

# LSEHD's First-Year Program, Experience, Reflection, & Action (ERA):

Raising Environmental, Racial, and Social Justice Awareness in Predominantly White Higher Education Settings

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## ERA-FYP INTRODUCTION

### Social Justice at Boston College & in LSEHD.

- The official Jesuit and school motos center social justice.
- Cura Personalis & Cura Apostolica** – Care for the whole individual and care for the work (i.e. actions).  
“Being women and men for and with others.”

### ERA in Lynch School of Education & Human Development

- LSEHD launches programming for its first-year undergraduates toward authentic social justice passions and real world actions by centering student positionality.
- Fosters positionality-informed social justice consciousness in students by targeting three developmentally critical and formative education informed processes: Experience, Reflection, and Action.
- Each process is targeted for individual growth through multiple activities that foster Design-Thinking problem solving.

Includes flexible thinking, tolerance of ambiguity, willingness to make

## ERA-FYP CURRICULUM MODEL

### Fall Semester

- Exploring positionality through regular reflections with section Instructors and peer Teaching Intern insights (Personal Reflections)
- Design Swarms for ‘Design Thinking’ tools and training
- World renowned ERA speakers on developmental journeys.
- Social Justice Discussions. Topics include: Environmental Challenges, Racial Justice, Educational Equity & Law, and Discernment during Crisis

### Spring Semester

- ERA Action research project serves as a new form of transformative education within the higher education context.
- Efforts are aided aided by talented section instructors, peer mentors and teaching interns, and newly informed institutional positionality.
- Includes an end-of-semester ERA-FYP team poster and presentation symposium
- Action Plans for how LSEHD *students* will address real world problems within their means and going forward.

