IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE IN MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: A SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF COLLEGE DIVERSITY PRACTICES

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Social/Personality Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

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by

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The aim of this study was to assess how multicultural educational practices shape students' learning, intergroup relations, and identity development. Multicultural education reflects the diversity of students' backgrounds to make learning relevant to students' lives and models positive intergroup relations by examining diverse perspectives. It is hypothesized that these effects are associated with the development of students' own identities. Dialogical Self theory (Hermans, 2001) conceptualizes identities as relational, rather than individual, constructs embedded in particular practices and interactions. This study tested the capacity of dialogical theory to identify those practices that foster the development of all students equally.

The research questions guiding this study were: 1) What educational practices are produced as a function of a multicultural curriculum? 2) How do these practices structure student processes, including students' identities, attitudes towards others, and learning? The study focused on a single multicultural course at Hunter College, Sociology 217: Race and Ethnicity. A within-subject longitudinal design examined student outcomes before and after their participation in the course. A between-subject design examined differences between students attending the target course and a comparison group. A

quantitative survey assessing the major constructs was supplemented by a narrative task where students explored a conflict scenario. Additional data assessed the educational framework: a) weekly class observations, b) teacher interviews, and c) archival data describing the history of the school's multicultural policy.

The results demonstrated the benefits of multicultural education, specifically in the areas of identity development, understandings of democracy, and intergroup relations. The dialogical basis of student development was illustrated by a detailed analysis of student processes, describing relationships among perspective-taking, identity development, academic development, and engagement in discussions and conflicts. These results were further expanded by an examination of how multicultural education operates in classrooms and what pedagogical and institutional practices support its effectiveness. Additionally, the study found differences in the experiences of majority and minority students attending the multicultural class. These differences illustrated the need to tailor multicultural education to its diverse recipients, by linking theoretical content to class pedagogy and the wider institutional climate.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

"The deepest and the most fundamental learning that can occur at Hunter is from each other – hence, there is inherent value and richness associated with our diversity." (Report of the President's Commission on Campus Climate and Relations, 1993, p.23)

Multiculturalism has become a popular framework guiding efforts to institutionalize social justice and intergroup understanding. It promotes a critical examination of assumptions formed by any one group in relation to values endorsed by multiple others (Flowers & Richardson, 1996). In addition to promoting diversity as a value, multiculturalists also insist that all cultural groups be treated with respect and as equals. However, the theoretical underpinnings of multiculturalism fail to specify precisely how to manage group differences, typically attended by preexisting inequalities, in the concrete settings of the nation's schools and workplaces. As a result, a range of models of diversity is practiced, often with conflicting results regarding the relationships among the recipients of multicultural policies. Research is needed to fill the gaps in the understanding of when and how the emphasis on difference and diversity produces equitable group relations.

Multicultural education was first introduced as a response to the need of educating the growing numbers of immigrant children in American public schools (Spring, 2001). Its foundation coincided with the Civil Rights movement and the intergroup education movement of the 1950's, giving multicultural education a distinctly political flavor. The ensuing debates over academic curricula have forced schools to examine basic assumptions about the goals of education and the roles of students as its recipients (Fitzgerald & Lauter, 2001). Rather than stressing individual perceptions as a root of inequality, the new educational framework focused on structural inequalities, both inside

and outside of schools, as a way to open a contextual analysis of group relations and its relationship to students' success.

Recent research examined a range of multicultural models currently practiced across schools (e.g., Zirkel, Lopez, & Brown, 2004). The results point to a specific set of issues faced by educators and students today. Fifty years ago, following the Brown v. Board of Education decision (1954), students gained access to newly desegregated schools, and curricula have changed to include courses reflecting the histories and contributions of America's multiple ethnic and racial groups[1]. Although the general benefits of these changes have been firmly established by now (e.g., Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002), ongoing achievement gaps have been documented between and within institutions in terms of how they serve diverse student populations (e.g., Lee, 2002; Wenglinsky, 2004). Today, we need to ask how multicultural benefits may be attained by all students, shifting the emphasis to the specific processes of pedagogy and learning in the multicultural classroom (Zirkel & Cantor, 2004).

It is becoming clear that simply letting students of various backgrounds learn together is not sufficient to enacting lasting change in fostering relationships across racial and ethnic lines (Zirkel & Cantor, 2004). What is needed is an educational framework that allows students to experience and practice effective forms of intergroup contact, giving them skills that will prove crucial in the twenty-first century (Gaines, 2004). Further, new models of pedagogy need to be developed to foster both theoretical and experiential types of learning, to create bridges between students' values and actions (Nagda, Kim, &

[1] In 1997, a survey of 65 American colleges and universities found that almost 60 percent had instituted requirements that students take at least one course addressing diversity (Humphreys, 1997). Another study examining 196 colleges and universities found that 34% had a multicultural general education requirement, 33% offered course work in ethnic and women's studies, and 54% had introduced multicultural material into their departmental course offerings (Light & Cureton, 1992).

Truelove, 2004). For this to happen, the institutional environment needs to be radically changed, in order to support teachers and students as they explore new ways of how to live with one another (Gaines, 2004).

Finally, the focus on the classroom raises questions about how different groups of students make sense of the multicultural curricula, considering their divergent life experiences and interactive styles. Research shows that the experiences and learning attained in multicultural courses differ by students' racial or ethnic status (Nagda et al., 2004). To make multiculturalism effective for all students, we need to study the development of identity among groups of students in connection with various school and pedagogy types (Zirkel & Cantor, 2004).

Recent educational theory emphasizes links between knowledge, culture and group membership, and the role of students' identity. Giroux (1995) describes schools as contexts in which both knowledge and social identity are simultaneously produced. Student identity processes are a key factor in the process of learning about others, and identities themselves are shaped by the processes of learning (Dilg, 1999). The interrelation between learning and social identity development underlines the need to examine identity processes as determinants of not only students' well-being but also as a factor in the development of intergroup attitudes and academic achievement.

Social psychology has offered several frameworks theorizing social identity and intergroup relations (e.g., Stephan, 1999; Tajfel, 1981). Recently, the theory of the dialogical self proposed an understanding of self as a relational process shaped by larger social and institutional contexts, often characterized by conflictual relationships among various self-other positions (Hermans, 2001; Sampson, 1993). By creating connections

between individual, interpersonal, and institutional processes, these theories provide a basis for social critique. They study not only the effects of categorization but also question how social categories are created, acting to support alternative identity constructions (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Reicher, 1986).

The dialogical conception of self and identity replaces the traditional question asking how individuals operate in groups with the question of how *groups operate within individuals*, establishing the primacy of context in the study of individual and interpersonal processes (Sampson, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978). In turn, it creates an opportunity to examine individual processes in terms of social justice. By constructing particular notions of selfhood, definitions of identity may act as tools to shape particular social relationships (Rose, 1998). Examining individuals across levels of social context invites the crucial question of who benefits from current social categories and the hierarchical relations that support them, connecting the goals of psychology to democratic outcomes.

The aim of this study is to examine an educational model that links group identity to the development of students' knowledge as a basis of transformative educational practice. The multicultural school provides a research context to clarify how social categories interact with institutional contexts to produce particular types of subjectivity and knowledge. It allows for the study of connections between the three levels of context outlined by Doise (1997): a) *institutional*: social representations of group membership guiding educational policy (multicultural curriculum and pedagogical philosophy); b) *interpersonal*: interactions resulting from the institutionalization of multiculturalism (intergroup relations in the school and the classroom); and c) *individual*: identities,

attitudes towards others arising from these interactions, and academic skills (students' identities, intergroup attitudes, and academic success).

The following review will describe past and current research that forms the conceptual background for the proposed study. It will address two broad areas: multicultural education and the social psychological study of self and identity. Key notions connecting these theoretical fields are the concepts of identity and social justice. Locating the learner at the intersection of individual development and institutional structure allows for the establishment of a democratic educational practice. Traditionally, schools have served to support, rather than transform, existing social practices including stereotyping, racism, sexism, and other forms of injustice. In order to disrupt existing inequalities, we need to design school environments to become open to diverse types of knowledge, promoting equal participation by students of different backgrounds (Boler, 2004). By giving an audience to the voices of all learners, we can stop the processes of privileging and alienation that traditionally separate some groups of students from educational success.

