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# Testing the Efficacy of Brief Multicultural Education Interventions in White College Students

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This pilot study tested the overall and relative efficacy of 3 common approaches to multicultural education in a sample ( $N = 52$ ) of White undergraduate students using a randomized controlled trial. Brief multicultural education interventions were delivered in the form of educational, social norming, and entertainment conditions. Affective (i.e., White guilt) and cognitive (i.e., awareness of White privilege) outcomes of interventions were assessed. Possible causal relations between intervention condition, White guilt, and awareness of White privilege were also examined. Analyses revealed a main effect and large effect size for intervention condition. Results showed that education and entertainment conditions produced higher scores on a measure of White guilt compared with control and that the entertainment condition produced higher scores on awareness of White privilege compared with all other conditions. Mediation analyses revealed that observed changes in White guilt scores from pretest to posttest explained the relationship between intervention condition and awareness of White privilege. Findings did not support a causal ordering with changes in awareness of White privilege as a mediator of intervention condition and White guilt. Results suggest that brief multicultural education interventions are effective and that entertainment-oriented interventions may be particularly useful in terms of producing desired changes in White college students.

*Keywords:* diversity training, multicultural education, White guilt, White privilege

The impact of multicultural education on college students' racial attitudes and multicultural competence has received increased attention over the past decade (e.g., Case, 2007; Chang, 2002; Neville, Poteat, Lewis, & Spanierman, 2014). In general, studies show that multicultural education is associated with positive outcomes in college students, including reductions

in modern expressions of racism, such as color-blind racial ideology (Neville et al., 2014) and awareness of White privilege (Case, 2007). Despite advances in knowledge related to how multicultural education activities may influence racial attitudes of college students, there remains uncertainty regarding what approaches are most effective or why certain activities produce desired changes (Engberg, 2004). More studies of multifaceted outcomes of multicultural education, including cognitive (e.g., awareness of White privilege) and affective (e.g., guilt) changes among students are also needed. Therefore, the present study examined the overall and relative efficacy of three common approaches to multicultural education in White college students.

White students were the focus of the present investigation, as this group remains overrepresented in higher education (Kena et al., 2014), racism on college campuses has generally been described as a "White problem" (Garriott, Love, & Tyler, 2008), and Whites continue to assume dominant, societal positions of power (Sue,

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2003). Researchers have discussed the need to better understand White students' responses to learning about White privilege specifically, given accompanying resistance that is often encountered in response to such educational interventions (Bowman, 2010). Understanding how White students experience White privilege and White guilt concomitantly was a focus in the present investigation, as affect has been described as a critical component of learning about privilege for Whites (Todd, Spanierman, & Aber, 2010). In response to calls from researchers to examine causal links between multicultural education and student responses (Engberg, 2004), potential mediators of the effect of educational interventions on outcomes were also tested.

### Effects of Multicultural Education

Given recent increases in the implementation of diversity training and multicultural education, published accounts of their effectiveness have become more common. In a meta-analysis of the effects of multicultural education in the mental health professions, Smith et al. (2006) reported an effect size of  $d = .92$  for the impact of multicultural education on a variety of outcomes (e.g., multicultural counseling competence, racial identity, and racial prejudice) and an effect size of  $d = .46$  for the impact of receiving multicultural education versus control. Furthermore, the effect size for multicultural education interventions nearly doubled ( $d = 1.13$  compared to  $d = .61$ ) when they were described as having been based on extant theory and research. Although pooled effect sizes for studies in the Smith et al. (2006) review fell into the "medium" to "large" range (Cohen, 1988), the authors highlighted the relative lack of reporting of intervention ingredients in past research, noting that few studies included information sufficient to determine what activities were used while others did not report this information at all. Of those that did report specific intervention components, "experiential activities" were the most common (Smith et al., 2006). It should be noted that this meta-analysis was conducted on interventions implemented with mental health graduate students and professionals, who may be characteristically different from undergraduate students. For example, some of these participants may have received

previous multicultural education or diversity training or been more open to multicultural education given their participation in helping fields. Thus, how results of this study may translate to undergraduate students remains unknown.

