

TEACHING BEYOND OPPRESSION: HOW CENTERING STORIES OF RESISTANCE INCREASES POLITICAL EFFICACY

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Over the last half century, public opinion research has documented a consistent decline in Americans' trust in government, most notably among younger individuals (Hosking 2019; Kahne and Westheimer 2006). In this study, I conduct an experimental analysis in a general education political science course to test whether centering learning assessments on stories of political resistance or oppression has an impact on students' political efficacy, or the belief that "political and social change is possible and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change" (Campbell et al. 1954). Preliminary data analysis indicates a statistically significant increase in political efficacy scores within the treatment group receiving the political resistance stimulus. Overall, the findings of this research suggest that counter-narratives matter. By encouraging students to view politics through a lens of resistance, educators can create transformative educational experiences that inculcate the foundational values of participatory democracy.

