SOCIAL JUSTICE AND A DIVERSE DEMOCRACY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN COLLEGE

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Opportunity to Learn in College

• Value of skills associated with diversity
  • High social skills and non-routine analytic skills characterize the highest paying jobs (David Deming)

• Consistent research evidence about the importance of interactions across groups in college that result in cognitive and democratic outcomes (Denson, Bowman)

• Creating the conditions for authentic intergroup relations—practicing citizenship
Theory of Diversity and Learning

• Encountering the new and unfamiliar causes us to abandon routines and think actively (Langer)
• Disequilibrium occurs when one encounters perspectives that depart from one’s own embedded worldview (Piaget, Chickering)
• Learning and social development occurs when interacting with others who offer different perspectives and experiences

Pluralistic Orientation as a College Outcome

• Practical standpoint: measure was derived directly from the skills articulated by employers for a diverse workforce (Bikson & Law, 1994).
• Developmental perspective: outcome is linked to students’ thinking and social interaction (cognitive), perspective taking (social-cognitive) as well as new models of intercultural competence and maturity (inter- and intrapersonal dimensions; King & Baxter-Magolda, 2005)
Pluralistic Orientation Scale
(N= 29,796 students; Alpha reliability = .85)

Survey items: Rate yourself relative to peers

Tolerance of others with different beliefs
Ability to work cooperatively with diverse people
Openness to having my own views challenged
Ability to discuss/negotiate controversial issues
Ability to see world from someone else’s perspective
College Experiences Promote Change in Students’ Pluralistic Orientation: End of First Year

INFORMAL
Positive interactions with diverse peers
Taking action on racial issues
Hrs/week working for pay
Hrs/week studying
Hrs/week socializing

CAMPUS FACILITATED
Leadership training
Diversity co-curricular activities
Service learning & community service
Course opportunities for intensive dialogue
Relationship of Types of College Courses and Pluralistic Orientation

- Service Learning
- Materials/Readings about race/ethnicity
- Opportunities for Intensive Dialogue

Mean Score vs. Number of Courses Taken Reported on DLE

- 0
- 1
- 2-4
- 5+
Framework*: Civic Learning Measures

- **Self**
  - Understanding of Self & Others
- **Communities & Cultures**
  - Change: Knowledge of people from different races/cultures
- **Knowledge**
  - Civic Awareness
  - Integration of Learning
- **Skills**
  - Pluralistic Orientation
  - Critical Consciousness & Action
- **Values**
  - Social Agency Public Action
- **Public Action**
  - Civic Engagement in Public Forums
  - Political Engagement

*From Musil (2009)
## Data and Sample for Replication Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The Freshman Survey (TFS)</th>
<th>Your First College Year (YFCY)</th>
<th>Diverse Learning Environments (DLE)</th>
<th>College Senior Survey (CSS)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administered</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>End of first year</td>
<td>Climate, 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} year</td>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th} year and beyond</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>matched</td>
<td>25,373</td>
<td>8,316</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
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<td>399</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results from Common Model Across 19 Democratic Outcomes

### Direction and Number of Significant Relationships*

For Experiences significant across more than 10 outcomes

- Positive Cross-Racial Interaction (+19)
- Habits of Mind for Life Long Learning (+19)
- Sense of Belonging (+10, -3)
- Volunteer Work (+12)
- Liberal Political Views (+10, -2)
- Leadership Training (+11)
- Institution’s Respect for Expression of Diverse Beliefs (+11)
- Service-Learning Course (+10, -1)

*Significant at p<.05 or greater
Challenges to Diversity and Democracy

• Desire to assume everyone to be the same, and treat everyone the same because it is assumed “fair”
  • Promotes group think
  • Ignores continuing disparities created by structures, systems, and individuals
• Continuing forms of bias and stereotyping related to underrepresentation
• Lack of experience and skills to understand and interact across differences
Reported an Incident of Discrimination to a Campus Authority (% of Students Responding "Yes")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Underrepresented Minorities at Institution</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latino/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-35</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36+</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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</table>
Percent of Latino/a Students Experiencing Different Types of Discrimination and Bias

