

Marketing Inclusion: A Social Justice Project for Diversity Education

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Abstract

Challenges related to marketplace diversity present an opportunity to prepare students to successfully engage with diversity through innovative curricular approaches. The present research develops a semester-long course project designed to enhance students' awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion issues from a social justice perspective. We discuss the context of diversity issues in business schools and identify key issues affecting marketing educators. Our review of the pedagogical literature on diversity highlights the importance of a social justice orientation. Social cognitive theory is used as a conceptual framework to guide the design of a problem-based experiential project. We detail project implementation and assess evidence regarding the impact of the project. Findings suggest an experiential, problem-based class project can support students understanding of diversity from a social justice perspective. We discuss the project benefits and challenges and highlight pedagogical issues for educators who want to integrate diversity content into a broad array of marketing courses.

Keywords

diversity, inclusion, social justice, experiential learning, social marketing

Today's students will work in increasingly multicultural environments and must understand consumers from different social groups, experiences, and lifestyles (Frey, 2014; Stern, 2008). At the same time, we see ongoing instances of marketplace conflict which suggest a lack of productive facility with diversity. The marketing strategies of major brands including Prada, Gucci, H&M, and Burberry's among others have caused social consternation and accusations of bias (Blanchard, 2019; Kwun, 2019). These repeated controversies reinforce the need for enhanced students' skills in marketing to diverse consumers. Business employers have also questioned students' preparedness to work with others who are different from them (Goodwin, 2015). Concurrently, there is increased recognition that campus climates are not inclusive for all students, resulting in nationwide movements for campus reform related to diversity and inclusion (Bourgeois, 2018; Worthington, 2012). As a result, institutions of higher education are under pressure to equip students to competently engage in multicultural contexts, including on their own campus. New campus policies undoubtedly affect the business school and reinforce the need for an emphasis on diversity.

As a result, marketing educators must place a greater emphasis on teaching successful engagement with diversity. Research demonstrates that diverse groups are more innovative, creative, and better at solving the types of complex problems that confront contemporary society (Driver, 2001; Phillips, 2014). In addition to having diverse individuals

involved in the marketing process (Davis, 2007), it is imperative that all students are educated to engage with diversity issues. Opportunities for students to engage with diversity in institutionally structured settings can improve student academic, social, and cognitive development (Bowman & Park, 2015; Denson & Chang, 2015). Increasing diversity content in marketing education better prepares students to successfully lead in dynamic and complex marketplaces. However, diversity has not received the same attention in business schools as other emergent fields including business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and globalization (M. P. Bell, Connerley, & Cocchiara 2009; Mitchell & Vandegrift, 2014), and this ignorance may be a lost opportunity. The repeated controversies over stereotypical and insensitive marketing strategies used by major corporate brands are similar to past business crises, which have led to a focus on ethics in the business school curricula (Blanchard, 2019; Kwun, 2019). Researchers have argued that enhanced understanding of diversity can contribute to strategic marketing effectiveness and help avoid the types of offensive marketing practices observed in the marketplace (Demangeot

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et al., 2018; Grier, Thomas, & Johnson, 2019; Poole & Garrett-Walker, 2016; Tharp, 2001).

The ability to constructively engage with diversity is not only a critical marketing skill but also represents a curricular issue of social responsibility for marketing educators (Burton, 2005; Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, & Zúñiga, 2009). Societies are struggling with issues of diversity and social injustice across domains, including in retail, health, and financial markets (Blackwell, Kramer, Vaidyanathan, Iyer, & Kirschenbaum, 2017; Turner, 2018). There is renewed academic and practical interest in social justice dimensions of diversity, which is reflected in the marketing literature by considerations of how strategies and tactics contribute to equitable consumer experiences and outcomes (Demangeot et al., 2018; Dobscha & Høngsmark-Knudsen, 2019; Garrett-Walker et al., 2018; Grier et al., 2019; Johnson, Thomas, Harrison, & Grier, 2019). Industry research similarly demonstrates that a growing number of highly regarded companies “known for their hard-nosed approach to business—such as Gap Inc., PayPal, and Cigna—have found new sources of growth and profit by driving equitable outcomes for employees, customers, and communities of color” (Blackwell et al., 2017, p. 2). Thus, schools must also focus on developing leaders who are adept at using their skills to address social justice dimensions of business challenges (Goodwin, 2015; Lewington, 2019; Toubiana, 2014; Turner, 2018).

The impetus to integrate diversity and social justice considerations into the marketing curriculum presents an opportunity to prepare students for success with innovative curricular approaches. There is a need for courses and class activities which can increase students’ knowledge, skills, confidence, and perspectives relevant to marketing in the multicultural societies worldwide. This research asks the question: Can a marketing project support student awareness and understanding of diversity-related social justice issues in marketing? We propose an approach which builds on the importance of problem-based experiential field projects. We detail a semester-long course project designed to support students’ facility with diversity concepts through the development of a social marketing plan. The plan focuses on a specific diversity challenge which has social justice considerations. First, we overview the context surrounding the project, starting with the need for diversity education in business schools and the marketing curriculum. We next explain the conceptual framework for the project, and then detail its implementation. We assess student deliverables for evidence of the project impact on student awareness and understanding of diversity issues and a consideration of social justice. In conclusion, we highlight focal pedagogical benefits, challenges and limitations, and make recommendations for marketing educators who want to integrate diversity content into a broad array of marketing courses.

Literature Review

The Institutional Context for Diversity in Business Schools

The topic of diversity has been viewed as important to both business and business school curricula for almost 30 years. Diversity can be defined as “real or perceived differences among people with regard to race, ethnicity, sex, religion, age, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation and family status that affect their treatment, opportunities and outcomes” (M. P. Bell et al., 2009, p. 598). The definitional emphasis on the effects of individuals’ identities on their “treatment, opportunities and outcomes” acknowledges the business significance of the impact of real or perceived differences among people. Affirmative Action policies in the late 60’s were followed by recognition that legal mandates were insufficient to change entrenched corporate cultures and led to programs which emphasized “valuing diversity” (Herring, 2009; Kochan et al., 2003). The focus on the business implications of diversity was further fueled in the early 1990s by U.S. Census predictions that “minorities” would be the majority of the U.S. population by the year 2020. The resultant “business case for diversity” emphasizes the potential for increases in customers and profitability through valuing diversity. Davis (2013), for example, shows that it was economic self-interest, not social pressures, that drove marketer interest in Black consumers. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB, 2019) has acknowledged the need for diversity content in business school curricula since the 1980’s and includes diversity in business school accreditation criteria (see also Andre, 1993). The marketing field has also increased attention to diversity, most visibly in research, such as the 2013 issue of the *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* dedicated to diversity (Henderson & Williams, 2013). The American Marketing Association (2016) Foundation has a variety of programs related to diversity, most of which emphasize the development of a diverse faculty or student body.