## ERA-FYP Developmental Maps, Design-Thinking Swarms & Posters

Fig. 1. ERA Fall Semester Map



Fig. 2. ERA Design Swarm Example

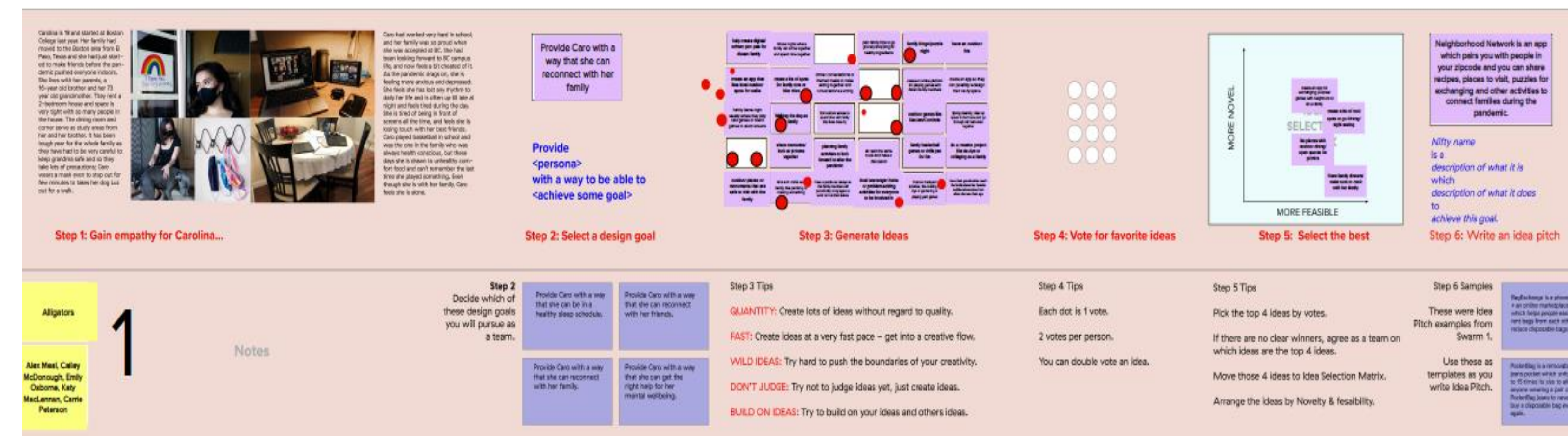


Fig. 3. ERA Spring Semester Map

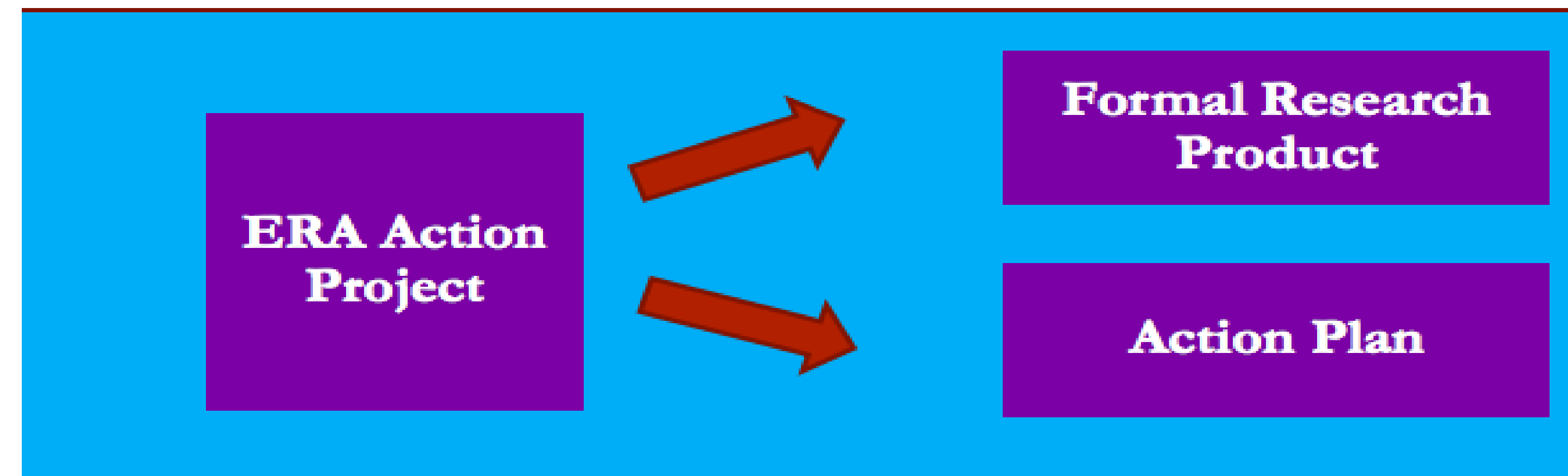
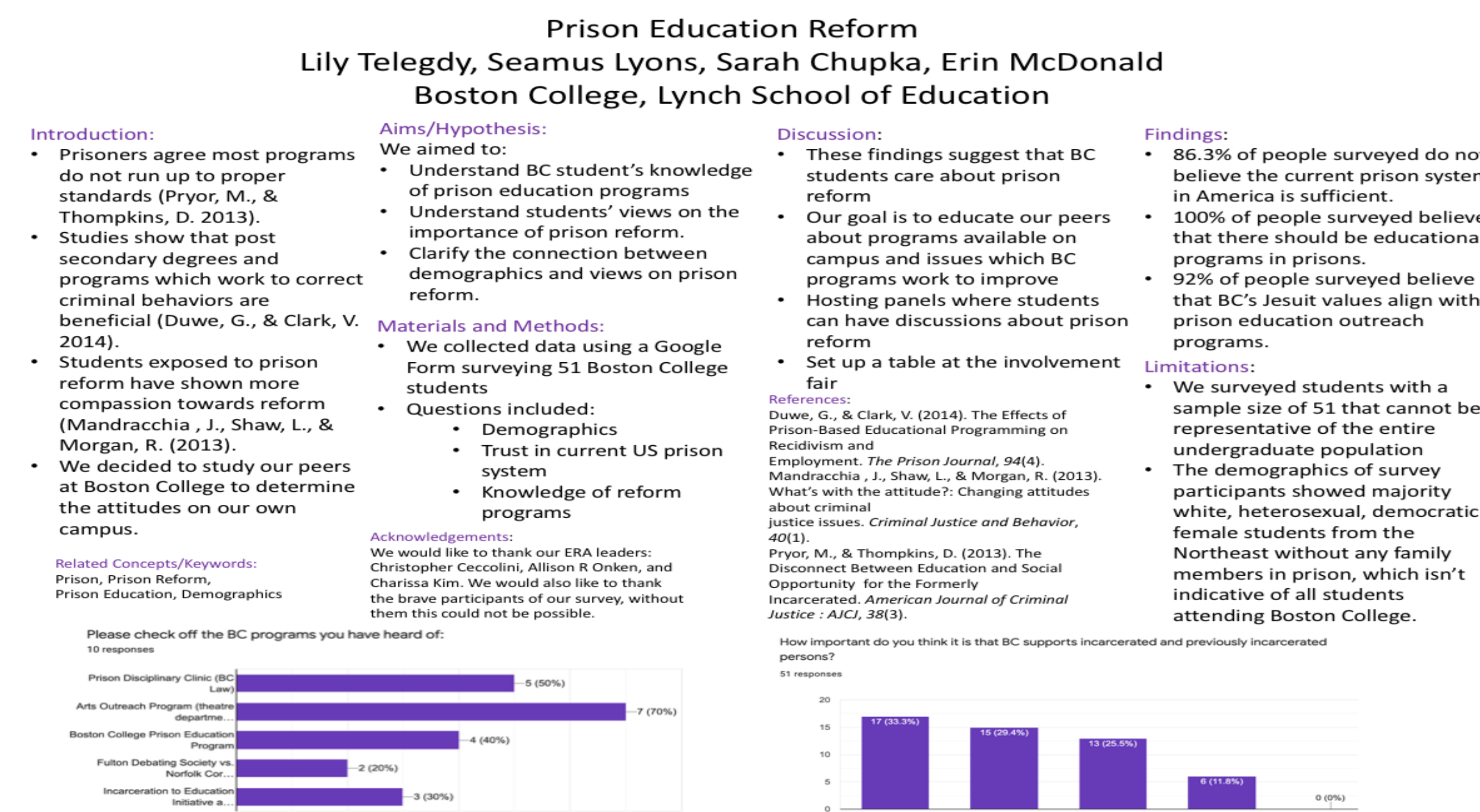


