




SPR 18th Annual Meeting

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ID# 225

Location: Imperial Ballroom (Grand Hyatt/2nd Floor)

Time of Presentation: Jun 02 5:45 PM - 7:45 PM

Category/Theme: Implementation Science

Evaluation of the FAIR Program: Teaching Diversity Awareness and Social Justice to At-Risk Youth

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The increasing ethnic, cultural, language, and class diversity in the United States calls for a proactive approach in helping young people develop into healthy, socially competent adults. FAIR: Fairness for all Individuals Through Respect (FAIR) is an experiential multicultural education program that addresses fairness in social interactions. The FAIR curriculum gives youth an opportunity to recognize and explore their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards and about people who are similar and different from them (Zimmerman, Aberle, & Krafchick, 2005). Although FAIR has been used with hundreds of students in public schools, it has not been facilitated with an at-risk population. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of FAIR for at-risk youth in five residential treatment facilities and day treatment programs in Northern Colorado.

Participants were recruited and assigned to either the experimental or wait list group. Participants in the experimental group were given a pre-assessment, received the FAIR curriculum, and given a post-assessment. Participants in the wait list group were given a pre and post assessment without receiving FAIR. One month later, researchers returned to the wait list facilities, and participants were given a pre-assessment, received the FAIR curriculum, and given a post assessment. Outcome measures included awareness of privilege and oppression (Montross, 2003), multicultural attitudes (Munroe & Pearson, 2006), and ethnocultural empathy (Wang et al., 2003), as well as a role model inventory and character development survey (Jones, 2006). Additionally, qualitative data will be explored to recognize themes.

Currently, preliminary data analysis is being conducted by the primary investigators in the study. Prior to hypothesis testing, preliminary analysis of demographic information will be conducted on the data. Additionally, a t test will be performed to confirm that the participants in the control and experimental groups were similar at the start of the study. Variables that are highly skewed will be transformed to obtain more normal distributions. Next, hypothesis testing will be done using a MANOVA. If there is a difference in pre-test scores, then a MANCOVA will be used.

Investigators anticipate that FAIR will increase youth's awareness of privilege and oppression, multicultural attitudes, and ethnocultural empathy with others. In addition, the investigators anticipate an increase in three areas of character including respect, responsibility, and fairness. It is the expectation of the researchers that FAIR is found to be an effective and valid intervention for at-risk youth regarding awareness of diversity and social justice issues.

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