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Effects of Racial Literacy on Color-Blind Racist Attitudes

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EFFECTS OF RACIAL LITERACY ON COLOR-BLIND RACIST ATTITUDES

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The purpose of this study is to explore Illinois Wesleyan’s students’ and faculty’s racial literacy and racial, attitudes. Because IWU is a primarily white institution its faculty and students may lack sufficient diversity experience and training. Students were invited to participate in an anonymous survey that assessed their color-blind racial attitudes, experience in US Diversity Flag courses, and allowed them to share their experience with race more broadly. Professors participated in short, semi-structured interviews in order to gain their perspective on teaching race-related courses. Results showed that many students held some level of color-blind racial attitudes, which inhibits racial literacy. Also, many students felt they did not have sufficient experience with race-related topics. Professors expressed that it is difficult to teach race-focused courses at IWU, but that it remains important to do so. Based on my findings, I suggest that IWU should offer more classes and events focused on increasing students’ racial literacy.