Engberg (2004) reviewed available studies on multicultural education for undergraduate students. Studies reviewed included descriptions of outcomes for required, nonrequired, and women's studies diversity courses. Engberg (2004) included studies with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods designs in his review. Based on his review of the literature, Engberg (2004) concluded that multicultural educational interventions with undergraduates are generally effective. However, he noted shortcomings of the existing literature on multicultural education, including lack of randomized controlled trials, failure to include measures of social desirability, inadequate instrumentation, and failure to examine theoretically based mediators of interventions on student outcomes. Cumulatively, this information suggests that there is a need for more rigorous studies on approaches to multicultural education, including examination of potential mediating variables.

There is some available research addressing the relative efficacy of common approaches to multicultural education with undergraduate students. In an experimental test of three common approaches to multicultural education with White undergraduates, researchers found that a cooperation condition, in which participants read a passage describing cooperative behavior between two oppositional religious groups and coworkers, elicited the largest reductions in implicit racial bias. Researchers also found that a respect condition, in which participants read a description of respecting others' opinions, elicited the largest reductions in self-reported negative attitudes toward African Americans (Blincocoe & Harris, 2009). However, this study used priming manipulations to experimentally test each condition rather than educational activities that may be more readily used in classroom settings. Additionally, only intergroup attitudes were examined as outcome variables in this study. Researchers have identified indicators of self-awareness, such as awareness of White privilege and affect, as important variables to consider in studies of multicultural training

(Pinterits, Poteat, & Spanierman, 2009). Thus, the present study examined commonly used approaches to multicultural education and their effects on White privilege awareness and White guilt.

A limited number of studies have examined practical approaches to multicultural education and their effects on White guilt and awareness of White privilege. One study examining the effect of multicultural education on White undergraduate students' cognitive and affective reactions to racism found that a semester-long psychology of race and gender course elicited increases in students' awareness of White privilege as well as feelings of guilt (Case, 2007). However, this study implemented a nonrandomized pre-post design with no control condition and did not examine the relative efficacy of specific components of the course. In a more recent study, researchers conducted a randomized controlled trial to examine the effect of a brief video (i.e., 20-min) intervention on White undergraduates and found that the intervention resulted in reductions to students' color-blind racial ideology as well as increases in White empathy and guilt (Soble, Spanierman, & Liao, 2011). Although this study included a control condition, it also did not include alternative interventions to allow comparison of the relative efficacy of educational activities or a control for social desirability. Thus, in the present study, we controlled for social desirability and compared the relative efficacy of various approaches to multicultural education using a randomized controlled trial design.

Collectively, although previous research provides information on the efficacy of multicultural education among White students, more research is needed that examines the overall and relative efficacy of common practical approaches to multicultural education with this student group (Paluck, 2006). Given White students' overrepresentation on many college campuses and role in perpetuating racism, these findings could have practical implications for improving campus racial climates. Furthermore, no studies have examined possible mediators of the relationship between receiving multicultural education and associated outcomes in White students. Researchers have called for studies that examine why multicultural educational interventions work, as this could inform the design and implementation of future interventions

based on theory (Engberg, 2004; Paluck & Green, 2009). It has been suggested that White students may struggle when learning about their own privilege and racial oppression (Todd & Abrams, 2011). Understanding why White students respond more or less favorably to multicultural education could lead to more targeted interventions with this group. Finally, research examining the efficacy of relatively brief (i.e., 15 to 20 min) multicultural education interventions is warranted, given brief interventions can be delivered over a relatively short period of time. Thus, at institutions where White students constitute the majority of students, brief interventions could have a broad impact. We characterized our interventions as "brief" in the present study given the majority of interventions reported in prior studies have taken place over the course of a full semester (e.g., Case, 2007; Engberg, 2004) as well as to be consistent with other studies of "brief" multicultural education interventions (e.g., Soble et al., 2011).

