



# VOICES OF ACTIVISM AND TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEYS: STUDENT'S LIVED EXPERIENCES WITH THE ACTIVISM GROWTH MODEL

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*This study investigates the implementation and outcomes of the Activism Growth Model (AGM) (2021), conceptualized by Dr. Gyasmine George-Williams. The AGM is an instructive paradigm that nurtures student activism, emphasizing self-awareness, relationship building, and proactive engagement in social change. This study explores the model's efficacy across four interdisciplinary courses: Black Experience in the United States, Social Justice in Higher Education, Social Justice in Sport and Culture, and Inequalities in Health and Human Movement. Employing qualitative methodologies, the research assembles data from course evaluations, student assignments, and reflective exercises to assess the AGM's impact on students' learning outcomes, engagement levels, and personal and activist development. The study reveals the dynamics of student encounters with the AGM, detailing both the hurdles encountered and the progress achieved. The findings aim to illuminate the model's potential in fostering empowered, informed, and active student advocates within diverse academic landscapes.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Activism Growth Model (AGM), created by George-Williams (2021), represents an innovative framework in educational pedagogy specifically tailored to encourage student engagement with activism. At its core, the AGM encourages a profound journey of self-discovery, fostering a robust understanding of personal identity, which is crucial for effective activism. Further, it emphasizes cultivating meaningful relationships and advocates for actionable steps toward engendering societal transformation. Given the pivotal role of education in shaping future activists, this study aims to evaluate the AGM's application and outcomes within the context of interdisciplinary undergraduate courses, thereby offering a multifaceted view of its influence on student development. The selected courses—each addressing critical societal issues from distinct perspectives—provide a rich terrain for examining how the AGM informs and transforms student engagement and activism. The study employs a qualitative methodology, gathering data through various reflective and student exercises within the Black Experience in the United States, Social Justice in Higher Education, Social Justice in Sport and Culture, and Inequalities in Health and Human Movement courses. By analyzing the AGM's application across different academic settings, this study contributes valuable insights into the pedagogical strategies that can effectively nurture student activism. It addresses a significant gap in the literature, offering evidence-based perspectives on the AGM's role in cultivating informed, empowered, and proactive student activists who are poised to contribute meaningfully to societal progress. This approach facilitates a nuanced understanding of the students' experiences with the AGM, shedding light on the model's effectiveness in enhancing their academic performance, engagement with social justice issues, and overall activist identity.

# STUDENT ACTIVISM: A CATALYST FOR SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDENT ACTIVISM

Student activism has been instrumental in catalyzing social change, with its roots deeply embedded in the pursuit of justice, equality, and progress (Jones, 2018). Through concerted efforts, students have historically utilized their collective voice and action to address injustices, advocate for marginalized communities, and advocate for systemic reform. This narrative explores the multifaceted dimensions of student activism, encompassing organized demonstrations, advocacy for policy amendments, and educational and community outreach endeavors to elevate awareness and mobilize support for pivotal causes. The Vietnam War era exemplified the potent influence of student activism, with significant mobilization against the conflict and associated military draft, impacting education and life loss (Taylor, 1990). The Kent State University incident, where students tragically lost their lives during an anti-war protest, underscored the era's heightened activism intensity (Scott, 2004). Concurrently, the Free Speech Movement (FSM) at the University of California, Berkeley, emerged as a pivotal chapter in student activism, advocating for political freedoms and catalyzing national discourse on student rights and academic liberty (Cohen, 1985). During the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement witnessed substantial student contributions, notably through the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) establishment and active engagement in sit-ins, freedom rides, and voter registration drives (Carson, 1987). The Greensboro sit-ins represent a landmark in combating racial segregation, triggering nationwide demonstrations and significantly contributing to subsequent civil rights advancements (Williams, 1987). The Women's Liberation Movement on campuses in the 1960s and 1970s marked a critical era for student-driven gender equality advocacy, challenging prevailing norms and advocating for substantial policy transformations (Freedman, 2002). During this period, they witnessed the proliferation of women's groups and initiatives, culminating in significant educational reforms and contributing to the foundational principles of Title IX (Faludi, 1999). Internationally, student activism was pivotal in the anti-apartheid movement, exemplified by the Soweto Uprising and global campus-led divestment campaigns, instrumental in amplifying pressure against the apartheid regime and heralding a new era of racial equality in South Africa (Cochrane, 2016).

## CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENTS AND INTERSECTIONAL ACTIVISM

In recent years, movements like Black Lives Matter have become emblematic of the power and dynamism inherent in contemporary student activism, showcasing a deep commitment to addressing and dismantling systemic inequalities. The emphasis on intersectionality within these movements, as highlighted by Cullors and Bandele (2018), underscores the recognition of how various forms of discrimination—such as race, gender, class, and more—are interlinked and compound each other, necessitating a comprehensive approach to advocacy and reform. The tragic death of George Floyd acted as a catalyst, intensifying the urgency of the call for racial justice and highlighting the pivotal role of student activists in spearheading campaigns aimed at dismantling systemic racism. As Ransby (2018) notes, these young activists have been at the forefront, demanding substantive changes to entrenched structures of inequality, thus playing a critical role in the broader racial justice movement. Similarly, the activism ignited by the Parkland shooting demonstrates the significant impact that young people, particularly students, can have on public policy and societal attitudes. In the wake of this tragedy, student survivors mobilized to demand action on gun control, showcasing an exceptional level of engagement and advocacy that has challenged longstanding norms and sparked a nationwide conversation about gun laws and safety. As detailed by Smith (2019), these students have advocated for change and embodied a new form of civic engagement, inspiring their peers and redefining what it means to be an activist today. These examples of modern student activism illustrate a broader shift toward more inclusive, interconnected, and impactful advocacy. By embracing intersectionality and leveraging their unique positions and perspectives, student activists are not just participants in the fight for social justice—they are reshaping the landscape of activism and demonstrating the potential for collective action to catalyze meaningful change in society.

## RESILIENCE AND INNOVATION AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, student activists faced and overcame unprecedented challenges, demonstrating remarkable resilience and ingenuity. The transition to a largely digital world during this period necessitated innovative approaches to advocacy, with student activists spearheading initiatives in areas like racial justice and educational equity, even amidst such global upheaval (Hafner, 2021). The pandemic catalyzed a significant evolution in student activism, marked by an increased reliance on digital platforms for mobilization and advocacy, highlighting the potential for a more interconnected and versatile approach to activism moving forward (Smith, 2021). This shift toward digital activism during the pandemic underscores a broader transformation within student advocacy, suggesting a move towards a future where activism can be local and global, immediate and sustained, through the adept use of technology. The capacity of student activists to adapt and innovate in the face of adversity suggests a robust potential for shaping future public policy and societal norms, affirming the significant role of student activism in societal evolution and reform. The COVID-19 era has thus not only tested the resilience of student activists but also enhanced their strategic approaches, potentially offering new paradigms for advocacy and mobilization in an increasingly digital world. These insights indicate that student activism, resilient and adaptable, continues to be a vital force for societal change, adept at overcoming the challenges posed by rapidly changing societal landscapes.

### DIGITAL ACTIVISM HISTORICAL CONTEXT

#### TRAYVON MARTIN AND MIKE BROWN

The foundation of modern digital activism can be traced back to significant events such as the murders of Trayvon Martin and Mike Brown, which catalyzed the #BlackLivesMatter movement. In 2012, Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old unarmed Black teenager, was fatally shot by George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer in Sanford, Florida. Martin was returning home after purchasing snacks when Zimmerman, finding him suspicious, pursued and eventually shot him. The incident sparked outrage, particularly after Zimmerman was acquitted of all charges. The acquittal underscored the systemic racial biases within the justice system and highlighted the vulnerability of Black lives in America (Cobb, 2016). The widespread public outcry led to the creation of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi. This hashtag became a symbol of a broader movement against systemic racism and violence against Black people. The founders envisioned a decentralized movement that could unite people against racial injustice and create a platform for Black voices to be heard (Garza, 2014).