The application of dialogical theory to multicultural education is a response to calls for a contextual analysis as a basis of educational practice that helps answer the question about what types of practice are most effective in diverse classrooms (Boler, 2004; Sleeter & Bernal, 2003; Zirkel & Cantor, 2004). It will be argued that by addressing the links between school policy, identity development, and social change, dialogical theory can inform both theoretical and practical debates in education and outline concrete steps to implementing innovative strategies in college classrooms.

Multicultural education

Multicultural education is an educational practice that has its roots in the Civil Rights movement and in responses to the growing cultural diversity of the student body in contemporary United States (Fitzgerald & Lauter, 2001; Spring, 2001). Its main premise lies in asserting cultural diversity as an educational tool, to aid incorporating the increasing numbers of viewpoints that children bring to the school in a manner that promotes children's success and their ability to participate in democratic practices. There now exist many different theoretical strands under the umbrella of multicultural education, often in tension over what the goals of multicultural tension should be, who should define these goals, and how these goals should be incorporated into educational practice (Sleeter, 2001). In the following review, I will provide a brief synthesis of these issues and argue that to achieve meaningful democratic outcomes, multicultural education needs to be connected to the psychological study of social identity.

The history and goals of multicultural education

Today, multicultural approaches exist on a continuum that at one end stresses the recognition of plurality of students' cultural backgrounds and at the other end uses those backgrounds to transform educational practices to promote not only learning, but also a wider social change (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). In other words, multicultural practices differ in the degree to which they link the diversity of the student body and the need to provide all students with adequate education to the goals of equality and social justice, acting to transform not only students but also their teachers, schools, and communities. An early predecessor of multicultural education, the intergroup education movement serves as an

example of the first perspective and as a theoretical framework whose influence can be still traced to many forms of multicultural education today.

Informed by the writings of Franz Boas (1928) and other cultural theorists, the intergroup education movement sought to validate experiences of students from minority backgrounds by asserting that each culture adds value to the society by contributing its unique characteristics. Known as the “contributions” approach (Banks & Banks, 1993), educational curricula based on this philosophy stress the unique histories of America’s minorities, their different customs, foods, songs, dances and foods. The primary goal of this approach was motivational; by providing academic representation of minority cultures, these curricula sought to promote the self-esteem of marginalized students and to increase their participation in the learning process and in the mainstream American society (McGee Banks, 1996).

Multiculturalist approaches to education, emerging from the Civil Rights movement of the 1960’s, brought about a stronger focus on relations with American non-immigrant minorities, such as African Americans, Native Americans, women, and people with disabilities. The new Immigration Act of 1965, initiating the admission of non-White immigrants in unprecedented numbers, radically transformed the racial make-up of the country. At this time, Black studies, women’s studies, and ethnic studies programs started to develop in universities around the country with hopes of strengthening the representation of minority groups on the campus and in wider society (Wilkerson, 1992). Thus, the focus of multicultural education was fundamentally political; rather than stressing the acquisition of attitudes that promote a harmonious society, it strived to transform existing power relations in the nation’s schools and other public domains.

In line with this aim, multicultural education advocates pursued two goals: one concerning the establishment of curricula dealing with minority cultures and issues, and the other promoting the transformation of existing "mainstream" courses and pedagogies (Fitzgerald & Lauter, 2001). In this way, multicultural education diverged from the goals of intergroup education advocates; it established that acknowledging the "contributions" of diverse others constitutes a necessary, but not sufficient requirement for a just society (May, 1999) and was deemed inadequate to reaching multicultural educational goals.

Multicultural educators turned attention from minority cultures to White racism, patriarchy, and capitalism, and called for a shift in decision-making power over schooling (McGee Banks, 1996; Sleeter, 2001). By the early 1990's, a fierce debate developed between educational conservatives (e.g., D'Souza, 1991; Howe, 1991; Schlesinger, 1992) and the supporters of the nation-wide multicultural reform (May, 1999; Sleeter, 2001). As soon as multicultural education became the foundation for required curricula, the debate over its merits turned into "a tug of war over who gets to create the public culture" (Kessler-Harris, 1992, p. 310).

The debates over multicultural education revolve around several assumptions guiding our thinking about identity and intergroup relations. These assumptions, in turn, shape the various diversity models developed to manage participation, progress, and identity in the nation's schools and workplaces (Plaut, 2002). In the following review, I will describe how diversity ideologies function to promote or hinder just educational practice by portraying student identities as either similar or different from each other, and by locating ability in the individual or society. Understanding the different nature and effects of these models will provide a rationale for the application of a psychological theory uniquely

suited to examine multicultural education practice, the dialogical theory of self and identity.

Diversity as sameness or difference

One key point in the debate over multicultural education is whether diversity should be used as a means of finding similarity and consensus or to form an analysis of difference (Sleeter, 2001). The first perspective can be found in strands of multicultural education that advocate uncritical "celebration of diversity" as a first step to leveling the experiences of all students. In classroom settings, teachers sometimes promote cultural awareness by the display of artifacts of minority cultures, such as varieties of foods or music. Yet the effectiveness of such techniques may prove counterproductive unless those teachers simultaneously acknowledge that minority students are equally valued participants in the class. For example, the teacher should work to decouple students' ability tracking from group membership by closely examining the diagnosis of academic failure in minority students, and by creating academic grouping around other subjects that do not confound ability with minority status (Markus, Steele, & Steele, 2000).

The pervasive idea that differences between people are artificial and largely irrelevant to one's experiences in the United States is tied to the view that equality can be achieved through similarity (Fine, Weiss, & Powell, 1997; Shweder, 1991). According to liberal ideals, group life is seen as a matter of personal choice, leading to the belief that individuals should be judged on the basis of personal merit rather than group characteristics (Plaut, 2002). As a result, many teachers try to act "color-blind" or as if the ethnic identities of their students are invisible (Stephan, 1999), effectively making students' differences "whited out", or at least "bracketed" during cross-group interactions

(Fine et al., 1997). Markus, Steele and Steele (2000) discuss an example of a teacher addressing a black parent's concern that in her class, "no black children [are placed] in the top third-grade reading group." The teacher, operating under the assumption that "all of our children are equal", states that she simply doesn't have "any black students who read at that pace" and that "the reading group assignments have worked out this way." This perspective illustrates the White teacher's own cultural experience that group membership has little to do with educational achievement and that each student is free to explore the goals of the classroom without worry that they would be devalued. However, this is not the experience of the black child and his parents, for whom the classroom is the site of contact with the dominant culture and the threat of devaluation plays an integral part in their participation (Markus et al., 2000).

When education is guided by the similarity assumption, the choices presented to minority students are either to abandon one's differences for the sake of "fitting in" and become alienated from oneself or to reject the standard and norms set by others and lose out on the opportunity of education (Burbules, 1996). It does so by closing down the possibility of a dialogue between different subcultures represented in the classroom and by failing to examine the dominant beliefs that shape what counts as important and worthy of study and what forms of participation, progress, and identity are legitimized (Grant & Sachs, 1995). To pave the way to such dialogues, critical multiculturalists argue, we need to start from a presumption of difference rather than sameness. Shifting the focus from commonality to difference can be a valuable corrective, in recognizing that although individuals may seek compatible goals, they may do so in substantially different ways (Burbules, 1996). Further, difference can be used as a resource, rather than

an obstacle, to students' learning, when used as a lens to examine both the dominant and minority assumptions that structure students' experiences as well as wider social practices outside of school (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-Lopéz, & Tejeda, 1999).

Individualistic versus contextual approaches to education

Another issue in the theory of educating diverse students is the understanding of the self, viewed either in terms of individual cognitive and affective processes, or as a relational process emerging from one's interactions with the social context. The first perspective characterizes models of education in which students possess essential characteristics, such as ability, skill and particular learning strategies. For example, during early efforts to educate Native American children, the students' learning styles were frequently described as passive and "nonverbal", reflecting the students' lack of engagement during traditional instruction. To remediate this lack of skill, educators employed drill-based pedagogical strategies with an emphasis on observation (McCarty, Wallace, Lynch, & Benally, 1991). However, when presented with a bilingual inquiry-based model of instruction, the previously "nonverbal" students responded enthusiastically, because they were now able to utilize their prior knowledge that was meaningfully incorporated into the classroom context. This example illustrates the limits of the concept of ability as an individual property. Instead, students' ability changes with instructional contexts because it emerges from interactions between social participation and academic curriculum (Mehan, Okamoto, Lintz, & Wills, 2001).