### Mediating Mechanisms

This study examined possible causal sequencing of intervention conditions, White guilt, and awareness of White privilege. *White guilt* has been described as feelings of guilt among Whites that may develop in response to systemic inequality (Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003). *White privilege* has been defined as the systematic accrual of unearned social and psychological benefits based upon skin color (Neville, Worthington, & Spanierman, 2001). Thus, while awareness of White privilege represents a cognitive understanding of racial inequality, White guilt reflects an affective response to racial oppression. Research suggests that inducing race-related guilt in Whites leads to reductions in negative racial attitudes (Powell, Branscombe, & Schmitt, 2005) and that White guilt is positively associated with greater awareness of White privilege (Iyer et al., 2003; Swim & Miller, 1999). Although some studies suggest that awareness of White privilege may predict White guilt (e.g., Iyer et al., 2003; Spanierman, Poteat, Wang, & Oh, 2008), researchers have called for additional research that examines the causal link between these two variables in the context of receiving multicultural education (Case, 2007).

Theoretically, exposure to educational interventions that highlight racial disparities and the existence of White privilege could lead to increases in White guilt, which in turn could account for self-reported acknowledgment of White privilege. This causal chain would support existing theoretical models of privilege awareness and social justice-focused education. For example, Buckley (1998) asserted that social justice and humanitarian education should lead to affective reactions in learners (e.g., guilt), which should in turn lead to intellectual dimensions of understanding why oppression exists (e.g., awareness of White privilege). In a qualitative study of White students' experiences of service learning, researchers found support for a process in which "trigger events" led to feelings of guilt, which in turn led to acknowledgment of privilege (Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, & Davi, 2007). Alternatively, receiving multicultural education could produce changes in awareness of White privilege, which could then lead to higher levels of White guilt. This causal sequencing would be consistent with prior experimental research examining induction of White privilege and collective guilt (Powell et al., 2005). Because no studies have examined causal relations between receiving multicultural education, awareness of White privilege, and White guilt, we tested different causal orderings of White privilege and White guilt variables to determine antecedents and consequences of educational interventions in this study.

### Purpose of the Present Study

The present study aims to advance knowledge related to the overall and relative efficacy of commonly used multicultural education interventions among White college students. This pilot study was part of a larger research program on effective approaches to multicultural education. In a review of 284 studies devoted to laboratory and field experiments involving diversity training, Paluck and Green (2009) categorized approaches into four broader categories: cooperative learning (e.g., intergroup contact), entertainment (e.g., movies, radio, TV, and film), discussion and peer influence (e.g., social norming), and direct instruction (e.g., class readings, informational workshops, lectures). Whereas cooperative learning has received substantial empirical attention (Johnson

& Johnson, 1999), few studies have tested the efficacy of other common approaches to multicultural education. Therefore, this study compared the relative efficacy of entertainment, social norming, and educational conditions.

We hypothesized that all experimental conditions would lead to increases in awareness of White privilege and guilt relative to control. Because there is little research to suggest which approaches to multicultural education may be more efficacious than others, no specific hypotheses were made regarding relative efficacy of experimental conditions. Similarly, because no previous studies have examined causal links between multicultural education interventions, White guilt, and awareness of White privilege, no specific hypotheses were made for mediation analyses.

## Method

### Participants

Participants were 52 self-identified White college students attending a medium-sized private university in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States (U.S.). Approximately 67.3% ( $n = 35$ ) of the sample identified as female while 32.7% ( $n = 17$ ) identified as male. Average age was 19.92 years ( $SD = 0.47$ ). By class rank, participants identified as first year (40.4%,  $n = 21$ ), sophomore (38.5%,  $n = 20$ ), junior (13.5%,  $n = 7$ ), and senior (7.7%,  $n = 4$ ). Participants described the geographic region in which they grew up as "rural" (15.4%,  $n = 8$ ), "suburban" (71.2%,  $n = 37$ ), and "urban" (13.5%,  $n = 7$ ). When asked to describe the makeup of their friendship group, participants reported "more than 25% White" (9.6%,  $n = 5$ ), "more than 50% White" (34.6%,  $n = 18$ ), and "more than 75% White" (55.8%,  $n = 29$ ). Participants rated the degree of their exposure to other races as "no exposure" (1.9%,  $n = 1$ ), "small amount of exposure," (25%,  $n = 13$ ), "moderate exposure" (40.4%,  $n = 21$ ), and "high exposure" (30.8%,  $n = 16$ ).