The 2014 shooting of Mike Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, further propelled the #BlackLivesMatter movement into the national and international spotlight. Mike Brown, an 18-year-old unarmed Black teenager, was shot and killed by Darren Wilson, a white police officer. Brown's body was left in the street for hours, igniting outrage within the Ferguson community and beyond. Protests erupted, calling for justice and an end to police brutality. The lack of indictment for Officer Wilson, despite substantial public pressure, highlighted the deep-rooted issues of racial bias and lack of accountability within law enforcement. Social media, particularly Twitter, played a crucial role in organizing protests, spreading information, and documenting police responses. The hashtag #Ferguson trended globally, drawing attention to the systemic issues of police brutality and racial discrimination (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015).

#### THE ROLE OF TWITTER IN DIGITAL ACTIVISM

Twitter's real-time communication capabilities and extensive reach have shaped digital activism. During the Ferguson protests, Twitter was used to share live updates, organize demonstrations, and document instances of police violence. The platform's hashtag feature, exemplified by #Ferguson, allowed users to consolidate information and create a unified narrative around the events, making it easier for people to follow and participate in the movement (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015). Twitter democratized information dissemination, allowing marginalized voices to challenge traditional media narratives and provide a more comprehensive and inclusive

view of social justice issues. Activists and citizens on the ground could share their experiences and perspectives directly, bypassing traditional media gatekeepers and reaching a global audience (Cohen & Kahne, 2012).

## **THE EVOLUTION OF TIKTOK AND PRESENT-DAY DIGITAL ACTIVISM**

As digital platforms evolved, so did methods of digital activism. TikTok, known for its short-form video content, has become a significant tool for activism. Its algorithm promotes viral content and allows activists to reach a large audience quickly. The platform's predominantly young user base is particularly receptive to social justice messages, making TikTok an effective medium for raising awareness and mobilizing action (Jenkins et al., 2016). In the wake of George Floyd's murder in 2020, TikTok saw a surge in BLM-related content. Users created videos to educate others about systemic racism, share personal stories, and call for action. Hashtags like #BlackLivesMatter and #JusticeForGeorgeFloyd trended, amplifying the movement's reach. TikTok's features, such as duets and stitching, enable users to collaborate and build on each other's content, fostering community and collective action (Zhang, 2020).

## **THE EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL ACTIVISM: FROM #BLM TO PRESENT-DAY PLATFORMS**

Digital activism represents a transformative force, redefining the paradigms of engagement and advocacy in the digital era (Smith & Graham, 2022). As an emergent form of mobilization, it transcends traditional boundaries, leveraging technology to foster inclusivity and amplify diverse voices. This section contextualizes the ascendancy of digital activism, elucidating its role in reshaping student-driven movements and its broader implications for societal change (Johnson, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed a paradigm shift, propelling student activism into the digital sphere as conventional avenues became untenable (Diaz & Carter, 2020). This segment explores the adaptive strategies employed by activists who embraced digital platforms to sustain and invigorate their campaigns. By examining case studies, we highlight how virtual platforms facilitated a continuum of advocacy, enabling students to maintain momentum and foster solidarity during unprecedented times (Lee & James, 2021).

## **NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES OF DIGITAL ACTIVISM**

Digital activism, while potent, is not immune to criticism and inherent challenges, including concerns of "slacktivism" and information veracity (Karpf, 2020). In this section, we dissect these critiques, drawing on empirical studies to contextualize their significance and explore the mitigation strategies deployed by activists. Engaging with the discourse on digital activism's limitations and potential pitfalls provides a balanced perspective on its efficacy and resilience (Thompson & Kinne, 2022). Here, we chronicle the triumphant narratives of digital campaigns that have galvanized public attention and instigated change (Roberts & Parks, 2023). Analyzing milestones achieved by movements like #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo, we underscore the instrumental role of digital platforms in elevating these causes. By synthesizing statistical evidence and qualitative insights, we delineate the transformative power of digital activism in driving social and political advancements (Hansen & Jenkins, 2021).

