

R.E.F.O.R.M. Café: Understanding Perceptions Related to Frontline Social Justice Reform Among College Students

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Abstract

Using the World Café methodology to generate small group constructive dialogue, the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café was created to provide an opportunity for undergraduate students attending a historically Black college and university (HBCU) to voice their concerns about pragmatic components of social justice work. The findings from the study extend the body of knowledge related to undergraduate perceptions on social justice education and change agency in frontline positions. Major discussion topics revolved around perceptions and preparation to act as change agents. Themes emerging from the conversation included individual accountability to serve as a change agent, use of role authority to act as a change agent, importance of supportive environments to African American student success, and desire for improved pedagogy related to race equity reform. Recommendations from the study may assist educators and social justice reformers statewide to improve course content and curriculum rooted in social justice reform.

Keywords: social justice education, race equity reform, change agents

Introduction

In contemporary America, social injustice is ubiquitous, and the state of Florida is no exception. Social injustices are not the result of any one inequity or system. Racially disparate and inequitable operations and outcomes in any organization create, sustain, exasperate, amplify, and even reintroduce the self-perpetuating systemic inequities that keep justice beyond our reach. The self-perpetuating nature of inequity prolongs the dissemination of known racial disparities, making existence within society a dangerous place for marginalized communities.

The fight for equity needed to combat the attendant diminution in the quality of life for marginalized communities is only possible if individuals throughout various systems join in social justice work. Social justice reform depends on social actors, whose sense of their own agency to effect change as well as their sense of social responsibility toward others, with others, and society as a whole guide their actions (Adams et al., 2007). The social justice idea that equity is attainable in every facet of society results from identifying and understanding social power dynamics, social inequities, fair treatment, and impartiality. Honoring the dignity and the right of every individual and group to have basic needs met regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, gender identity and expression, language, national origin, worldview, physical or mental (dis)ability, or education is a fundamental social justice concept (National Education Association, 2019). Racism is a social expression of power and privilege which (dis)advantages individuals and groups based on race and is supported by individual, institutional, and systemic policies and practices that benefit dominant groups. The interdependent aspects of racial inequity collectively open the door to the possibility that changing a single contributing factor can advance social justice by influencing, mitigating, and reducing specific (instances of) racial disparities (Washington Johnson, 2019). Thus, individual

awareness of their authority to disrupt oppression and improve race equity is a prerequisite to their taking up the work.

Education, income, and wealth disparities are interconnected with race inequities. Existing government programs and services are vital in addressing symptoms of racial inequity; however, the persistence of racial inequity across all indicators of success leaves no doubt meaningful progress toward racial equity requires focusing on the policies and institutional strategies that perpetuate those inequities (Cahalan et al., 2019). Although attention to policy change often focuses on initiating a top-down approach to change institutional and systemic inequities, individual action must be considered as a viable path for considering the need and mechanisms for reform. More specifically, people at the bottom of an organization, considered frontline employees, must be able to identify and take action against inequities (Oshry, 2007a). Presently, social justice education is a response to disparity—systemic social justice education is an answer to that disparity.

Social justice education is comprised of curriculum strategies that incorporate a variety of pedagogies to include intergroup dialogues, lectures with discussion courses, and service learning (Brown, 2004; Krings et al., 2015). Triggering and developing a student's ability to use themselves as an agent of change may be accomplished through social justice education. Florida's schools, colleges, and universities must prepare students to accept individual accountability to create effective change within systems/organizations as they enter frontline employment for effective social justice reform work to occur. The capacity to create change is obsolete when individuals are unaware of their ability and authority to address problems. Therefore, education, training, and community engagement emphasizing social justice must keep in mind that the planning and implementation of any reform initiative requires action at all levels to include cultivating change agency among students.

Understanding undergraduate student perceptions of the tools and impact of change agents is essential if universities are to adopt curricula that produce the change agents needed on the frontlines of social justice reform work. Race equity exists when race cannot be used to predict life outcomes. Freire (1970/2018) argued that improving the broken systems and structures that fail people of color will benefit all groups. Racial inequity is a social justice issue whose solution requires normalizing conversations about race and operationalizing strategies for advancing racial equity.