However, despite almost three decades of calls for engagement in diversity, scholars have repeatedly observed that many business schools have only tangentially integrated issues of diversity in education (M. P. Bell et al., 2009; Jackoway, 2014; Mitchell & Vandegrift, 2014; Stern, 2008). According to Jackoway (2014), diversity is “still an afterthought in a number of schools” and is “more like the exception to the rule than the rule” (p. 28). We could not identify any national or international data to confirm how frequently business schools include diversity content in their curriculum. Research has found that students perceive that business management course materials lack cultural diversity and do not offer critical perspectives (Goodwin, 2015). The lack of emphasis is attributed to obstacles including faculty resistance, lack of academic resources,

and an absence of innovative pedagogy to engage both faculty and students (Burton, 2005; Pasque, Chesler, Charbeneau, & Carlson, 2013).

At the same time, research and practice have shifted from a focus on diversity to emphasize inclusion. Inclusion refers to “how well organizations and their members connect with, engage and utilize people across all types of differences” (Ferdman, 2013, p. 4). A report from the American Council on Education demonstrates considerable growth of ethnic minority enrollment at universities across the nation (Ryu, 2010). However, evidence suggests that increased diversity is not necessarily accompanied by positive and productive engagement of such diversity. One nationwide multi-institution campus climate assessment found that an average of 20% to 25% of survey respondents indicate that they have experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct on campus (Rankin and Associates Consulting, 2016). Studies have documented significant increases in hate-related incidents which target members of specific groups on college campuses nationwide (Bauer-Wolf, 2017; Bauman, 2018). The changing demographics combined with increased recognition that campus climates are not inclusive for all students has resulted in nationwide movements for campus reform related to diversity and inclusion (Bourgeois, 2018; Worthington, 2012). This focus has also led many universities to place a renewed emphasis on increased diversity content in their curriculums (Bourgeois, 2018; Plantz, 2015). Diversity interventions in an educational context may prove especially beneficial given that students may be more open minded, tolerant, empathetic, and less committed to strong paradigmatic views (Avery & Thomas, 2004). Integrating diversity into the marketing curriculum is an opportunity to strengthen business education in ways that may benefit both society and the bottom line. However, there is limited guidance regarding specific ways to integrate diversity into the marketing curriculum. We propose one such way.

Integrating Diversity Into the Marketing Curriculum

Diversity may be integrated into marketing education via a focused course that explores diversity issues, or diversity focused activities and assignments. The general aim is to simultaneously increase students’ knowledge around diversity in the context of learning marketing concepts. The “valuing diversity” theme predominant in business schools is reflected in marketing by an emphasis on multicultural marketing. Multicultural marketing courses emphasize an understanding of how diverse cultural identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation) influence consumption as a way to equip students to market to diverse consumers (Burton, 2005; Davis, 2013; Sharp, 2001). Students would ideally learn how to market products and

services in ways that are sensitive to cultural differences and how these differences affect consumer needs and preferences. Such identity-focused approaches are undoubtedly important as they center cultural values that distinguish and define groups in order to build strategies that cater products and services to specific group needs and desires.

Prior research on diversity in the context of marketing pedagogy has developed specific approaches to integrate diversity in marketing courses. Burton (2005) highlighted the need for focused courses about multicultural marketing, outlined what a course might look like, and identified supportive resources for faculty. Her outline highlights an understanding of identity-related characteristics of diverse groups and emphasizes the importance of the use of diversity-related examples in “mainstream” courses. Stern (2008) detailed a marketing course that was based on “diversity walks,” where student teams observe members of various subgroups and report on their consumption-related findings in class. Wright and Clarke (2010) argue for the importance of study-abroad programs to develop student skills to engage with multicultural markets both domestically and globally. Their empirical results support that study-abroad programs help students become more globally minded, communicate better across cultural and national boundaries, and develop increased sensitivity to cultural differences.

More recent research has considered topics which suggest a role for social justice in preparing students to engage diversity in marketing curricula. Thomas and Jones (2019) argued that given the increased diversity of consumer markets, advertising educators must integrate considerations of race in their teaching to effectively prepare students for the future. Their research outlines a paradigm and set of practices to foster a critical reflexivity in students to help them engage directly with issues of race. Brown and Sekimoto (2017) focused on the need to incorporate critical pedagogy as a way to retain students from underrepresented groups by creating a classroom environment that valued their lived experiences. Poole and Garrett-Walker (2016) examined undergraduate students’ ideologies related to multicultural issues using a survey method. Their results show that business majors were less aware of institutional discrimination, racial privilege, class privilege, religious privilege, and were more likely to adopt colorblind ideologies than students with arts/humanities, social science, science, and nursing majors. They argue that their results suggest that these students lack a frame of reference and understanding to develop effective multicultural marketing strategies (Poole & Garrett-Walker, 2016). Rosenbaum, Moraru, and Labrecque (2013) created a service sensitivity exercise to increase student cognizance of inequity in consumers’ experiences. They explain how the concept of fair service is absent from marketing textbooks which inadequately prepares students for the transition from academia into industry. In this exercise, students answered questions relating to

customer discrimination in order to “help students develop an appreciation for diversity and understand how to manage a service setting so that all consumers receive optimal service quality” (Rosenbaum et al., 2013, p. 5).

Although the pedagogical research around diversity and marketing is relatively limited, it provides important insights. Research shows a progression from a focus on cultural identities to considering justice dimensions regarding the market outcomes of different groups. The latter is an important and often overlooked point in curricular content and highlights the importance of including social justice concerns in addition to a focus on understanding cultural differences, which we discuss next.

The Importance of a Social Justice Orientation

It is necessary for students to develop an understanding not only of cultural diversity but also to appreciate how these differences may influence people’s marketplace “treatment, opportunities and outcomes” (M. P. Bell et al., 2009, p. 598) which is emphasized in the definition of diversity. As suggested by the definition, dynamics related to identity may lead to or support injustice in the marketplace. Social justice has numerous contested definitions but limited consensus on its meaning across disciplines (Jost & Kay, 2010; Reisch, 2002). Nonetheless, definitions converge on key conceptual elements including a specified allocation system for societal goods, a process to protect rights and a concern with human well-being (L. A. Bell & Adams, 2016; Blackwell et al., 2017; Jost & Kay, 2010; Toubiana, 2014). In the present context, we use social justice to refer to explicit consideration of concepts related to fairness, equality, and equity in marketing pedagogy. Our notion aligns with that of Toubiana (2014) who argues that business schools that focus on social justice would seek “to clarify the role of business in creating a society that is equal, fair, and just” (p. 83).

Social justice is important to marketing pedagogy given research which demonstrates that markets both exclude and privilege some consumers and emphasizes a role for marketing in perpetuating inequity (e.g., Grier et al., 2019; Henderson & Williams, 2013; Licsandru & Cui 2018; Saren, Parsons, & Goulding, 2019). Saren et al. (2019) define marketplace exclusion as “the mechanisms through which certain individuals and communities are barred from the resources and opportunities provided by the market to other citizens.” These authors note how research has shown exclusion from marketplace activities based on factors such as age, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and geography. For example, Bone, Christensen, and Williams (2014) use a mystery shopping field study which reveals that bank loan officers treat White and minority consumers differently in terms of the information provided to them, the information required from them to apply for a loan, and the encouragement and assistance demonstrated to them.

