

Exploring Children's Worlds by Confronting Issues of Equity and Colorblind Racism

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Background

Based on previous semesters of EDU 210: *Exploring Children's Worlds*, students who are preparing to be elementary school teachers do not have the language to talk about equity and colorblind racism. This class serves as an intervention to build awareness of the systems of privilege and oppression occurring in and around schools. Candidates participated in activities and discussions of multiple types of media, including a book about the history of school racial segregation, desegregation, and resegregation in Southeastern Wisconsin (see Miner, 2015). We investigated how candidates' thinking and definitions of equity and racism change throughout the semester by conducting pre- and post-surveys and evaluating three critical reflections. *Critical reflection* goes beyond just reacting to or describing experiences. Students must follow an evidenced-based structure based on a framework of description, importance, and action steps, adapted from Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1994). We used a mixed methods approach to analyze critical reflection of candidates' clinical experiences for definitions of equity from everyone receiving equal treatment to the preferred definition of and power evasion (Neville and reported attitudes on the COBRAS (Colorblind Racist Attitudes Scale; Neville et al., 2000).

Research Questions

Does the course change students' definitions of equity, moving them away from defining equity as a synonym of equality and toward a definition which includes differences based on need?

Does the course change students' colorblind racism attitudes, including a move toward recognizing racism in individuals and systems and explicitly demonstrating cultural empathy?