Justice Reform Community

The Justice Reform Community (JRC) was established at a historically Black college and university (HBCU) in Florida as an interdisciplinary approach to planning and delivering programs to build the Annie E. Casey Foundation Florida HBCU Juvenile Justice Talent Pipeline (FL Pipeline). The FL Pipeline is a thought partnership between the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) and faculty of Florida's four HBCUs. In the initial stages of development, the FL Pipeline faculty cohort were trained to design courses and combine the AECF pipeline strategy with its leadership development approach before joining in the work of preparing graduates to enter juvenile, criminal, or social justice-related fields with a race equity lens to be agents of system change rather than perpetrators of the status quo.

For planning and delivering of programs to be effective, the JRC developed a result statement to include a call to action and a commitment to faculty purposefully engaged in research, scholarship, and pedagogical practices. The statement was specifically intended to empower diverse frontline juvenile, criminal justice, and social justice professionals to competently employ a race equity reform skill set. A faculty learning community, student leadership development program, and the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café, which is the focus of this study, are each JRC programs advocating the role-driven race equity reform orientation that grounds the FL Pipeline work at the HBCU in this study.

The JRC faculty learning community leads integration of role-driven race equity reform orientation and skills into existing course content by collecting and creating instructional resources. The authors

of the current study created the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café to increase knowledge of how to train students to be change agents in frontline positions while also generating recommendations to further develop effective practices for race equity reform in education.

A role-driven race equity reform orientation calls upon individuals to hold themselves accountable to pursue opportunities to use themselves as agents of race equity reform in the face of inequitable or disparate organizational operations and outcomes (Washington Johnson, 2019). R.E.F.O.R.M. is an action tool created to help faculty and students incorporate the role-driven race equity reform orientation when identifying racial inequity, taking up personal accountability for influencing practices, or implementing role-level strategies to combat social injustices with innovative approaches to mitigate those inequities (Washington Johnson, 2019). The R.E.F.O.R.M. action tool includes the following:

1. ***Recognize racial inequity*** in organizational operations and/or outcomes.
2. ***Evaluate the factors*** that contribute to specific racial disparities and disparate processes.
3. ***Formulate a strategy*** to change a contributing factor within your boundaries of authority.
4. ***Own your responsibility*** for implementing the strategy formulated for change.
5. ***Revise the strategy*** to resolve issues raised by reviewing progress.
6. ***Mobilize stakeholders*** using adaptive leadership.

Using the R.E.F.O.R.M. action tool may help students identify racial inequities by *recognizing* and *evaluating* contributing factors with the potential to enable them to *formulate* and implement realistic plans to influence those factors, which is the hallmark of taking *ownership* of the responsibility to advance reform by incorporating stakeholder interests into innovative practices that undermine systemic forces marginalizing communities. In this way, the R.E.F.O.R.M. action tool may help students be transformational leaders who align, *revise*, and *mobilize* their contributions to race equity reform (Pillsbury & Goddard-Truitt, 2015; Roberto, 2011; Washington Johnson, 2019).

The current study uses the findings from the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café, to establish a baseline of undergraduate student perceptions to help guide the planning and implementation of curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular efforts aimed at preparing students for a lifetime of effective social justice work. Understanding student perceptions is key to critical pedagogy related to social justice education (Kincheloe et al., 2011).

R.E.F.O.R.M. Café

In an effort to generate a discussion related to social justice reform work, undergraduate students enrolled in criminal justice courses were provided the opportunity to participate in the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café. The R.E.F.O.R.M. Café was modeled after the World Café, which is a small group conversation method that encourages a facilitated dialogue to gain knowledge and actionable solutions in a café-style environment (Brown & Isaacs, 2005). The intent of the café-style environment is to create an atmosphere that allows for multiple perspectives and is welcoming and non-judgmental to the participants (Tan & Brown, 2005). Previous studies incorporating a social justice framework in fields related to mental health (Morrow et al., 2011; Morrow & Weisser, 2012), social work (Dempsey et al., 2011; Fouché & Light, 2011; Tan & Brown, 2005), and nursing (Dawkins & Solomon, 2017; Kempnich & Costanzo, 2014) have used the World Café methodology to initiate a dialogue and extend knowledge related to the respective fields. Additionally, the World Café method is used to provide youth with an opportunity to express themselves, be heard in a safe environment (Cook et al., 2019; Pennell, 2014), and encourage youth participation for social change (Adebiyi et al., 2018; Meriläinen et al., 2018). More specifically, the World Café approach is applied within professional

education programs and research initiatives for undergraduate students (Page & Temple-Malt, 2018; Terry et al., 2015).