Similarly, an analysis of legal court cases shows how consumers are routinely discriminated against in the marketplace based on their identity as a member of certain groups (Henderson et al., 2016). Conversely, research illustrates how some consumers may be privileged in marketplace transactions. Privilege can be understood as a set of unearned social benefits that a dominant group possesses and often goes unacknowledged (Johnson, Thomas, & Grier 2017). Consider that the findings of Bone et al. (2014) not only demonstrate barriers minority consumers face but also how White consumers get the benefit of receiving more information, fewer requirements, and more support from loan officers. Students developing strategies to market financial services to diverse consumer segments would undoubtedly benefit from understanding the reality of such marketplace dynamics.

Indeed, given that substantial research shows that group membership may influence marketplace experiences and outcomes, the typical educational focus on understanding cultural differences is enhanced by considerations of social justice. Students’ facility with diversity is supported by an understanding of how resources and privilege are inequitably distributed in society (L. A. Bell & Adams, 2016; Garrett-Walker et al., 2018; Poole & Garrett-Walker, 2016). A basic aim of multicultural education is for students to increase knowledge of and learn to work with diverse groups, reduce stereotyping and prejudice, and challenge societal inequities (Banks, 2015; Bennett, 2001). Without awareness of and a frame of reference for social inequity, a student may be handicapped in on-campus dynamics and in their ability to contribute to equitable marketing strategies postgraduation. As Rosenbaum et al. (2013) note,

students entering careers as service/retail managers often understandably fail to fully recognize the extent to which service quality is not being equally afforded to all customers and the roles they must play in acting as promoters of customer equality within consumption settings. (p. 15).

The valuing diversity discourse predominate in industry and business academia eclipsed a prior emphasis on social justice and equal opportunity (Noon, 2007). A reemphasis on social justice is consistent with industry trends which encompass social equity in marketing strategies (Blackwell et al., 2017; Turner, 2018). Social justice perspectives in business can not only inform students’ development of strategies to address complex multicultural markets but also support moral and respectful responses to a multicultural workforce (Byrd & Lloyd-Jones, 2017). As society struggles with issues of diversity-related social injustice across domains, the benefit of educated and empowered citizens is ever more evident. The multicultural education literature has identified social justice as a central genre of diversity-related multicultural education (Bennett, 2001). This work has over three

decades of research, theoretical support, and reflects the multidisciplinary nature and complexity of multicultural education. However, pedagogical approaches to diversity that encompass a social justice orientation are lacking in business schools (Byrd & Lloyd-Jones, 2017; Poole & Garrett-Walker, 2016). Thus, as educators add more diversity content to the marketing curriculum, it is important to include social justice considerations. Thus, our overall project objective is to increase student awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion issues from a social justice perspective. We next describe our conceptual framework, project design, and intended project outcomes.

A Diversity Project for the Marketing Curriculum

Conceptual Framework

Research in multicultural education identifies the importance of diversity experiences to increasing students' cognitive development and skills. Research has found that diversity courses are associated with student gains in critical thinking, moral reasoning, and increased complexity of thought (Bowman, 2010; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Hurtado, 2005). For example, students who took a diversity course showed greater gains in moral reasoning than those who took a management course (Hurtado, Mayhew, & Engberg, 2012). Other research has found that some diversity experiences can positively affect cultural awareness, self-efficacy for social change, perspective-taking skills, greater social awareness, and support for race-based initiatives (Hurtado, 2005).

We utilize social cognitive theories from the multicultural education literature to undergird development of a diversity focused class project. Gurin et al. (2002) have explained the link between diversity and cognitive growth in a theoretical framework which is well used within the literature on multicultural pedagogy (e.g., Bowman, 2009; Castellanos & Cole, 2015; Cole & Zhou, 2014). Gurin et al. (2002) build on seminal theories of cognitive development to argue that the developmental stage of undergraduate students allows college diversity experiences to exert a significant impact on the students. Experiences which are novel or dissonant from what is regularly experienced are more likely to prompt conscious and effortful thinking (Gurin et al., 2002). Furthermore, research supports the notion that cognitive growth stems from situations which lead to a state of uncertainty or even anxiety (Hurtado, 2005). When students are confronted with diversity-related information that presents new ideas, the disequilibrium that can be created sets the stage for cognitive growth. This positive discomfort expands and enriches a students' worldview to consider that of another.

In summary, a project that involves unfamiliarity, novelty, and/or discrepancy to students, leads to more mindful

thinking and cognitive growth because of the dissonance or disequilibrium it creates. A key implication of this theoretical perspective is that the integration of diversity-related concepts in the marketing classroom can be an important "stimulus," which can provide new perspectives and "open" ways of thinking. These basic theoretical notions undergird our project development.

We integrate this theoretical perspective with work on experiential learning to further guide project development. Experiential learning supports student comprehension of marketing concepts "by internalizing theory through guided practice" (Young, 2002, p. 43). Experiential learning allows for the creation of knowledge through structured experience and supports the development of problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and knowledge retention (Hodge, Proudford, & Holt, 2014; Kolb, 2014). Thus, experiential projects can be an effective way of addressing diversity as they impart interdisciplinary knowledge and skills students need to work with diverse others (Wright & Clarke, 2010). We focus on a particular type of experiential learning called problem-based learning (PBL). PBL is an instructional approach where students conduct research, integrate theory and practice, and develop solutions to complex real-world problems (Savery, 2015). PBL aims to help students develop flexible, adaptable knowledge, effective problem-solving skills, and productive collaboration skills. A central feature of PBL is a focal interdisciplinary problem which students work collaboratively to solve with the help of a faculty member. Given a complex real-world problem usually has multiple possible solutions, the approach supports self-directed learning as students identify what they need to learn as they attempt to address the problem (Savery, 2015). PBL seems especially well-suited for diversity-related pedagogy in the contemporary marketing environment where marketing challenges are often interdisciplinary.

Project Design and Intended Outcomes

The described framework lays the groundwork to expect that a project that engages students with a novel diversity-related marketing challenge should lead to more effortful and complex thinking around diversity and inclusion issues. Moreover, if the diversity project is designed to encompass social justice considerations, this will prompt complex thinking to include consideration of issues of fairness, equality, and equity. Development of the present projects integrates key characteristics of PBL, specifically: presenting the problem as real life, having students work cooperatively as a group, the use of material to stimulate student discussion regarding the problem, guiding with limited resources, and evaluating students' learning processes (Boud & Feletti, 2013; Savery, 2015).

Significant demographic changes at the focal University have increased diversity yet also been accompanied by

