course fulfills a general education requirement of the university. The pre- and post-instructional surveys asked students the same set of simple questions about the concept of race, the same set of questions relating their experience of race in their own lives, and demographic information. The post-survey also included a section of questions asking students about how they felt about the instruction in this subject area. Each of the instructors from these courses filled out a survey to document the teaching strategies they employed within teaching the segment on race/ethnicity. The instructor survey also documented the class structure, instructor experience, and a self-reflection of how confident the instructors felt in their understanding and instruction in concepts of race.ⁱⁱ The pre-instruction survey was administered about a week before the scheduled instruction in concepts of race/ethnicity; the post-instruction survey was administered a week or two after instruction. I used these surveys to construct an idea of students’ pre-instruction concepts of race, how (and how not) those concepts changed after instruction, and to correlate patterns of instruction with patterns in learning

outcomes, as are elaborated in the sections below. Examples of the student and instructor surveys can be accessed in Appendix I.

This project studied eight sections of an undergraduate introductory anthropology course during the spring semester of 2015. Class size ranged from 90 to 19 students. There was a natural division in the distribution of class sizes; 6 of the sections had 30 or less students (with around 20 attending weekly lectures) while two of the sections had more than 40 students. All of the instructors had taught the class previously. The instructors reported that they felt fairly confident in their understanding of race and ethnicity ($\bar{x} = 85\%$) though slightly less confident in *teaching* concepts of race and ethnicity ($\bar{x} = 82.5\%$).

During Spring semester of 2015, 97.7% of the undergraduate students in Texas A&M University at College Station were below 25 years old and 95% were Texas residents (Data and Research Services, 2015, p. 3). Roughly a quarter of the undergraduate students are first-generation college students (Ibid). To not jeopardize student identities, the survey did not ask for name, identifying number, age, status in school, or hometown; student surveys were matched using a unique identifier created from their phone number and mother's maiden name. This system ensured that there could be no way for the researchers to attribute a survey to an individual. 298 individual students took at least one half of the pre/post-survey; 191 students took both parts of the survey. Students were not warned that there would be a survey—they were briefed on the study and their rights to consent and asked to participate in the first 10 minutes of class in person.

Over 95% of students on the post-instructional survey indicated that they had attended the lecture/activities for the segment on race or ethnicity. As seen in Figure 1, 58% of surveyed students reported as female and 40% responded as male; overall the University is more evenly gender-balanced, with 48.8% female and 51.2% male (Ibid). The study population was also slightly more ethnically diverse than the university at large. Figure 2 shows the diversity in identities represented in the surveyed students.ⁱⁱⁱ While a majority of students identified as white/Caucasian-European, 31% of students responded that they were “often” assumed to have a different heritage than which they identified as. Twelve percent of students reported having multiple identities. No significant differences were seen within demographic factors (gender and ethnic identity) for any of the pre-instruction questions^{iv}; most students seem to have come in with similar preconceptions about the nature of race and ethnicity.^v

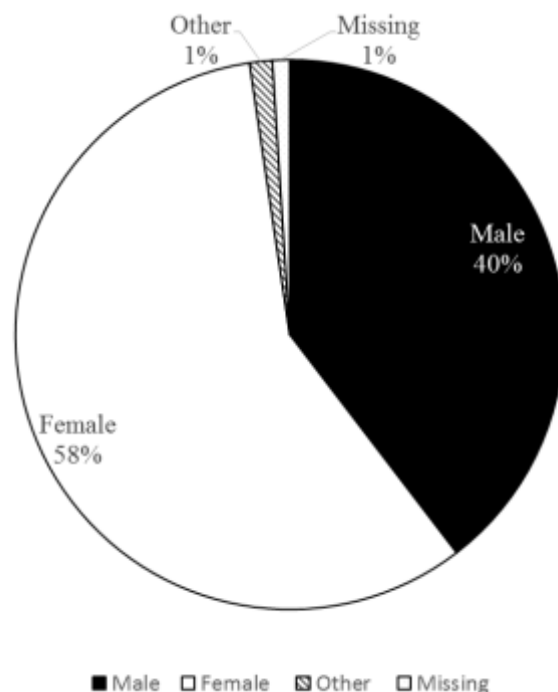


Figure 1. Student participant self-reported gender identity (N=298).