Considered a “simple, yet powerful conversational process,” the World Café method for participatory research functions to gain individual and collective knowledge (Brown et al., 2007; Brown & Isaacs, 2005; Page & Temple-Malt, 2018) and establishes an interactive learning environment (Anderson, 2011) to allow students to be more comfortable in creating a dialogue related to social justice reform work. The methodology used for the World Café may be considered to raise awareness of systemic and institutional operations that need to be changed (Font-Guzman, 2014). This method avoids a top-down approach, which allows all participants the opportunity to engage and share their perspectives as experts of their own experiences, in a collaborative learning environment (Tan & Brown, 2005). The current R.E.F.O.R.M. Café is structured to provide an opportunity for students to impart their insights through a dialogue that requires educators to listen to conversations, enabling a better understanding of perspectives often marginalized (Kincheloe et al., 2011). Using this approach allows pedagogy related to social justice education to be integrated into and further developed for future programs and curriculum (Kincheloe et al., 2011).

At present, minimal research is available relating to student awareness of their authority to act as a change agent within a role-driven race equity reform strategy. While the perceptions among educators and community activists who champion social injustices are well-known (Brown, 2004), perceptions of undergraduate students related to social justice reform are not well understood, especially among students who attend HBCUs (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2002; Johnson, 2005; Nickels et al., 2011). Without discourse, assimilating the personal and professional knowledge of social injustices may be difficult. By including dialogues in social justice education, students are free to voice their opinions while also contributing to the pedagogical strategies that improve recognition of racial disparities, thereby empowering students to act as change agents (Brown, 2004).

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of undergraduate student perceptions related to social justice reform work. Students who participated in the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café had an opportunity to voice their concerns about pragmatic components of social justice work as they continue to take actions necessary to be agents of change, now and in frontline positions.

Method

Within social justice research, qualitative methodology allows for a restructuring of power among researchers and participants to gain a better understanding of perspectives from marginalized populations (Page & Temple-Malt, 2018). For this study, the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café was created following guidelines for qualitative research by using the World Café methodology to invoke small group constructive dialogue. Undergraduate students attending an HBCU in Florida voiced their concerns about pragmatic components of social justice work. They also shared perceptions of their own capacity to be agents of change, now and in frontline positions.

Participants

A total of 15 undergraduate students between 18–25 years old and enrolled in a criminal justice course participated in the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café. The event consisted of three conversation tables with three to four participants per table. Of the 15 participants the majority were Black with the exception of two students who identified as White and one student who identified as Asian.

The R.E.F.O.R.M. Café Design

The R.E.F.O.R.M. Café was designed to reflect the seven principles of the World Café (Brown & Isaacs, 2005; World Café Foundation, 2015). These principles consist of:

- set the context
- create a hospitable space
- explore questions that matter
- encourage everyone to participate
- connect diverse perspectives
- listen for patterns and insights
- share collective discoveries

Additional efforts were made to include the use of round tables with white paper to write and/or sketch reflections from the conversation. Coffee and snacks were available to add to the ambiance of the café event (World Café Foundation, 2015).

The authors for the current study hosted the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café and recruited faculty (with a social justice background) to facilitate dialogue as table hosts and graduate students to serve as notetakers. Prior to the event, table hosts and notetakers received a short training. At the beginning of the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café, a short presentation welcomed participants and shared the purpose of the FL Pipeline, JRC, and R.E.F.O.R.M. Action Tool. An outline of the event was provided to participants (see Appendix), which consisted of three conversation rounds with three conversation tables.