Method

Participants

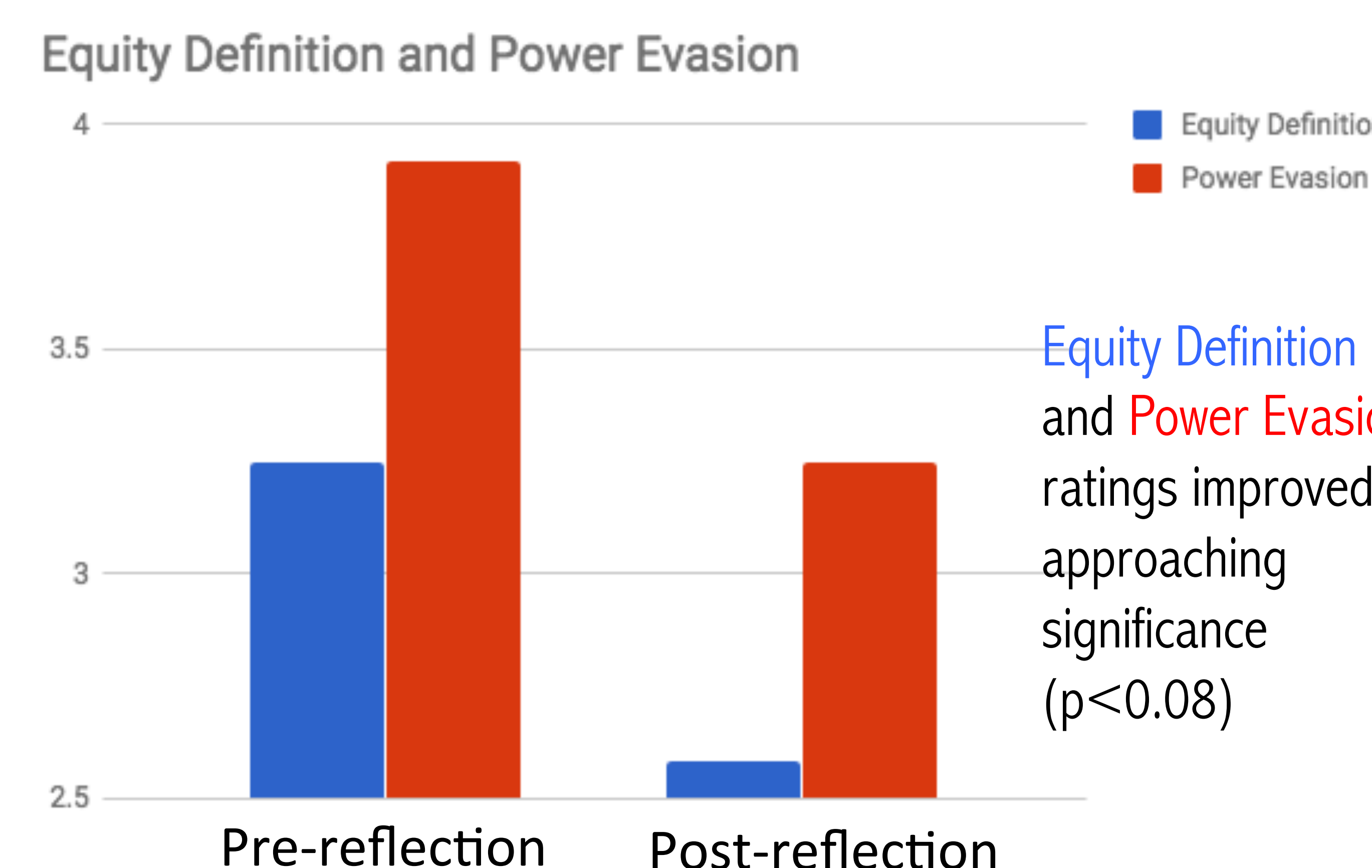
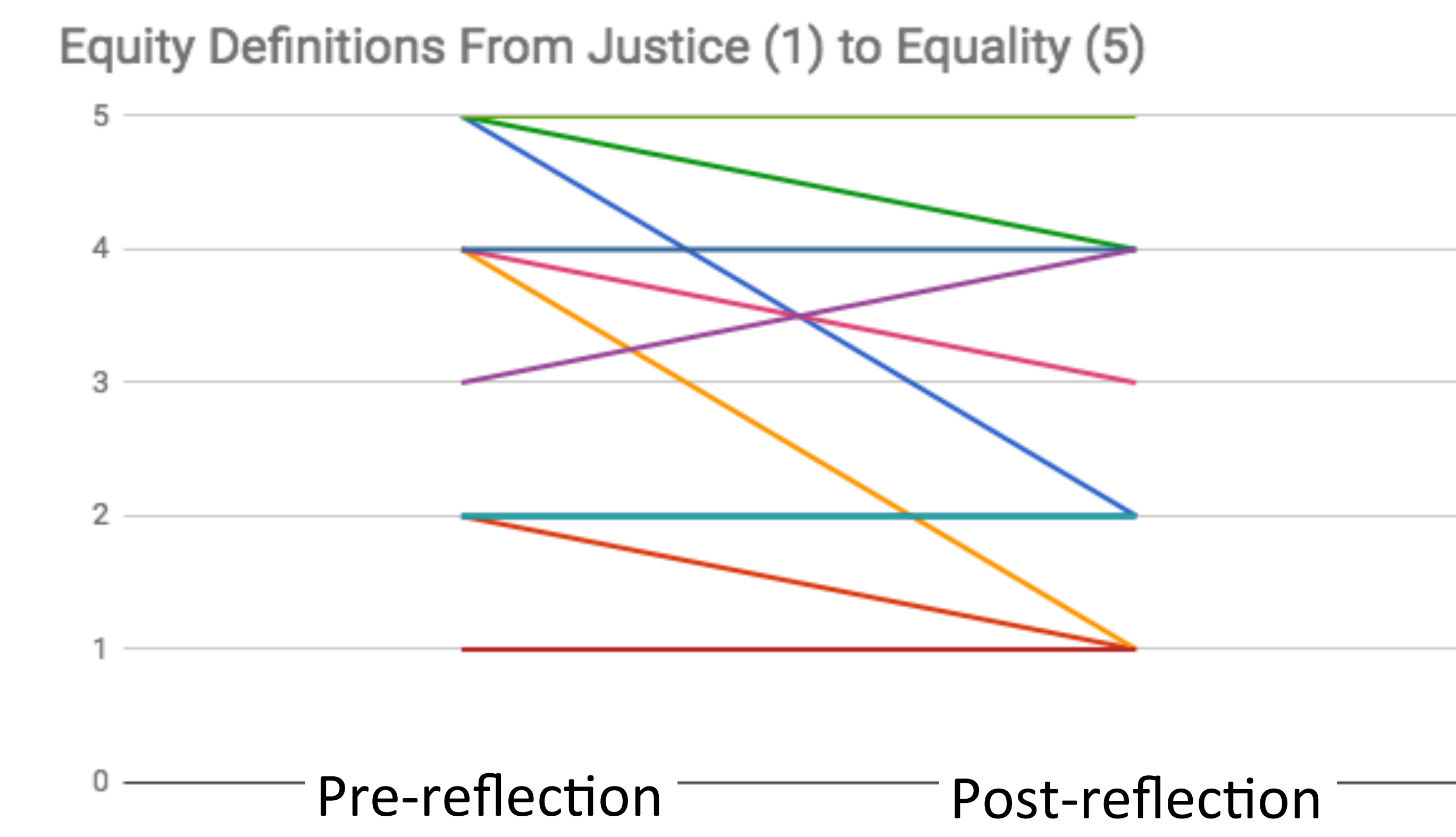
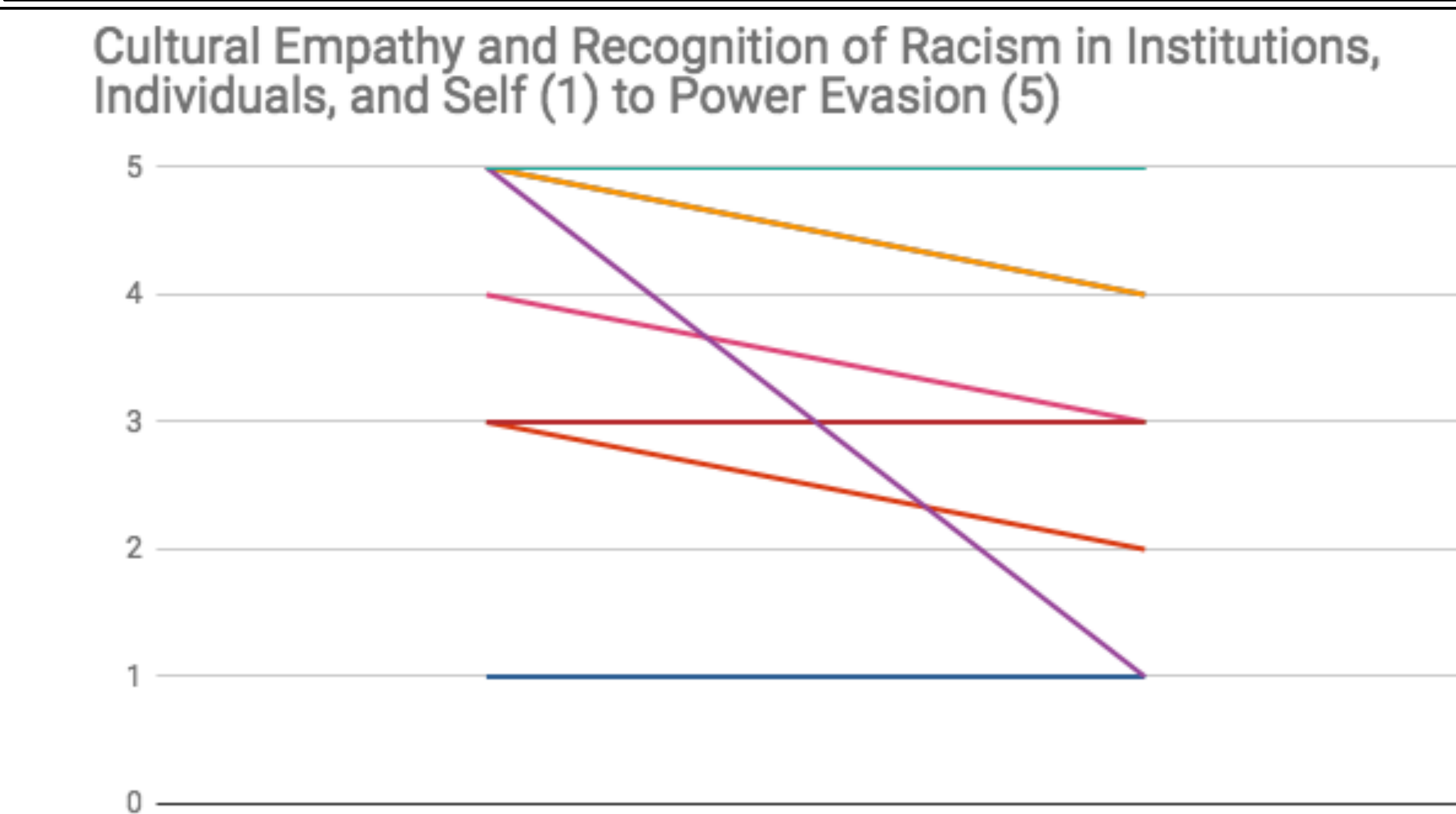
