Sharing Strengths and Struggles in the Classroom and Beyond: Results from the Teaching Community Psychology Survey

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Sharing Strengths and Struggles in the Classroom and Beyond: Results from the Teaching Community Psychology Survey

Abstract

Research on the state of community psychology (CP) in undergraduate education is scarce. This lack of understanding within the discipline hinders the ability to learn from CP educators' experiences and disseminate effective practices. To begin to address this gap, the current study distributed a survey to CP educators located within the United States, exploring the following questions: 1) what are the demographics, locations, and roles CP-related educators occupy, 2) what are the biggest challenges educators encounter in and outside of the classroom when teaching CP-related content, and 3) what additional resources/supports do educators need from both their institution and the larger professional field to deliver high quality CP educational experiences. Responses from participants (N=44) highlight diversity in educators' positions and geographic locations, as well as the prominence of a CP focus across departments. Applying an ecological framework, findings indicate that educators encounter multiple systemic challenges while teaching CP-related content at the departmental, institutional, and local community levels. At a national scale, the political climate regarding public education also contributes to instructional barriers. Assessment of resources regarding needed support systems and action within the field are provided. Lastly, we stress the value of future research concerning faculty teaching undergraduate CP courses.

Introduction

The teaching of community psychology (CP) has garnered well-deserved attention in recent years. For instance, the Council of Educational Programs, an interest group within the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA), published an article examining the core competencies in research and practice for training within graduate programs (Christens, Connell, Faust, Haber, & the Council of Educational Programs, 2015). Additionally, the 2017 SCRA Biennial in Ottawa, Canada marked the formation of a new interest group focused on undergraduate student education. These efforts coincide with an increasing emphasis on the domains of service learning, civic engagement, and community-based partnerships within undergraduate education (Bringle & Steinberg, 2010; Peterson, 2009; Sandmann,

Thorton, & Jaeger, 2009), all of which reside within the CP wheelhouse.

As efforts build surrounding undergraduate education within CP, exploratory research is needed to better understand the professional landscape, challenges, successes, and experiences of faculty implementing CP pedagogy. Ongoing research efforts are critical in beginning to document and disseminate effective practices. Furthermore, exploratory inquiry fosters collegial self-reflexivity. Thus, sharing information about the strategies, pitfalls, and challenges educators encounter in their profession can support CP junior faculty in navigating institutional challenges (e.g., documentation, tenure, promotion, etc.). Lastly, as the field of CP pushes to increase diversity in representation, introducing non-traditional undergraduate students to CP concepts can

provide unique outlets and pipelines for further expanding the field. In sum, the value of this project is three-fold: 1) to learn from the experiences of and 2) disseminate the resources provided by this sample of CP educators (N = 44), as well as 3) to showcase the potential value of completing future comprehensive surveys of faculty teaching undergraduate CP courses.

In the sections below, we highlight existing scholarship on CP education including breadth, training, and content. Our review includes the number of universities offering CP-related courses, the types of CP-related courses offered, and prominent pedagogical challenges for educators in service learning courses. Notably, existing literature addressing these topics is scarce, thus highlighting the importance of a needs-assessment to map out the current professional landscape of CP in relation to undergraduate education.

Undergraduate CP Courses

Data on the prevalence of undergraduate course offerings in CP-related content and programming is limited. Aubry, Sylvestre, and Ecker (2010) compared the number of undergraduate CP courses offered in Canada in the 2000s (i.e., 2008-2009 academic year) and the 1990s (i.e., 1992-1994 academic years). They identified a slight increase in the number of universities offering undergraduate courses as well as the number of courses offered (19 universities, 32 CP-related courses in the 1990s compared with 25 universities, 38 CP-related courses in the 2000s; see Table 1). Findings highlight the need to track the positions of CP faculty within the United States, and the number of programs offering CP courses.

Table 1.

Undergraduate community psychology courses offered

	Decades	
Comparison Characteristics	1990s	2000s
Universities offering CP courses	19	25
# of Courses offered	32	38

In terms of content, CP courses have predominantly focused on prevention, empowerment, and decolonization (Barton et al., 1976; Carolissen, Canham, Fourie, Grahm, Puleng Segalo & Bowman, 2017; Sandler & Keller, 1984), heavily implementing problem-focused learning, visual methodologies, program evaluation, and service learning practices (Aubry et al., 2010; Barton et al., 1976; Carolissen, et al., 2017; Dawes, 2018; Sandler, & Keller, 1984; Schilts, Harker, & Gardner, 1977; Strage, 2000; Visser & Cleaver, 1999). These courses are typically offered as upper division electives (i.e., an optional course for students in their final year) allowing for flexibility in instructor design and engagement (O'Sullivan, 1993).

One challenge identified in the community-based and service learning literature that could also be present while teaching CP-related courses is time, as it can be difficult to adequately implement a community-based intervention within a single academic term (Carolissen, et al., 2017; Dawes, 2018). Time constraints also impede the ability of students and faculty to build trusting relationships with community partners (Mclean, Johnson, Eblen, 1977; O'Sullivan, 1993). Furthermore, CP-related courses can

be time consuming for instructors, requiring additional preparatory work, planning, and coordination, and may be particularly challenging for non-tenured faculty within departments that do not value these practices or provide relief time for service-learning. Although the service-learning literature highlights the challenges of community-based engagement, further research is needed to explore the explicit challenges of educators teaching CP-related courses, as the methodologies, pedagogies, and values of CP differ from mainstream service-learning.

Faculty Training and Development in CP

The question of who is teaching CP courses remains a gap in the current literature. Notably, are faculty that are traditionally trained in CP the individuals teaching CP-related content? While research is limited on the professional training of instructors teaching CP-related courses, we compared data sources regarding SCRA membership and background as a potential proxy for current training and teaching CP content in the domain of undergraduate education.

Prior research indicates that faculty teaching CP-related courses were trained in clinical psychology. For instance, in 1978, Andrulis, Barton, and Aponte surveyed all members of SCRA and found that while 95% of respondents held a PhD in clinical psychology, 67% had never taken a CP course. Over half of the respondents were white (95%), male (86%), and between the ages of 25 and 44 (66%). The field's diversity has increased over the past several decades. According to the recent SCRA membership database, 34% of members have a degree with a specific focus in CP, 66% are white, and 29% identify as male (see Table 2). However, survey data is limited concerning the demographics of faculty teaching CP-related courses (some of whom may not identify as community psychologists nor as a member of SCRA), thus further highlighting the need for survey research.