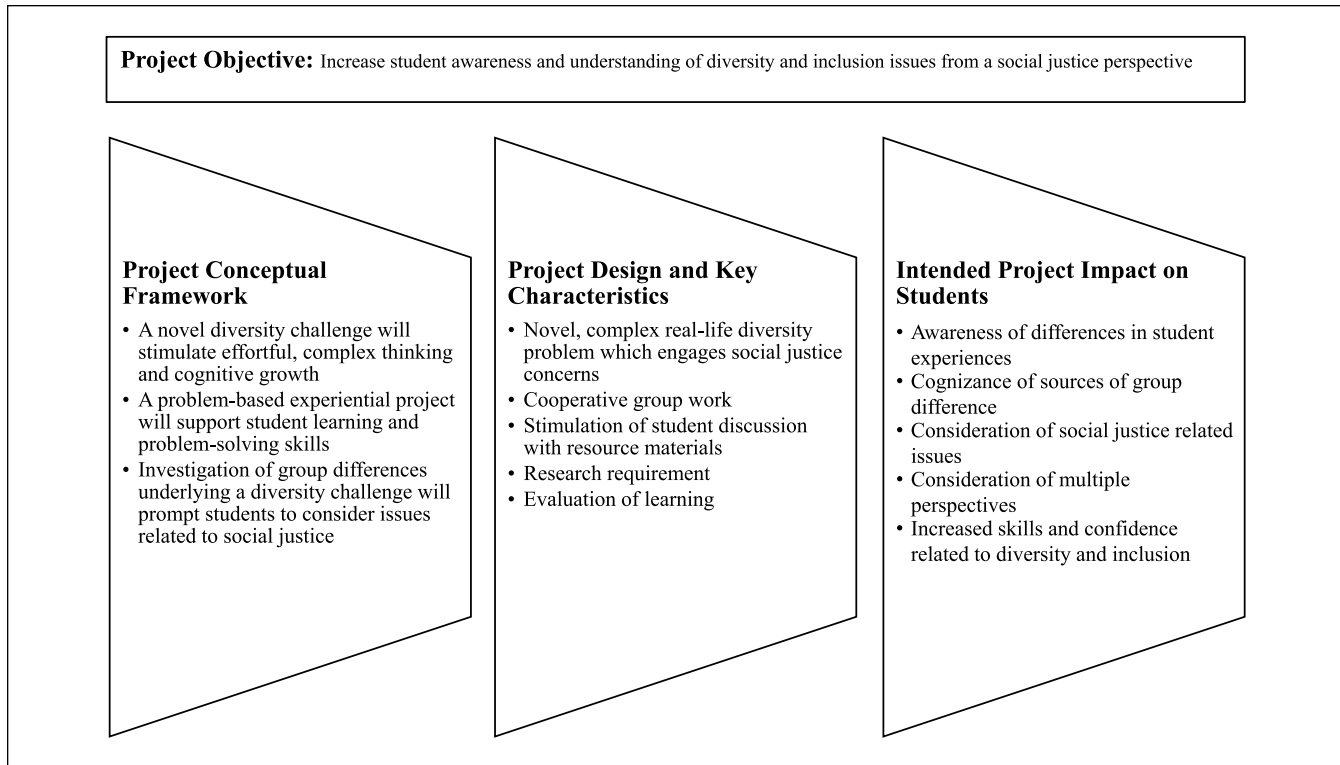


Figure 1. Project logic model.

related tensions which provided the “problem” for learning. Specifically, the University has shifted from a campus dominated by White students primarily from Mid-Atlantic States to encompass significant enrollment growth from several underrepresented minority groups, first-generation college students and students from the Southwestern United States. Many of these changes are based on intentional strategies by the University administration. At the same time, the campus has experienced examples of racial tensions, hate speech, and religious intolerance. The University conducts a comprehensive self-study every 10 years, and the 2014 study resulted in a recommendation that the University “carefully consider how best to support the more diverse student body and ensure that its engagement in the University special opportunities, sense of belonging, degree of satisfaction, and retention and graduation rates is carefully monitored and regularly assessed.” Identifying strategies to address this recommendation was a key focus of the University Marketing and Enrollment Task Force who served as the internal client for the present project. The Task Force was composed of Senior Administration from the University and aimed to understand factors that inhibit equitable access, participation and satisfaction with the University among diverse students. In this way, the client issue represents an issue of diversity with embedded social justice considerations as it concerns differences in the experiences of students based on their identity as a member of a particular

group. We interviewed key members of the Client Task Force to create a two-page *Marketing Challenge* document which detailed campus tensions, the University’s response to date and the need for a social marketing plan to increase diversity and inclusion on campus. The key marketing challenge was summarized in the document as follows:

Many strides have been made over time, yet the belief remains that campus inclusiveness can be enhanced to contribute to a more supportive and comfortable environment for all members of the University community. Your challenge is to develop a social marketing plan to help achieve these aims. Specifically, you are to specify the focus of your plan, analyze the situation, determine specific target audience(s) and the behavioral objectives and goals and develop a social marketing strategy.

We use a project logic model to summarize the project design, including the conceptual framework, key project characteristics and intended project outcomes (Figure 1). A logic model presents a picture of how an initiative is intended to work (Milstein & Chapel, 2018). Based on the conceptual framework, we expected that the student focus on marketing diversity and inclusion at their own institution should provide students with the incongruity that creates the opportunity for learning. Although students are familiar with their institution, they are likely less versed in how universities operate or the marketing dimensions of diversity and

inclusion. The project also required primary and secondary research, which should provoke students to investigate reasons underlying diversity issues on campus. Given the project engages consideration of differences in the experiences of students, social justice should emerge as a consideration in student project deliverables. As a result, the project should increase student awareness of group differences in experiences and some cognizance of the sources of such differences. Overall, the project should help students increase their awareness, skills, and confidence related to diversity and inclusion. Below, we describe the course and the project implementation.

Project Implementation

The project was implemented in the *Social Marketing* course, an upper-level elective undergraduate course taught in the business school at a midsize private institution in the north-east region of the United States. The course is highly interactive and combines individual presentations, guest speakers, in-class activities, and lecture in a predominantly discussion-based setting (see Figure 2). Discussion centers on weekly readings, lecture topics, individual presentations, and relevant items brought in by the students during a “show and tell” period in each class. The latter assignment requires each student to bring to class and discuss some self-selected marketing material (e.g., a promotion or product) related to the session topic, once per semester. A key objective of the course is for students to learn how to systematically approach the development, implementation, and evaluation of a social marketing plan. An essential component for achieving the learning objectives is the Applied Client Project, which accounts for 30% of the student’s grade in the class. For the project, the class is divided into consulting teams of three or four to address a marketing challenge for a “real” client. Past clients have included various nonprofit, government, and corporate institutions focused on topics such as reducing vaping, increasing physical activity, and promoting volunteer firefighting.

The project was implemented in the Spring semester in 2016 (Cohort 1—hereafter C1) and again in 2018 (Cohort 2—hereafter C2). The majority of the 18 students in each cohort were female, White, and majoring in a business or communication-related subject (see Table 1). Although only a few were specifically marketing/business majors (C1: 4 and C2: 7), all were marketing minors. Marketing classes at the business school tend to draw students from all over campus given that marketing is one of the largest minor programs on campus. The topic of each class followed Lee and Kotler’s (2015) Social Marketing 10-step Planning Process, allowing for in-depth discussion and understanding of each element of marketing planning (see Figure 2). Each semester the project topic was introduced during the second session with in-class distribution and review of the marketing challenge document.

In the next session, the client presented the challenge of promoting inclusion on campus and answered student questions. The teams were free to determine the specific diversity focus of their campaign (e.g., race, income, and gender), with the exception that the second class (C2) could not replicate strategies used by the first class (C1).