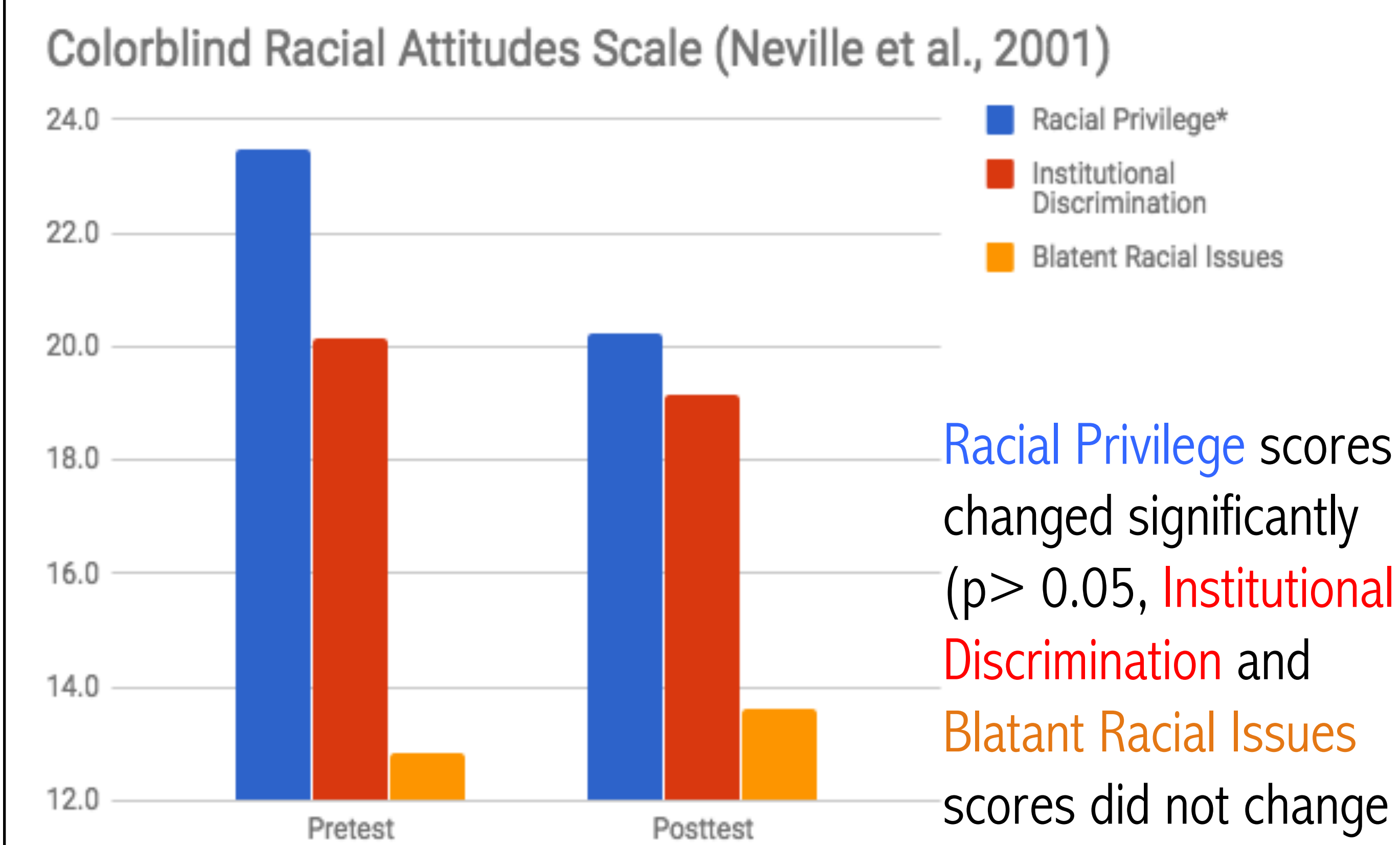
Thirteen students from EDU 210: Exploring Children's Worlds Seminar participated in this study. 100% of the participants identified as white and 92% were female. At the time of the study, they were all planning on applying for the Teacher Education program as Elementary Education majors.