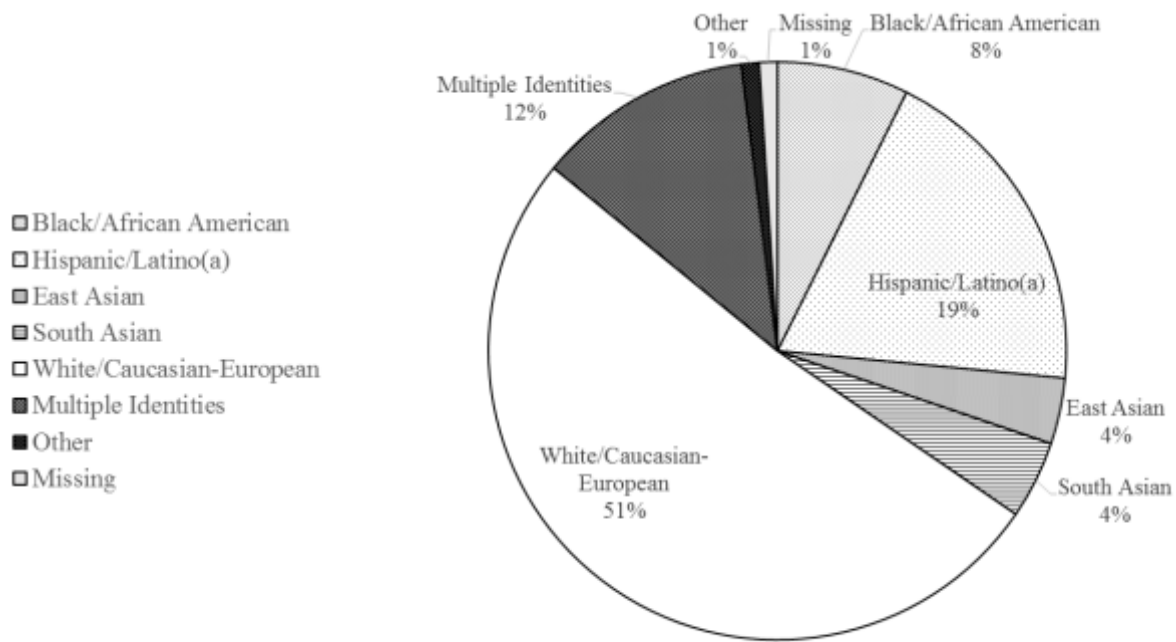


Figure 2. Student participant self-reported ethnic identity (N=298).

Results

Teaching Patterns

Overall, the teaching methodologies used by these graduate instructors were similar. All instructors used a lecture format to talk about their units on race and ethnicity; half included videos as part of instruction. All instructors indicated that they tried to engage students in a discussion about race/ethnicity, although only one section had more than 50% participation. Three different books were used, and all sections save one assigned additional readings in the form of news, scientific, or historical articles. Three of the sections had a required assignment related to the topic of race/ethnicity, though the assignment was worth 5% or less of the students' grade. All sections planned to assess student comprehension through an exam; five sections included a weekly reading quiz on the assigned reading for the course.

Concepts of Race/Ethnicity

Students were asked five conceptual questions about the nature of race.^{vi} While many students started with incorrect perceptions about the nature of race, statistically significant numbers of students corrected to a more anthropological view of race after instruction. 43% of students responded before instruction that they could tell someone's race by the way they looked or dressed; after instruction, that percentage fell to 24.7%, a significant difference ($P < .0001$, $\chi^2(4) = 73.2$), as shown in Figure 3. Similarly, 41% of students answered that people of "certain races are naturally better at certain things (such as: sports, academics, dancing) than individuals of other races"-- in the post-test, 33.7% of students maintained that position, a smaller but still significant difference ($P < .0001$, $\chi^2(1) = 51.16$). TAMU students still associate race with a biological component. While only 15.3% of students in the pre-test responded that race was biologically determined, a majority of students (74%) contended that race was both biologically determined and culturally defined. Only 10% of students recognized race as a cultural phenomenon in the pre-instructional survey. In the post-instruction test, a little over half of the students answered that race was culturally defined. This drastic change is illustrated in Figure 4 and was statistically significant ($P < .01$, $\chi^2(4) = 14.013$). Interestingly, in contrast to the other pre-instruction conceptions, most students (86-89%) understood that races have been identified different ways across time and human history. When the surveys are scored, most students (62%) improved by one or more questions; as show in Figure 5, the mean change in score for those who took both surveys was 0.78. Students who took both the pre- and post-instructional survey scored better overall than the students who took just the post-survey; it is unclear if that differential is due to a familiarity with the questions from the pre-test or an indication that better

average attendance may contribute to better retention of course material.