By the fourth week of the semester, each team submitted a project proposal, which stated and justified their specific topic within the broad scope of diversity. Each team received detailed written feedback along with a brief list of relevant resources, potential challenges, and other considerations. Thrice during the semester, each student submitted a reflection journal where they shared their thoughts and feelings about the project and class. The assignment helped the students connect the theoretical with the practical experience and contributed to problem-solving skills through application of the integrated knowledge gained (Petkus, 2000). Students also completed an individual case analysis to ensure that they understood how marketing concepts apply to social initiatives. Midsemester, and again 2 weeks before the presentations, teams submitted project updates so that the professor could evaluate their progress and provide feedback in meetings with each group. Last, the students presented their campaigns to the client group, and submitted their final written papers (see Figure 2). The team presentations of their social marketing campaigns were evaluated by the four members of the client team and the professor using a brief scoring sheet which assessed the soundness of the strategy, the use of research to support decisions, and an overall rating (all on 7-point scales) along with an opportunity to provide open-end comments for each rating. Throughout the semester, the instructor also kept project field notes which recorded class observations, student project comments in office hours, client comments, and any other project-related issues. Next, we discuss evidence for the impact of the project on intended student outcomes related to diversity, inclusion and social justice.

Evidence of Project Impact

The project aimed to increase student awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion issues from a social justice perspective. We reviewed student journals for all project-related comments, summarized results of a survey administered at the end of the semester and evaluated the written social marketing plan and oral presentations. The student journals were used to gain insights on their reflections about the project, including the key issues and topics they discussed. The survey assessed student perceptions of their diversity-related confidence, cultural awareness, self-efficacy related to social change on their campus, and satisfaction with learning in relation to the project (see Table 3). Additionally, in C2, we added questions from the National Survey of Student Engagement (Kuh, 2001) to capture

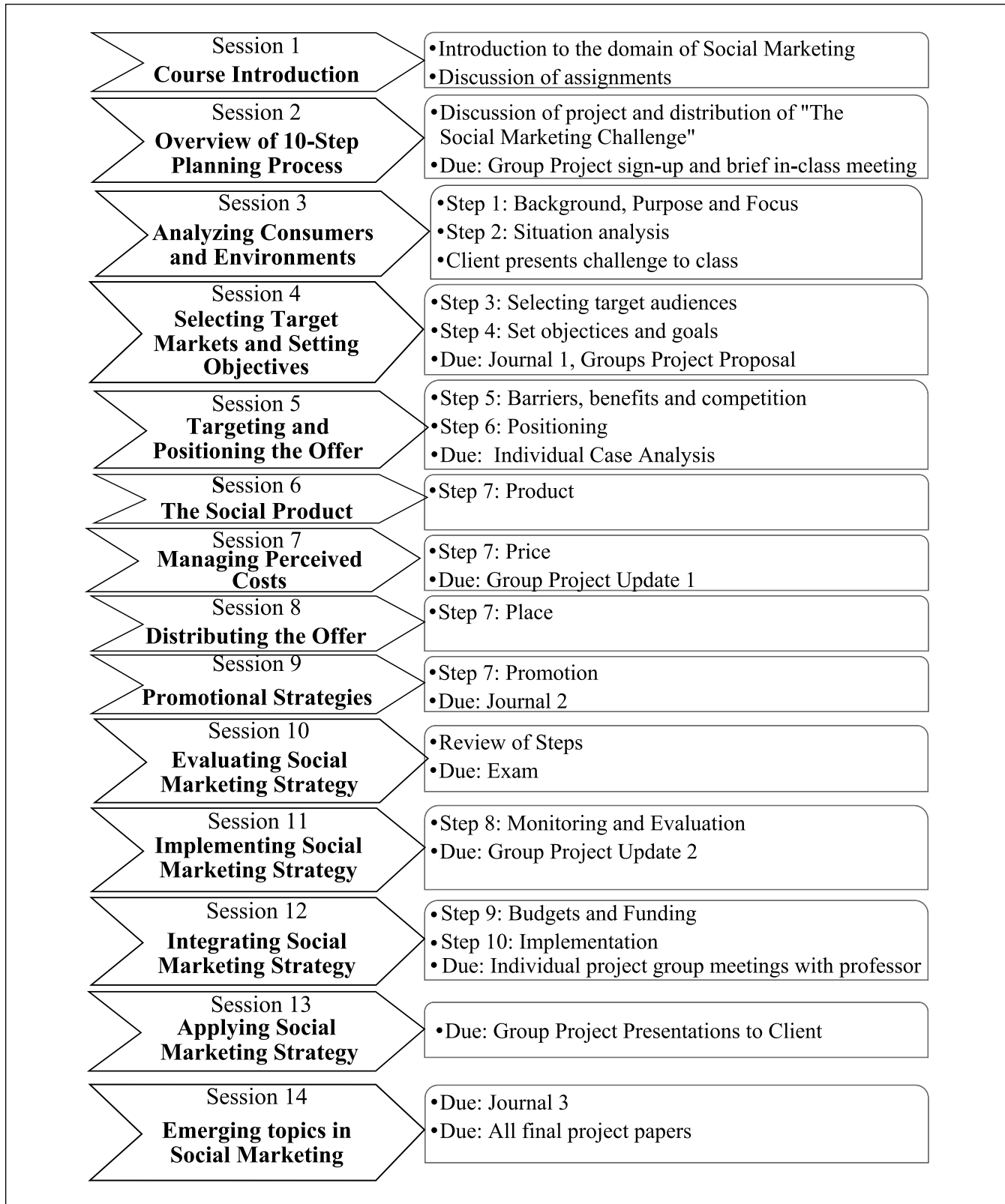


Figure 2. Course overview.

Table 1. Description of Study Participants.

Demographics and scholastic major	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Gender		
Male	4	7
Female	14	11
Race		
Asian/Asian American	0	3
Black/African American	0	5
Hispanic/Latinx	3	1
White	12	9
Other (multiracial)	3	0
Grade level		
Senior class	8	12
Junior class	10	6
Scholastic major		
Marketing and other business majors	4	7
Communications (including public relations, public communications, strategic communication, journalism, and media studies)	11	9
Arts and Sciences (including Political Science, Psychology, and Gender Studies)	3	1
Public health/health promotion	0	1
Total	18	18

students' perceptions of the frequency of their engagement with diversity (see Table 4). These questions were included to provide some support that the project presents new information, a crucial assumption of our project development. Given the small numbers, the survey results should be viewed from a qualitative perspective, as directional evidence to consider in tandem with all student project deliverables. The review of the evidence was also informed by the instructor project field notes which captured comments made in class and during mandatory individual student meetings, comments from the client on the final projects, instructor assessment of the student updates, and final campaign papers and presentations. Conclusions are drawn based on triangulation of these multiple pieces of evidence described above. We discuss findings across the two semesters the project was implemented, noting any differences unique to either of the cohorts.

In both classes, the students selected a diverse range of topics to address the marketing challenge. In C1, the topics included the following: promoting open dialogue regarding matters related to sexual violence on campus among first-year students, increasing budget consciousness and long-term financial sustainability among low-income freshman students, increasing participation in extracurricular activities among low-income students, and increasing diversity and inclusion in student organizations. In C2, there was also a variety of project topics with three campaigns promoting strategic actions for faculty to increase classroom inclusion; and three campaigns focused on increasing intergroup

contact via a creation of spirit week, a campus fair, and the formation of safe spaces. These approaches all aimed to increase student feelings of belonging on campus and reflected concerns of equitable student experiences. For example, the project focused on the creation of safe spaces built the need on recognition that not all students feel safe on campus, but should have the opportunity to do so. The group also considered the role of racial stereotypes in the differential treatment of students which contributed to members of particular groups not feeling safe. The range of ideas presented by the teams reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the modern business environment. Below, we discuss the evidence of the impact of the project.