Table 2

SCRA Member's Demographics 1978 vs 2018 (SCRA Membership Database & Survey Data)

Demographic	1978	2018 SCRA Membership	2018 Survey Data
Race / Ethnicity	White: 95%	White: 66%	White: 76.09% Black or African American: 10.87% Asian: 4.35 % Hispanic/Latinx: 6.52% Multiracial: 2.17%
Gender	Male: 86%	Male: 29%	Male: 32.61% Transgender Male: 2.17% Female: 58.7% Transgender Female: 0% Gender Varian & Non-Conforming: 4.35% Not Listed: 2.17%
Psychology Degree	95% Clinical	34% Community	80 % Community

Due to the scarcity of literature described above, an exploratory assessment of academic positions within CP in undergraduate education is needed to further understand the diversity of positions occupied by community psychologists (and those who identify with the field), the number of universities offering CP courses and the core challenges these educators face. Notably, educators in departments without a programmatic CP focus may face additional barriers in course design, teaching, and required professional milestones for tenure. Learning from educators' narratives can help the field identify challenges, develop practices to bolster faculty success, and strategically disseminate high quality learning experiences and exposure of CP to diverse undergraduate audiences. In the section below, we discuss our own positionalities, and personal investment in understanding the field of undergraduate education within CP.

Positions of the Authors

As a collective writing group, we occupy multiple identities and spaces including: White, multiracial, cisgendered, feminist, Jewish, women, as well as first generation academics (i.e., two of us are assistant professors, and two are graduate students). Thus, we examine our results and findings with a specific lens, sociocultural background, and vested interest in furthering efforts to support junior faculty and graduate students interested in innovative teaching within the field of CP. All four authors currently reside in public, undergraduate, teaching-focused institutions; however, the first two authors have taught and trained in doctoral programs located within public research-focused institutions. Furthermore, the third author pursued her undergraduate education within a research-focused institution. Our

positionalities provide a unique opportunity to examine the convening and contrasting experiences of teaching across diverse academic settings. As juniors within our own career trajectories, we aspire to document and disseminate knowledge that can inform and support other juniors in the field (i.e., assistant professors, graduate students) in content delivery, innovating teaching pedagogy, and navigating and persevering through institutional challenges.

Methods

Survey Instrument

The development of survey questions was informed by previous research from the CP teaching and service-learning education literature (e.g., Aubry et al., 2010; Barton et al., 1976; Christens et al., 2015; Sandler & Keller, 1984; Ward, 1998). Questions were also based on the authors' experiences as CP educators. An initial draft of the survey was sent to the SCRA Council for Educational Programming and the SCRA Undergraduate Education Interest Group for review. The first two authors also piloted the survey with faculty colleagues and undergraduate and graduate CP students from their research teams. After integrating suggestions based on feedback from these groups, a final iteration of the survey was disseminated to participants electronically via Qualtrics.

The survey consisted of twenty-seven questions. Survey questions captured basic demographic information, data related to professional training, and teaching context (e.g., type of institution, teaching load). In addition, the survey included six open-ended questions about core challenges faced in teaching CP courses (e.g., *What are the biggest challenges to teaching Community*

Psychology?), and needed supports (e.g., *What additional supports or resources would help your teaching practice?*). Open-ended questions allowed for additional descriptive data to be captured surrounding participant experiences in teaching undergraduate CP content (see Appendix A for the full survey).

Data Collection

A central goal of this manuscript is to explore the landscape of teaching CP with a particular emphasis on undergraduate education, thus we utilized a purposeful sampling approach. In line with these efforts, and in collaboration with SCRA, a survey was disseminated to faculty that teach CP and related course content within the United States. The survey link was shared via the American Psychological Association and SCRA listservs and sent to department chairs in psychology and related disciplines throughout the United States. In order to identify departments, a team of undergraduate students researched 4-year universities with a psychology major across the United States. In particular, students noted courses that may have a CP-related focus. The first and second authors reached out to department chairs of each psychology department via email. These emails consisted of a list of courses within the department that may have CP-related content and instructors. Department chairs were encouraged to send the survey to faculty who teach CP-related content or identify with the discipline. The purpose of the survey was to better understand the diversity of courses, programs, and positions occupied by community psychologists, or those who identify with the field in order to gather insight on the following questions:

1) what are the biggest challenges encountered by educators in the classroom, 2) what additional resources/supports do educators need from both their institution and the larger professional field, and

3) what teaching resources (e.g., literature, films, class activities) do CP instructors consider essential to their teaching effectiveness?

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics for the demographic survey responses were calculated employing SPSS software. Qualitative data analysis for open-ended response questions utilized thematic content coding (Krippendorff, 2004). Survey responses were exported into a spreadsheet. The two leading authors grouped similar themes and sentiments together, whereas the third author provided external validity checks. Differences were resolved via discussion and consensus coding. Notably, thematic salience was determined based on the prominence (i.e., 30% or more participants indicated a similar sentiment), as well as novelty of key ideas across survey responses (Creswell, 2012).

Results

The survey solicited a total of 44 responses. Below, we highlight demographic information as well as open-ended responses concerning challenges and needed supports for facilitating high quality student engagement.

Participant Demographics and Teaching Context

To enhance the utility of our data for readers with interests in CP teaching experiences, we utilized an interactive data visualization software (Power BI) to present information on participant demographics and their teaching context (to access these data, click here). Unlike the static images typically used in publications, interactive visual displays allow readers to independently explore the data and identify patterns by simply clicking on a variable of interest. For example, Page 1 of the data visualization – Demographics & Institutions – indicates that 23% of the

Example 1. Unfiltered data

Demographics & Institutions

This page illustrates respondents' institution (i.e. region), department (# of community psychologists within the department), and personal demographic information

College Location

| All | ∨ |

University Region

Gender Identity

- Female: 26
- Male: 15
- Transgender, Gender Variant, Gender Non-Conforming, or Non-binary: 3

Community Psychology Faculty Breakdown

- Part of an official CP program: 26
- Lone CP in my department: 11
- One of several CPs, but no official program: 6

Ethnicity

- White: 34
- Black/African American, Asian, &/or Multi-Racial: 7
- Hispanic/Latinx: 3