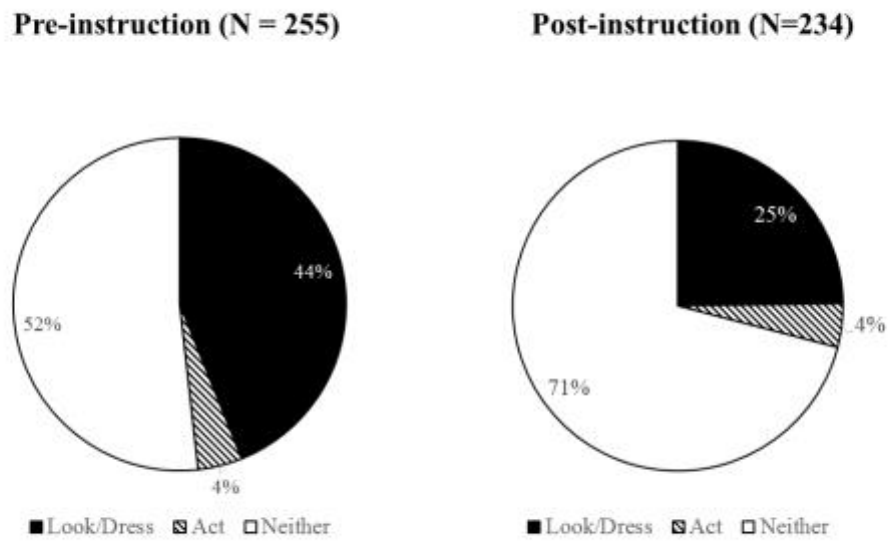


Figure 3. Question 1 overall responses. Prompt: "You can tell someone's race by..."

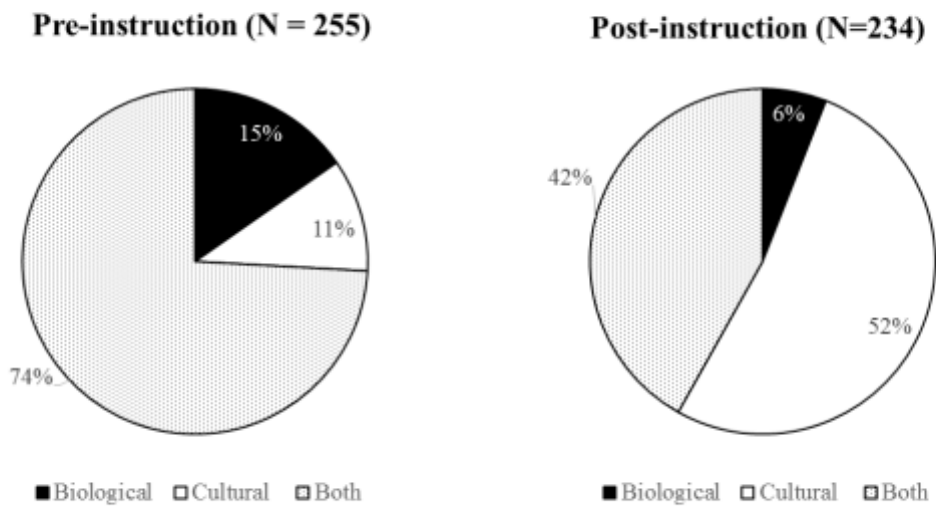


Figure 4. Question 4 overall responses. Prompt: "I think race is..."

