TIP Northwest 2021

Introduction to Psychology
APA IPI Tags: Theme 5
Content Area Tags: Social psychology, personality, emotion, multicultural, gender, motivation
Estimated Time: 60 minutes

The WEIRD Bias in Psychological Science

The purpose of this activity is for students to work--either individually or in groups--to examine classic studies looking at the participant makeup as evidence of bias based on the "WEIRD" characteristics: Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic.

Activity Instructions

- Provide students a list of some "marquee" studies and ask them to look up some details of the studies. This could be done individually as an assignment or in small groups during class. Students could use a Google Doc or other collaborative document (e.g., Jamboard: https://jamboard.google.com/).
- Ask students to reflect on the participants of these studies, who were (likely) the participants? Who may not be reflected in the data?
- Ask students to individually reflect on themselves and their family's history. Would they have been reflected in this study? Why might that be a problem?
- Introduce the WEIRD model and discuss it as a source of bias.
- Lead a discussion around the theme of Psychology being an empirical and evolving science--need more studies on more diverse populations.
- Ask students to discuss who they would suggest including in future studies on the topic in the article(s) they reviewed
    - Make sure to ask them to explain why so they can practice their critical thinking skills!

Student Learning Objectives

By completing this assignment, you will be able to…

- Acknowledge the diversity in human experiences that is not captured in psychological research.
- Critique existing empirical literature based on participant population and suggest alternatives for future research.

Post-Activity Discussion Questions (follow up activities)

1. What did this help you understand about your own identity and how it is represented in psychological science?

Credit to: Missy Beers, Carol Wilkinson, Jeremy Newton, Ameer Almuaybid, Madeleine Gorges, Amy Westerfield, Melissa Grinley

Activity Notes (for Instructors Only)

- This assignment could lead to collaboratively authored student documents highlighting sources of diversity/lack thereof in marquee studies or individual student reflection

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Other resources

- Borge, M., Soto, J. A., Aldemir, T., & Mena, J. A. (2020). Building Multicultural Competence by Fostering Collaborative Skills. *Teaching of Psychology*, 0098628320977421.

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