University Region

- West: 13
- Midwest: 12
- South: 9
- Northeast: 5

Faculty Position

- Asst. Prof. (Tenure Track): 14
- Assoc. Prof. (Tenure Track): 9
- Full Prof. (Tenure Track): 8
- Adjunct Prof. / Lecturer: 5
- Non-Tenure Track Asst. or Assoc. Prof.: 4
- Graduate Teaching Assistant: 3
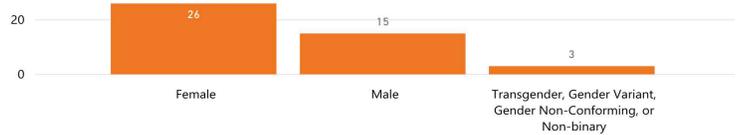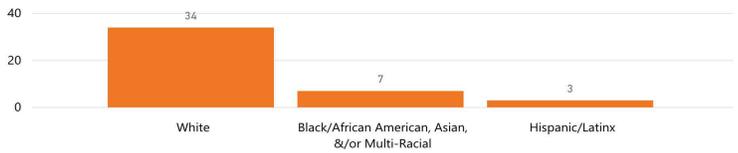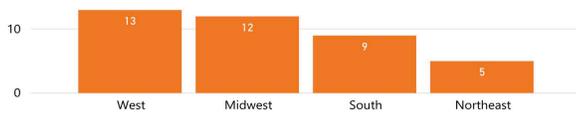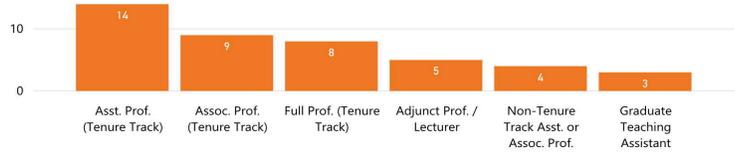
Note: Groups were combined to include three or less individuals to preserve participant anonymity

Example 2. Filtered data

Demographics & Institutions

This page illustrates respondents' institution (i.e. region), department (# of community psychologists within the department), and personal demographic information

College Location

| All | ∨ |

University Region

Gender Identity

- Female: 8
- Male: 2
- Transgender, Gender Variant, Gender Non-Conforming, or Non-binary: 1

Community Psychology Faculty Breakdown

- Part of an official CP program: 26
- Lone CP in my department: 11
- One of several CPs, but no official program: 6

Ethnicity

- White: 9
- Black/African American, Asian, &/or Multi-Racial: 2
- Hispanic/Latinx: 0

University Region

- West
- Midwest
- South: 4
- Northeast

Faculty Position

- Asst. Prof. (Tenure Track): 3
- Assoc. Prof. (Tenure Track): 5
- Full Prof. (Tenure Track)
- Adjunct Prof. / Lecturer
- Non-Tenure Track Asst. or Assoc. Prof.
- Graduate Teaching Assistant
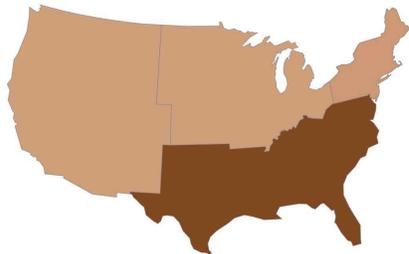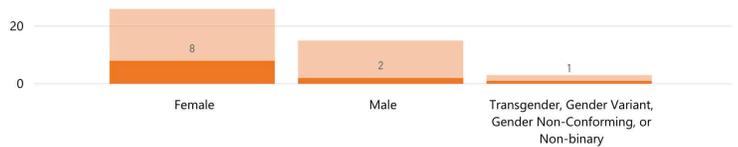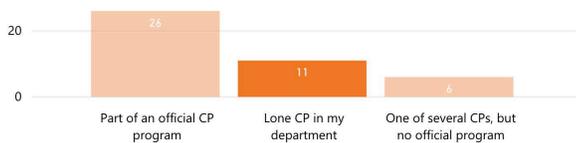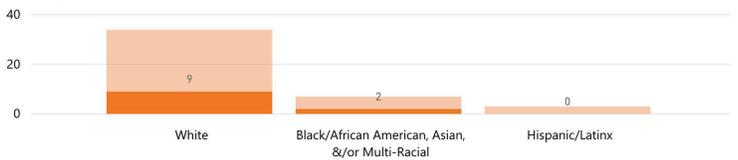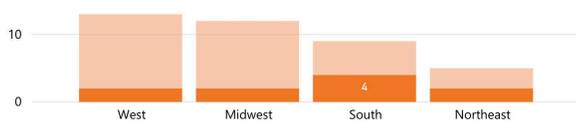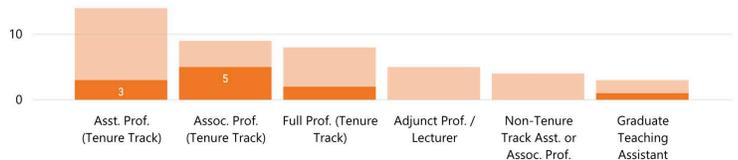
Note: Groups were combined to include three or less individuals to preserve participant anonymity

respondents reported working at an institution in the South (see Example 1 below). Clicking on the bar graph for the response "lone community psychologist in my department" will cross-filter the entire page (see Example 2). Subsequently, the data display indicates that of the 11 lone community psychologists, 40% of them reside within the South. Filters can be cleared by clicking on the bar graph a second time.

Participant demographics. Over half of the participants identified as female (59%), whereas fifteen participants identified as male (33%). One participant identified as transgender male, two as gender non-conforming, and two did not respond. In terms of race/ethnicity, thirty-five participants identified as White (76%), ten as Black/African American (10.87%), two as Asian/Pacific Islander (4.35%), three as Hispanic/Latinx (6.52%) and one as Multi-Racial (2.17%). One individual did not reply.

Institutions. Participants ranged in the geographic location of their academic institution, with thirteen located in the Northwest (33.33%), twelve located in the Midwest (30.77%), nine in the South (23.08%), and five in the Northeast (12.82%). Click here to explore data visualizations of respondent demographics in relation to institutional location. After extensive analysis with regards to duplication (i.e., identifying participation response patterns from the same universities), we were able to determine that respondents identified or were affiliated with 32 unique universities, and offered a total of 93 CP-related courses. In regards to geographic demographics, nineteen participants indicated that their institution was located in an urban setting (47.5%), sixteen in a suburban area (40%), and five in a rural region (12.5%). In terms of institutional focus, eighteen participants identified as working at an institution in which teaching and research were equally emphasized (41.86%), fourteen identified

belonging to a primarily teaching-focused institution (32.56%), and eleven a predominately research-focused institution (25.8%). Click here to explore data visualizations surrounding institutional characteristics.   Participants indicated a sizeable range of perceived college student demographics. Thus, a median is reported to indicate the mid-point of the frequency distribution (Howitt & Cramer, 2007). In particular, we were interested in examining the diversity of undergraduate students at each respondent's institution, potentially highlighting the diversity of possible exposure to CP-related content. Participants perceived 31% of their student body to be first generation, 30% eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—previously known as food stamps), 55% White/Caucasian, 13.5% Latinx/Hispanic, 10.5% Black/African American, 7.5% South Asian/Indian American, and 10% East Asian/ Asian American. In the context of university focus (i.e. research focus, teaching focus, or research and teaching focus), there was a slight difference in perceived first-generation students at the university. Specifically, we found that faculty at teaching institutions reported a greater percentage of students' whom were first generation (M = 49.28) as compared to research-focused institutions (M = 21.11)[1]. This finding highlights that CP educators at teaching-focused institutions may have greater exposure and interaction with first generation students.