Reflection Journals

The qualitative data from the student journals was aggregated and reviewed to identify common themes. We examined their journals for repetition of ideas to understand student commonalities in perceptions and feelings about the project. Three key themes emerged that relate to the intended outcomes for the project. We discuss each theme below and provide example quotes for each theme in Table 2.

Theme 1: This Project Is too Much! The first theme, which was primarily evident in journal 1 for both classes, reflected student concerns about the magnitude of the project. Their comments suggested that they initially approached the project with both optimism and a degree of hesitation. Students believed that their efforts would help make the University a better place and they could make a difference in the inclusiveness of the University community. Many saw the project as giving them valuable experience for their resume or to discuss in interviews. However, most students also predicted that it would be too complex, difficult, and time-consuming. As one student noted, "I am worried about how we are going to complete such a big challenge that is so complex and has many different nuances." One reason for the hesitancy appeared to be a lack of familiarity with the subject. Several mentioned concern about learning enough about diversity and inclusion in addition to learning the social marketing frameworks necessary to complete the project. A substantial number were also concerned about having the research skills needed for the project. Their responses provide some evidence that the focus on diversity and inclusion was "new" information.

Theme 2: Grappling With Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice. The second theme reflected student engagement with diversity, inclusion, and social justice concepts. The way in which the theme was reflected evolved over the course of the three journals. In the second journal, student comments reflected ongoing nervousness about both the magnitude of group project and their understanding of the topic in conjunction with their evolving social marketing knowledge. Many

Table 2. Student Comments From Reflection Journals.

Cohort 1 (2016)	Cohort 2 (2018)
<p><i>Theme 1: This project is too much!</i></p> <p>"I am still worried about how we are going to complete such a big challenge that is so complex, and has many different nuances to it, especially in such a short period of time. While this does scare me, it also makes me excited for what is to come, as this will be a very interesting learning experience, even if our project is not necessarily the best or ends up being implemented and working."</p> <p>"I am curious to see how our group pulls together the very hard task of implementing a planning processes around increasing and implementing campus-wide diversity and inclusion."</p>	<p>"There are so many different variables that seem to go into a topic such as this. For me personally, the biggest obstacle on campus is how to get everyone out of their specific bubble and get them to interact with different types of people. Our university is very diverse, but it is almost segregated into these factions like how you see in a dystopian future movie."</p> <p>"The concept of inclusivity is layered and extremely complex. To me, the problem seems very clear: only 33% of African American students on campus report feeling included on campus. That number is so low, and if things continue the way they are, the number will only continue to drop."</p>
<p><i>Theme 2: Grappling with diversity and inclusion</i></p> <p>"The research that we need is sensitive information. However, we need this research so we can move forward in understanding our target audience."</p> <p>"I am really worried about the project. It is becoming very difficult to pinpoint the specific behavior we want to change in order to instill a sense of belonging within the university."</p> <p>"It was also interesting to see the segregation among the different clubs/organizations, and even realizing that many of my friends do tend to just surround themselves with Latins and not being very open of meeting new people."</p> <p>"Creating a campaign that lends to diversity and inclusion at was extremely difficult due to the social stigma attached to discussing this issue on campus. Many are under the false impression that the university is already a diverse and inclusive campus and communicating this myth was extremely difficult. It was also difficult coming up with verbiage for the campaign."</p> <p>"The project allowed me to find ways for a better build-up of my campus and to also allow me to open my mind to what there is to fix. Little did I know about the inclusion problem and to what extent it affected students with different social-economic backgrounds."</p>	<p>"While at times I find it difficult to speak my opinion because I do not want it to be taken as word for all Black people."</p> <p>"I don't know if our students are ready to understand the root of the issue. I don't know if they are able to handle criticizing from how a person of color feels about the White culture and our White peers. I do however want to try, because I think that inclusivity is much needed."</p> <p>"I was unaware that people had felt so uncomfortable on campus. Being a White female, I have never thought about the issues surrounding this topic and I am grateful that this class has allowed me to explore other viewpoints."</p> <p>"As a White student on this campus, I am ignorant to a great deal of the issues surrounding diversity and inclusion. I know from listening to friends and seeing the problems our campus has experienced with hate crimes, but I am unaware of the true personal experiences."</p> <p>"Working on the final project has been very interesting and informative, because I have not paid that much attention to the diversity and inclusion research and did not realize how many people do not feel comfortable in classrooms. I now realize that White privilege plays a large part in the reason why so many minority groups do not feel comfortable."</p>
<p><i>Theme 3: Empowerment</i></p> <p>"As frustrating as that could be, and as confusing as it was to think about how to solve such a big issue like diversity for the school, it was rewarding in the end."</p> <p>"As the project unfolded before us, I was excited and motivated as I thought that something my peers and I had done could positively impact the quality of life at University. And when the leaders from the administration came to listen to our projects, I felt scared and nervous, but empowered to show them a real and viable solution to a huge problem."</p> <p>"I still think that the topic was extremely broad and super hard to solve, but I think the challenge was met and we really stepped up to the plate. I felt so satisfied when our group was done."</p> <p>"All and all, I feel this project was one of the most difficult, but also rewarding of my college experience. As a senior, it was a wonderful project to end my college experience on and prepare me for the workforce."</p>	<p>"Overall, this project has given me more insight into the lives of my peers and the professors who teach us, and how they perceive diversity and inclusion at University."</p> <p>"I am very pleased with how our group's final project/ presentation came together in the end. I think we've done a great job this entire semester of following the exact steps of developing a social marketing strategy. Staying focused and valuing each step for what it brings has allowed our group to work diligently on what we want to accomplish for this project."</p> <p>"This is a project I'm actually excited about as it can make a difference."</p> <p>"The topic of inclusivity and diversity at University was one that I've never had in a class before. It's refreshing to do a project about something that's real and that affects all of us at University."</p>

students expressed surprise that different groups on campus had variable experiences of belonging on campus. Their journal reflections reflected their attempts to

understand contextual and socioeconomic issues as they worked to identify research questions, select specific target audiences, and determine focal behaviors to provoke

Table 3. Student Self-Reported Learning.

	Cohort 1 (2015)		Cohort 2 (2018)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>In relation to the course project I feel I gained:</i>				
Confidence in addressing issues related to diversity and inclusion	5.2	1.5	4.9	1.3
Skills to address issues-related to diversity and inclusion	6.0	1.0	5.8	1.5
Knowledge about issues-related to diversity and inclusion	6.2	.92	5.8	1.5
Biases related to issues-related to diversity and inclusion	6.1	1.3	4.9	1.9
Perceptions of issues-related to diversity and inclusion were challenged	5.8	1.3	4.9	1.6
Ability to communicate better around issues-related to diversity and inclusion	5.0	1.8	5.1	1.4
Overall satisfaction with the project	5.0	1.5	5.8	1.5

Note. Ratings are based on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Table 4. Student Self-Reported Diversity Experiences (Cohort 2: 2018).

