

Voices of Activism and Transformative Journeys: Students' Lived Experiences with the Activism Growth Model



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Abstract

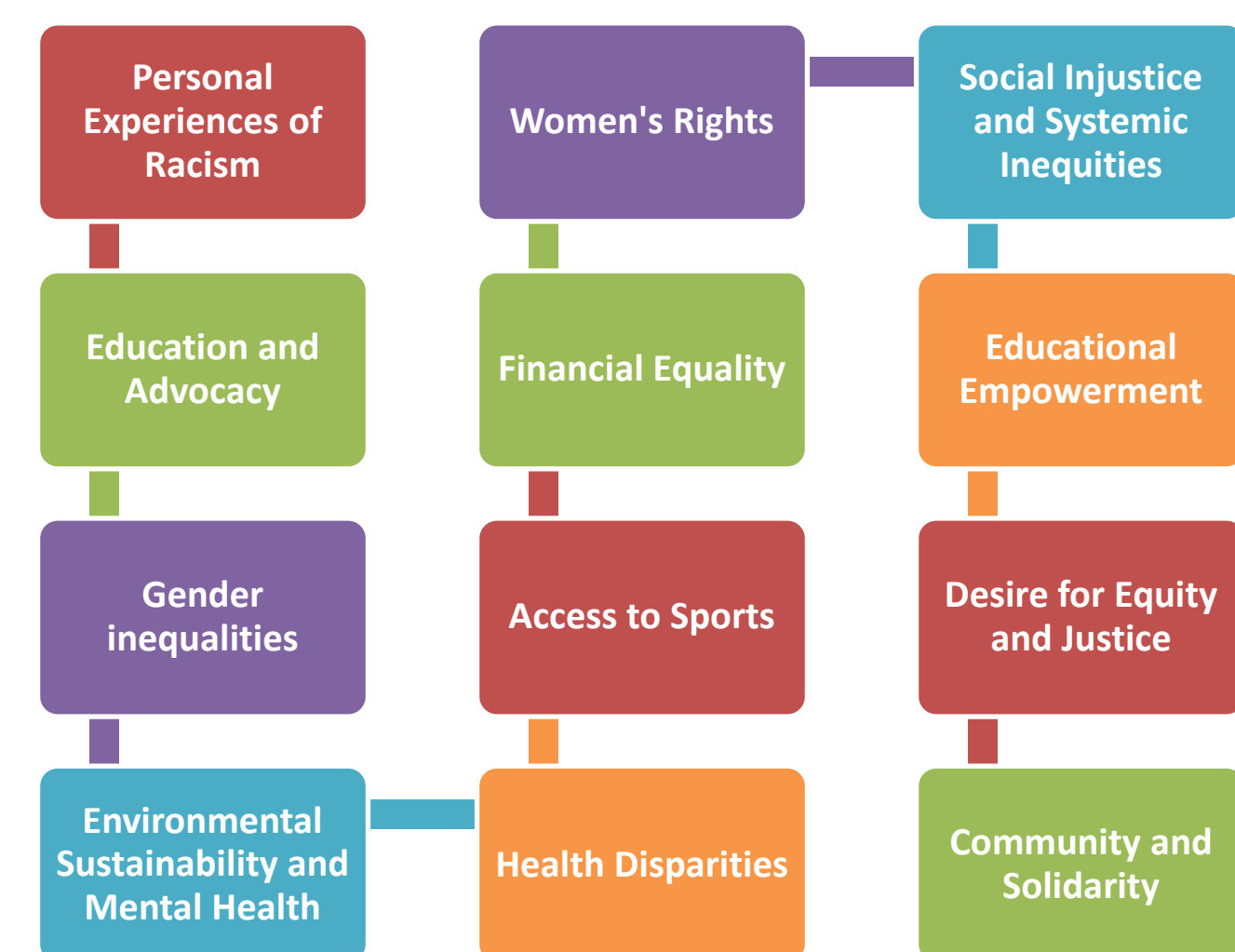
This study explores the integration of the Activism Growth Model (2021), developed by Dr. Gysmine George-Williams, which provides a theoretical framework for individuals to discover their voice and engage in activism that emphasizes the importance of understanding oneself, building relationships, and taking action to create positive social change.

This study examines the impact of incorporating this model on student learning outcomes, engagement, and personal growth as activists. Data was assessed in interdisciplinary courses such as a) *Black Experience in the United States*, b) *Social Justice in Higher Education*, c) *Social Justice in Sport and Culture*, and d) *Inequalities in Health and Human Movement* courses at two universities. The study utilizes qualitative methods to gather data through course evaluations, student assignments, and reflective exercises. We explore the challenges and opportunities they faced along the way, and how these experiences have shaped their personal growth and academic journeys. The findings provide insights for stakeholders into the effectiveness of the Activism Growth Model in empowering students to find their voice and cultivate their role in activism within various academic contexts

AGM Assignment Learning Objectives

- Developing students' critical thinking skills
- Fostering empathy and understanding
- Building community engagement
- Facilitating self-reflection and personal growth
- Experiential Learning

Motivations for Activism



Hear from our research team member Jaelyn Thomas!

Activism Growth Model



The Activism Growth Model's tenets facilitate critical thinking, personal reflection, and student-led activism projects that connect theory with real-world action. The AGM is a powerful framework that can be applied to individuals from all walks of life, from students and community organizers to parents and faculty.

Student Voices

"Activism can be greatly aided by using roadmaps like the AGM, which offer a clear explanation of its goals and break down complicated topics into manageable steps"

"I believe that the lack of education and knowledge is one of the main reasons these injustices still exist."

"To achieve radical change, we would have to rebuild the system from the ground up"



Participants

Level	Course Name	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Graduate	Social Justice in Higher Education	1	10
Undergraduate	a) Black Experience in the United States	1	30
	b) Social Justice in Sport and Culture	1	10
	c) Inequalities in Health and Human Movement	2	100 (50 students each)

Results

70% of participants identify as **Change Agents**, highlighting their focus on creating systemic change through education, organizing, advocacy, and working towards constructive solutions within communities.

20% are **Reformers**, indicating their approach to improving systems from the inside using creative solutions.

10% identify as **Agitators**, who concentrate on raising awareness and challenging the status quo through confrontation, and advocacy.

This illustrates the diverse approaches students are taking to advocate for change and address societal injustices.

Scholarly activism and education are among the most frequently mentioned methods, indicating a strong emphasis on knowledge dissemination and teaching as tools for activism

Recommendations

- Incorporate Activism into Curriculum Design
- Facilitate Critical Discussion and Reflection
- Support Student-Led Initiatives
- Encourage Scholarly Activism
- Promote the Use of Public Platforms
- Create Safe Spaces for Dialogue and Activism
- Model Activism and Advocacy
- Foster Interdisciplinary Learning
- Support Experiential Learning