Participant positions. At the time the survey was administered, the most commonly reported positions included tenure-track faculty, non-tenure track faculty, and current graduate students, with 69.76% of faculty holding a tenure-track appointment. Of those, fourteen participants reported holding positions as assistant professors (32.56%), eight as associate (18.60%), and eight as full (18.60%). About a third (30.24%) of participants reported holding a non-tenure track position. Five participants reported employment as an adjunct/lecturer (11.63%),

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[1]Due to the small sample size, inferrential statistics were not performed

three as non-tenure track assistant professors (6.98%), and three as graduate teaching assistants (6.98%). Two identified with other position descriptions (4.65%). Thirty-two participants (72.7%) reported receiving their training in CP, however, eight participants (18.18%) that did not have traditional doctoral training in CP reported having an advisor trained in CP and/or working on a research team with other graduate students trained in CP. These eight participants reported a background in health, applied or community-based research, and thus were determined by their department to be best-suited to teach a CP course. Notably, four participants did not respond (.09%).

The length of time participants taught CP ranged from one semester to thirty-two years, with an average of 7.75 years. Two and five years were the most common responses. In terms of frequency, sixteen participants reported teaching at least one CP course every quarter or semester, thirteen taught one class per year, and seven taught the course every two to three years. Twenty-six participants reported teaching within a CP-specific program or department (60.47%). Six worked in a department with others who identify as community psychologists (13.95%), whereas eleven noted that they were the only community psychologist within their department (25.58%). Thirty-eight participants reported teaching undergraduate courses (65.52%), thirteen reported teaching doctoral students (22.14%), and seven teaching masters-level students (12.07%). Click here to explore data visualization patterns regarding respondents' academic positions, training, and teaching experience.

Course focus. Thirty-four participants reported teaching an introduction to CP course, fourteen indicated teaching a community-based research methods course, thirteen a CP-focused project/field work, seven an internship program, four program evaluation, and four prevention and

promotion. In addition, four reported teaching a course focused on social change/community organizing. Additional courses taught by participants within the discipline of CP were: liberation psychology, community-based advocacy intervention, applied psychology, psychology and social justice, psychology of prejudice, psychology in the rural community, CP learning community, experience of intersectionality, human service program, political psychology, statistics in CP, and a clinical community course. Typical class size consisted of twenty-five or fewer students, with ten participants reporting teaching a class of thirty-six to fifty, and four reporting a class size of seventy-six or above. Faculty teaching graduate courses were more likely to report smaller class sizes (M =16-25 students) as compared to faculty teaching undergraduate courses (M = 26-35 students). Additionally, participants teaching an introduction to CP course tended to report the largest class sizes - with 10 respondents reporting a class size of 36-50 students, and 4 respondents reporting a class size of 76 or above - as compared to other CP related courses (i.e., prevention & promotion, social change/community organizing, etc.) Correlations and cross-tabs were performed examining gender, race and ethnicity in relation to teaching experiences (i.e. course loads, class size, etc.), however no significant trends were identified. Click here to explore data visualizations of course characteristics (i.e. content, class size, expectations).

Challenges and Needed Supports

Data were collected concerning: 1) the challenges faced by educators, 2) the unique needs of faculty, and 3) recommended resources.

Challenges. Participants were asked to report what they believed to be the biggest challenges in teaching CP. The 37 open-ended responses to this particular question indicated overlapping and intersecting challenges across a wide range of setting-

level contexts infiltrating the CP classroom climate. Thus, we applied an ecological analytic lens to facilitate an application of systemic thinking in the context of CP teaching (Bronfenbrenner, 2009).

First, key interactions and tensions among institutional and departmental settings, as well as the larger community yielded notable barriers to teaching CP. We define this thematic trend as "Navigating Meso & Exosystem Challenges," as responses highlight the interactions and conflicts between institutional, departmental, and community settings. Another trend that emerged across survey responses was the existence of counteracting societal beliefs regarding individualistic thinking concerning curriculum and pedagogy, as well as certain students' political orientations. We defined this categorization as "Challenging Macrosystem Beliefs," as CP educators must navigate the introduction of novel and challenging topics (e.g., systemic thinking, diversity in research methods, power and privilege). Many of the challenges participants listed fit across categories. We focused on reporting *how* these challenges impact participants in each respective category (e.g., by reducing the quality of written feedback on student reflection papers).

Navigating meso and exosystem challenges. Twenty participants reported substantial challenges in teaching CP courses at the institutional level, with one of the most frequently cited challenges focusing on deficits in infrastructure. As one survey respondent indicated: *"Not enough instructional time or time spent in the community."* These deficits included institutional demands for larger courses, a lack of adequate classroom space, a lack of campus resources for supporting students' emotional well-being and mental health, and inadequate funding for community-based learning (e.g., for student transportation to

partner sites, supplies for research or project related materials, etc.). Participants reported that the combination of a large class size and the limited time available in a given term led to concerns that students would be unable to both learn and apply CP concepts in a substantive manner. These institutional challenges seemed to be amplified in courses integrating community-based learning or collaborative projects. Educators indicated that institutional bureaucracy and policies often hinder effective teaching when said policies restrict the time and resources available to develop sustainable off-campus partnerships. For instance, one respondent noted the *"university's inability to see what needs to occur for effective community engagement."*

At the departmental level, seventeen participants expressed multiple challenges, both within and outside of the classroom setting. For example, a significant challenge arises when departments are unable or not committed to consistently offering a CP course. This effect is further illustrated in the following quote: *"The department does not promote the course...so enrollment is typically low. The low enrollment is interpreted by department heads as signaling the courses shouldn't be offered, when actually students are unable to make informed decisions."* Participants also noted that students often have difficulty connecting the content of a singular CP course (i.e., a course not housed in a program within their department) to the broader field of psychology. Lastly, several participants indicated that working as the lone community psychologist within a department was an alienating experience. These participants expressed that most colleagues and students are socialized into post-positivist, individualistic approaches to psychology. When students do not see the paradigmatic and methodological diversity of CP reflected in other psychology courses, educators encounter a steep learning curve while teaching these concepts, and often

struggle to convince students and other faculty that CP-related approaches are both rigorous and valuable.