### Procedures

An a priori power analysis was conducted to estimate the necessary sample size for this pilot study. Existing meta-analyses of multicultural education interventions (e.g., Smith et al., 2006)

and studies examining brief multicultural education interventions (e.g., Soble et al., 2011) were reviewed. Based on this literature, we estimated a population effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of .95. Assuming an alpha level of .05, 52 participants were required to achieve power of .80. Following institutional review board approval, students were recruited from classrooms for a study examining "educational practices and social attitudes."

The flow of participant recruitment into the study is summarized in Figure 1. A total of 222 students provided contact information to be scheduled into one of the four study conditions. These students were sent a link via e-mail to schedule a designated time to participate in the study through a secure website. One hundred five students signed up to participate in the study and were contacted via e-mail and telephone by a research assistant to remind them of their scheduled participation time and date. A total of 73 students attended and completed their scheduled intervention, 52 of whom identified exclusively as "White" on the demographic form.

Participants were randomly assigned on arrival to the study into one of four conditions.

Students participated in small groups and were asked to avoid communicating with one another during study procedures. Interventions were proctored by trained research assistants and took place in private classrooms. Each educational intervention lasted between 15 and 20 minutes, and participants completed measures before and after the intervention. Measures of awareness of White privilege and White guilt were completed at pretest and posttest. Social desirability was assessed at pretest only. Following completion of study procedures, participants received a \$10 gift card.

### Measures

**Awareness of White privilege.** Participants' awareness of White privilege was assessed with the Racial Privilege subscale of the Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000). The Racial Privilege subscale includes seven items rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). For the present study, one item was reverse-scored such that higher scores were indicative of high awareness of White privilege. A sample item is, "White people in the U.S. have certain advan-

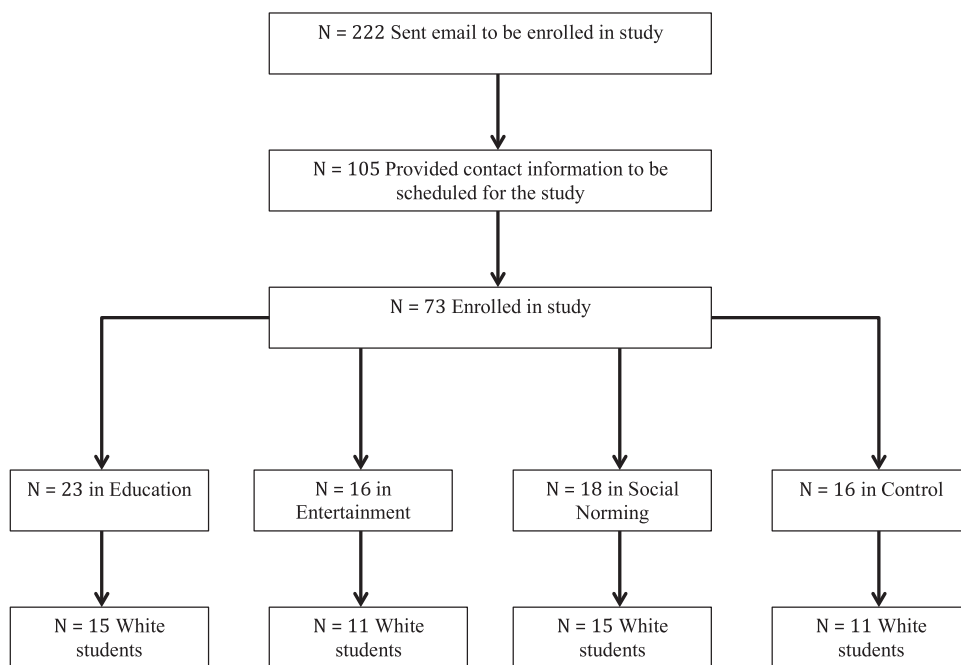


Figure 1. Flow of participant recruitment in the present study.