## **EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION: YOUTH AT THE FOREFRONT OF DIGITAL CHANGE**

Youth engagement is critical in the digital activism ecosystem, with students often leading and innovating in this space (Clark & Reddick, 2022). Digital activism equips young activists with vital skills and platforms for advocacy, fostering critical thinking, civic engagement, and social responsibility. Spanning diverse causes—from racial justice and climate action to gender equality and educational reform—activism catalyzes meaningful change. However, to maximize their impact, young activists need structured guidance. The Activism Growth Model (AGM) (George-Williams, 2021) provides a research-based framework for integrating activism into interdisciplinary courses, empowering students to explore social justice issues and develop practical skills.

Digital activism has transformed social movements by offering new tools and platforms for raising awareness and amplifying marginalized voices. From the early days of the #BlackLivesMatter movement on Twitter to today's activism on TikTok, digital platforms continue to drive collective action. As digital activism evolves, harnessing its potential while addressing its challenges is crucial. Integrating digital strategies with grassroots activism can foster inclusive communities and work toward a more equitable society.

## **THE ACTIVISM GROWTH MODEL AND THE GROWTH MINDSET RELATIONSHIP**

### **WHAT IS THE GROWTH MINDSET?**

The growth mindset is the belief that one's abilities and intelligence can be developed and improved over time through hard work, dedication, and perseverance. This concept was developed by psychologist Carol Dweck (2006) and has been widely embraced in education and personal development contexts to promote resilience and achievement. This mindset encourages individuals to embrace challenges, learn from their mistakes, and view failures as opportunities for growth rather than setbacks (Dweck, 2006). This concept contrasts a fixed mindset, where abilities are seen as static and unchangeable. The central premise of the growth mindset is that embracing challenges, persisting in the face of setbacks, and seeing effort as a path to mastery are all critical for fostering a love of learning and resilience necessary for great accomplishment.

### **HOW CAN STUDENTS USE THE GROWTH MINDSET IN ACTIVISM?**

A growth mindset and activism are closely linked, as both demand resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to learning. Activism often involves long-term efforts toward social change, requiring individuals to embrace challenges and persist despite setbacks. A growth mindset helps activists view obstacles as opportunities for learning and development rather than insurmountable barriers, fostering perseverance and sustaining motivation over time. Activists can better handle setbacks and maintain a long-term commitment to their goals by cultivating this mindset. Additionally, the growth mindset promotes self-reflection and critical thinking, essential in activism. Activists must analyze complex social issues and consider diverse perspectives. A growth mindset encourages them to reflect on their biases, think critically about potential solutions, and remain open to new ideas, deepening their understanding of the issues they address.

### **ORIGINS OF THE ACTIVISM GROWTH MODEL**

As an illustration of present-day activism, each new generation of student activists creates new and divergent ways to change the landscape of higher education and how decision-makers must address student activism and advocacy. Without creativity, innovation, and against-the-norm approaches, campus activism efforts may be halted by the administration, staff, and those opposed to such public tactics before the efforts can take hold and launch (George-Williams, 2019). The increased activism and advocacy on college campuses and in communities has led to a surge of individuals desiring to step boldly into their activist and advocate identities. As exciting as this epiphany can be, it can also lead to a feeling of fear, trepidation, and the "imposter syndrome," which is defined as the feeling that you aren't worthy of contributing, that your voice and experiences are fraudulent (George-Williams, 2021). With this epiphany, some have also experienced not knowing exactly how, when, where, or with whom to engage and develop their advocate or activist identity. This can lead to despair or a lack of direction, with so much passion and uncertainty about which path to take to fuel your fire (George-Williams, 2021). The Activism Growth Model is a robust framework that can be applied to individuals from all walks of life - from community organizers to high school students.