Another example of individualistic approaches to education is the self-esteem hypothesis that examines the relationship between society's rejection of immigrants and immigrant children's rejection of themselves (Adler, 1929). Based on this theory,

educators concluded that one of the goals of educating minority students should be to increase students' self-esteem by publicly acknowledging their accomplishments and praising symbols of their cultures (McGee Banks, 1996). This perspective continues to influence the "contributions" approach to multicultural education, with its emphasis on celebrating differences in the absence of a deeper examination of practices that establish and perpetuate the meanings of differences. Further, it has informed discourses about at-risk youth, focusing primarily on inner-city students of color, in form of a "deficit theory" (Nieto, 1999). This perspective views disadvantaged students in terms of cultural and educational deficits, resulting in their disproportional placement in special education classes, remediation programs emphasizing "basic skills", and the overuse of discipline that exacerbates the feelings of mistrust and betrayal between school officials and the community (Fine, 1991; Yeo, 1995).

Prejudice reduction programs are a more recent example of conceptualizing solutions to minority student education in terms of individual cognitions. Their focus is on targeting the sources of majority students' prejudice towards outgroups, with the goal of reducing tensions in the multicultural school. The model assumes that stereotypical attitudes result from faulty and irrational reasoning processes that are largely unconscious and automatic, acquired through socialization in the dominant American culture (Stephan, 1999). If students were confronted with the discrepancy between their beliefs in egalitarianism and their negative responses to minority members, it was argued, they would change their behaviors to be more in accord with their values (Rokeach, 1971).

The prejudice reduction approach was employed in many educational programs, with the goals of reducing ignorance about other minority cultures and teaching about the

negative effects of stereotyping (Stephan, 1999). Evaluation studies of these approaches showed mixed evidence of the programs' effect on reducing students' prejudice; in fact, a small portion of the programs seemed to increase students' negative attitudes (McGregor, 1993; Stephan & Stephan, 1984). Researchers argued that these results might be explained by a failure to adequately manipulate students' perceptions and behaviors during interventions, typically instituted as short-term educational units rather than comprehensive curricula (Stephan, 1999). However, the problems with prejudice reduction programs may be better understood as a failure to connect student outcomes to practices that structure prejudice on societal as well as individual levels. Only such practices that address the social contexts of student performance may change unjust legitimizing forces that continue to permeate educational settings.

The various strategies that target minority students' levels of self-esteem and skill and majority students' attitudes towards stereotyped minority members share a common premise: they seek to explain identity and intergroup processes on the level of the individual. For minority students, such solutions typically involve some form of remediation, either by increasing students' confidence or improving educational skills. For majority students, the task is to create a more inviting environment through a change of attitude and behavior towards those who are seen as different from themselves.

Basing educational interventions on individual-based outcomes falls dramatically short of addressing the real causes of students' success and failure. Prescribing psychological solutions to Black underachievement, or trying to reduce prejudice on part of students and educators, offers only a "semblance of pluralism" in its failure to address the social-structural causes of educational and intergroup issues (Popkewitz, 1988).

Critics view cognitive solutions to educational inequalities as naïve and misdirected and potentially damaging in deflecting attention from White racism (Popkewitz, 1988). Instead of solutions targeting students' attitudes shaped by the experiences of inequality, many critics call for curricula based specifically in interventions aimed at dissembling racism, by shifting control over education to the communities that are usually excluded from decision-making (Dei, 1996).

To aid this effort, we need to examine assumptions about the nature of the self and identity that underlie current educational discourses. In the following, psychological theories of self and identity will be analyzed in view of frameworks guiding pedagogical practice targeting students' perceptions of the self and other, and relations among diverse groups. Identifying these connections will provide a rationale for applying psychological theory to the study of identity and intergroup issues in multicultural education, outlining a conceptual framework for the current project.

Psychological theories of self and identity

There now exist two areas of social psychology that theorize the self, identity, and intergroup life (see "two social psychologies", Verkuyten, 2005). One of these traditions is tied to the cognitive school of psychology, represented by Tajfel's Social Identity theory (1981) and Turner's Social Categorization theory (1982). The other framework is based in cultural psychology (e.g., Cole, Gay, Glick, & Sharp, 1971) and social-cultural approaches based on the work of Vygotsky (e.g., Rogoff, 1995; Wertsch, 1991). In the following, main differences between these traditions will be outlined, with the goal of identifying a research framework best suited to the study of identity in multicultural education.

Cognitive theories of identity

Cognitive theory, introduced in the 1970s, proposed that people automatically and often unconsciously categorize themselves and others into social groups, most typically based on perceived characteristics of race, gender, and age (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Tajfel's (1981) Social Identity Theory described the effects group categorization has on motivation, self-esteem, and the formation of preferential treatment of in-group as opposed to out-group members. These "automatic" process were further specified by Turner, who in his Social Categorization Theory (1982) hypothesized that people use social categories for self-definition only when group membership is salient. Consequently, it was suggested that a reduction in intergroup bias can be achieved by emphasizing personal as opposed to group-related information in social situations (e.g., Brewer & Miller, 1984).

De-emphasizing racial and ethnic characteristics to promote individualized contact between groups did not furnish expected solutions to intergroup conflict. Apart from the difficulty of manipulating encounters in real-life settings, it was argued that when personalized contact results in positive experiences, it does not generalize to other outgroup encounters in the future (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). In addition, the suggestion to erase race and ethnicity from social encounters reflects an erroneous assumption that group membership is largely a matter of choice. This belief, firmly entrenched in the dominant cultural ideal of individualism prevalent in North America, expresses the idea that under the "thin veil" of group differences, people are fundamentally the same (Plaut, 2002).

As is increasingly apparent, the experiences of racial and other minorities in the nation's schools are far from identical to those of white middle-class children (Markus et al., 2000). As shown in the debate over multicultural education, assuming sameness as opposed to difference can trigger further divisions in the experiences of group members. New, subtler forms of prejudice and racism may be created when silence and taboo surrounds expressions of race and ethnicity (Gartner & Dovidio, 1986; Schofield, 1986).

Another assumption of cognitive psychology that came under critique that parallels arguments in multicultural education is its individualistic level of analysis. The failure to connect identity processes with features of social contexts, including power and status that characterize particular group histories and ideologies that guide relations between the groups sidesteps issues of justice and precludes social change (Hogg & Williams, 2000). Reicher and his colleagues emphasized the political nature of identity construction (e.g., Dixon & Reicher, 1997; Sani & Reicher, 2000). Instead of describing the consequences of identification, they have proposed the importance of establishing how and why particular categories come into place, arguing that identities such as ethnicity or disability status are not natural attributes but rhetorical devices used to accomplish particular types of social action (Dixon & Reicher, 1997).

As an example, Gurin and her colleagues (Gurin, Hurtado & Peng, 1994) theorized how features of the broader macrosocial environment, such as technological and political developments, create microsocial conditions that, in turn, foster psychological processes involved in the construction of identities of persons of Mexican descent. These authors showed that the historical developments accompanying immigration from Mexico set up unique contact environments for immigrants and White Americans producing distinct

identities of Mexicanos and Chicanos. Similarly, the importance of the interactive context has been argued by Deaux and Martin (2004) who described the interplay between social categories and settings in which these categories acquire particular meanings in the formation of identities based on race, ethnicity, and disability status.

Redefining self and identity

Reframing the psychological study of identity and intergroup relationships requires revisions in the conceptualization of the self and its role in the wider social context. Several theoretical traditions have now emerged that transform basic assumptions of traditional psychology and, in particular, cognitive theory that has depicted the individual primarily as a choosing subject separate from society. Cognitive theory locates the origin of human action in the individual mind operating by principles of information processing. Its emphasis on cognitive schemas, environmental scanning, and feedback separates persons from their social contexts and makes social interaction only a secondary concern (Gergen, 1997).

In contrast, critics of cognitive theories agree on the significance of social relationships as a context in which psychological functioning takes place. Analysis of social interaction provides a basis of the cultural school of psychology. This perspective lays ground to an understanding of selfhood as a product, rather than a precursor of, people’s attachments and relationships formed in particular local and cultural contexts (e.g. Cole et al., 1971; Gergen, 1997; Wertsch, 1991). Similarly, socio-cultural theorists following the tradition of Vygotsky (1978) focus on social activity as a unit of analysis constituted by dynamic contributions from individuals, their social partners, and traditions specific to their cultural environments (Rogoff, 1995).