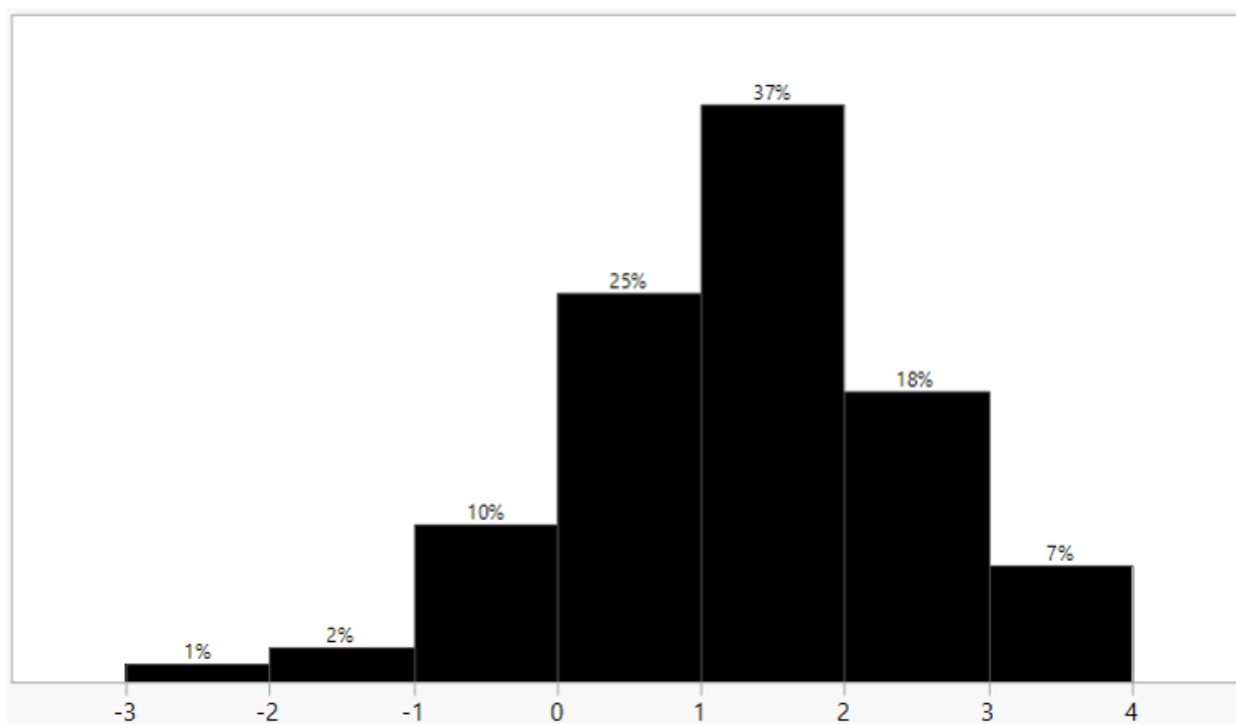


Figure 5. Change in overall score from pre-instructional survey to post-instructional survey (N=191, $\bar{x} = .78$). Zero indicates no change in score, positive numbers indicate a change towards anthropologically correct answers, negative numbers indicate change toward racist answers.

Applying concepts to students' lives

Despite the apparent change in students' conception of race on a factual basis, the responses on the surveys indicated that most students did not internalize the importance of these anthropological concepts. Most students recognized that perceived race could affect one's life, even in the pre-instructional survey ($\bar{x} = 4.02/5$). However, most students reported that they did not think about race often in their everyday lives ($\bar{x} = 1.96/5$); the post-survey indicated a slight but significant improvement ($\bar{x} = 2.14/5$, $P < .019$, $t(189) = 2.37$). Students mostly maintained that they treated "people of different races the same", both in the pre and post-instructional survey. Students' recognition of the importance of their racial identity was widely distributed ($\bar{x} = 3.02/5$, St dev 1.28), as were their opinions about whether race was an important topic to talk about anymore ($\bar{x} = 2.56/5$, St dev 1.32). Surprisingly, students reported that they felt more comfortable talking about race and ethnicity in the pre-instructional survey (mean 4.18/5, St dev .94) than in the post-instructional survey (mean 4.08, St dev .91). Although not quite statistically significant ($P < .027$, $t(189) = -2.37$), it seems that students had a simpler view of race and ethnicity coming into the course than they did coming out of it. Similarly (and thankfully), students became significantly less sure of their ability to "identify someone's race just by looking at them" ($P < .0001$, $t(189) = -5.53$).