The theories that inspired the foundation of the Activist Growth Model were Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993), Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005), Black Feminist Thought (BFT) (Collins, 2000), and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The Activism Growth Model draws upon a rich tapestry of theoretical frameworks, each contributing distinct perspectives and insights to inform its structure and objectives.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) originated in the early 1990s by scholars interrogating the interplay of race, law, and power, revealing how systemic racism is ingrained in legal frameworks and societal structures (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Its influence on the Activism Growth Model lies in its emphasis on identifying and contesting racial injustices and understanding how racial hierarchies impact marginalized communities, providing a critical lens through which activism is contextualized and strategized. Community Cultural Wealth, articulated by Tara Yosso in 2005, expands the concept of capital beyond economic parameters to include various cultural know-how, skills, abilities, and networks possessed by culturally marginalized groups (Yosso, 2005). This theory illuminates the assets and strengths that marginalized communities inherently possess, suggesting that these resources can be leveraged for activism and empowerment, thus informing the Activism Growth Model's approach to harnessing communal strengths for social change. Lastly, Black Feminist Thought (BFT), as expounded by Patricia Hill Collins, provides a framework for understanding the intersections of race, gender, and class, emphasizing Black women's unique experiences and struggles (Collins, 2000). BFT's contribution to the Activism Growth Model is its nuanced perspective on intersectionality and the importance of considering multiple, intersecting forms of oppression when engaging in activism. This ensures that the model is inclusive and attuned to the complexities of identity and experience.

## **MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS AND CULTURAL APPROPRIATION**

The intersection of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the Blackfoot nation's influence invites an essential discussion about cross-cultural contributions to psychological frameworks. The Blackfoot Nation, historically prominent in North America for its rich cultural heritage and significant ties to the northern Great Plains (Dempsey, 1978), is often credited as a potential inspiration for Maslow's model. Maslow's time on a Blackfoot reserve gave him insights into communal and spiritual aspects of Blackfoot life. However, the extent to which he authentically integrated these teachings into his hierarchy remains debated (Hoffman, 1988). Maslow's hierarchy, traditionally depicted as a pyramid with physiological needs at the base ascending toward self-actualization, contrasts with Blackfoot teachings, emphasizing collective welfare and interconnectedness over individual progression (Peat, 2002). This philosophical divergence highlights critical differences in conceptualizing human needs, underscoring the importance of communal harmony in Blackfoot culture versus Maslow's focus on personal fulfillment. Scholars advocate for more accurate recognition of Indigenous intellectual contributions, urging ethical consideration when incorporating cross-cultural knowledge into academic paradigms (Cajete, 2000; Kimmerer, 2013).

## **DISCONNECTING THE ACTIVISM GROWTH MODEL WITH MASLOW: GROUNDING IN BLACKFOOT**

Reevaluating Maslow's hierarchy with awareness of its possible Blackfoot philosophical roots provides a valuable lens for enhancing the Activism Growth Model. It is essential to acknowledge the Blackfoot Nation's influence on Maslow's concept of self-actualization and the hierarchy of needs, widely regarded as a foundational theory in humanistic psychology (Cajete, 2000). Maslow's motivational theory, which emphasizes building a solid foundation before advancing toward self-actualization, mirrors the Blackfoot's holistic worldview (LittleBear, 2000). Recognizing these influences highlights the interconnected nature of personal well-being, community welfare, and environmental balance—key elements of Blackfoot philosophy. Honoring the Blackfoot Nation's contributions underscores the importance of cultural acknowledgment in maintaining academic integrity and ethical research practices (Peat, 2002). Revisiting the Activism Growth Model with this perspective enriches its theoretical framework, making it more inclusive, culturally grounded, and relevant across diverse activist contexts. While Maslow's hierarchy remains a prominent psychological model, engaging with its potential Blackfoot connections emphasizes critical considerations of cultural appropriation and the importance of recognizing Indigenous intellectual contributions (Cajete, 2000; LittleBear, 2000; Peat, 2002).

The Activism Growth Model (AGM) benefits from an integrative approach that incorporates the rich philosophical foundations and cultural insights of the Blackfoot Nation, emphasizing holistic well-being and communal interconnectedness. This integration deepens the model's theoretical base, aligning it with Indigenous perspectives that view activism as an interconnected, community-centric pursuit. Below are the tenets of the AGM in Table 1 and how those tenets align with the cultural and strengths-based understandings of the Blackfoot.