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>During the current school year about how often did you:</i>		
Attend events, activities, or presentations that reflect a diverse group of people	2.8	0.98
Participate in the activities of centers related to specific groups (cultural, racial, religious, gender, LGBT, etc.)	3.1	0.88
Participate in a diversity-related club or organization	2.9	1.0
Participate in a demonstration for a diversity-related cause	3.1	0.86
Reflect on your cultural identity	2.3	0.79

Note. LGBT = lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Ratings are based on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

inclusion. In addition, their concerns about the sensitivity of discussing these issues with their peers became more apparent, especially in C2. In the third journal, this theme was reflected in comments which suggested that students gained a broader awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion issues from a social justice perspective. For example, students frequently described their own positionality (e.g., “As a White student . . .”) and hypothesized its relationship to issues of diversity and inclusion. The students also used language related to diversity, inclusion and social justice such as mentioning White privilege, implicit bias, and inequality. Students also noted that they felt they gained more insight and understanding into not only their peers but

also faculty suggesting how they considered multiple perspectives. As one student noted, “Overall, this project has given me more insight into the lives of my peers and the professors who teach us, and how they perceive diversity and inclusion at the University.” Comments also suggested that they were not used to having these discussions, but they welcomed them. Student comments also emphasized the benefits and challenges of developing strategies to market inclusion from a social justice perspective.

Theme 3: Empowerment. Student comments indicated self-efficacy and personal satisfaction with the increased knowledge they gained from working on the project. Their comments went further though, to note a specific type of efficacy and satisfaction based on contributing knowledge and assistance to “their” University community on such an important issue. As one student said, “As a senior, it’s really cool to think that I could make a lasting impact on the community that has given me so much.” There was also a strong sense of satisfaction from the privileging of their voices as students. These comments included learning from their peers, freedom in planning the project, engaging with the client, and feeling like they were leaving something with the University. Students’ comments suggest a feeling of empowerment, which is defined as “a process by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over issues of concern to them” (Rappaport, 1987). From this perspective their comments reflect a self-perceived gain in the ability to influence their school setting. Students also discussed how they gained social marketing knowledge from the project. This acknowledgement provides some support that the addition of the diversity content did not obscure focal course content. Social marketing was most often described as a beneficial learning experience that could be used to help society, and in this case the University.

Student Survey

Although based on the small class sample sizes ($n = 18$ in both C1 and C2), student responses to the survey also provided support for the impact of the project suggested by the analysis of the journals. We assessed students mean ratings of the key indicators for their self-reported learning for each cohort. Student ratings suggested that they perceived that they gained additional confidence, insights, knowledge, and skills related to diversity and inclusion from the project. Specifically, the majority of their mean ratings were 5 or higher on a scale of 1 to 7 (Table 3). The additional questions added in C2 to assess the novelty of the diversity experience provided additional evidence that the project was indeed a novel experience. Student responses to the questions about past diversity experiences suggested that students were not active in diversity initiatives, with all mean ratings of 3.1 or lower on a 7-point scale for the various diversity experiences (Table 4).

Social Marketing Plans and Presentations

The social marketing campaigns developed by the students reflected both facility with the social marketing framework and an awareness of issues related to diversity, inclusion, and social justice. The client presentations and the students' responses during the Q&A period reflect that the students gained a broader perspective, including knowledge and understanding regarding campus dynamics perceived to exclude or privilege students based on their identity. The variety of topics, extent of research, and nuanced discussion of strategies from a social justice perspective suggested they gained an appreciation for not only inclusion but also issues at the root of inclusion. For example, one team's campaign aimed to create a more inclusive classroom environment for minority students. The plan detailed specific strategies and tactics to address findings of a campus report that significant numbers of students of color felt alienated in campus classrooms. The development of their marketing strategy included discussion of research on implicit biases that may prompt professor behaviors to unconsciously include or exclude particular students. The team discussion, like that of other teams, reflected consideration of how members of minority groups on campus had divergent experiences relative to White students, and also potential sources of those differences. Finally, an important test of any experiential client project is the feasibility and relevance of the proposed strategies for the client. Client comments on the presentation scoring sheets described the strategies as relevant, actionable, and based on important insights regarding the target markets. Follow-up conversations approximately a year later for each project found that administration had implemented pieces of each of the strategies in their evolving diversity initiatives and continues to refer to the strategies.

One key difference was noted in C2 versus C1, as reflected in journals and individual student meetings. Specifically, students in the second pilot of the inclusion project expressed concerns around addressing race in the classroom. Multiple White students noted that they did not want to continually bother their Black classmates to ask them about racial issues, while conversely, multiple Black students noted the challenge of continually having to explain their experiences. This did not occur in C1, where there were no Black students, although there were students of other diverse ethnoracial identities. We elaborate on this point in the Discussion.

General Discussion

The present research integrates disparate literature, details the development of a theoretically based class project and summarizes evidence that the project may support student learning about diversity from a social justice perspective. Review of student deliverables show that participation in the project influenced students' awareness of group differences in experiences and outcomes and prompted their interest in

understanding sources of group differences. Findings also illustrate student consideration of multiple perspectives as they developed their marketing strategies, and their beliefs that they gained skills and confidence related to diversity and inclusion. These findings provide compelling evidence that a problem-based experiential project can increase student awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion issues from a social justice perspective. Of course, the small sample sizes ($n = 18$ each cohort) and lack of a preexperimental and postexperimental design constrain the strength of this evidence. Nonetheless, the positive initial outcomes are promising, and the conceptual framework and project design provides a solid foundation for other marketing educators to customize, implement, and report on similar projects. We next discuss project benefits, challenges, and needed resources to support such future initiatives.

Project Benefits

The course diversity project appeared to achieve the key course objective of enabling students to learn how to develop a social marketing plan, while also imparting knowledge related to diversity and inclusion from a social justice perspective. The problem-based experiential learning approach allowed students to not only practice and apply the concepts they were learning but facilitated increased awareness and knowledge of diversity and inclusion as a substantive issue. This latter point is significant because even amid increasingly diverse campuses segregation often prevails and integration is not automatic. As a result, diverse contexts do not necessarily increase student awareness of and facility with diversity-related challenges. The problem-based experiential learning required that the students become active participants as they learned about inclusion and reflected on their own perspective and positionality throughout the learning process. The project also prompted students to consider issues of inequality, privilege, and social hierarchy. As the students strategized to increase inclusion on campus, they researched "why" the various issues exist, and engaged in discussions related to power privilege and social justice on campus. This focus on social justice aligns not only with increasing emphasis in business but also a broader cross-disciplinary emphasis on diversity and social justice in higher education (L. A. Bell & Adams, 2016; Byrd & Lloyd-Jones, 2017). The emphasis on social justice can support the development of leaders who contribute to pressing social challenges as well as business objectives.

Students' understanding of how diversity issues benefit from marketing strategy to influence inclusion on their own campus allowed them to directly see how their efforts might benefit the client organization. The focus on their own institution also appeared to engender student commitment, prompt them to acknowledge education as a business issue,

consider how marketing skills can address a social challenge, and further their interdisciplinary learning. The interdisciplinary nature of experiential learning projects—and of diversity and inclusion as a topic—also relates to many institutions' missions and goals, especially in terms of the development of student citizenship, critical thinking, communication skills, and lifetime learning (Wiese & Sherman, 2011). The type of learning gained from the project goes beyond diversity and showed students the applicability of their marketing education to a variety of social and economic domains. The project is adaptable to examine other aspects of diversity and inclusion, especially real-world problems that reflect social justice challenges.

