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Culturally Responsive Teaching and Religious Diversity

Emily Oegema
Hope College

Grace Critchfield
Hope College

Jacob Humbert
Hope College

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Thesis:

With the ever-increasing classroom diversity, developing competency in culturally responsive teaching is critical to successful teacher preparation. Culturally responsive teaching values diverse students' cultures and utilizes them to maximize instructional effects for each student. Keeping in mind that Hope College is a Christian Institution, there may be some religious biases and unique challenges compared to a public university. We predict that people with low prior knowledge about the world's various religions will agree more on these stigmas because they base their opinion on common stereotypes rather than facts. Consequently, higher exposure to cultural diversity in education will result in students forming more informed views on religions and their stereotypes. In return, students will develop into more effective and culturally responsive teachers.

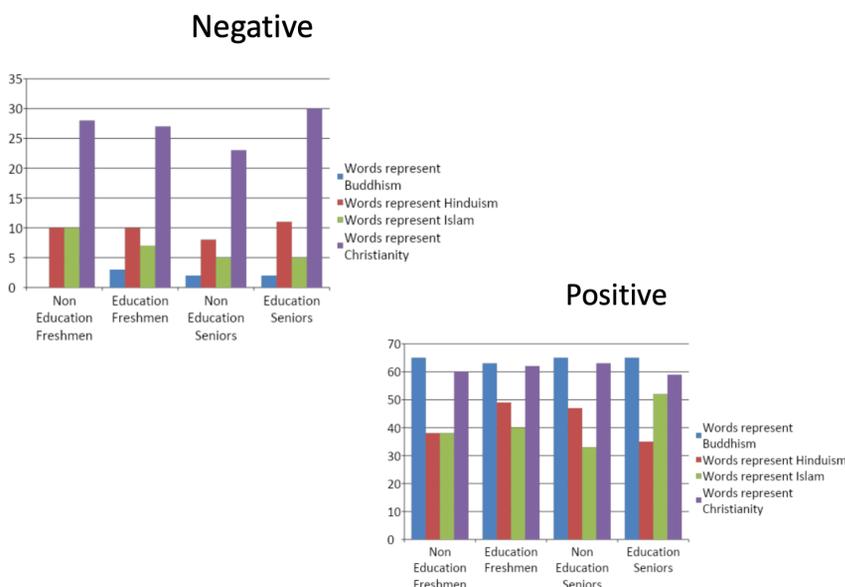
Conclusions: Stereotypes

There are people who base their responses on bias, and there are people who base their responses on prior knowledge. We found that bias is inevitable in society today, and all four of our study groups based their responses on these common stereotypes.

Personal Beliefs

When dealing with the religion that students have a higher prior knowledge in, college students tend to interpret information more in depth. This can be seen in Part 1: Depths of Interpretation. There was most disagreement when discussing words that were associated with Christianity.

Part 1: Depths of Interpretation



Student responses from all four study groups had a common pattern of disagreement when selecting what word, positive, neutral, or negative, to select when given a word associated with a religion.

Part 2: Association

	Positive Buddhism	Negative Islam
Non-Ed Freshman	34 (58%)	26 (48%)
Ed Freshman	42 (46%)	48 (53%)
Non-Ed Senior	42 (46%)	48 (53%)
Ed Senior	38 (63%)	38 (66%)

“Usually refers to increased self-understanding, generally associated with peace and contentedness” – Freshman Non-Education Student on Buddhism

“Once again I don't practice it but I am not opposed to others involved in it.” – Senior Education Student on Islam

Students chose words based on religious stereotypes. Students often selected Buddhism when given a more positive word and Islam when given a more negative word.

Non Education Freshmen		Chi-sq. = 45.092, df = 6, p < .001
	Islam vs. Christianity	Chi-sq. = 23.283, df = 2, p < .001
	Buddhism vs. Christianity	Chi-sq. = 24.12, df = 2, p < .001
Education Freshmen		Chi-sq. = 57.713, df = 6, p < .001
	Islam vs. Christianity	Chi-sq. = 41.680, df = 2, p < .001
	Buddhism vs. Christianity	Chi-sq. = 28.037, df = 2, p < .001
Non Education Seniors		Chi-sq. = 44.333, df = 6, p < .001
	Islam vs. Christianity	Chi-sq. = 31.393, df = 2, p < .001
	Buddhism vs. Christianity	Chi-sq. = 16.423, df = 2, p < .001
Education Seniors		Chi-sq. = 53.417, df = 6, p < .001
	Islam vs. Christianity	Chi-sq. = 26.352, df = 2, p < .001
	Buddhism vs. Christianity	Chi-sq. = 16.423, df = 2, p < .001

Sample size:
Education freshman: 31
Education senior: 22
Non-education freshman: 20
Non-education senior: 20

	Overall differences
Non-Ed Freshmen	Chi-sq. = 65.859, df = 6, p < .001
Ed Freshmen	Chi-sq. = 96.880, df = 6, p < .001
Non-Ed Seniors	Chi-sq. = 96.880, df = 6, p < .001
Ed Seniors	Chi-sq. = 111.251, df = 6, p < .001

Quote

“By learning more about each other and our various religious traditions and beliefs, we can begin to minimize discrimination, which results from either misinformation or lack of information” (Jafralie and Zaver 90).

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