**Table 1**  
*Integration of Blackfoot Philosophies into the Activism Growth Model (AGM)*

<b>AGM Tenet</b>	<b>Corresponding Blackfoot Philosophy</b>	<b>Description</b>
Do your soul work	<b>Spiritual balance and introspection</b> (Bastien, 2004; George-Williams, 2021)	Emphasizes internal coherence and spiritual alignment as foundational for effective activism.
Know your roles	<b>Understanding societal and cosmic roles</b> (HeavyRunner & Marshall, 2003; George-Williams, 2021)	Highlights the importance of discovering personal roles within the activism framework and contributing to collective well-being.
Choose your activism vehicles	<b>Utilizing gifts and position to serve the community</b> (WeaselHead, 2015; George-Williams, 2021)	Encourages leveraging personal strengths and resources for communal advocacy.
Find your people	<b>Relationality and community ties</b> (Yellow Bird, 2013; George-Williams, 2021)	Stresses the importance of seeking a supportive community and emphasizes that activism thrives when rooted in strong communal relationships.
Locate the barriers	<b>Recognizing and navigating life's challenges</b> (LittleBear, 2000; George-Williams, 2021)	Encourages awareness of obstacles and emphasizes resilience, reflecting the value of perseverance in the face of challenges.
Prioritize radical self-care	<b>Linking individual health to community well-being</b> (Cross, 1997; George-Williams, 2021)	Promotes self-care as essential for sustaining activism and maintaining collective vitality.

*Note.* This table aligns Blackfoot Philosophies with the AGM.

Integrating these Blackfoot philosophies into the Activism Growth Model (AGM) enhances its cultural depth, ethical grounding, and practical applicability. This approach acknowledges activism's holistic and interconnected nature, recognizing the interdependence of personal well-being and collective action. By aligning key AGM tenets with indigenous teachings, the model becomes more inclusive and adaptable, offering a framework that resonates across diverse cultural contexts. The following section outlines the methodology employed in this study. It aimed to capture students' lived experiences engaging with the AGM, ensuring their voices and narratives are central to understanding the model's real-world application.

## Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research design, focusing on autoethnography to collate and analyze data from a reflective paper assignment and subsequent exercises. This approach aligns with Chang’s (2008) description of autoethnography as a method that combines autobiographical narratives with ethnographical inquiry, allowing individuals to explore their personal experiences within broader cultural and social contexts. Incorporating autoethnographic methods, mainly through reflection paper assignments and reflective exercises, provided a nuanced lens to examine students’ individual and shared narratives at the two institutions. These institutions implemented the AGM within four undergraduate courses—Black Experience in the United States, Social Justice in Sport and Culture, Inequalities in Health and Human Movement, Contemporary Issues in Health and Human Movement—and Social Justice in Higher Education and Collaboration and Consultation in Counseling graduate courses. Thematic analysis, a critical tool in qualitative research, facilitated the extraction and examination of vital themes and patterns concerning student engagement and the practical application of activism within these educational contexts.

Three hundred and twenty students participated in this study. Participants were recruited through the submitted course assignment at both institutions, ensuring representation from various campus organizations, activities, backgrounds, and academic disciplines. These students represented both undergraduate and graduate levels, offering a broad spectrum of perspectives on activism within collegiate settings, as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2**  
*Student Participant Information*

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Semester/Term</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
Institution 1	Black Experience in the United States (2 undergraduate courses)	Spring 2021 Spring 2022	56
Institution 1	Social Justice in Higher Education (2 Graduate courses)	Spring 2021 Spring 2022	18
Institution 2	Collaboration and Consulting in Counseling (1 class)	Winter 2020	14
Institution 2	Social Justice in Sport and Culture (1 undergraduate courses)	Spring 2023	12
Institution 2	Inequalities in Sport and Physical Activity (2 undergraduate courses)	Fall 2023	60
Institution 2	Contemporary Issues in Health and Human Movement (2 undergraduate courses)	Spring 2024 Fall 2024	160
<b>Total</b>			<b>320 Students</b>

*Note.* The table identifies the total number and courses of student participants.