Following the presentation, the first of three rounds began. Each round was approximately 15–20 minutes in length. In between each round of questions, there was a brief transition before beginning the next conversation round. Although participants were able to choose a new conversation table at the start of each round, table hosts and recorders remained stationary to allow for intermixing of participants with the table hosts. Participants were free to choose whether to contribute to the conversations. During each round, the three conversation tables discussed the same pre-selected questions relating to social justice reform and change agency. The following are examples of the questions:

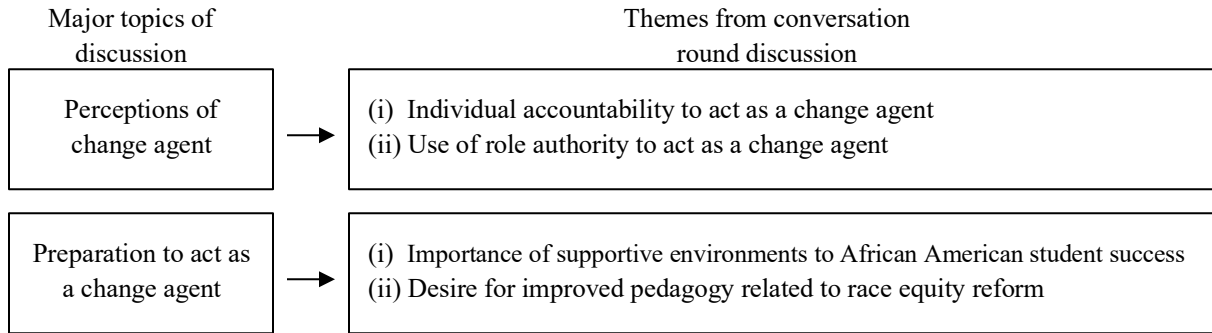
1. What is a change agent/race equity reformer?
2. Discuss whether or not you believe individuals at all levels of an organization can align the way they complete tasks to decrease racially disparate outcomes.
3. What barriers or constraints do you think change agents/race equity reformers in entry-level positions confront?
4. How has the host institution helped or prepared you to act as a change agent/race equity reformer?
5. What can the host institution do to help overcome barriers or constraints in curriculum, instruction, or campus life when acting or preparing to act as a change agent?

After the event, designated note takers at each conversation table provided detailed manual notes to the hosts. The majority of notes were taken with bulleted and paraphrased information with a few direct quotes. The notes were then transcribed and organized by question into a single document, hand-coded, and then analyzed to identify the key themes.

Findings

Several themes emerged in the current study related to undergraduate perceptions of social justice reform work, which include the following: (a) individual accountability to act as a change agent, (b) use of role authority to act as a change agent, (c) importance of supportive environments to African American student success, and (d) desire for improved pedagogy related to race equity reform. Figure 1 provides an overview of the major discussion topics and emerging themes.

Figure 1. Overview of the Topics and Emerging Themes from the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café.



Individual Accountability to Act as a Change Agent

The first question of the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café asked participants to define change agent/race equity reformer. During the discussion, individual accountability to act as a change agent emerged as a theme. A student defined a change agent as “someone who is trying to make a change either socially, or politically.” Another student defined a change agent as “a person who works to minimize or eliminate the negative effects that come along with being a minority.” All participants in the event considered themselves to be a change agent in some capacity. Several students expressed an intention to help reduce or eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in occupations related to law, criminal justice, and social work after graduation. In contrast, one student said, “You don’t always have to do in order to be a change agent.” Similarly, a student stated, change agency may be “intentional or unintentional.”

Representative bureaucracy theory assumes that a public organization is most efficient when frontline employees and the citizens they serve share demographic characteristics. This assumption is grounded in the expectation that people with shared social demography have similar values and civil servants’ values will mitigate inequities in organizational outcomes (Andrews et al., 2016). The literature distinguishes the *passive* from *active* representation (Andrews et al., 2016; Bradbury & Kellough, 2008, 2011). Passive representation is the symbolic procedural legitimacy and equitable access attendant to descriptive representativeness. Active representation is an effect of active advocacy, which includes the interests of affinity groups in daily decision-making (Andrews et al., 2016; Bradbury & Kellough, 2008, 2011). Participants in this study identified with passive and active representation. Some students committed to future careers advocating for people of color, while some students of color indicated they are change agents simply by being part of marginalized groups. A student explained, “just being in the position I’m in as an African American male adds [change agent] to the accomplishments” he has achieved. Another student indicated, “being a double minority provided a unique perspective to share with others.” Both statements are indicative of an implicit belief that change agency can be defined by impacts rather than actions—passive and active. These demographic dependent perceptions appear to be distinct from students’ descriptions of active and passive representation when initially defining change agent.