At the community level, participants faced considerable challenges related to teaching service-learning and community-based courses. Although not all CP courses involve such a component, many participants reported experience in this domain (N = 22). Above all, identifying long-term, sustainable community partners whose work aligned with CP values (e.g., a justice-based rather than a charity-based approach to social problems) was among the most frequently cited challenges. Participants also noted that this work necessitates considerable time and energy on their part: *"Need prep for before service can begin because of the additional requirements necessary before work can start."* Participants also indicated practical challenges, such as competing student obligations and priorities (e.g., jobs, families, athletics, other classes, etc.), limited access to transportation, limited time to adequately prepare students to engage in service (e.g., fingerprinting, background checks, interviews), and lack of faculty time to allow for deep reflection in the classroom and to provide meaningful feedback to students.

Challenging macrosystem beliefs. The structure, requirements and sequence of courses within both undergraduate and graduate level programs translate messages regarding the value and importance of particular methods, paradigms, and disciplines within a field. Eleven respondents expressed challenges regarding the implementation of curriculum. For instance, the position of a course within the curriculum map for a given major was perceived as an obstacle to effective teaching (e.g., course offered as an elective rather than required coursework). Participants also indicated that some CP courses did not require the proper amount and/or type of prerequisites, creating a challenge for students who did not yet

possess a conceptual foundation of traditional psychology concepts from which to compare CP paradigms and approaches. Alternatively, participants indicated that some CP courses came too late in the major (e.g., a senior capstone), by which time students had already adopted a particular framework. *"Psychology majors come to the course with very individualistic, biological explanations for behavior and have narrow understandings of psychological science (i.e., as post-positivist; quantitative over qualitative)."*

Pedagogical challenges related most frequently to the experience of teaching explicitly political courses that challenge conventional psychological science and overtly claim social justice values. Participants reported their own lack of preparation to support students' critical consciousness development, facilitate participatory dialogue and self-reflexivity, and foster a setting that values diverse perspectives while also staying true to CP values. These challenges were exacerbated when educators had no formal training in CP. Additionally, participants perceived a lack of teaching resources available within the field (e.g., limited selection of CP introductory textbooks, difficulty identifying guest speakers, outdated teaching materials/activities).

Uniquely, seven CP educators also noted the challenge of student context, or the beliefs, values, and ideological perspectives students bring into the classroom. This array in political orientation and lived experience could be at times contentious, as noted in the following quote: *"Wide array of student experiences in the classroom from naïve white folks to queer folks of color already deeply engaged in community."* Participants reported difficulty teaching within conservative political regions and institutions, where they struggled with student readiness and willingness to discuss issues related to power, privilege, and oppression. Within the context

of the classroom, some participants reported confronting deep student resistance to CP values and intervention approaches.

Needed supports. Participants provided a number of suggestions in the domains of needed supports and resources. These recommendations highlight multi-level ecological factors in regard to bolstering effective and successful CP teaching at the undergraduate level. First, in service of fostering individual capacity building and support networks, thirteen open-ended responses indicate a desire for additional teaching resources within the field of CP. As one participant noted: "*descriptions of current CP initiatives around the world, and videos of community psychologists in action doing projects.*" Resources included in-class group-based activities to apply core content to real-world scenarios, illustrative videos, additional textbooks, and greater sharing of resources between CP faculty (i.e., syllabi, tests, assignments, etc.). Second, at the departmental and institutional level (i.e., meso, exo-system), twelve open-ended responses indicated a greater need for support in teaching CP. This sentiment is illustrated in the following quote: *"Departmental support...supervision of adjunct faculty who teach the course, funding for transportation to community settings or reliable Skype with cases at partner institutions to discuss topics."* In addition, suggestions included smaller class sizes to engage in pedagogy reflective of the field, reduced teaching loads, and additional resources (i.e., scholarships) to support community engagement and field-based research.

Third, six respondents noted that support and preparation is often necessary for instructors prior to teaching a CP course. Additional suggestions encompassed providing students with exposure to CP in introductory courses (research methods, introduction to psychology), vetting guest speakers, and

assistance with the logistics of securing internship placements for students (i.e., fingerprinting, transportation, and ethics training). Lastly, in order to persevere in the context of recent macro-level politics, faculty noted the need for further discussion, strategies for, and examples of facilitating controversial yet pivotal topics in CP (i.e., power, oppression, systems change, etc.). This was especially the case for educators positioned within contentious class climates wherein students occupy polarizing political positions, geographic locations and identities in relation to power and privilege. This particular challenge is noted by one participant: *"How do we handle white supremacist leaning students in the room with first-generation undocumented students of color safely?"*

Suggested educational resources. A host of educational resources were provided by participants to support instructors teaching CP-related content. We provide an initial list of materials recommended by survey participants which included course textbooks, novels, articles, websites, and films (see appendix B). Thirty-three respondents listed resources they considered "essential" to teaching CP. Taken together, a wide array of literature and films were recommended, with a handful of texts repeatedly mentioned. The most frequently cited reading was William Ryan's (1976) *Blaming the Victim* (n=7), followed by Peggy McIntosh's (1988) *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (n=5), and *Small Wins: Redefining the Scale of Social Issues* (1986), by Karl Weick (n=4). In addition to these titles, a number of authors were cited two or more times. These included various works by Urie Bronfenbrenner, Michelle Fine, Leonard Jason, Jim Kelly, Geoffrey Nelson, Douglas Perkins, Isaac Prilleltensky, Julian Rappaport, Stephanie Riger, Edward Seidman, Beth Shinn, Paul Speer, Edward Trickett, Roderick Watts, and Marc Zimmerman.

Discussion

Survey findings highlight the unique and diverse positions CP educators occupy (tenure track, non-tenure, and graduate teaching assistants), and the range of courses they teach. Participants tended to be located in the West or Midwest, and teaching in predominately liberal or politically-mixed communities. Over a third of participants (17, 38.6%) indicated that they were not part of an "official CP program." As the CP field continues to grow, it is critical to examine unique resources and needed supports of educators offering CP courses in non-CP specific departments, programs, and/or minors. For instance, open-ended survey responses suggest that many participants were unable to expose undergraduates to CP-related content until their junior and senior year. This often made it challenging for students to accept CP paradigms regarding scientific research, theory, and methodology that differed or critiqued "mainstream psychology." Furthermore, results highlight that faculty whom often identified as the "lone community psychologist" within their department tended to be located in Southern, rural, and conservative communities. These trends highlight the potential need for contextually specific resources and supports for faculty occupying these particular environments. For instance, open-ended survey responses tended to indicate the challenges in teaching social justice-oriented content (i.e., allyship, power, privilege, etc.) to conservative classrooms. Lastly, respondents teaching at teaching-focused institutions tended to report a higher number of first-generation undergraduate students. This unique student sample may require additional resources, supports, and considerations for faculty teaching CP, yet also offers a unique opportunity for historically underrepresented students to gain exposure to the field of CP. Notably, the growing diversity in student demographics, and the discrepancy between students and CP

educators in relation to race and ethnicity highlights the importance of educational efforts focusing on developing content that is reflective of the student body, as well as exposing historically underrepresented students to CP.