### Activism Growth Model Autoethnography Paper Assignment

The data collection mechanism, an ethnographic paper called the Activism Growth Model Autoethnography Reflection Paper Assignment, was pivotal in this methodology. Students engaged in autoethnographic reflection that facilitates deep introspective analysis and connection with broader societal and cultural dynamics (Ellis et al., 2011). Through this reflective process, students interpreted their experiences with the AGM, linking personal insights to broader societal activism and advocacy. In engaging with the AGM's framework, students were prompted to delve into their missions and visions, aligning their narratives with societal change paradigms through the lens of the AGM tenets. This aspect was crucial for understanding how individual experiences resonate with collective activism frameworks, echoing Reed-Danahay's (1997) insights into autoethnography's utility in bridging personal narratives with more extensive social phenomena. The instructional design for the Activism Growth Model Autoethnography Reflection Paper emphasized several core learning objectives to foster a rich, engaging environment for exploring social justice activism. These components are displayed in Table 3 below:

**Table 3**

*ACTIVISM GROWTH MODEL AUTOETHNOGRAPHY ASSIGNMENT CORE LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Component	Description
Core Learning Objectives	<b>Developing Critical Thinking:</b> Students enhanced their ability to critically examine societal constructs, aligning with Brookfield's (2012) emphasis on critical thinking in understanding social injustices.
	<b>Fostering Empathy and Understanding:</b> Students reflected on personal and societal narratives to foster empathy toward marginalized groups, aligning with the AGM's intersectionality and inclusivity goals (Crenshaw, 1989).
	<b>Building Community Engagement:</b> Students were encouraged to apply their learning in real-world community action, resonating with Zimmerman's (2000) work on community engagement and empowerment.
	<b>Facilitating Self-Reflection:</b> The AGM framework encouraged introspection, in line with Schön's (1983) advocacy for reflective practice in personal and professional growth.
	<b>Experiential Learning:</b> Students engaged directly with activism within and beyond academic settings, supporting Kolb's (1984) theories on the significance of experiential learning.
Outcome	The use of autoethnography provided personal narratives that were contextualized within broader activist and societal frameworks, highlighting the interaction between individual agency and collective action in driving social change.

*Note.* This table shows the AGM paper assignment core learning objectives and desired outcome.

### Results

The results of this study underscore the Activism Growth Model's (AGM) substantial influence on fostering student engagement and promoting a robust inclination toward activism within academic settings. To illustrate the diverse ways students engaged with activism through the Activism Growth Model (AGM), their experiences have been organized into key thematic groupings. These groupings highlight distinct aspects of their activism, from various forms of advocacy to personal challenges and growth. The themes are grouped into four categories in Table 4 below.

**Table 4**  
*Forms of Activism*

Theme	Student Narratives
Dynamic Activism in Practice	“In my community service and on social media, I stand for justice, earning recognition for my steadfast commitment.”
	“I find my voice on social media, advocating for justice and connecting with allies.”
	“Through diversity committees and public marches, I assert my stance, driving change both within institutions and publicly.”
Art as Advocacy	“Art is my political voice, challenging norms and inspiring change through visual narrative.”
	“My political cartoons are my activism tools, critiquing injustices while engaging viewers.”
Passionate Advocacy and Issue Engagement	“Addressing systemic racism and advocating for educational equity motivates my activism.”
	“I focus my advocacy efforts on disability rights, particularly for minority voices.”
	“Combating gender disparities, especially in sports, fuels my passion for activism.”

*Note.* This table displays the common forms of activism students share and engage in.

**Table 5**  
*Advocacy Approaches*

Theme	Student Narratives
Nuanced Advocacy	“Understanding when to lead and when to support is crucial in activism. My role is to elevate, not dominate.”
	“I strive to amplify necessary voices, especially when my presence should support rather than lead.”
	“Collaboration and backing are my activism approaches, ensuring the spotlight remains on those who should lead.”
Intersectionality and Diversity	“I champion intersectional activism, confronting various injustices to advocate for broad societal change.”
	“At my workplace and school, I champion diversity, ensuring that we address a spectrum of injustices.”
	“My activism intertwines various causes on social media, illustrating our interconnected struggles.”

*Note.* This table highlights how students approach advocacy.