Use of Role Authority to Act as a Change Agent

Participants articulated several distinct perceptions related to using formal and informal role authority to act as a change agent. The use of power (formal authority) and interpersonal interactions (informal authority) to provide access to opportunities for others emerged when asked to discuss whether or not individuals at all levels of an organization can align the way they complete tasks to decrease racially disparate outcomes. Their perceptions regarding the relative ease with which those at the top and

bottom of organizations make policy changes are consistent with Oshry's work addressing the vertical distribution of power (Oshry, 2007b; Oshry & Prewitt, 2001). Oshry (2007b) defined "tops" as system developers, with power to strengthen, or weaken, system capacity to effectively respond to the environment. Tops create the formal mechanisms that inform all members of system conditions and of their roles in making the system work (Oshry, 2007b; Oshry & Prewitt, 2001). Participants agreed upper and middle managers can implement policy changes through formal authority while frontline employees can influence policy changes through interpersonal interactions. A student explained, "everything is (about) person to person interactions," therefore, hiring diverse frontline employees with different perspectives shows managers "will appreciate different outlooks" to increase the importance for frontline staff to share ideas with people in power. Another student explained, "once you go higher up in a position you gain more power and a higher voice" to implement policies. The importance of "catching the higher-ups" (upper to mid managers) attention and force them to make a change" was explained by another student. Oshry (2007b) expressly identifies notifying higher-ups of problems and willingness to work toward a solution as a means for frontline staff to "fix" systems.

When addressing the ability to create system change while in frontline positions, participants shared concerns related to, "walk[ing] on thin ice" and "standing up to the boss," as limitations and consequences of active representation to advance race equity reform, especially in policy driven organizations. Although participants expressed concerns about advancing system change while in frontline positions, the need for buy-in from frontline employees was discussed as a necessity to actually implement or influence any policy for changing frontline practices. Oshry (2007b) asserted the potential to be system fixers is the unique power of bottoms seen in frontline staff. Street-level bureaucracy theory holds that frontline staff, especially those working in the public sector, are often unsupervised—leaving them to use discretionary decision-making to influence change with informal role authority (Andrew et al., 2016). These beliefs about consequences and effectiveness to achieve race equity reform through the use of power and/or influence seemed to color student intentions to be change agents in frontline positions, which lead to a discussion on preparation to act as a change agent.

Importance of Supportive Environments to African American Student Success

When asked how the host institution has helped or prepared students to act as a change agent/race equity reformer, the importance of supportive environments to African American student success was emphasized. Participants described attending an HBCU as a "level playing field" and "(safe) place for self-expression compared to Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs)" among students of color. A student explained attending an HBCU, "exposed me to a different culture...showed equity reformers within the culture to help [me] become a reformer on my own" through interactions with various professors. Another student explained, "coming here opened my eyes on the Black community and the issues" while others discussed the increased awareness related to racial and ethnic disparities impacting societies. Educators are fundamental to increasing social awareness of inequities and incorporating social justice education (Lalas, 2007). Those who aspire to create an environment that supports social justice education must incorporate a multicultural perspective into a student-centered approach to teaching (Hackman, 2005), needed to create a supportive environment for African American student success. According to Arroyo and Gasman (2014), the nature of support in the environment is critical to African American student success whether at HBCUs or PWIs. Substantial similarities in racial, ethnic, and cultural background that engender the feelings of safety, comfort, and support from peers, faculty, and administrators, is the foundation of African American student success (Arroyo & Gasman, 2014; Guiffrida, 2005; Johnson, 2005). The supportive environment attends and moderates the iterative processes of achievement, identity formation, and value cultivation, factors that contribute to African American student success (Arroyo & Gasman, 2014; Johnson, 2005).