Open-ended survey responses highlight a host of challenges at multiple ecological levels in the context of teaching undergraduate CP courses. For instance, at the mesosystems level, participants described feelings of isolation, as well as lacking resources, or departmental supports for teaching CP-related content. In the context of the exosystem level of analysis, respondents encountered challenges in the policies, procedures, and rules governing their teaching (e.g., preparation time, travel funds, interactive classrooms, course size). Notably, close-ended survey responses indicated that faculty at teaching institutions tended to have a higher teaching load, and larger class size creates additional challenges for developing and sustaining innovative and community-engaged curriculum. At the macrosystem level, respondents discussed challenges in teaching CP-content (e.g., theory, methodology, social-justice focus) that countered or critiqued traditional spheres of psychology.

Finally, we inquired about readings participants considered foundational to their courses. This information is vital to a field such as CP that aims to amplify diverse and underheard perspectives. Upon examination, we found some consistency across participant recommendations. Many of the most commonly cited readings were published decades ago, which speaks to their continued relevance. It is noteworthy that the vast majority of the authors mentioned, particularly those with multiple mentions, are white, and mostly male. There was a concerning dearth of scholarly recommendations written by women of Color, despite their significant contributions to the

field. A critical examination of the texts that comprise our cannon, and whose experiences and voices we center in our classrooms, seems warranted.

Implications and Recommendations

Continuing to apply a multi-level ecological lens to the field, we propose strategies and resources at the micro, meso, and macro-level. Each of our recommendations are grounded in the challenges, successes, or suggestions from participants.

Recommendations at the individual level. Given the experience some participants shared regarding feeling isolated or alienated, our research and experience highlights collaborative teaching as one potential strategy for combatting feelings of isolation (Layne, Ford, Morgan, Kenimer, 2002). Educational research has documented the benefits of collaborative teaching (e.g., enhanced student learning, critical thinking, and developing practical skill sets) as well as faculty learning communities (Layne et al., 2002; Lester & Evans, 2009; Manthei & Isler, 2011). Thus, collaborative teaching or dialogue with social justice-minded colleagues may further increase the impact and scope of student learning, providing outlets for scholarship in CP pedagogy (see Litchy, & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017; Kornbluh et al., *forthcoming*), reducing the logistical and administrative responsibility bestowed upon one faculty member, and potentially bolstering institutional buy-in and support. The authors recommend that faculty interested in co-developing courses focused on community partnerships reach out to centers or institutions on campus engaged in service learning, civic engagement, and cross-cultural efforts. These institutions can help foster faculty connections, locate community partners, and provide administrative support in the paperwork required when students engage in the community. These institutional bodies and centers may also be able to

advocate for faculty release time, additional course credits, or additional monetary compensation for faculty taking on community-based service learning projects. In addition to connecting individuals to organizational resources, these interpersonal linkages between colleagues can further bolster CP teaching within the university.

Recommendations at the meso & exosystem. At a meso and exo-level, steps can be taken at the regional and national levels to further support faculty engaged in introducing CP to undergraduate audiences. At a professional level, the field can support junior faculty invested in undergraduate teaching pedagogy and scholarship in the research, tenure, and promotion process by providing outlets for publication concerning undergraduate teaching, pedagogy, and methodology (such as this special issue). Thus, at an exo-systemic level, altering the publishing guidelines, policies, or outlets within CP peer-reviewed journals could provide further opportunity for professional development. For instance, space for one manuscript on undergraduate teaching could be allotted for each CP-related journal issue (i.e., the Global Journal of Community Practice, The Journal of Community Psychology, The American Journal of Community Psychology).

Recommendations at the macrosystem. Third, challenging the dominant macro-level discourse surrounding the discipline of psychology can further support CP faculty in exposing undergraduate students to CP concepts early in their education. In a recent review, Bauer and colleagues (2017) found that of 53 introduction to psychology textbooks, only 17% contained an adequate representation of CP. The authors suggest following-up with publishers engaged in revising current editions, as well as promoting textbooks that integrate CP content. To further normalize the relevance of CP as a subfield within psychology, the field

could also provide an introduction to CP video or a published supplemental chapter that faculty could then disseminate in psychology 101 courses. Supplemental materials, talks, or textbooks that push beyond post-positivism and quantitative methods could also be offered for introductory research method courses. For instance, SCRA ought to develop a bank of community psychologists willing to engage in guest lectures (e.g., via Skype) within traditional psychology courses (e.g., introduction, research methods, or other related sub-fields like social psychology, psychology of women, health psychology, etc.). Additionally, SCRA could develop or regularly update a clearinghouse for teaching materials (including those that address service-learning, community-based research, etc.) for a range of geographical regions and class sizes. Notably, the growing diversity in student demographics, and the discrepancy between students and CP educators in relation to race and ethnicity highlights the importance of educational efforts focusing on developing content that is reflective of the culture, background, and issues of the student body. Efforts to strategically work with critical race scholars and ethnic studies departments could further enhance the quality and diversity of CP curriculum. In addition, survey findings indicate the potential growing need for faculty at teaching institutions to provide resources to first generation students. Both efforts are important in fostering a pipeline of historically underrepresented future scholars who see themselves, their communities, and issues of importance to them reflective of and applicable in the field of CP.

In order to further support such efforts, SCRA could fund a fellowship position, providing one or two faculty members taking the lead in such efforts (e.g., guest lectures, updating educational materials, and outreach) buyout or course relief time for a quarter or semester teaching load within their institution. These

strategies could alter macro-level beliefs within the discipline of psychology regarding theories, perspectives, and research undergraduate students are exposed to in introductory psychology courses. Such efforts could inform students' decision-making processes in pursuing upper-level community psychology courses, thereby bolstering the capacity and readiness of undergraduate students.