tages because of the color of their skin.” Concurrent validity for the scale has been shown through significant correlations in expected directions with other CoBRAS subscales as well as theoretically related measures of racism and discrimination. Discriminant validity for the scale has been demonstrated through a nonsignificant correlation with a measure of social desirability (Neville et al., 2000). Coefficient alphas for scores on the Racial Privilege subscale have ranged from .71 to .83, whereas two-week test–retest reliability for scale scores was .80 (Neville et al., 2000). Coefficient alpha for scale scores in the present study was .73 at pretest and .81 at posttest.

**Guilt.** Race-related guilt was measured with the White Guilt subscale of the Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites scale (PCRW; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004). The White Guilt subscale includes five items rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) with high scores indicative of high levels of guilt. A sample item is, “Being White makes me feel personally responsible for racism.” Convergent validity for the subscale has been demonstrated through significant correlations with subscales and total scores on the CoBRAS as well as measures of ethnocultural empathy and discrimination. Divergent validity has been shown through a nonsignificant correlation with a measure of social desirability (Spanierman & Heppner, 2004). Coefficient alpha for scale scores on the White Guilt subscale have ranged from .73 to .81, whereas two-week test–retest reliability was .69 (Spanierman & Heppner, 2004). Coefficient alpha for scale scores in the present study was .72 at pretest and .80 at posttest.

**Social desirability.** The Impression Management (IM) subscale of the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; Paulhus, 1994) was used to assess participants’ socially desirable responding. The IM subscale consists of 20 items rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A sample item is, “I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.” Items are averaged with higher scores indicating high levels of impression management. Scores on the IM subscale have been shown to positively correlate with scores on lie scales and role-playing measures and Cronbach’s alphas for IM scale scores have ranged from .75 to .80. Coefficient

alpha for scale scores in the present study was .80.

## Interventions

All interventions were developed in consultation with experts on multicultural education and were pilot tested to ensure they could be delivered in brief (i.e., 15 to 20 minutes) format. Consultants were deemed to be “experts” based on their previous history conducting research on, or serving as campus leaders for, multicultural training. Interventions were designed to address differential access to opportunities and resources because of skin color (i.e., White privilege). Protocols were developed for each intervention condition and research assistants were trained prior to delivery of interventions.

**Education.** McIntosh’s (1998) seminal writing on White privilege, “*White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack*,” was read by participants in the Education Condition. The reading outlines 26 examples of the daily effects of White privilege and is frequently used in multicultural education (Sammons & Speight, 2008).

**Entertainment.** A video clip entitled “True Colors,” from the series *Primetime Live* (Pearce & Ross, 1991), was viewed by participants in the entertainment condition. The video clip documents the differential treatment received by one Black and one White man in daily interactions with others across several different situations (e.g., buying a car, renting an apartment, purchasing music). The video has been used in prior studies (Soble et al., 2011) and has been described as an effective approach to multicultural education (Daniels, 2009).

**Social norming.** For the social norming condition, a White, male graduate student with experience advocating for racially inclusive educational practices developed and video recorded a personal narrative recounting his experiences unlearning racism and confronting White privilege. The narrative was reviewed by the first author, who made recommended changes to its format and delivery to maintain consistency with other educational interventions in the study. Several iterations of this process occurred until a final version was reached. The Social Norming condition was formatted to be similar to guest speaker educational interventions, which are frequently used

in multicultural education and training (Hepner & O'Brien, 1994; Neville et al., 1996; Malott, 2010).

