

*Pedagogy of the Empowered: Fostering Everyday Activism in Intro Psych (and Beyond)*

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As the field's flagship course, Introduction to Psychology presents a number of unique opportunities and challenges. As instructors, we are faced with many competing demands: negotiating the breadth and depth of the curriculum, effectively teaching to students with diverse backgrounds, interests, and motivations, and serving as an ambassador for the discipline, among many others. As a result of these demands, it may appear daunting (if not impossible) to also address social issues, especially when attempting to adapt strategies or specific assignments from upper-level courses that allow more depth of coverage.

In this talk, I will share tips and tricks for integrating social justice themes and concrete acts of everyday activism into introductory psychology without sacrificing (and perhaps even enhancing) the course's original learning objectives and outcomes. I'll begin with broad strategies that are germane to discussion of any social issue: making connections between academic content and current events, effectively communicating those connections to diverse groups of students, anticipating and preempting potential challenges, as well as responding to those that do arise in the moment.

Specific examples of course concepts/applications to be discussed will be determined by audience preference, but may include the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo movements, immigration justice, LGBTQ+ rights, disability justice, educational inequity, and the public's relationship to science. The session will also include ample time for attendees to share strategies that have proven successful for them, collectively problem solve tricky teaching situations, and brainstorm new ways they can incorporate everyday activism into their existing courses. By integrating social justice content, instructors can bolster students' topical knowledge while also empowering them to use what they learn inside the classroom to affect positive social change in their everyday lives—even if Intro Psych serves as their only exposure to the field.