The intent of social justice educators is to instill the confidence and skills students need to participate in political, civic, and multicultural activism (Brown, 2004; Krings et al., 2015; Nickles et al., 2011). R.E.F.O.R.M. Café conversations suggest faculty expectations are influential in motivating participants to consider change agency. Participants spoke favorably of faculty who point students to examples of race-related change agents while simultaneously discussing ways faculty undermine development as a change agent. A student explained that development as a change agent may be impacted when, “too many chances are provided to students,” shielding them from the negative consequences of decisions. A consensus emerged around the idea that there is a point at which compassion becomes counterproductive and leniency undermines students’ developing accountability, which erodes the motivation of students who comply with initial expectations of faculty. Rigor and rhetoric in the classroom should be considered when contemplating how to prepare students to act as change agents. Muller (2012) encourages social justice educators to inform the delivery of existing course content with an understanding of the importance of including solutions and mindfulness of the nuances of motivation. Success means training lifelong learners who are able to trust and draw from their own experiences and using lessons learned through experiential and informal instruction, which is the foundation of all learning (Muller, 2012).

Desire for Improved Pedagogy Related to Race Equity Reform

Increased political and multicultural activism is found among students who participate in social justice education courses related to social justice issues, using social justice pedagogies (Krings et al., 2015). When asked what the host institution may do to help students overcome barriers or constraints in curriculum, instruction, or campus life when acting or preparing to act as a change agent, the desire for improved pedagogy, especially “more updated curriculum to prepare students to act as change agents” was expressed by participants. Students may deconstruct institutional barriers and defy the status quo when classrooms provide the necessary tools (Nickles et al., 2011). Curriculum focused on social justice education incorporates a variety of pedagogies including intergroup dialogues, lecture courses with integrated discussion, and service learning (Brown, 2004; Krings et al., 2015). Pedagogies focused on civic engagement, information literacy (i.e., social problem literacy), and critical literacy enable savvy information consumerism, critical evaluation, and cultivate the habit of attention to contextual influences (Lowry, 2016). Participants said they want faculty to “meet them where they are.” By creating a learning environment that connects new knowledge to students’ lived experiences, histories, and cultures, and an interest to learn beyond traditional methods of knowledge storing, educators may encourage critical thinking skills through learning approaches that include problem-based learning (Muller, 2012). Participants shared the desire for the host institution to focus more on leadership and experiential learning opportunities that provide “real-world experience through internships” with more realistic workplace environments to better prepare students to be change agents upon graduation. The need for the host institution to provide opportunities that emulate a more realistic workplace environment with expectations to prepare or act as a change agent was also discussed.

In addition to updating curriculum, the suggestion of creating a mission statement related to race equity reform, which is reiterated while attending the institution and reinforced post-graduation, was discussed as a means to instill values for change agency and race equity among participants. Establishing a social justice mission statement with which students agree may develop shared values to engage in social justice reform work (Torres-Harding et al., 2015). Incorporating a mission statement with service-learning and experiential learning related to social justice reform work may better prepare students to take action as change agents in frontline positions.

The findings from this study provide additional insight into preparing students to act as change-agents within frontline employment upon graduation and may be used by educators to plan and modify pedagogical practices related to social justice education among undergraduate students.

Undergraduate students who participated in the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café explained race equity reform does not always involve institutional action but requires results on an individual level. Students indicated a desire for increased faculty relationships that cultivate mentor-like professionalism rather than familial-like personal relationships to enhance class and pedagogical structures in preparing for change agency. The integration of the ideas of change agency and race equity reform into curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular activities would increase student awareness of the ability to advance and catalyze race equity reform from all levels of an organization.

Discussion

This study adds pragmatic concerns of undergraduates at an HBCU to literature related to student perceptions of social justice work. Equally important, the findings deepen understanding of undergraduate perceptions of change agents who catalyze social justice reform in frontline positions. Questions during this R.E.F.O.R.M. Café focused on racial inequity; however, the method and implications are transferable to social justice education efforts in Florida.