In a related strand, several theories conceptualize social interaction as a conversation. These approaches stress the reciprocal nature of dialogues as well as the importance of language in cultural mediation, a process by which cultural processes enter the individual plane of functioning (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Discourse analysis, for example, defines individuals as positions assumed by speakers in a dialogue rather than minds existing in separate bodies (Gergen, 1997). The emphasis on communication and dialogue transforms the understanding of personhood as a condition separable from its social context; it allows a contextual analysis of individual thought embedded in social action. From this perspective, it is not the individual that preexists relationships and "chooses" forms of communication with the social world, but the conventions of relationship that enable for individual understandings to emerge (Gergen, 1997).

Other theories have contributed to the developing understanding of selfhood as a relational process (e.g., Bamberg, 1997; Davies & Harré, 1990; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Together, these conceptualizations have allowed for a radical revision of the assumptions held by the cognitive framework, namely, the separation between the self and its social context, and, by extension, the depiction of intergroup relations in terms of fixed differences between ingroups and outgroups. A revised definition of identity, depicted in this emergent framework, is characterized by the following elements: a) self-positioning based on multiplicity of self-other dialogues, and b) identity as a process based in social practice.

The dialogical theory of identity (Hermans, 1996) allows for an analysis of difference in ways that preclude the formation of essentialized identities and cultures, treated traditionally as potentially divisive or irrelevant to social life, including the contexts of

schooling. I will argue that educational models based on dialogical understanding may shift the debates over diversity in education to their proper focus on social justice. By linking theoretical analyses of identity as dialogue to the goals of multicultural education, learning environments can become sites where difference is not suppressed but actively negotiated, as students and teachers move towards learning goals anchored equally in academic achievement and social change.

Although multicultural theorists share many theoretical assumptions defining the dialogical model, there currently exists a gap between a critical multicultural theory and its application in educational practice. What is needed is a greater elaboration of the pedagogical principles that may be used to implement critical strands of multicultural education (Dilg, 1999; Sleeter, 2001). How can teachers transform society while trying to teach basic academic skills to students who often come with a wide range of academic readiness, learning styles, and grasp of English? The challenge for the theorist lies in specifying institutional ideologies and educational practices that mediate student outcomes by restructuring traditional participant structures in the classroom, including teacher and student roles, as well as the contents of educational curricula. In this way, the application of the dialogical theory of identity can translate critical educational theories into a tool to change traditional classrooms.

The Dialogical Self

Hermans' theory of the dialogical self specifies a complex organization of relationships as a basis of identity. This depiction argues with the notion proposed by James (1890/1902) who distinguished between two self components, the I, or the self-as-knower, and Me, the self-as-known, that center the experience of the self as a unified

entity. Instead, building on Bachtin's theory, Hermans proposes an extended and de-centered notion of identity: as there is no one single author in a polyphonic novel, there is no single self, but rather a "plurality of consciousness", represented by different self-voices articulating their distinct ideas (Hermans, 1996).

Related to the idea of multiplicity of self-organization is the concept of self-positioning. The relative autonomy of self-positions allows for a fluid movement as a basis of identity negotiation in the contexts of changing social relations. Hermans describes this movement as an ongoing dialogue between voices that characterize the self (2001). These dialogues can be also characterized as socio-relational processes that tie social structures to individual subjectivities (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). Underlying the dialogical positioning of the self is an ongoing tension between meanings generated as a function of dialogues. Whereas cognitive accounts typically view conflicting self-understanding as a sign of maladjustment (e.g., Higgins, 1987), from the dialogical perspective, the capacity for conflict is seen as a psychological context that may serve to strengthen, rather than disrupt, the acquisition of new understandings (Hermans, 1996).

In the study of identity, self-positions may be characterized by conflicts between various representations of one's group memberships, constructed as relationships to other groups across contexts and time. For example, Bhatia and Ram (2001) stress the discrepancies in the self-positionings of immigrants as they encounter diverse and changing social contexts. The tensions immigrants experience originate not only through the "clashing" influences of home and host cultures, but also through the unique histories of relationships between these cultures that are incorporated into the self. For example, a Chinese immigrant's sense of self could hardly be separated from the larger American

story of Chinese "yellow peril" or from the newer representation of being a "model minority" (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). It is out of these conflicting representations that immigrants fashion their unique identities through "vectors of similarity, continuity, and difference" (Frankenberg & Mani, 1993, cited in Bhatia & Ram, 2001).

Further, by focusing on imagined dialogues as a source of constructive potential, Hermans links the active process of positioning and re-positioning to imagination. People differ in their capacity to imagine dialogues with others. As an example, Daiute, Buteau, and Rawlins (2002) found differences in children's writing about conflict when they compared narratives reflecting autobiographical and fictional experiences. In describing imagined dialogues, the children depicted more often the psychological states and feelings of the characters and character perspectives. These findings suggest that employing imaginative genres can shift the relational frame of students' self-presentation to diverse audiences, freeing them from certain constraints and provide alternative means of self-construction. In this way, fictional activities can foster personality development through childhood and adolescence by eliciting themes that may be censured in public spaces (Daiute, 2004).

These analyses importantly point to the role of social context in which individuals form dialogues with real, or imagined, others. Hermans states that relationships between various voices in the self are often asymmetrical, reflecting actual differences in power between the self and others. In the dialogical self, in-groups and out-groups are implicit parts of the self, creating the suppression of certain voices and a greater prominence of others within the self (Gonçalves & Salgado, 2001). On the other hand, alternative positions may be generated by changes in the self-system that may start to challenge the

existing relationships. In regard to social groups characterized by majority and minority status, the self can generate multiple positionings that transcend the narrow boundaries of "us" versus "them" and that may result in new forms of social relationships (Hermans, 1996).

Including audience in analyses of narrative constructions of selves has important implications. Most generally, it allows us to understand the ways in which different social contexts may create or obstruct opportunities for narrating particular selves. One of these contexts is the broad context of cultures. Hermans argues that with increasing globalization, individuals find themselves facing increasingly diverse audiences that function to transform typical ways of constructing the self. In his view, the act of orienting oneself to divergent audiences may result in an increased capacity for dialogical misunderstanding (Hermans, 2001). Sharing with others cultural elements that may be highly divergent, partly unknown, and laden with power differences is a challenge characteristic of our times, transforming traditional ways of understanding the self and its relation to society. Revised theories are needed to shift our analyses from the core aspects of cultures and bounded individuals to the intersecting "contact zones" between different cultures, different selves, and different cultural positions in the self (Hermans, 2001; Hermans & Kempen, 1998).

Differences in power are further tied to the role of cultural institutions. Linell (1990) argues that patterns of dominance can be partially understood as a product of culturally and institutionally sanctioned opportunities for communicative activities. Competing values may emerge in the context of institutional regulation of practices such as schooling, health care, employment, and other areas of public life. Depending on the

degree of power sharing allowed within these contexts, the participants' own voices may be alternatively silenced in the process of acquiring dominant cultural ideologies or supported as a vehicle of social innovation.

For example, Daiute, Stern and Lelutiu-Weinberger (2003) analyzed a youth violence prevention curriculum as a site of acquisition as well as disruption of dominant cultural values. By looking at educational practices supported by this curriculum, they identified the heterogeneous nature of youth's views about conflict and connection, and argued for policy extensions that would explicitly promote the examination of values rather than the teaching of monolithic conflict resolution strategies. Further, they proposed that children can be socialized to become important agents of social change once their views are allowed to be expressed in institutional contexts, in a model linking children's development as thinkers and social actors to the development of schools as sites of social change (Daiute et al., 2003).

Finally, developing theoretical connections between the self and the various audiences to which the self is positioned to speak provides important insights into the nature of identity development. By construing particular relationships between the characters in the self-narrative and orienting their actions to the story's particular audiences, narrators make claims about themselves that hold true above and beyond the local conversational situation. In other words, by answering the question of how do I, as a narrator, want to be understood by the audience, the speaker also provides an answer to the question of "Who am I?" (Bamberg, 1997).

The above-described approach to understanding identity depicts the self as a process resulting from psycho-social interactions. These interactions are located in particular

social and institutional contexts characterized by power asymmetries that, in turn, impact on the development of the self as a social agent. In this manner, issues of social justice are linked to individual development by establishing the key role of social relations in promoting, or limiting, personal, physical, symbolic, and emotional activity (Daiute, 2004). The following section will depict how the theory of the dialogical self can be specifically applied to the study of identity, knowledge, and educational policy in the multicultural school. I will argue that a dialogical understanding of the self can elucidate the ways in which multicultural practices may support, rather than hinder, positive intergroup relations and the development of students as active participants in the democratic process.

