

The Effect of an Educational Intervention on Students' Attitudes Toward Obesity

Julie Sappington, RN, Ph.D.
Southeast Missouri State University
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Fellow

Goal/Learning Objectives

- Determine if an educational intervention affected students' attitudes toward obesity
- Increase awareness of health/social issues related to obesity and weight bias and examine own attitudes

Project Description/Intervention

- Intervention group (n=45)
- 2 UI100 “Health Care Issues of the New Millennium” classes engaged in class discussion/assignments related to
 - health/social issues related to obesity
 - weight bias (educational, health, work, social)

Project Description/Intervention

- PBS film: Fat: What No One is Telling You
- Yale University's Rudd Center on Food Policy and Obesity (weigh bias and public policy)
- The Fat Rights Coalition
 - Dare to Show Your Face videos
- One page reaction paper

Projection Description

- Control group (n=42)
- 2 UI100 classes received no information regarding obesity
- Intervention and control groups(n=87)
 - completed the Implicit Association Test
 - measures attitudes about obesity

Demographic Data

- Gender
- Age
- Major
- Height
- Weight
 - BMI: measure of body fat based on height/weight
<http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>

Implicit Association Test

- Timed, word categorization test
- Measures implicit attitudes toward obesity
- Used extensively in the field of social psychology

Fat People	Thin People
fat	slim
obese	thin
large	skinny
Good	Bad
wonderful	terrible
joyful	nasty
excellent	horrible

Fat People	Thin People
fat	slim
obese	thin
large	skinny
Good	Bad
wonderful	terrible
joyful	nasty
excellent	horrible

Fat People		Thin People
Good		Bad
o	obese	o
o	horrible	o
o	slim	o
o	excellent	o
o	large	o
o	nasty	o
o	fat	o
o	joyful	o
o	thin	o
o	wonderful	o
o	skinny	o
o	terrible	o
o	obese	o
o	horrible	o
o	slim	o
o	joyful	o
o	thin	o
o	terrible	o
o	skinny	o
o	excellent	o
o	large	o
o	nasty	o
o	fat	o
o	wonderful	o

10

Fat People		Thin People
Good		Bad
o	terrible	o
o	thin	o
o	wonderful	o
o	fat	o
o	nasty	o
o	slim	o
o	excellent	o
o	large	o
o	horrible	o
o	obese	o
o	joyful	o
o	skinny	o
o	horrible	o
o	fat	o
o	joyful	o
o	slim	o
o	nasty	o
o	obese	o
o	wonderful	o
o	skinny	o
o	excellent	o
o	large	o
o	terrible	o
o	thin	o

Fat People	Thin People
fat	slim
obese	thin
large	skinny
Bad	Good
terrible	wonderful
nasty	joyful
horrible	excellent

Fat People	Thin People
fat	slim
obese	thin
large	skinny
Bad	Good
terrible	wonderful
nasty	joyful
horrible	excellent

Fat People	Thin People
Bad	Good
o obese	o
o horrible	o
o slim	o
o excellent	o
o large	o
o nasty	o
o fat	o
o joyful	o
o thin	o
o wonderful	o
o skinny	o
o terrible	o
o obese	o
o horrible	o
o slim	o
o joyful	o
o thin	o
o terrible	o
o skinny	o
o excellent	o
o large	o
o nasty	o
o fat	o
o wonderful	o

24

Fat People	Thin People
Bad	Good
o terrible	o
o thin	o
o wonderful	o
o fat	o
o nasty	o
o slim	o
o excellent	o
o large	o
o horrible	o
o obese	o
o joyful	o
o skinny	o
o horrible	o
o fat	o
o joyful	o
o slim	o
o nasty	o
o obese	o
o wonderful	o
o skinny	o
o excellent	o
o large	o
o terrible	o
o thin	o

Data Analysis

- Difference scores
 - Subtracting number of items correctly classified in mismatched category pairing conditions (fat people + motivated or good) from the matched (fat people + lazy or bad)
 - The higher the score the greater the bias

Results

Group	Control	Intervention
Mean	16.33	17.31
SD	8.65	10.07
N	39	45

Results

- P value = .6370
- No significant difference was found between the control and intervention groups

Results

- “After reading about weight bias and watching the movie my thoughts have not changed. I do not believe that excuses should be made for obese people...they landed themselves in that situation.”
- “Obesity has been a problem throughout my life. I used to get made fun of all the time. Like the article says - if you want to help someone lose weight don't make fun of or criticize that person.”
- “After reading all the information I began to question what I truly thought about discrimination. I am not exactly skinny but I am confident in who I am. Some people may not be able to change their weight but they can learn to accept themselves and live a happy life.”

Significance of Study

- Introduced students to the issue of weight bias
- Facilitated open discussions about health/social implications of weight bias
- Encouraged students to examine their own beliefs/attitudes
- Beliefs/attitudes about weight are not easily changed