In sum, we identified several specific action steps for SCRA, and for those invested in undergraduate education, to push forward: 1) provide publication space regarding teaching methodology for undergraduate students in CP, 2) reach out to authors of psychology 101 textbooks and discuss incorporating CP into their more recent editions, 3) fund a fellowship for one to two faculty members interested in taking the lead in developing a clearinghouse of undergraduate teaching resources and support systems, and 4) conduct a survey every 5 years to further track the diverse locations, universities, and positions of CP-educators teaching undergraduate students.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the study consisted of a small sample size that was perhaps not entirely representative of the number of educators teaching CP-related courses thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Participation was also restricted to 4-year colleges, thus limiting the perspective and voices of faculty at community, junior, or trade schools with a CP-oriented focus. Second, the research team encountered challenges in identifying potential CP courses that were explicit in their course description and title when reviewing online university catalogues. Thus, capstone or independent courses involving instructor discretion or autonomy may have actually encompassed CP content yet would not have been identified through the

sampling approach. Third, to preserve confidentiality, and support high response rates the research team did not solicit participants to identify their particular institutions or provide permission to compare their name to the SCRA membership listserv. This limited the ability to analyze differences between respondents' supports and services in relation to their membership to SCRA. Future research would benefit in comparing responses based on participants' professional associations and networks in CP. Fourth, the research team reached out several times through active listservs from the American Psychological Association, in particular, SCRA. However, faculty engaged in community-based action research or affiliated with CP may be active or professionally associated with different fields outside of psychology (e.g. social work, sociology, public health, etc.). Additional strategies are needed to identify and solicit input from faculty and educators active in teaching CP content or related fields on an international level, thereby expanding the scope beyond the United States. These efforts may have further reach and yield higher response rates when surveys are solicited at regional and national conferences prior to registration. Furthermore, strategic follow-up interviews varying participants by position, department, and focus will yield further information on the specific challenges, restrictions, and opportunities for educators in the various contexts of undergraduate education. Lastly, follow-up surveys with students could elicit diverse information and counteract self-report bias regarding the challenges students perceive when taking CP courses.

Conclusion

In focusing on undergraduate education in CP, this exploratory study addresses a glaring gap in the literature. Notably, research is dated and at times non-existent concerning the identities of CP educators within undergraduate education, the challenges instructors encounter, and needed resources. Furthermore, findings provide an understanding of the growing diversity in educator social location (i.e., race, gender, age), as well as geographic and institutional settings concerning undergraduate education within the field of CP in the United States. Findings indicate the multi-level ecological challenges (i.e. departmental, institutional, local community, and the political climate at a national level) in implementing CP courses and pedagogy within the classroom. We can better support faculty in undergraduate education by investing in the development of additional educational materials, coordinating resources, and facilitating the scholarship of innovative teaching pedagogy and inquiry, thus providing resources across the multiple ecologies in which teaching occurs.

Ongoing evaluations and developmental needs assessments are vital within the professional field to adequately capture the teaching positions of CP within undergraduate education, as well as identify evolving challenges and emerging supports. Arguably, documenting these changes can further enhance junior faculty members' professional development within undergraduate education - some of whom may be the only CP within their department - as well as bolster the presence of CP within undergraduate education to diverse audiences and future career professionals. Notably, future research and ongoing recruitment on an international scale is needed to inform these efforts, thereby providing a more nuanced picture concerning the ecological landscape of undergraduate education in the context of CP and allowing for more complex analyses (e.g., race/gender allocation in regard to teaching courses).

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Author note

Appendix A. Survey Instrument

Q1. What is your gender identity?[2]
- Male
- Female
- Transgender Female
- Transgender Male
- Gender Variant & Non-Conforming
- Not Listed (Please describe): _____
- Prefer not to answer

Q2. Which of these bests describes you? Please mark all that apply.
- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Multiracial (Having parents of more than one ethnic background)
- Member of a group not listed above (Please describe): _____
- Prefer not to answer

Q3. What region within the United States is your institution located?

- South

- Northeast

- Northwest

- Midwest

Q4. Which of the following best describes your faculty position?

- Graduate Teaching Assistant

- Adjunct Professor/Lecturer

- Assistant Professor (Non-Tenure Track)

- Assistant Professor (Tenure Track)

- Associate Professor (Tenure Track)

- Full Professor (Tenure Track)

- Other (Please Describe): _____

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[2] Gender and race survey response categories included an option that allowed participants to identify with a group not listed. We purposefully did not employ the term "cisgender" to allow for fluidity in individuals who may identify with a particular gender not of

Q5. How long have you been teaching Community Psychology?

_____

Q6. How frequently do you teach Community Psychology?

_____

Q7. Which of the following best describes your university?

○ Community College

○ 4-Year University/College Teaching Emphasized

○ 4-Year University/College Research Emphasized

○ 4-Year University/College Teaching & Research Emphasized

Q8. Which of the following best describes the prevalence of community psychology faculty within your department?

○ We have a community psychology-specific department, and/or program.

○ While we don't have a specific program, there are several professors in my department who identify as community psychologists.

○ While we don't have a specific program, there are several professors on campus (not within my department) who identify as community psychologists.

○ I am the lone community psychologist in my department.

Q9. Which of the following best describes the students you teach? Please mark all that apply.

☐ Undergraduate Students
☐ Graduate Students (Primarily obtaining their Masters)
☐ Graduate Students (Primarily obtaining their Doctorates)

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their biological origin, as well as individuals who did not identify as gender binary (i.e. male vs. female). This particular approach is identified as a best practice within the literature in the context of gender identity (the GenIUSS Group, 2004).

Q10. For the following categories, estimate the percentage of the student body within your University.

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
First generation college student ()											
Eligible for food stamps ()											
Students of color ()											
Latino(a)/Hispanic/Latinx ()											
Black/African American ()											
White/Caucasian ()											
South Asian/ Indian American ()											
East Asian/ Asian American ()											
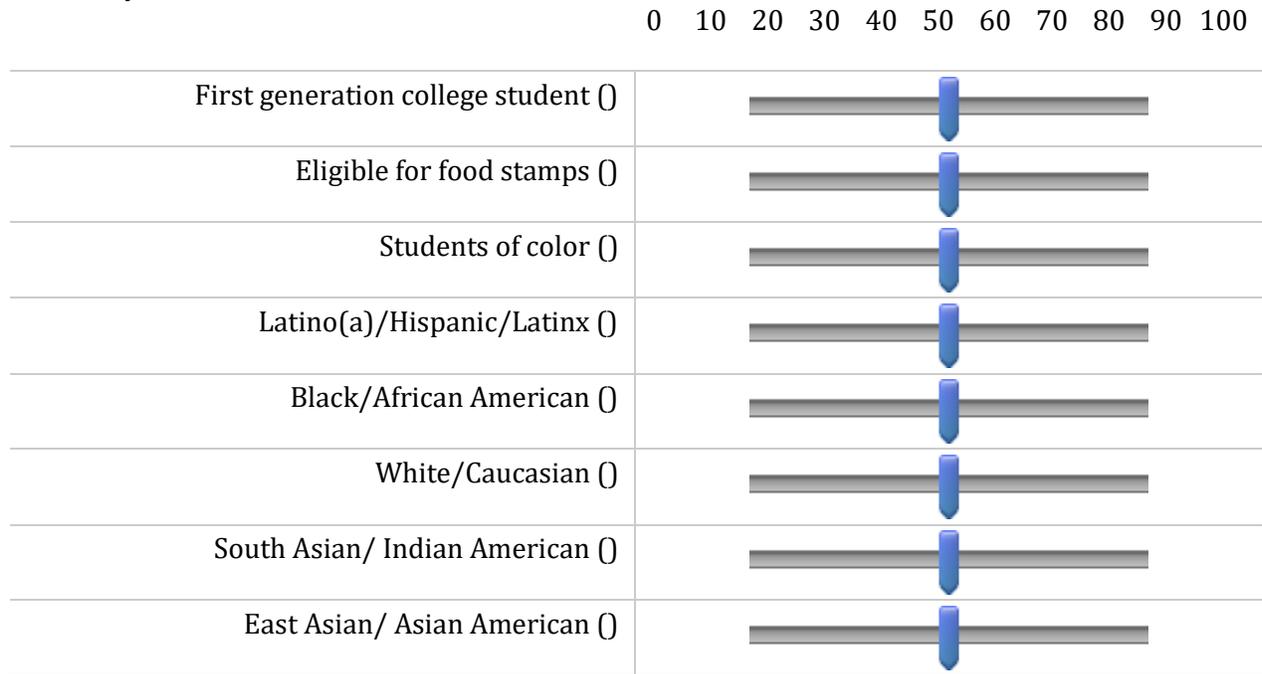
Q11. For the following categories, estimate the percentage of the student body within your classroom.