A dialogical model of multicultural education

Specifying models in multicultural education

There now exists ample evidence supporting the view that diversity has positive effects on educational outcomes. Some of this evidence grew out of the need to defend affirmative action admission policies in higher education, in response to recent legal attacks on some of the nation's universities (e.g., Smith v. University of Washington Law School, 2001; Johnson v. Board of Regions of the University of Georgia, 2001; Gratz v. Bollinger; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Kurlaender & Orfield, 1999). In the most extensive research program on educational diversity to date, Patricia Gurin and her colleagues at the University of Michigan used multi-institutional data surveying 12,965 students attending 185 institutions over the course of four years (Gurin et al., 2002). Their results showed that a diverse student body yields robust positive effects on students' academic and civic outcomes, and that these effects are especially evident for

White students, contrary to a common misconception that educational diversity only benefits students of minority backgrounds (Chang, Witt-Sandis, & Hakuta, 1999).

The next step after securing evidence of the beneficial impact of diversity is to outline the conditions that facilitate these effects. Research identified factors on the level of institutional structures, course curricula, classroom participation, and informal interactions among students as possible mediators between the racial/ethnic make-up of the school and student outcomes. These effects were found on the following levels: a) *Structural diversity,* referring to the numerical representation of different ethnic/racial groups in the student body; b) *Informal interactional diversity,* documenting the frequency and quality of students' peer experiences across diverse backgrounds; and c) *Classroom diversity,* assessing class content relevant to minority experiences and classroom discussions occurring around matters of race (Gurin et al., 2002).

Analyses of mediational effects show that structural diversity, or the presence of a mixed student body, serves as a prerequisite for other forms of diversity, which in turn facilitate the desired outcomes. For example, Chang (1999) found that socializing with someone from a different racial group and discussing issues of race mediated the effects of structural diversity on college retention, college satisfaction, and intellectual and social self-confidence. Sometimes, mediating factors affect differentially students from minority and dominant backgrounds; for example, White students benefited most from informal interactions on campus and participation in racial/cultural workshops (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996). In another study, perceptions of the institutional climate differed by students' race: Black and Chicano students were less likely than their White peers to view the school as committed to diversity and following student-centered

models, two factors that predicted perceptions of racial tension on campus (Hurtado, 1992).

Although large-scale studies assessing diversity effects serve as important sources of data to uphold diversity policies and secure funding for culture-related initiatives in education, they typically fail to provide specific models of diversity pedagogy. Survey data are ill suited to investigations of the particular mechanisms and processes underlying complex interactions between students, teachers, school administrators, and communities. For this reason, analyses examining the micro-processes of identity negotiation are still needed to establish the value of institutional diversity in forming particular relationships. When minority students are merely enrolled in institutions that are not prepared to educate them, diversity on campus may become ineffectual, or at worst, contrary to the goal of improving intergroup relations (Chang, 1999). Such effects were shown, for example, by Hurtado (1992) who found that many White students feel threatened by the presence of minority students and may perceive such environments as divisive, yielding stronger perceptions of campus racial conflict.

Pedagogical philosophy

From a dialogical perspective, the key to understanding the mechanisms of change in educating diverse students lies not merely in the content of curricula and the nature of students' interactions on campus, but rather in a pedagogical philosophy that guides the connections between the schools, students, and their communities (Sleeter & Mendocinos, 1999). Such a philosophy identifies solutions on local rather than national levels; it seeks explanations for student failure or success not in schools or students, but in the form of partnership between schools and the communities the schools serve

(Sleeter & Mendocinos, 1999). Thus, educational reforms that fail to consider the voices of students and their teachers may have limited applicability. Instead, critics argue, we need to start with a model of pedagogy that is inherently responsive, or dialogical in nature (Gay, 1995), to adequately address the needs of all students in a diverse society.

Dialogical models of pedagogy result from the cooperation between students and their teachers, and between schools and their communities, who are joined by their mutual concern for the students' success in a society riddled with conflicting messages about equality and justice. Many practical insights into multicultural pedagogy emerged from teacher research reflecting on particular forms of local educational practice. In some of these initiatives, teachers are responding to the inadequacy of traditional educational models that no longer meet the practical needs of their students (Kalantzis & Cope, 1999). Faced with the reality of increasingly diverse classrooms, teachers become, by necessity, "ethnographers" of the communities in which their schools are embedded, as they struggle to answer students' questions about the conditions in their own lives, and to meaningfully prepare them for life in a pluralist democracy (Freedman, Simons, Kalnin, Casanero, & the M-CLASS teams, 1999; Mehan et al., 2001).

In the following section, I will outline the pedagogical principles suggested by teachers engaged in a multicultural educational practice. Because no comprehensive models currently exist that outline the steps from multicultural theory to educational practice, the teachers' insights will be used to identify and illustrate the processes that characterize diverse classrooms and the interactions they foster. These insights draw on an understanding of the importance of students' identities, embedded in social practices both inside and outside of school, to the process of education.

The principles of multicultural pedagogy also draw on student voices that represent an important source of critique when revising traditional classrooms (Lelutiu-Weinberger, 2004; Nieto, 1999). In fact, research found that many students' views on education are fully consistent with critical perspectives of experts in learning theory, cognitive psychology, and sociology of work (Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1992). In one of the schools from which the following examples were drawn, students identified specific areas of improvement as a corrective to a racial incident on the school grounds: increase enrollment of students from minority backgrounds, increase number of courses specifically dealing with racial/ethnic issues, teach an understanding of culture in a non-deterministic manner, teach skills of communication across cultural lines, and foster links between the school and community (Dilg, 1999). It is to these principles that I will turn next.

The dialogical curriculum

The sources of a dialogical multicultural curriculum are the histories, social conditions, events, and issues that directly involve the students' lives. On one level, this may mean the teaching of various histories reflecting the cultures that students introduce into the classroom by their presence. For example, Mary Dilg designed a course entitled Issues of Race and Culture to introduce texts written by authors from various cultures, with an emphasis on those cultures represented in the student population (Dilg, 1999). The purposes of this work are multiple. First, it allows students to gain a better understanding of each other's perspectives, filling a gap created by their typically segregated home communities. As one student stated: "We don't know enough about each other's heritage" (Dilg, p. 16). Second, it provides an assurance for the students that

their education is about them and for them. One Black student said: “I felt comfortable in school only once…It was a Black history class…It was commonsense questions and commonsense knowledge.” The students’ feeling that their classes are “commonsense” or “real” often reflect their engagement with material that is deeply personal. This belief, in turn, fosters motivation and participation in class. As this student said: “Two, three years ago, …I didn’t have the slightest idea why I came to school…[Now], teachers here understand my identity and culture… I’m here, I’m learning” (Nieto, 1999, pp. 200-201).

Another purpose of teaching about various histories is to raise students’ understanding of culture as constructed rather than fixed (Nieto, 1999). By sharing their histories and those of others, students may explore the many relationships people form to their identities and the ways these can be publicly represented (Dilg, 1999). For many, this view of history is perplexing. As one student said: “I don’t understand why people reflect on the painful history of their people in their dealings *now*” [emphasis original] (Dilg, 1999, p. 17). Yet knowing history is the vehicle to understanding oneself and others, and paradoxically, to freeing oneself from its burdens. Seeing other students deeply engaged in aspects of history relevant to their culture can act as an eye-opener for their peers. One young Black woman described her thoughts upon starting to read a Native American novel in class “I thought, ‘Not another one of those Indian-and-his-land things.’ Then I realized what I was saying: that people must say of me, when I get ready to speak, ‘Not another one of those Black struggles things’” (Dilg, 1999, p. 37). As students continue to define each other’s stand on their personal histories, they are also acting as audience fostering the multiple processes of self-identification taking place as they collectively engage with the material.