Best Practices

To best understand the efficacy of different teaching methodologies, I compared the movement of students' answers from non-anthropological to anthropological views. I computed the mean change survey score between four variables: class size, inclusion of video in lecture, extra assignments, and extra reading quizzes. Class size was either large (> 40 students) or medium (20-30 students); videos were either included or not; assignments were either given or not; reading quizzes were required or not. These four variables were chosen because they had roughly equal numbers of students in each category and the combination of classes would not be repeated between the variables. This reduced the statistical effect if one class was particularly more persuasive than another due to the skill of the instructor. Very few statistically significant differences existed between the different variables; Figure 6 compares the average total change in score among the different variables. The only variable which resulted in significantly improved (where the 95% confidence interval for the mean between the two options of the variable did not overlap) conversion of a racist view to an anthropological one was the inclusion of a video in class.^{vii} Adding an assignment or activity to the topic of race and ethnicity did improve students' answers, but not enough to be statistically significant with this sample size. However, when looking solely at conversions (that is the movement of previously racist answers to more complex and critical views on race), in two questions (Questions 2 & 4), the proportion of conversions for adding video as well as adding assignments was statistically better at a 95% confidence level. Overall, the patterns are relayed in Table 1.

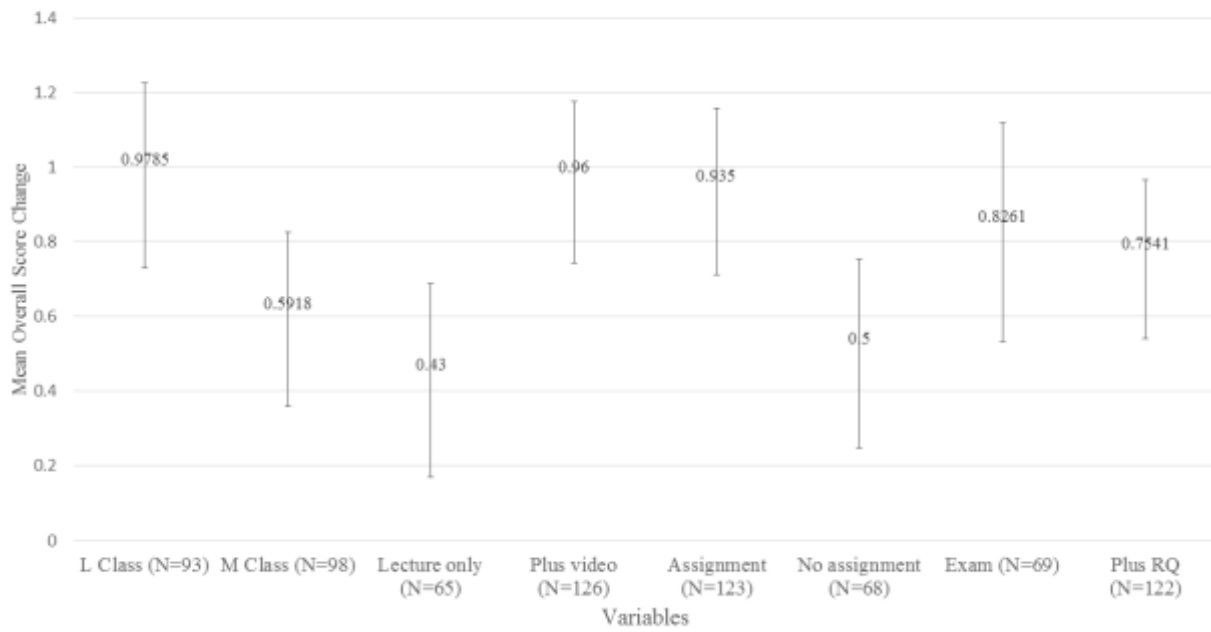


Figure 6. Mean overall score change by pedagogical tools. Error bars denote 95% confidence interval around the mean. The "plus video" is the only variable in which confidence intervals do not overlap, indicating that it is statistically higher than the "lecture only" variable.

Table 1. Statistically significant improvement in students' post-instruction surveys. Double star (**) indicates statistical significance whereas the 95% confidence interval around the means of variable permutations do not overlap, indicating that one variable was significantly better in improving students' scores than the other.

Variable	N	Question 2	Question 4	Overall
Class size				
Large	93	**		
Medium	98			
Video addition				
Lecture only	65			
Video added	126	**	**	**
Assignment addition				
No Assignment	68			
Assignment added	123	**	**	
Examinations				
Midterm/Final Exam only	69			
Reading quiz added	122			

NOTE: No differences were seen in Questions 1 and 3; Question 5 was excluded from analysis, as explained in endnote vi.