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
First generation college student ()											
Eligible for food stamps ()											
Students of color ()											
Latino(a)/Hispanic/Latinx ()											
Black/African American ()											
White/Caucasian ()											
South Asian/Indian American ()											
East Asian/ Asian American ()											
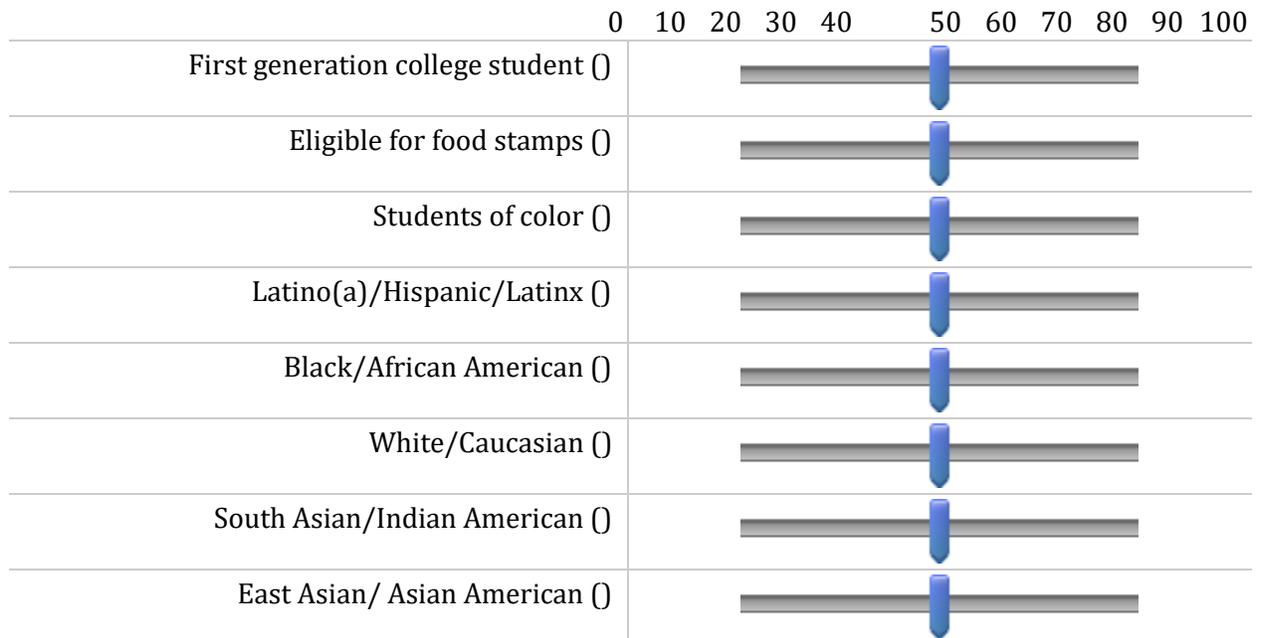
Q12. Which of the following best describes the location of your college?

○ Rural

○ Urban

○ Suburban

Q13. Which of the following best describes the political climate surrounding the area (county-wide) in which your college is located?

○ Predominately (>60%) Conservative

○ Predominately (>60%) Liberal

○ Mixed

Q14. Which of the following are the community psychology courses you teach? Please mark all that apply.

☐ Introduction to Community Psychology

☐ Community-Based Research Methods

☐ Program Evaluation

☐ Internship

☐ Community Psychology Project/Field Work

☐ Prevention & Promotion

☐ Social Change/Community Organizing

☐ Other (Please Describe):_____

Q15. If you are teaching a service learning class, how many hours are required of your students to engage in the community?

○ 5-10

○ 11-16

○ 17-20

○ 21-25

○ More than 26 +

Q16. What is the typical size of your Community Psychology course?

○ 15 or less

○ 16-25

○ 26-35

○ 36-50

○ 51-75

○ 76 or above

Q17. Do you have graduate level training in Community Psychology?

○ Yes

○ No

Q17b. If no, how did you get interested in Community Psychology?

_____

Q18. What is your typical course load (e.g. 2:1, & 4:4)?

_____

Q19. What (if any) is your primary text for teaching "Introduction to Community Psychology"?

_____

Q20. What are the biggest challenges to teaching Community Psychology (i.e. consider departmental, structural, institutional, funding, and instructional, etc.)?

_____

Q21. What additional supports or resources would help your teaching practice?

_____

Q22. What are the essential readings you "must have" in your syllabus?

_____

Q23 What is your favorite class activity, and why? Please describe.

_____

Q24. Would you be willing to share the materials for this class activity with others?

○ Yes (Please provide an email address that you would be comfortable with the Undergraduate Interest Group contacting you by)
_____

○ No

Q25. What is your favorite assignment, and why? Please describe.

_____

Q26. Would you be willing to share a write-up of this assignment with others?

○ Yes (Please provide an email address that you would be comfortable with the Undergraduate Interest Group contacting you by)
_____

○ No

Q27 Voluntary: SCRA is hoping to gather a comprehensive list of undergraduate community psychology programs. If you don't mind please share your name, email address, and institution.

○ First Name: _____

○ Last Name: _____

○ Email Address: _____

○ Institution: _____

Appendix B

Teaching Resources[3]
Books & Novels
Ehrenreich, B. (2010). *Nickel and dimed: On (not) getting by in America*. New York, NY: Metropolitan Books.
Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed (revised).* New York, NY: Continuum.
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Textbooks
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[3] Note: Resources preceded by an asterisk are recommendations from the authors, not survey participants.

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