The dialogical perspective is useful in analyzing a multicultural curriculum in its focus on audiences that enter into the classroom with various materials, representing different voices to which students respond during lessons. When speaking to their own histories, students uncover the various ways in which their group membership shapes who they are and how to position themselves to their pasts. An African-American student said: "Proud to be Afro-American? Well, yeah and no. I am proud to be Afro-American because…I have so many dreams and so many ways of being…And no, because I have to accept the term Afro-American because I was born in America, I wasn't born where my ancestors come from" (Nieto, 1999, p. 200). Engagement with one's own history does not, however, lead inevitably to perspectives that are critical and open to the perspectives of others. Students who are frequently perceptive of the schools' superficial treatment of various cultures may not apply the same critical skills when speaking of their own backgrounds. The student cited above, for example, viewed his culture as a "great race of kings and queens", with little insight into the dynamics of such a rigidly organized society (Nieto, 1999). Similarly, students may have difficulty with generalizing past events to cultural issues today. For example, in one class focusing on slavery, the students failed to grasp the relationship between discrimination occurring in the past and the conditions suffered by minorities at present, reasoning that "there are no slaves anymore" (Mehan et al., 2001, p. 134).

Class discussion and student audiences

One mechanism that helps to de-center students' understanding of history, both their own and that of others, is through speaking to their peers and teachers in the classroom. By doing this, they learn of the effects their particular perspectives may have on those of

others. In Mary Dilg's class, the sometimes painful exchanges between students triggered revisions of some of the students' unexamined assumptions. One student said: "The Black students opened my eyes, I thought there were no problems. I was totally oblivious" (Dilg, p. 26). From these insights emerge the students' understandings of the connections underlying the fabric of our society, forcing them to look harder at what roles their particular heritage plays in relationships with each other. One student said: "Students of minority groups should maintain and be proud of their heritage but not use it as a barrier to isolate themselves" (Dilg, p. 31). Another student offered an even deeper understanding of the dynamics shaping cross-cultural relations: "[Culture is] a question of how people *see* it. Not how it *should* be seen" (Dilg, 1999, p. 20, emphasis original).

Finally, students position themselves to the society at large, through discussions of the meanings their identities carry in the public sphere. One student explained how assumptions operating in our society might be detrimental to the cross-race interactions taking place at school: "Most kids here are colorblind, but African-Americans aren't colorblind and they can't be…We are constantly reminded of who we are" (Dilg, 1999, p. 36). Other students reflected on their roles as students in a society that continues to devalue their achievements: "Cops try to arrest me for absolutely no reason because I'm Hispanic. So I personally want to help my race look better, to succeed" (Dilg, 1999, p. 24). Developing links between the context of the school and society generates learning that is at once academic and pragmatic, by making students question current power arrangements that affect their chances at success across various settings.

Students may address not only their peers, but also the communities in which their schools are embedded, by generating dialogues both real and imagined. The curriculum

can facilitate students' orientation to the world outside of school by incorporating texts and materials not designed for school instruction, such as news articles or public documents, or by viewing school-based materials in a broader context. In one example, first-grade students discussed the frequency with which they encountered representations of minority groups in their textbooks (Bode, 1999). In this art class, students studied their own faces, comparing the diversity found in the classroom with the representations of "people of the world" found in their textbooks. Next, they decided to write a letter to the publishers to inform them that the books from which they were to learn were biased. As one first grader expressed in her letter: "Dear publisher, make your books faire!" (Bode, 1999, p. 128).

Many examples of a curriculum based on dialogical principles are formed directly as a response to an event in the community or the classroom. In one class, students examined a racist letter addressed to one of their teachers, in an effort to understand what triggers hate in their community and how to respond to it (Nieto, 1999). In another case, a school-based racial incident initiated an examination of the school community. Through discussion groups, the students were not only able to sort out the tensions underlying the incident, but also to outline what they needed to learn to create a less divisive environment for themselves. They shared their insights with the school community during an open assembly (Dilg, 1999). In another example, students, shocked by their own lack of ability to stop prejudice, created a course discussing genocide in the histories of different groups. By doing this, they hoped to bridge the uneasy discussions erupting between Black and Jewish students in their classes that too often served as barriers to mutual understanding (Dilg, 1999).

Engagement with curriculum that is relevant to the students' lives creates opportunities to exercise students' voices as they negotiate their right of equal participation in our society. Through speaking to their multiple audiences, students come to define themselves as not only learners but also social actors who have a say in how their communities represent themselves and others, how opportunities are allocated, and how conflicts are addressed. In this way, learning becomes linked to social action, embedded in the relationships forged between students, schools, and communities. This form of education equals learning with students' empowerment (Freire, 1970; Nieto, 1999; Sleeter & Bernal, 2003). The goal of such pedagogy is to support students to become both critical and successful, so they can foster democratic practices in settings both inside and outside of school (Bartolomé, 1994).

Decentering classroom participation

The content of the curriculum fosters students' engagement in connection with forms of social participation in the classroom (Mehan et al, 2001). Specifically, the critical multicultural classroom is based on a power shift disrupting the traditional view of teachers as experts and students as passive recipients of knowledge (Fitzgerald & Lauter, 2001). Freire defined this principle when he conceptualized literacy education as cultural education for freedom, in which students do not absorb knowledge in a passive manner but generate it by critical engagement with ideas through dialogue (Freire, 1970). Because dialogue is relational, it needs to take into account all of the voices present, and treat none of the views, including those of a teacher, as simply imposed, in contrast to traditional top-down pedagogy of conventional schooling (Sleeter & Bernal, 2003).

Even well intentioned teaching styles may constrain the types of dialogues allowed in the classroom. Teachers are used to knowing more than their students do and they may resist forms of knowledge emerging from the students' lives (Sleeter & Mendocinos, 1999). In one example of a traditional service learning project, future teachers underwent a field placement in a low-income community literacy programme (Sleeter & Mendocinos, 1999). Although the student teachers' placement was specifically framed as a learning assignment, their predominant approach to students in this setting was that of "helping", or "giving" education to those who are less knowledgeable and less privileged. This type of teaching views knowledge as information passed on from the teacher to the student as if it were a basket of eggs, which needs to be delivered safely, intact, and without damage (Sleeter & Grant, 1993).

To disrupt traditional assumptions operating in diverse schools, Sarah Freedman and her colleagues initiated a unique project in which teachers interrogated different styles of pedagogy during their own practice in the classrooms (Freedman et al., 1999). This experience forced the teachers to examine their own assumptions as they inform types of interactions occurring among the students and between the students and their teachers. Some of these insights focused on the implications of teaching students of color by middle-class White teachers (Shakespear, 1999). Others explored the possibilities of shaping the curriculum in direct response to the students' concerns (Valenti, 1999). Another teacher learned how to increase her students' independence with their increasing competence to select and fulfill academic tasks. Although these students sometimes struggled with completing high-level assignments that they took upon themselves, they experienced a sense of empowerment and accomplishment. The teacher commented on

how their success resulted from the unique relationship she formed with her class: “I do know that they go beyond what most people think they can do…I see something in them that they are able to do. I try to have them believe what it is that I see” (Davenport, 1999, p. 217).

With the shift in classroom structure away from the central role of the teacher, students themselves act as audiences to each other in a mutual construction of their learning. This peer-to-peer participation model has been described as *cooperative learning* (Cohen, 1992; Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Sapon-Shevin & Schniedewind, 1993; Slavin, 2001; Stephan, 1999). Originally conceived as an intervention to reduce intergroup prejudice based on the principles of the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954), cooperative learning has been implemented in various forms in national and international educational settings, producing both positive intergroup outcomes and academic success (Slavin, 2001). Its principles are fully compatible with the dialogical approach: a) assuming that learning emerges from interactions with others, a principle underlying a contextual analysis of the self (Vygotsky, 1978); b) promoting democratic engagement as part of the educational process, teaching students that everyone can benefit from listening to others’ perspectives, (Sapon-Shevin & Schniedewind, 1993), and c) promoting and valuing difference as an explicit resource (Sapon-Shevin & Schniedewind, 1993).

Classroom conflict

Educators speaking from direct experiences in their classrooms warn of the potential for conflict emerging from students’ interactions with each others’ differences (Boler, 2004; Dilg, 1999; Freedman et al., 1999). Some say that rather than aiming to achieve unity of thought, we need to expect conflict: “what matters is to have forums for

exploring conflict, ways of engaging with one another about the conflicts, which do not systematically disadvantage some participants (Houston, 2004, p. 106). Fostering students' dialogue can have contradictory effects: it can introduce barriers to understanding as well as provide an arena for acting out tolerance, acceptance, and respect (Dilg, 1999; Juarez, 1999). Students, like their teachers, come to school unprepared to address intergroup issues in constructive ways. Opening up these discussions for the first time can serve as a trigger for insults or hostile critique. In one class, an African-American woman spoke of her feelings of fear regarding whites, and particularly "rednecks" to a class of predominantly White pre-service teachers. A White male student responded: "I don't appreciate your comments about rednecks; some of my best friends are rednecks." To which she replied, "Then you might want to reconsider working in a predominantly Black environment. None of us are keen on YOUR friends" (Berlak, 2004, p. 128, emphasis original).