Student Racial Identity Development at Predominately White Institutions

While not explicitly explored by PETCRA, ethnic identity is an important component in students' understanding and internalization of non-racist narratives. Campus climate is perhaps the most important element of ethnic identity development in traditional college-aged individuals (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). Predominately white institutions (PWIs) are unique situations in which ethnic identities are redefined and performed, shaping students' experiences, identities, and ability to cope with new, potentially transformative ideas.

I explore two dominant narratives for ethnic identity development within college students at PWIs. Firstly, I explore white students from predominately white backgrounds whose white status is never challenged. Secondly, I explore all students whose ethnic status is changed in college—such as students of color who came from homogenous high schools where they were not considered minority students or white students who, through college experience, come to recognize their ethnic status in college. I am especially interested in narratives of minoritization at PWIs, as this process has been linked to decreases in self-confidence and thereby academic challenges (Davis 2009, Lett and Wright 2003, Parker and Flowers 2003). This is especially relevant for students who have internalized racist perspectives about their own ethnic groups. While I recognize that these experiences are vastly different for students who came from ethnically diverse high schools, and those who have already developed strong ethnic identities, academic studies of this student population are wanting. Of course, intersectional analyses indicate that other identities, such as gender, sexual orientation, and nationality, are often simplified or marginalized in these overarching narratives of student identity development (Patton et al. 2016, Renn 2012), and are especially important when understanding positionality at PWIs (Chavous 2002, Chavous, Rivas, Green, and Helaire 2002).

Non-Recognition of Ethnic Identity: non-challenged white students at PWIs

The white racial consciousness model (WRCM) developed by Rowe, Bennet, and Atkinson (1994) can be of much insight to the different perspectives that white individuals take on their ethnic status. This model is more useful than Helm's (1990, 1995) white identity development model (WIDM) as it is comprised of perspectives ("types") rather than a linear development to non-racist thought. The WRCM model's basic organization is between *unachieved* and *achieved* white racial consciousness. Unachieved consciousness manifests in different perspectives that either avoid the topic of race altogether (*avoidant*), confirm to dominant racist narratives (*dependent*), or confusion about ethnic identity in general (*dissonant*). Cognitive dissonance and experience moves individuals from unachieved to achieved white racial awareness. Without challenge of ethnic status, especially for avoidant types, white individuals have no need to address their identity, especially at PWIs where white is perceived as the status quo.

Recognition of Ethnic Identity: all challenged students at PWIs

College is often a time when individuals are confronted with ethnic diversity for the first time. For white students, once aware of white racial status, however, individuals may adopt perspectives that are not all positive. Unconscious or conscious racism is embodied though Rowe et al.'s (1994) *dominative* type, although non-interventionist *conflictivist* or paternalistic *reactive* types also draw from narratives of white supremacy. *Integrative* type, which recognizes the complexities of ethnic identity and the privileges associated with being white, should be recognized as a process rather than a radical transformation.

Ethnic identity development for minority students has traditionally been ethnically-dependent, as different minority groups in the US have different struggles and relationships to power structures (Patton et al. 2016). Many students of color come from relatively homogenous backgrounds, where they also may not recognize their own ethnic identity, similar to Rowe et al.'s (1994) unachieved status. However, recognized status among minority groups can lead to internalized racism. In her longitudinal study of Latino/a students, Torres (2009) demonstrated that both privileged (Anglo-oriented / white passing) and non-privileged students had internalized racist perspectives about their own ethnic group. While not a connection that Torres made, the narratives she presents indicate that students struggled in the absence of positive roles for non-white-passing students. Dominant (white supremacy / racist) discourse in popular media allows for stereotypes or characters of ethnic groups that are internalized within those communities. This is formalized in Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) prominent model of black ethnic identity development / Nigrescence.

To contrast studies of PWIs that may overstate the importance of ethnic identity to motivation and academic performance (Davis 2009), Lockett and Harrell (2003) found that black students' academic outcomes at a historically black college (HBC) were correlated better with self-esteem than with ethnic identity. While they argued that ethnic identity was therefore not a predictor of academic success, I believe this reinforces the idea that positive stereotypes, breaking racist assumptions about people of color, are especially important to the positive ethnic identity development of students.