Students' comments across rounds indicated individual definitions of "change agent" were synthesized into a shared understanding that allowed them to refine perceptions of individual change agents and perceptions of change agency—the work of social justice. This progression is illustrated by the fact some students were initially unfamiliar with the term "change agent" but used their familiarity with the mechanisms of grassroots movements to contribute to conversations. An interesting consistency across discussions of change agency on the frontlines of both community and workplace is the absence of express intentions to own reform efforts (i.e., organize and lead marches, town hall meetings, workplace affinity groups, conversations about race and other disparities with coworkers, union organizing, etc.) despite ready identification of their potential or assertions of their necessity when describing effective race equity reform. These findings are similar to preservice education teachers who lacked a blended teacher and social justice reformer identity (Moore, 2008). There was some agreement that the change needed to achieve race equity reform requires the use of power and/or influence. Whether students believed using power in this way would limit a reformer's career progress or whether they believed there are limits on what the use of an individual's power can achieve is unclear.

Instructional design and interpersonal interactions during adaptive challenges will need increased emphasis on motivating faculty and mobilizing students to own responsibility for role modeling and self-regulation, respectively. Success will result in new ways to create the supportive environment central to student advancement and result in graduates better skilled in the accountability necessary for professional success, which is fundamental to role-driven race equity reform orientation.

The R.E.F.O.R.M. Café, following the World Café model from which the study was derived, may be a versatile and powerful tool for social justice education's frontline professionals. The R.E.F.O.R.M. Café provided a safe, structured space for constructive conversation. Using this methodology may provide students the opportunity to develop oral communication and collaborative learning skills, potentially refining and expanding their understanding of change agents across discussions of various pragmatic aspects of social justice work. These same findings raise questions about the way prior knowledge or shared experience might change the depth and quality of R.E.F.O.R.M. Café conversations. These questions highlight an aspect of this study that is a limitation.

Limitations of the Study

The generalizability of the findings is limited to students who have enrolled in at least one criminal justice course at an HBCU. In addition, prior experience and/or knowledge related to social justice work and change agency was not obtained to establish a baseline for participants. Therefore, the level of professional and personal experience may differ among participants, which may influence

perceptions and preparation needed to act as a change agent. Furthermore, participants of the study are limited to students who attend a public HBCU and does not take into consideration the perspectives of students who attend the private HBCUs in Florida, most of which have ties to religious organizations.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies related to undergraduate perceptions on social justice work should take into consideration the inclusion of HBCUs located throughout the state of Florida. The addition of students from multiple HBCUs located in Florida will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the perceptions undergraduates attending HBCUs have of social justice work. Currently, there is no known research study related to social justice work and perceptions of undergraduates attending private HBCUs. Moreover, institutions with foundations in religious organizations have the potential to provide a more encompassing perspective of undergraduate perceptions at all public and private HBCUs in Florida. In addition, future research should consider conducting a longitudinal study documenting the collegiate experience of first year students through matriculation. A longitudinal study may provide a deeper understanding of pedagogical practices essential to transformational experiences that prepare students as change agents and race equity reformers for frontline positions. Participants should also include students from various disciplines, such as health sciences and education, in addition to the criminal justice field. The demand for social justice education and change agents within the health care and education systems is necessary to mitigate the health and quality of life inequities continuing to impact marginalized communities today.

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Appendix

Outline of the R.E.F.O.R.M. Café event shared with participants.

R.E.F.O.R.M. Café

HBCU Juvenile Justice Talent Pipeline

PARTICIPANT

Thank you for agreeing to participate during today's R.E.F.O.R.M. Café! Your role is imperative to our success. There are three (3) conversation rounds that will discuss selected questions located at the end of this pamphlet.

We anticipate approximately 15 minutes to discuss the question(s) assigned to each conversation round (Round). The Table Hosts' primary role is subtly interject follow-up questions and signals into the conversation so that (1) all participants are encouraged and allowed to share his/her wisdom; (2) key themes from the discussions are captured through written notes; (3) moving the conversation away from stuck points and toward the next question(s) of the Round.



SCHEDULE:

3:30 - 3:45	Gathering & Welcome
3:45 - 4:00	Round 1
4:00 - 4:15	Round 2
4:15 - 4:30	Round 3
4:30 - 4:45	Wrap-up
4:45 - 5:00	Debrief (Optional)

NOTE: Table Hosts may choose to briefly (2 min max) share the main themes, and questions from discussion in the preceding Round when welcoming participants during Rounds 2 & 3.