The discovery of conflicting perspectives in what was considered a "safe" classroom may be disturbing to all; in this way, students have a stake in perceiving their schools as problem-free, leading them to an engagement in denial much like the rest of their communities do (Dilg, 1999). Diaz-Gemmati's students asked their teacher: "Why you have to bring this garbage into the classroom? This place was the only place I could be without being made to think about stuff like who don't like who" (Diaz-Gematti, 1999, p. 66).

For these reasons, many call for an incorporation of conflict-mediating skills into the multicultural curriculum (Dilg, 1999; Stephan, 1999). Addressing conflict head on rather than skirting over uncomfortable issues promotes trust between students and teachers;

however, uncovering painful truths about ourselves and others may also invite defensiveness and suspicion (Dilg, 1999). As one student said: “There needs to be open communication first before you can start to say what offends you” (Dilg, 1999, p. 19). Some teachers have addressed these dilemmas by institutionalizing explicit dialogue-promoting structures into their classes. Dilg (1999) introduced a technique called “seminaring”, a participant structure that allows students to discuss controversial and personally involving topics in a manner that invites each person’s voice and contribution as it is offered for scrutiny by the whole group. This technique makes explicit the need for listening carefully and expressing one’s ideas clearly while trying to understand others. The teacher acts as a facilitator, reminding students that each of our perspectives are still evolving, and offers additional information if students are unable to resolve confusion or controversy on their own (Dilg, 1999).

Some teachers start their courses by explicitly stating the “rules of engagement” guiding class interactions (Glass, 2004; O’Malley, 1999). Teaching respect towards other points of view is a crucial skill needed to facilitate open and often difficult discussions. In one writing class, this rule has been stated as “There is absolute respect for every writer in the class (This includes the teacher). There is absolute attention when a writer reads his/her work” (O’Malley, 1999, p. 108). In another class, the teacher stressed the importance of separating views from persons and a recognition that every student and teacher is to some degree shaped by dominant cultural discourses to avoid expressions of blame (Glass, 2004).

In classes where dialogical principles are part of instruction, students are expected to undergo significant changes that go beyond traditional academic learning. When students

practiced the art of “listening with depth and understanding” in O’Malley’s class, they were able to internalize the careful attention to language and dialogical processes of interaction; they gained the skills to impose meaning on their experiences – to create a story and an identity – that celebrated, rather than diminished, their lives (O’Malley, 1999). Similarly, Glass’s students were told on the first day of class that “insofar as they participate fully in the class, they will never be the same” (Glass, 2004, p. 28). Mindful of the work involved in these courses, the teacher offered extra support during office hours as students wrestled with uncovering the underlying contradictions involving their identities and their world.

Berlak, in another account of teaching students to understand multiple points of view around issues of race, stressed the importance of involving students emotionally in the subject while modeling ways of reflecting on and integrating the experience. When a guest speaker challenged the class’s views on the significance of race in their and others’ lives, the students reacted with a range of emotions that were processed using journals and discussions. One of the students said that the group debriefing helped to “internalize the messages that were hard for [him] to grasp” because he realized that “others have feelings and images…just as real and also based on years of experience (Berlak, 2004, p. 13).

Other teachers described ways to model supportive interactions across points of view. Davenport used cooperative learning groups in which students read their work to their peers, modeling support from one’s classmates and creating an environment where “they could practice their reading without feeling embarrassed but instead feeling proud of what they could do” (Freedman et al., 1999, p. 214). Appropriate responses can be also

modeled by describing the teacher's own experiences. Glass, teaching about issues of race and power, helped students to overcome feelings of pain and confusion upon the realization of their ignorance and implicit contribution to injustice, by speaking of such experiences in his own life (Glass, 2004).

A variety of authors also started to point out the inherent contradictions involved in promoting democratic dialogues in today's classrooms. These dilemmas were described in a volume edited by Boler (2004), aptly subtitled "Troubling Speech, Disturbing Silences", referring to the need to continually balance the risks and benefits of dialogues across difference. Burbules speaks of the uneasy relationships between speaking and silencing that inevitably affect class dynamics, by, for example, silencing certain students once others are encouraged to speak (Burbules, 2004). Because selective silencing always occurs during class discussions, which voices should the teachers support and which should be "muted"? Some argue that in classrooms committed to social justice, "affirmative action pedagogy" should actively support the voices of traditionally marginalized students (Boler, 2004). Others question, however, the simple connection between a students' race or ethnicity and the inherent "correctness" of some students' discourse, while pointing out that using students as "mouthpieces" of ideologies masks the real sources of social oppression (DeCastell, 2004).

Concerns about privileging certain voices invites the related question of how to best protect students from tensions generated during class conflicts around issues of power and identity. Many authors agree that direct confrontation that triggers students' emotions is an extremely useful way to engage students' critical reflection on unjust practices (Burbules, Berlak, Erikcson, 2004). However, inflicting trauma as an educational method

may be ethically questionable, among other reasons because students have not willingly signed up to experience it, and even if they did, teachers are not qualified to assist them during the experience (Burbules, 2004).

In sum, the goals of a socially committed classroom are contradictory as well as controversial. The insertion of explicit values in a class focusing on social justice seriously alters the value-free model of education that many students expect to receive when they enter schools and universities. Questions about who should carry the burden of transforming society, or to pay for society's ills, become paramount. Should students undergo trauma and pain to become citizens supporting social change? Should teachers add to their job of teaching "knowledge" by attempting to transform their students and supporting them through conflicting personal experiences? Should both teachers and students put their academic careers at stake when conflicts erupt around expressing political differences?

Finally, the types of conflicts and what roles students play in that conflict (e.g., being a subject of blame, or playing the "victim") are structured by students' race and ethnicity status. Many authors have written of the difficulty posed by a critique of dominant practices and the accompanying discomfort experienced by students from dominant backgrounds present in the class (e.g., Berlak, 2004; Jones, 2004). For White students, recognizing that dominant cultural practices are oppressive to minority interests may entail self-blame or denial which, in turn, may not be conductive to careful listening required for a dialogue to proceed (Burbules, 2004). Others have pointed out the burden placed on minority students who are sometimes placed in a position to "teach" their experiences to students from dominant backgrounds, again making the dialogue one-

sided (Jones, 2004). For these reasons, it is important to consider the differential impact of the multicultural content on students from diverse backgrounds, and the ways in which various student responses, both to the subject matter and to each other, affect significantly the class dynamics and the types of dialogues these classrooms foster.

Diversity of student development

Assuming student diversity bears implications not only for curriculum design and the structuring of teaching practices, but is also reflected in the ways in which students respond to education. The multiplicity of student voices, while creating an environment that greatly stretches single viewpoints, also creates a range of particular responses to multicultural content, including resistance or discomfort with class material and format. These responses, in turn, may differentially affect students' participation and learning. On one level, a curriculum emphasizing minority viewpoints may draw certain groups of students to the exclusion of others. For example, an elective Women's Studies class taught at Mankato State University in 1987 had 95% women enrollment, and 12% minority enrollment constituting 4 times the University 3% minority student population (Lather, 1991). These patterns reflect the popular myth that diversity programs benefit primarily students of color (Chang, Witt-Sandis & Hakuta, 1999) as well as institutional strategies that may target particular students when offering these courses; for example, the Women Studies course was typically offered as part of a program for returning women students (Lather, 1991).

Students from dominant groups may experience resistance as a result of their presence in multicultural courses. A White male student enrolled in the Women Studies course described his feelings of marginalization: "I am puzzled as to how to react to it…this

reverse discrimination is just as bad as the first…it is hard for me to support any act that distracts with people dealing with me as *me*, not just a member of some group" (Lather, 1999, p. 148). These feelings reflect the different views of dominant group members compared to minorities regarding the role of identity in people's lives. Typically, members of dominant groups believe that group membership has little to do with the life-chances of individuals and their own in-group identification tends to be weaker than that of minority members (Gurin, Peng, Lopez, & Nagda, 1999; Martin, Bikmen, Deaux, & Reid, 2002; Sears, D.O., Citrin, J., Cheleden, S.V., & van Laar, C., 1999). Several theories offer explanations for these differences. Symbolic politics theory (Sears et al., 1999) argues that historically, White Americans have been socialized to emphasize individual over group rights while the experiences of Blacks have been associated with a collective struggle for justice. As a result, Whites are less receptive to group-based multicultural initiatives (Sears et al., 1999), an attitude associated with perceptions that individual rather than collective efforts are a best route to success in the U.S. society (Martin et al., 2002). Moreover, Whites may directly associate their identification with a support of inequality (Social Dominance Theory; Levin, Sidanius, Rabinowitz, & Federico, 1998).

