



Community-Based Social Practice Art, Mood, and Prosocial Traits

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PSY 498A Senior Capstone: Applied Projects



Project Proposal Question

Can participation in community-based social practice art impact a person's mood, self-compassion, compassion, and altruism?

Background

The arts have an incredible potential for expanding interconnectedness, for reaching people, touching them, and increasing empathy and compassion in the world.—Olafur Eliasson

For my capstone project, I set out to facilitate an outdoor community mural painting at St. Vincent de Paul food bank in north Portland. The director of the food bank was excited to beautify and facilitate community at the food bank. This project united my passions for fine arts and psychology, and was especially important to me as I work toward incorporating community arts in my future career. Due to the unforeseen circumstances of COVID-19, this community event and my data collection could not take place.

Social practice art is defined as an awareness of “interconnectivity between the individual and the collective, between a person’s suffering and social imbalance, [and] as an active commitment to personal and social transformation through advocacy for those aspects of individuals and society that are disenfranchised” (Hocoy). Because of its location on a food bank, this mural’s theme would emphasize the importance of food for all, community, and togetherness. I planned to study whether participating in community social practice art could impact a person’s mood as well as their compassion, self-compassion, and altruism.

Methods

For this project, I would promote a community painting day to University of Portland Students. I would gather 15-20 painting volunteer participants, and 15-20 participants who indicated they were interested in the event but could not attend as a control group. A survey with measures for mood (PANAS scale), compassion (DPES), self-compassion (Neff), altruism (NEO) would be administered to both groups of participants before the painting began, and after the painting was complete the same survey would be administered to measure any potential change.

References

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Predicted Results



Figure 1

Figure 1. Bar graph of anticipated results measuring one's change from before the communal art event to after the event in self-report score on the mood, self-compassion, compassion, and altruism scales. It is hypothesized that participant's mood scores would increase the most because previous literature highlights how malleable mood is compared to the other traits (Stefano et al. 2019).

Altruism is hard to properly measure (and self-report is very subjective) so I predict that this might have the lowest change from before the communal art condition to after (Bekkers, 2007).

I hypothesize that all of the measured traits will result in increases in people's self-report scores due to the uplifting, positive social interaction, interconnectivity of social practice art. I predict that there will be no change from before to after the communal art event (control group) in participant's self-report scores for all of the traits measured because there would not be any uplifting and reflective event to affect them.

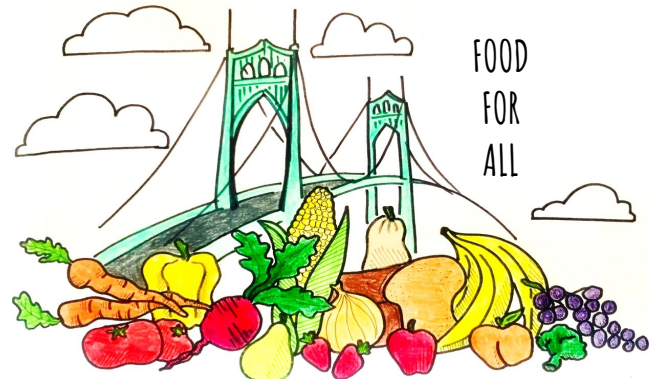


Figure 2

Figure 2. A preliminary sketch for the mural design. The painting would be done on a cinderblock wall outside the food bank, and would be created paint-by-number style with the participants.