**Control.** Participants in the control condition viewed a video that addressed the career development of young adults. The video did not include any information regarding race or racial privilege.

## Results

### Preliminary Analyses

**Data screening.** The Missing Values Analysis function in SPSS 23.0 was used to examine patterns of missing data. Little's missing completely at random (MCAR) test was nonsignificant ( $\chi^2 = 3.21, p = .668$ ), suggesting missing values were not related to any variables in the study. Examination of missing data patterns revealed percentages of missing data ranging from 0.0% for White Privilege and White Guilt scales to 5.8% on the IM subscale of the BIDR. A total of three cases were observed to have missing data on the BIDR, however examination of missing values indicated none of these participants had excessive (i.e., more than 20% of items missing data) missing data on the scale. Thus, mean substitution was used to handle these missing values (Parent, 2013). All variables met acceptable levels of skewness and kurtosis ( $<|11|$ ).

**Pretest differences.** Means, standard deviations, and correlations among main study variables at pretest are included in Table 1. No demographic variables were significantly correlated with main study variables. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to test for pretest differences between groups before main analyses. Results of this

analysis showed that there were no differences between groups at pretest before receiving interventions, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .93, F(2, 48) = .50, p = .80, \eta^2 = .03$ .

### Primary Analyses

**Overall and relative efficacy.** The overall and relative efficacy of interventions was tested using a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). We used Cohen's (1988) criteria for interpreting effect sizes in primary analyses (.01 = small, .06 = medium, .14 = large). Intervention condition was entered as the independent variable and posttest measures of Racial Privilege and White Guilt were entered as dependent variables. Pretest scores on Racial Privilege and White Guilt as well as social desirability were entered as covariates. Results of the MANCOVA were statistically significant, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .69, F(2, 42) = .50, p = .017, \eta^2 = .17$ . Univariate tests revealed a main effect for intervention condition on White Guilt  $F(3, 42) = 4.44, p = .008, \eta^2 = .24$ . Specifically, the Education condition ( $M = 3.28$ ) elicited significantly higher levels of White Guilt compared to Control ( $M = 2.60$ ). The Entertainment condition ( $M = 3.51$ ) resulted in higher scores on White Guilt compared with the Social Norming ( $M = 2.99$ ) and Control conditions. The Social Norming condition failed to produce significantly higher scores on White Guilt compared with other experimental or control conditions.

Univariate tests for Racial Privilege were not statistically significant,  $F(3, 42) = 2.20, p = .101, \eta^2 = .14$ . Because the effect size for this test fell into the "large" range (Cohen, 1988), we examined statistically significant mean differences between conditions. Results showed

Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Variables at Pretest*

Variable	Possible score range	Observed score range	1	2	3
1. White guilt	1–6	1.00–6.00	—	.30*	-.11
2. White privilege	1–6	1.57–5.71		—	.11
3. Social desirability	1–7	2.05–5.30			—
<i>M</i>			2.80	3.79	4.02
<i>SD</i>			0.93	0.89	0.66

Note.  $N = 52$ .

\*  $p < .05$ .



that the Entertainment condition ( $M = 4.27$ ) produced statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) higher mean scores on the Racial Privilege scale compared with Education ( $M = 3.81$ ), Social Norming ( $M = 3.76$ ), and Control ( $M = 3.72$ ) conditions. No other significant mean differences were found. Table 2 includes a summary of significant differences between intervention conditions and effect sizes.