The typical course assignments also contributed to the success of the project. The journal assignments provided a vehicle for students to consider their own thoughts, feelings, and related behaviors independent of their group. The content of the journals reflected their growth through the course of the semester in how they thought about diversity and inclusion and the social justice underpinnings. The assignment also allowed the professor to suggest additional readings, perspectives, or resources to address individual concerns. Students were pushed beyond their own subjectivity to identify and integrate research to support their strategic decision. The individual case assignment, which focused on a case that involved ethnic marketing, provided an early way to break the ice around discussing sensitive topics as the students analyzed it individually, but discussed the case in class. The project also helped students acquire communication and behavioral skills to develop and support multicultural competence necessary for the business world. The final project presentations reflected a visible comfort with discussing diversity issues, which was absent at the outset of the project.

Project Challenges

Of course, the project was not without challenges, including for the instructor. Time was a major challenge given the need to cover both substantive content and process, as well as to allow for primary research and guest speakers to present diverse perspectives. As students noted in their journal reflections, the project was intensive and time consuming. The students also did not actually have the opportunity to implement their plans. However, the presentations allowed the client to raise issues concerning the feasibility of the proposed campaigns, affording the students some insight into potential implementation issues.

The previously noted difference between the two pilot classes suggest that the composition of the class matters. In C2, multiple students noted that they did not want to have to either rely on diverse classmates to understand their experience, or alternatively, to have to constantly teach their classmates about their diverse experiences. This only emerged by,

and in reference to the African American students. This may be explained by the fact that although C1 did indeed have “minority” students (i.e., Hispanics), the presence of five African American students in C2 appeared to reflect more “visible” diversity, which heightened consciousness around the discussion of race. This is an important consideration regarding classroom management. This dynamic also insinuates that different students may gain from diversity in different ways. Indeed, research demonstrates that diversity courses that emphasize societal equity have a stronger effect on students of color than White students (Castellanos & Cole, 2015).

A related issue concerns the specific diversity topics chosen. C1 selected a diversity of topics but avoided issues related to race. However, for C2, race was highly salient based on a highly publicized racial incident on the campus, and the release of a diversity report which highlighted lack of inclusion specifically based on race. The increased saliency may have contributed to C2 having topics more closely related to race. Findings also suggest that race was challenging to discuss and is supported by journal reflections, comments in student meetings and class observation. Given the majority of students were White in both cohorts, these occurrences may reflect concerns of White fragility or White fatigue, both of which capture challenges related to discussing race among White students (DiAngelo, 2018; Flynn, 2015). Professors must be able to engage the issues and navigate potentially uncomfortable conversations in class in a respectful and productive way. In the present project, the journal allowed some insight into students' unfiltered thinking and issues expressed in the journals could be brought to the class for discussion generally without singling out any particular student. Nonetheless, findings reinforce the need for more pedagogical research on diversity with an emphasis on race, especially considering the changing demographics in marketplaces worldwide.

Potential faculty challenges include the required time and energy, commitment and willingness to raise sensitive issues, and the need to transition from class expert to colearner. Faculty must also understand how to manage students who may resist the topic, work to be politically correct, or tune out issues of diversity (Avery & Thomas, 2004; Mitchell & Vandegrift, 2014). Many students may come to campus from homogenous environments given the significant segregation, especially for youth, in the United States (Frey, 2011). While minority youth are driving population growth, friend networks are relatively homogeneous and cross-group interaction is still limited (Frey, 2014). Social media, where many youths spend a substantial amount of time, often serves not as an information source, but an “echo chamber” and constrains youth exposure to broader, diverse viewpoints (NPR Staff, 2016). Research also demonstrates significant differences in exposure to racial content on social media as well as

in real life settings and shows that social networks online are underscored by race and class-based self-segregation (Boyd, 2013). The lack of shared exposures and cross-group interactions is important to note because the benefits of diversity are supported by interaction (Ferdman, 2013). Finally, there may be potential challenges in student evaluation of professors who integrate diversity topics into the marketing curriculum. The involvement of the client who were high-level administrators also served as cues to seriousness and importance versus a “pet” project of the professor. Research on the effects of sensitive and/or divisive course content on student evaluations is lacking yet needed.

Resources for Future Projects

The focus of marketing on understanding the target audience through research and developing strategies to meet target needs is well-suited to engage issues of marketplace diversity. Although the focal project was developed for a social marketing class, we propose that similar problem-based experiential projects can be integrated into a variety of marketing courses. The “Marketing Challenge” presented to the students also now serves as a “mini-case,” which is used to discuss and infuse these issues in subsequent classes. Similar projects may also be integrated into other marketing courses such as international marketing, marketing research, consumer behavior, and marketing strategy. For example, the 2020 census is challenged with reaching the multicultural American population in the context of a proposed citizenship question and reflects a similar type of problem that could guide a semester project or class activity. The topic could be customized for an advertising, consumer behavior, or marketing strategy course using the provided project logic model. Faculty can also structure the project to guide focus on particular types of diversity (e.g., race, gender, and religion) or particular groups.

The importance of diversity issues to the business and marketing curriculum highlights the need for institutional support to address these issues. This support may come in the form of financial or intellectual resources to enhance professors’ knowledge of the marketing relevant aspects of diversity and how to integrate these into the curriculum. Guest speakers allow that not all content be conveyed through lecture by the faculty member. Support to develop relevant materials such as cases or multimedia products, which reflect diverse perspectives, may also engender curriculum development. The creation of cases that present realistic and complex diversity-related marketing challenges can help students both learn key concepts, as well as to develop their problem-solving skills through application. The development and dissemination of materials related to diversity and inclusion, especially from a social justice perspective, would also enable faculty to more easily incorporate relevant topics into projects and classes.

Conclusion

The present article argues the imperative for integrating diversity and social justice considerations into marketing courses and develops a problem-based experiential project to address this need. Despite the importance of the topic, there is limited guidance for marketing educators regarding specific approaches to integrate diversity into the marketing curriculum. Research suggests how the current generation of students often operates from a colorblind perspective and are unconscious of *actual* group differences in marketplace beliefs and experiences (Garrett-Walker et al., 2018; Poole & Garrett-Walker, 2016). This lack of knowledge may prove to be detrimental to marketing practice and to working within diverse and complex societies worldwide. Although this article focuses on a project created on a campus in the United States, diversity and inclusion is a worldwide challenge (Demangeot et al., 2018; Henderson & Williams, 2013). By building diversity topics and discussions into the marketing curriculum, educators better prepare students to design strategies to address diverse consumers from a perspective which considers the reality of the marketplace, including increasingly documented market injustices. Moreover, the increasing industry focus on social justice dimensions of business practices presages how such skills will increase in importance. Many projects on diversity, inclusion, and social justice occur outside of the marketing discipline despite the fact that marketing has a long history with regard to its use for changing social behaviors and making social change (Kotler & Levy, 1969). From this perspective, a plethora of diversity-related challenges exist to integrate into projects as well as other marketing assignments. Building these topics into the marketing curriculum will better prepare such students for constructive engagement with diversity, to challenge social injustice in the marketplace and to create social as well as financial profit.

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