Creating Space for Positive Identity Development

As explored in the above sections, PWIs prove unique challenges to combatting institutionalized, subconscious racialism that disproportionately affects students of color. Here I outline recommendations, informed by the research above, for positive classroom and institutional outcomes.

In the Classroom

Several reflective, qualitative essays narrate teaching methods that have been found useful for instructors of race and ethnicity (Lieberman and Kirk 2004, Macias 1996, Martin 1996, Tatum 1992). These methods mirror what the ethnic identity development literature implies: students need positive, non-threatening space in which to explore the construction of ethnic identities and their own personal identities (hooks 2010, Tatum, 1992). White students in particular may fail to recognize their own privileges and positionality, staying as avoidant types, if not challenged with alternative perspectives. If white students are not properly supported in the acknowledgement of their ethnic identity shifts, they may adopt consciously racist perspectives. Minority students also benefit from alternative perspectives of ethnic identity which do not adhere to narratives of inferiority. Active forms of learning help engage students to interact with material in more cognitively complex ways (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, and Norman 2010; Freeman et al., 2014, Prince 2004). The findings of PETCRA mirror these suggestions: simple choices, such as the addition of videos to lecture-based courses, can impact student acceptance of more anthropological views of ethnicity and race. Documentary films can impact students on more of an emotional level than pure lecture and switching material presentation style forces students to consider the new ideas from multiple perspectives. Pedagogical tools should include reflection in order for students to productively cope with the cognitive dissonance necessary to replace racist perspectives (King & Kitchener, 1994; Spalding & Wilson, 2002).

In the University

College life extends beyond classroom learning: ensuring that minority students have positive interpersonal interactions can help attenuate the academic repercussions of ethnically-based feelings of rejection. Mendoza-Denton and Page-Gould (2008) found that inter-group friendships between black and white students at a PWI increased feelings of belonging and affinity to the university. While interpersonal relationships cannot be forced, institutional structures can be manipulated to encourage diverse friendships and intergroup collaboration. Offices of student life can encourage for cross-cultural events which involve multiple ethnic student groups to work closely and collaboratively to cultivate interpersonal relationships. As such, positive role models are important avenues for promoting equity in higher education; providing such role models and positive campus climate initiatives have been implicated in the retention and promotion of Latino males (Hurtado and Ponjuan 2005, Sáenz and Ponjuan 2011). This is perhaps even more important at PWIs, where minority leadership may be less prominent. Ensuring that all students feel respected within the overall campus climate is therefore important to the support of positive ethnic identity development of students, as well as their academic careers.

Discussion

The results of PETCRA are both depressing and encouraging to those who think that today's students in today's world have a better understanding of race and ethnicity than those who came before them. The data shows that at this predominately white institution, racist perspectives are the default understanding of human diversity. Students who identify as white, however, are not the only ones who hold this perception; statistically speaking, there was no difference between white and non-white students' preconceptions about race before entering the classroom. This should be unsurprising—why should students of color be any more informed than white students on a topic that is so misunderstood in popular culture? The students self-reported, however, that they overwhelmingly felt comfortable in discussions about race and ethnicity—at least before instruction on an anthropological perspective on race. Students reported becoming *less* comfortable after instruction. This data shows that students are less informed than they think on the subject of race and ethnicity and that students of color are no more informed than their white counterparts, at least at this institution. To extrapolate to similar institutions, this data serves as a reminder not to assume what students know and have experience with discussions of race and ethnicity. Even self-confident students can hold racist perspectives, likely without knowing the term and the implications.

As such, racist perspectives may be deeply held misconceptions; even after instruction, up to 25% of students still held a racist perspective on at least one of the survey questions (see Figure 3). As such, a thoughtful, engaged pedagogy is likely the best route to dislodge misinformation and learned ignorance about racial concepts (Lieberman and Kirk 2004, Martin 1996, Moses 2004, Smedley and Smedley 2005). Even in classrooms that are lecture-based, as this study confirmed, small changes in instructional choice (in this case, adding a video) resulted in significantly improved student learning. Active learning classrooms have been shown to be even more effective than lecture-based classrooms in the STEM fields (Freeman et al. 2014), a finding that undoubtedly translates within the social sciences. While not quite statistically significant, adding an assignment about the topic also improved learning. Both of these methodologies force students to interact with information in different or more engaged ways. These methods are

contrasted to the old college standby: add more reading. There was *no* significant (or improved) evidence of retention with the addition of text.