**Mediation.** Change scores were computed for White Guilt and White Privilege scales from pretest to posttest to determine whether changes in these variables explained the relationship between intervention condition (experimental condition vs. control) and outcomes at posttest. The SPSS PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) was used to test mediation effects. A bootstrapping procedure was conducted to generate 10,000 random bootstrap samples from the dataset. The 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (CI) for these bootstrap samples were used to test for significant indirect effects, with confidence intervals not including zero indicative of statistical significance. Bootstrapping is the preferred method for testing mediation effects, particularly in relatively small samples, as it has been shown to have greater statistical power compared to other methods (Mallinckrodt, Abraham, Wei, & Russell, 2006). Results of these analyses showed that White guilt mediated the relationship between intervention condition and White privilege ( $\beta = -.23$ ,  $CI = [-.677, -.031]$ ,  $p = .016$ ), but that White privilege did not mediate the relationship between intervention condition and White guilt ( $\beta = -.02$ ,  $CI = [-.296, .378]$ ,  $p = .378$ ). These results suggested that the effect of intervention on aware-

ness of White privilege could be explained by changes in White guilt.

## Discussion

The present research advances the study of multicultural education in several ways consistent with recommendations in prior literature (Engberg, 2004). This study is one of very few to examine the overall and relative efficacy of commonly used approaches to multicultural education in White college students using a randomized controlled trial design and one of the only to examine several different approaches concomitantly. Furthermore, this study elucidates possible causal sequencing involved in White students' exposure to educational interventions, experience of White guilt, and acknowledgment of White privilege.

The hypothesis that all intervention conditions would lead to increases in White guilt and awareness of White privilege was partially supported. Although large effect sizes were observed for intervention conditions, only the Entertainment condition resulted in significantly higher scores on both dependent variables compared to control. Furthermore, the Education condition resulted in higher White guilt scores compared with control. The Social Norming condition did not lead to significantly higher scores on White guilt or White privilege relative to control. In terms of relative efficacy, the Entertainment condition outperformed Social Norming in increasing White guilt scores and participants in the Entertainment condition reported higher awareness of White privilege scores at posttest compared to Education and

Table 2  
*Statistically Significant Intervention Contrasts and Effect Sizes*

Contrast	Mean difference	<i>p</i> value	$\eta^2$
White guilt			
Education > Control	0.23	.005	.13
Entertainment > Control	0.91	.002	.09
Entertainment > Social norming	0.52	.038	.00
White privilege			
Entertainment > Education	0.18	.039	.04
Entertainment > Social norming	0.51	.026	.15
Entertainment > Control	0.55	.031	.10

*Note.* Effect sizes correspond to Cohen's (1988) criteria for interpretation: .01 = small, .06 = medium, .14 = large.

Social Norming conditions. The effect sizes observed in this study were similar to prior research, with the exception of the univariate effect size found for White guilt, which was larger compared with prior research examining brief multicultural education interventions (Soble et al., 2011).

The overall performance of the Entertainment condition relative to other experimental conditions and control suggests this educational intervention may be particularly useful with White college students. It is notable that the Entertainment intervention was the only to include data relevant to the experience of ingroup advantage (i.e., White privilege) and outgroup disadvantage (i.e., racial discrimination) simultaneously. It is possible that exposure to the daily experiences of racism and discrimination faced by people of color in the film resulted in higher scores on dependent variables compared to other interventions, which were more focused on White individual's experiences. The documentary nature of the film may also help explain the performance of the Entertainment condition, as it may have been more difficult for participants to discredit or minimize the information presented than in other conditions. Indeed, when information related to racism and White privilege is presented by White individuals it is not uncommon for them to be viewed as "race traitors" and subsequently discredited by their White peers (Kivel, 2002). This may, in part, help explain the results obtained for the Education and Social Norming conditions.

More research is needed that examines how multicultural education interventions delivered by Whites are received. For example, preliminary research suggests that African American instructors teaching race-focused diversity courses are perceived as being more biased whereas European American instructors are perceived as possessing less content expertise (Littleford, Ong, Tseng, Milliken, & Humy, 2010). Future studies could examine mediators and moderators of various educational interventions delivered by White individuals and their outcomes. Examples of such variables might include perceptions of expertise, perceived similarity, and likability.