Procedure

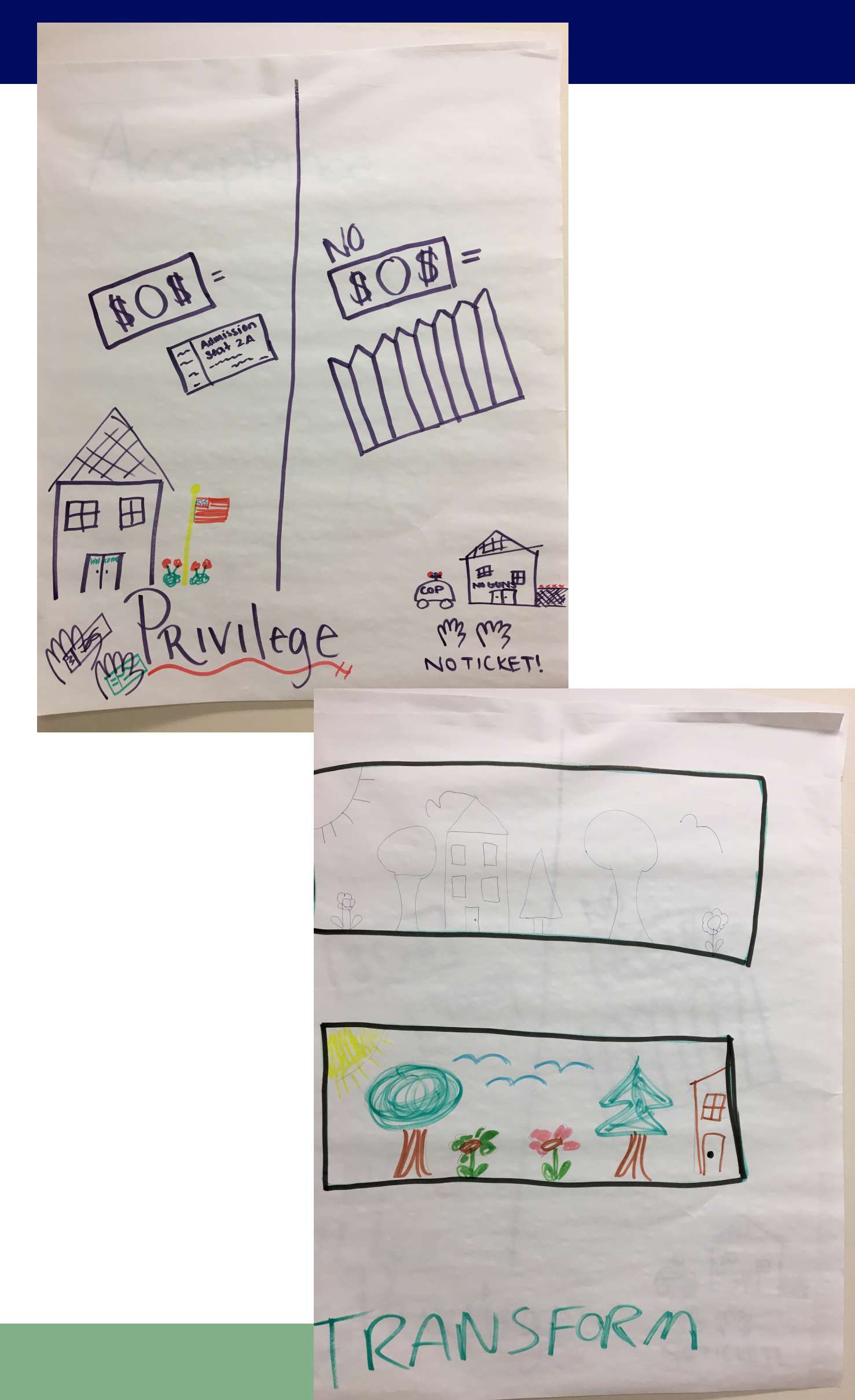
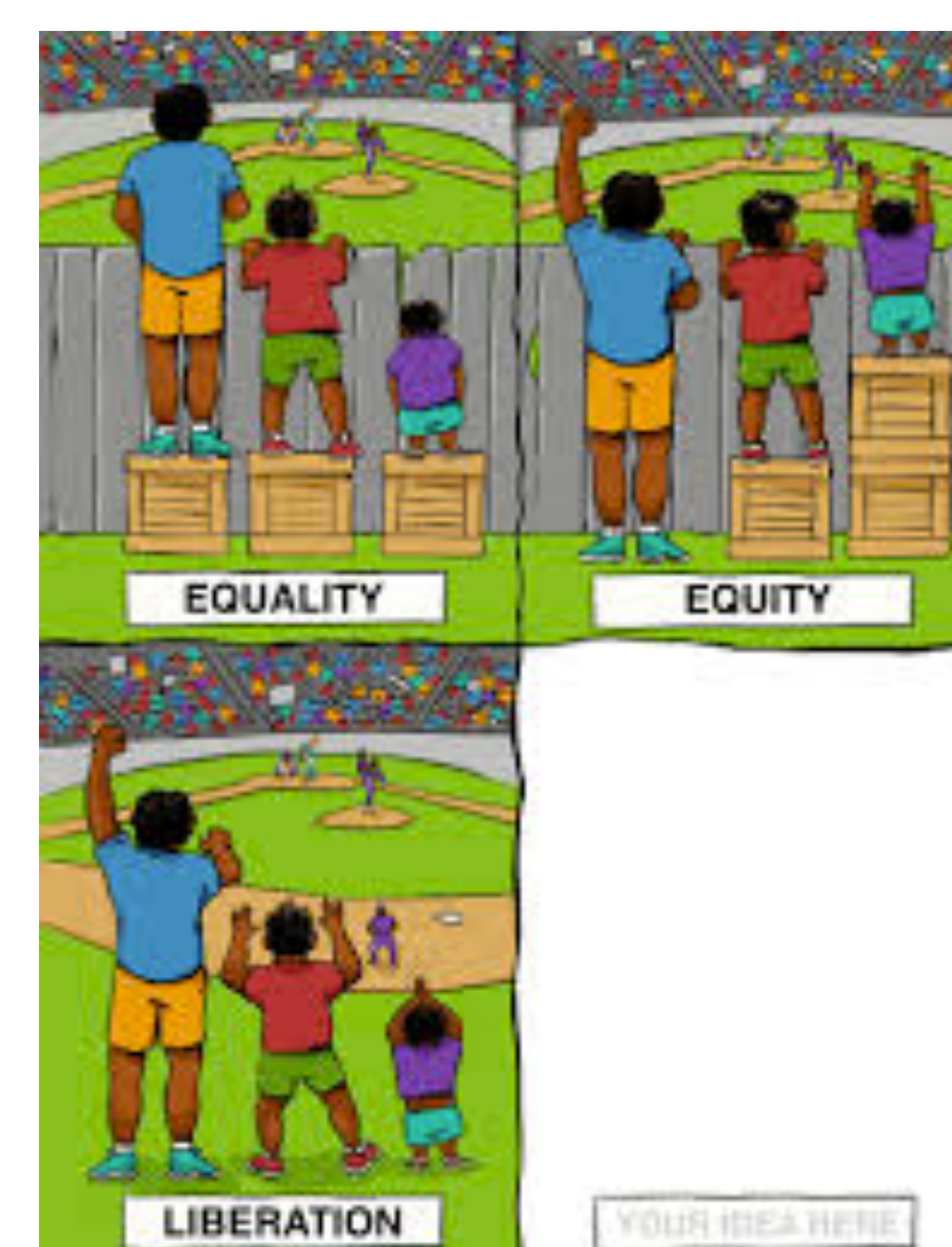
Students completed two measures during the semester, the COBRAS (Neville et al., 2000) and a critical reflection. As part of the critical reflection, they answered the following questions:

- Do you think that all people are basically treated equally in our country? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to be equitable in education?

Results



Course Activities



<http://culturalorganizing.org/the-problem-with-that-equity-vs-equality-graphic/>

Topics	Resources
Care, Bullying, Core Values	Rita Pierson: Every Kid Needs A Champion; Shane Koyczan: To This Day... for the bullied and beautiful; TheOatmeal.com/comics/believe_clean
Implicit Bias	The Implicit Bias Test; Hidden Brain: <i>In the Air We Breathe</i>
Stereotypes and Inclusiveness	Kohl, H.: <i>I won't learn from you</i> (article); Moezzi, M: <i>10 Things White People Need to Quit Saying</i> (blog)
Resegregation of Schools	Miner (2013); This American Life: <i>The Problem We All Live With</i>

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Provost's Office and OPID for their support of the Wisconsin Teaching Fellows and Scholars Program. We also thank Cyndi Kernahan and David Voelker for their able guidance this past year, Jim Robinson and Sarah Masik for their help, and the 2017-18 WTFS participants for their excellent ideas and support.

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