- Verbal comments
- Exclusion
- Offensive visual images

Percentage of Underrepresented Minorities at Institution

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<th>Percentage of Underrepresented Minorities at Institution</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>32.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-35</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>28.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>36+</td>
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<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0-20

21-35

36+
Bias Affects Sense of Belonging in College

Negative Correlation Between Discrimination/Bias and Sense of Belonging

Percentage of Underrepresented Minorities at Institution

Correlation Coefficient
Everyday Forms of Bias

- **Implicit bias** “refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.” Stereotyping is more prevalent in environments where students are underrepresented (Staats et al. 2015)

- **Stereotype threat** refers to being at risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's identity group such as race, gender or socioeconomic status, which has been shown to affect achievement (Steele and Aronson, 1995).

- **Microaggressions** are “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group” (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino., 2007, p. 72), often outside the consciousness of the aggressor.
Failure to Differentiate or Recognition Bias

When members of a particular minority group are sometimes mistaken for another person of the group or a different group (e.g., a different ethnicity) by others. All groups share this unintentional recognition bias, but research suggests the effect is most pronounced for those unfamiliar with specific racial/ethnic minorities.

Results in: Categorization, mistaken identity, lack of identification of ethnic differences, or confusing one student with another.
Failure to Differentiate Ethnicity and Individuals

I think one of the basic problems here on this campus is that Asians are taken as a collective group. Individual experiences and the cultural differences between, and the complexity of a culture within the Asian and Asian American community is not recognized.

I think that being black at [University], there are two different ways to look at it. There’s one, just being black to everyone else and to everyone else you are black. You’re not Caribbean; you’re not African; you’re not African American; you’re just black.
Competency Proving

I think one of the main times that I noticed something like that directly is whenever you have a group project and you may—if it’s like in the beginning of class, in a big lecture class people don’t know you at all. They don’t know anything about you, but the minute you’re signed into a group and you’re the only Black person in the group, you’re automatically looked upon as the weak link. That’s the way I come across in pretty much almost all of my group assignments. People don’t know me. They don’t know what I’m interested in; they don’t know anything about me, but the minute you come in you’re thought of as a liability. That’s kind of one of the main things I’ve experienced as far as that goes. (African American Female Undergraduate)
Competency Proving and Stereotyping

I definitely feel like when I walk into a classroom, I’m not necessarily treated with the same type of intellect that other students are treated with. I come in with a mentality that, “All right, let me prove that I’m a good student,” as opposed to walking in and knowing I’m a good student and the teacher acknowledging that, just as a baseline. I always feel like there’s a standard that I always have to live up to as opposed to just being a student in class. (African American Female Undergraduate)
Promising Practices

• Intergroup Dialogue—social justice education, conflict mediation, and social psychology in the reduction of prejudice.

• Create mutual learning environments with attention to content (knowledge about diverse groups) and process (activities that illustrate concepts e.g. cultural appropriation).

• Reduce belonging uncertainty—allowing for activities that both create comfort and also recognize there is some discomfort for all in learning to cross boundaries.
Creating Inclusive Classrooms

• Attend to power dynamics in discussion, who speaks and who is silent
• Create safe and brave spaces to share stories of lived experiences of systemic inequality and overcoming adversity.
  • Asking questions
  • Acknowledge multiple social identities
  • Use conflict as an opportunity to learn
• Find ways to make the “one and only” or solo status student feel more comfortable in class
Resources

• Diversity Research Institute, UCLA—June 2016
• Heri.ucla.edu surveys or research tab
• Heri.ucla.edu/nih presentations and papers
Scale: Complex Thinking for a Diverse Society
(N= 27, 288 Students; Alpha Reliability = .83)

Understanding of the problems facing your community

Understanding of social problems facing our nation

Ability to get along with people of different races/cultures

Knowledge of people from different races/cultures

Ability to think critically
College Experience Effects on Complex Thinking For A Diverse Society Among College Seniors

INFORMAL
- Positive interactions with diverse peers
- Interactions with students outside the U.S.
- Voted in a student election
- Demonstrated for/against the war

Also related to high ratings on:
Academic ability
Understanding of others
Self-understanding

CAMPUS FACILITATED
- Performed community service as part of a class
- Attended a racial/cultural awareness workshop
- Took an ethnic studies course
- Took a women’s studies course