Results of mediation analyses indicated that the relationship between intervention condition and awareness of White privilege was mediated by White guilt. These results suggest that White

students receiving race-focused multicultural education may be more willing to acknowledge the existence of White privilege because of education-induced guilt. Although this finding helps elucidate causal sequencing that may be involved in the receipt of multicultural education and associated cognitive and affective outcomes, more research is needed on how guilt may relate to consequences of educational interventions for White students. In a study of the relationship between White guilt and racial attitudes, researchers found that moderate levels of guilt were more strongly associated with favorable racial attitudes compared with low and high guilt scores (Spanierman, Poteat, Beer, & Armstrong, 2006). Additional social psychological research indicates that White guilt may impede prosocial racial attitudes and that an opportunity to reaffirm one's personal integrity may buffer this effect (Harvey & Oswald, 2000). Future studies could examine whether threshold effects exist for the relationship between guilt induction and modern racism attitudes for White students receiving multicultural education. Additionally, future research could examine how self-affirmation may be included in multicultural education interventions to augment feelings of race-related guilt among Whites.

## Implications

Findings from this study suggest that multicultural education delivered in a brief format is a promising intervention for White college students. Participants in the present study appeared to respond particularly well to an Entertainment condition in which experiences of racial discrimination and privilege were highlighted. Thus, presenting students with real-life examples of individual's experiences with privilege and oppression may be a useful educational strategy. Documentary films may be one way diversity educators can present these lived experiences. Diversity educators may benefit from using the interventions described in this study within the classroom or workshops devoted to White privilege. Importantly, the brief format of interventions used in the present study allows them to be implemented in a short period of time and potentially with a large number of students. Given that many diversity courses may include large class sizes or require cover-

age of a large number of topics, the ability to use brief educational activities may be an attractive option for instructors. Furthermore, findings related to guilt as a mediator of the effect of intervention condition on awareness of White privilege suggest that educators should not dismiss the potential facilitative aspects of discomfort in White students' learning in multicultural courses. However, it is noteworthy that the Education condition in the present study led to higher levels of White guilt, but not awareness of White privilege compared with control. Thus, it is possible some multicultural education activities could stimulate negative affective responses, but not the desired effect of increasing awareness of systemic privilege and oppression. It is imperative that future research address adaptive strategies for coping with discomfort that may arise in multicultural education activities. Such research could assist with better understanding why some students acknowledge systemic forms of oppression when receiving multicultural education whereas others may express resistance and defensiveness.

### Limitations

Several important limitations of the present investigation should also be noted. First, participants in the current study all attended a private university with an above average tuition rate relative to other U.S. higher education institutions. Furthermore, females constituted a substantial majority of participants. Thus, unique characteristics of the present sample may limit generalizability of findings. Additionally, this was a pilot study with a relatively small sample size and limited number of outcome variables to preserve statistical power. Future studies with larger samples and a greater number of outcome variables are needed to replicate our findings. This study also did not assess effects of interventions over time. Rather, participants were surveyed before and immediately after receipt of educational activities. Thus, participants were not given the opportunity to process information prior to completing posttest questionnaires. This methodological approach may not be consistent with actual classroom practices, in which students are typically given the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon course material. Therefore, interpretations made from this study should be tempered by the fact that educational

interventions—although potentially useful in classroom settings—may not have been delivered within a “real world” format.

The brevity of the educational interventions used in this study also raises questions about the depth of change participants may have experienced. Similarly, our study was not longitudinal and it is unclear how our interventions may perform over time. For example, although a student may experience temporary gains in awareness of White privilege as a consequence of receiving a brief intervention, it remains unclear whether deeper or sustainable changes in attitudes or behavior can be achieved through brief approaches to multicultural education. Research on college students' health behaviors shows that 15- to 20-minute interventions can lead to lasting changes in attitudes and behaviors (Martens, Smith, & Murphy, 2013). Additional research is warranted to assess whether brief multicultural education interventions can have a similar impact with White college students. Finally, all participants in the study were White, and findings may not be relevant for students of color. Additional studies are needed to better understand the unique experiences of these students to ensure multicultural education is effective for all.

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