### Discussion

The findings highlight the effectiveness of the AGM in fostering student activism. By offering interdisciplinary perspectives and promoting hands-on experiences, the AGM allowed students to operationalize their activism skills beyond the academic setting. Tables 6, Table 7, and Table 8 illustrate how the Activism Growth Model (AGM) can be strategically integrated into various aspects of campus life to foster a culture of social justice and student empowerment. By tailoring applications to specific practitioner roles, institutions can create more inclusive and dynamic environments that encourage students to engage meaningfully with activism

**Table 6**  
*AGM's Impact on Campus Activities and Student Development*

<b>Impact Area</b>	<b>Description</b>
Leadership Development	Promotes leadership skills through reflective practices and activism engagement.
Critical Thinking	Encourages students to critically analyze social justice issues.
Empathy and Community Engagement	Fosters empathy and collaboration across diverse student groups.
Intersectionality and Diversity	"I champion intersectional activism, confronting various injustices to advocate for broad societal change."
Social Consciousness	Cultivates an environment of social responsibility and civic engagement.

*Note.* This table highlights the AGM's impact on campus activities and student development.

**Table 7**  
*Applications of the AGM for Campus Practitioners*

<b>Practitioner Role</b>	<b>Applications of the AGM</b>
Student Organization Advisors	Facilitate reflective workshops to explore activist identities and roles.
Programming Board Coordinators	Organize social justice-themed events and programs.
Orientation Professionals	Integrate activism-focused sessions into orientation programs.
Policy-Level Administrators	Revise policies to support student activism and promote equity.

*Note.* This table highlights the applications of the AGM for Campus Practitioners.

**Table 8**  
*Examples of AGM-Driven Initiatives by Practitioner Role*

<b>Practitioner Role</b>	<b>Example Initiative</b>
Student Organization Advisors	Workshops on identifying activism vehicles and barriers.
Programming Board Coordinators	Hosting panel discussions and film series on social justice topics.
Orientation Professionals	Interactive workshops on role exploration and community building.
Policy-Level Administrators	Creating advisory councils of student activists to influence policies.

*Note.* These tables share AGM-Driven Initiatives by Practitioner Role.

The AGM offers a versatile framework for enhancing student development and community engagement.

## Implications for Education and Activism

The AGM model offers a robust framework for campus activities practitioners to support and enhance student activism. Its application across various roles and settings can cultivate a campus environment that prioritizes social justice, encourages student agency, and equips students with the skills to become lifelong advocates for change. Table 9 lists the Implications for Education and Activism utilizing the AGM.

**Table 9**

*Implications for Education and Activism*

Key Area	Description
For Educational Institutions	Educational institutions play a critical role in nurturing future leaders and change-makers. Adopting the AGM enables institutions to offer transformative learning experiences, encouraging students to engage critically with social issues.
Curricular Integration	Embedding social justice and activism into core curricula ensures students across all disciplines are exposed to these essential topics. Courses can focus on social issues, activism history, theory, and practical skills for civic engagement.
Faculty Support and Training	Institutions must support faculty by offering resources, training, and professional development opportunities to help integrate activism into their teaching. Building a community of practice among educators ensures sustained engagement with activism in education.
For Educators	Educators hold a unique position to inspire and guide students in understanding social justice. Through the AGM, they can foster informed, active participation in societal issues.
Pedagogical Approaches	Using active learning strategies like project-based learning, service-learning, and discussion-based classrooms promotes critical thinking, self-reflection, and active civic engagement.

*Note.* This table lists implications for education and activism and key areas.

### Conclusion

This study emphasizes student activism's dynamic and multifaceted character, illustrating a collective dedication to social advocacy and the utilization of varied strategies to drive societal transformation. Integrating the Activism Growth Model (AGM) into interdisciplinary courses enriches academic experiences by merging activism with scholarly inquiry, empowering students to become proactive societal change-makers. Student activists engage in direct actions like protests, leverage digital platforms to spread awareness, and engage in educational endeavors to mobilize community engagement, playing a crucial role in addressing critical social issues and cultivating a supportive, unified culture.

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