The results of this one study are inadequate to fully understand how racialism can be combatted in the classroom. The short time span between instruction and post-survey reflects only short-term learning, not complete internalization of the concepts. A more long-duration study would better analyze the long-term effect that instruction on race has on an individuals' perception. Increasing the sample size of the research would also allow for more nuanced understanding of different teaching methodologies. While a large proportion of undergraduate instruction relies on lecture as the primary vehicle for instruction, it would be interesting to compare these results to markedly different pedagogical approaches, such as flipped, online, or discussion-based classrooms. It would also be interesting to see how students' perception of race changes as they move through higher education and how new generations of students interact with these concepts differently.

Considering the widespread misinformation about race, ethnicity, and identity, however, it is likely that similar sentiments about racial concepts found in this study are seen at diverse PWIs, from TAMU to Harvard (Butler 2014, Flaherty 2017). Out of 117 PWIs surveyed in the late 1980s, approximately 25% of students perceived considerable racially-based conflict on their campuses (Hurtado 1992); this impact was seen most severely at large, selective, or public institutions. In a follow-up study of racial climate at PWIs, Harper and Hurtado (2007) found pervasive discontent with racial equity across institutions of higher learning within the United States. While Texas A&M has many similarities to other southern, predominately white, R1 institutions, it is possible that the patterns seen here may be unique or exaggerated due to TAMU's geo-political persuasion, student demographics, and campus culture. More data, from diverse institutions, about how students respond to education about concepts of race and ethnicity could shape the decisions administrators make to make higher education more equitable (Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

Conclusions

As with much of the American population, many TAMU students came into the classroom with a racist perspective; however, this study indicates that student preconceptions about race can be changed through instruction. Simply adding a video to lecture significantly improved moving students from a non-anthropological view to a more anthropological one. As this study indicates, small pedagogical choices within the classroom to engage students have significant impact on their learning (Ambrose et al. 2010). Student ethnic identity development is also important to consider when teaching about anthropological concepts of race, particularly within predominately white institutions. With today's globalizing future, it is crucial that citizens of the world understand and respect human biological and cultural diversity. Anthropological instruction in higher education shapes tomorrow's leaders of an uncertain future—instructors should be especially cognizant of how pedagogy engages and challenges students' preconceptions of diversity issues.

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Notes

ⁱ Do note that I make a distinction between the terms ethnicity and race. Ethnicity, as I use it, is an identity related to a person's unique cultural heritage. Race, as I use it, is an outdated concept that assumes that ethnic identity is fixed, biologically determined by one's ancestors, and can be used to demarcate humans into groups. These two concepts are often taught together and are often confused within popular media.

ⁱⁱ I did not make in-class observations or ethnographies of any of the classrooms. As a colleague and friend of many of the instructors, I felt it inappropriate to gauge or judge their classrooms. Similarly, I did not want the research to be perceived as an evaluation of their teaching and to skew the reality of their classroom behaviours.

ⁱⁱⁱ Texas A&M University has students identify their ethnic identity through the following categories: Black only + 2 or more with one black, Hispanic or Latino of any race, Asian only, American Indian/Hawaiian, White only, 2 or more excluding black. I find these categories problematic at the least and racist at the worst as the University continues with a "one-drop" rule of black identity. I chose different categories to allow students more options in describing their heritage; surveyed students could choose as many identifiers as they wished and write in their own.

^{iv} Because there were so many different ethnic identities, it is possible that the non-statistical difference is due to the fractionalization of non-white minorities, leading to the weakening of the analysis.

^v I used the term race within the surveys to lessen student confusion with the concept of ethnicity. Because race has historically been associated with a biological determinism, I especially wanted to explore the connotations of this term for these students. The survey design was quite simplified; it would be interesting to see how the data may have changed with a more nuanced questions, especially about the performative aspects of racial identity.

^{vi} I have excluded analysis of the last question, as students responded that they were confused by the wording and the results were not patterned.

^{vii} The most commonly used video was the Public Broadcasting Network's documentary *Race: the Power of an Illusion*.