Fig. 4. ERA-FYP Student Final Poster Example



## OUR ERA -FYP STUDENTS AND ERA STAFF

### ERA Students (2020-2021 Academic Year)

- 136 students
- 87% cisfemale (all students currently identify as cisgender)
- 67% White
- 40% attended a private or parochial school
- 35% have two parents with professional degrees
- Developmentally shared:
  - All 17 to 19 years old
  - Nearly no prior college experience.

### ERA Staff

9 LSEHD graduate student section instructors and 17 LSEHD advanced undergraduate student teaching interns.

Diverse in positional identities (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation) and developmental experiences.

ERA staff have had some form of formal training in counseling, teaching, social justice and advocacy.

## LSEHD ERA-FYP IMPLICATIONS

- Our students are notably more active in addressing inequities on the Boston College campus.
- LSEHD undergraduate students are more likely to seek positions at Boston College as research assistants, seek internships that are public/service oriented, remain in education/psychology focused careers, and pursue graduate degrees in related topics.
- Students regularly pursue and expand upon their ERA projects throughout their BC undergraduate programs.
- We are currently conducting an IRB approved longitudinal study to understand the impact of Design-Thinking and Critical Consciousness on academic and professional trajectory.
- As of May 2021, data suggest that LSHED students who participate in ERA grow in developmental areas critical to thriving in emerging adulthood.

Growth areas include:

- Design Thinking (Curiosity, Valuing Diversity, Applied Solutions)*
- Self Efficacy*
- Hope for the Future*
- Life Purpose*
- Gratitude*