Standpoint theory offers another explanation for the differences between views expressed by minority and majority members. Harding (1991) argues that because of their dual involvement in dominant and subordinate group experiences, members of minority groups develop a more extensive knowledge of the systems of domination leading to a more complete critique of ideology compared to dominant group members. Because of their position, they may be uniquely equipped to "see" the role of race and

ethnicity in individual lives while dominant groups often overlook the sources of their privilege. For example, Alice, a White seventh grader in a private school, critiqued the school's effort to present experiences of people of color through the English curriculum: "I'm not a racist, but I feel [the teachers] try to relate everything to African-Americans. Sometimes English is just about English" (Abu El-Haj, 1998, p. 217). Similarly, minority students' experiences may prepare them better than students from dominant groups to deal with intergroup issues and conflict negotiation, reflecting more complex ways of thinking about group life, including a greater sensitivity to racial tensions and efforts to ameliorate them (Daiute et al., 2001; Gurin et al., 1999; Hurtado, 1992). These group differences may be in part responsible for the findings that White students benefit most from exposure to multicultural curriculum and other forms of diversity (Gurin et al., 2002). For example, after 4 years of participating in an Intergroup Relations, Conflict, and Community Program, identified White students were less likely than their peers to express the belief that diversity was inherently divisive and that conflict had primarily negative consequences, paralleling responses of minority students who did not participate in the program (Gurin et al., 1999).

Aside from differences anchored in students' ethnic and racial viewpoints, a diversity of student responses exists within these groups, reflecting students' unique concerns not directly tied to intergroup issues. For example, some students attending the Women Studies course at Mankato College expressed conflicts regarding sexual orientation: "Because of worrying that someone will think I'm gay for taking this class, my boyfriend told me not to tell anyone that I'm taking this class" (Lather, 1991, p. 132). Other students criticized the fact that the course was promoting a single feminist perspective,

requiring that women students view themselves in terms of male oppression: “I know I’m oppressed but I don’t feel as oppressed/discriminated against as this class makes me feel I should feel” (Lather, 1991, p. 140). Some students felt the course contradicted their religious beliefs. Often, students felt simply burdened with the newly acquired knowledge that made them feel both oppressed and helpless: “I don’t want to believe the terrible things I’m learning”, “What good is knowing about this if I can’t do anything about it?” (Lather, 1991, p. 132).

As a way of validating the diversity of students’ voices, teachers may offer to address the variety of responses explicitly in their classes by involving students in an on-going interrogation of the educational process as part of the course (Lather, 1991). Stage theories of identity negotiation have been employed by some practitioners and researchers as a way to conceptualize the progression of student responses, while recognizing that students enter the classes at different points of readiness to deal with diversity issues (Gurin et al., 1999; Lather, 1991). At the same time, students’ diverse experiences may not be easily reducible to a single developmental trajectory. Therefore, to create real opportunities for voicing varied and contradictory responses, an on-going exploration of multiple positionings as a basis of identity and intergroup processes is recommended to researchers and practitioners (Daiute, 2004).

The pedagogical practices outlined above provide a model of multicultural education based on dialogical principles. This model is summarized in Figure 1 (p.201), depicting connections between factors on the level of institutions, classrooms, and individual students. These can be described as follows:

Student factors (outcomes):

a) In the multicultural school, students explore and validate their identities while interacting with theories, sharing perspectives with others, and examining conflictual viewpoints;

b) In the multicultural school, students develop positive relationships with others from different backgrounds;

c) In the multicultural school, students achieve academic success to prepare them for future achievement in society, and prepare to engage in social action.

Classroom factors:

a) The multicultural curriculum represents diverse histories and viewpoints while emphasizing their constructed nature;

b) The multicultural curriculum addresses concerns originating in students' lives;

c) The multicultural classroom models democratic forms of engagement, including conflict management, to facilitate dialogues across diverse viewpoints.

Institutional factors:

a) Multicultural education establishes difference, as opposed to sameness, of students' perspectives, as a tool for learning and democratic engagement;

b) Multicultural education is based on a contextual analysis of students' achievement, as opposed to viewing ability in terms of individual skills and knowledge;

c) Multicultural education links students' knowledge to social justice, broadening the goals of education to include academic as well as democratic outcomes.

Research questions

The model of dialogical multicultural education provided the basis for the study's design. The study addressed the following general questions:

- What educational practices are produced as a function of a multicultural curriculum?
- How do these practices mediate student and group processes, including students' identities, attitudes towards others, and learning?

More specifically, the research sought to describe particular processes, identified by the dialogical multicultural model, that shape student outcomes in various school contexts including institutional policy, pedagogy, class dynamics, and narrative activities (see Table 1: The contexts of multicultural education). The inquiry into the processes of multicultural education was guided by the following research questions:

- How does awareness of one's ethnic/racial identity structure student outcomes, in terms of academic achievement, relationships with diverse others, and democratic engagement?
- How do representations of one's race and ethnicity differ to produce meanings that structure the experiences of various subgroups of students in school?
- How do students construct their representations of selves, others, and relationships across difference in class discussions and during narrative activities? How do interactional processes, such as sharing perspectives and engaging in conflict help or hinder students' understandings?
- How do teaching practices shape students' interactions? Specifically, how do openness to students' concerns, modeling democratic engagement, conflict negotiation, and stressing critical viewpoints support student development?

- How do educational ideologies structure teaching and student experiences? Specifically, how does policy regarding multiculturalism foster particular kinds of teaching environments? How do schools' and teachers' views on diversity, student ability, and educational goals help students achieve success?

CHAPTER 2: METHOD

Study Design

This study examined the emergence and negotiation of student identity processes embedded in the various contexts of multicultural education. The methodology relied on several forms of assessment recommended to analyze identity processes in context, combining archival data representing "master narratives", observations of overt behavior, personal identity narratives, responses to structured stimuli, and self-reports (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Table 1 summarizes the different levels of context through which multicultural practices were examined: a) the institutional context was used to assess the philosophy guiding multicultural education practices in its official form, b) forms of pedagogy were assessed to examine the ways in which multicultural practices are locally implemented, c) classroom discussions assessed how students are socialized into the discourses of multiculturalism and how they practice their understandings of multiculturalism under the teachers' guidance, d) a Narrative Task provided a vicarious (imagined) format for the student to practice their understandings of multiculturalism as part of a lived interpersonal experience, and e) student feedback was assessed to examine how students make sense of their class experiences. Finally, a validated survey provided a comparison between students participating in multicultural classes and their peers at the same institution attending other classes.

Hypotheses

1. A major assumption of multicultural education is that addressing the cultural histories and conditions of different groups has a beneficial impact on students' learning, and the development of intergroup and democratic understandings. These effects are

achieved by focusing on students' identities and linking them to an analysis of social contexts in which these identities are produced and negotiated. The first hypothesis tested in this study examined student changes experienced as a function of attending a course focusing specifically on theories of race and ethnicity and intergroup issues (Sociology 217; see section entitled *The setting* for a full description of the course, p. 53). The changes were operationalized as *increases* and *decreases* measured by the following constructs:

- *Learning*: Intellectual engagement, academic skills, active thinking
- *Democratic understanding*: Citizenship engagement, racial and cultural understanding, perspective-taking, compatibility of difference and democracy, views on conflict
- *Intergroup interactions:* Amount and quality of contact with diverse others
- *Identity development:* Identity strength/importance

The unique effect of the course was measured by comparing changes over the course of the semester experienced by students attending the target course to changes of students attending other social science courses (specifically, Personality Psychology and Theories of Human Sexuality, both elective courses offered by the Psychology department[2]). Pre- and post-surveys were administered in these courses at the beginning and end of the semester.

2. Mechanisms of change may operate differently for students identified as members

[2] The selection of comparison courses was guided by their relative similarity to the target course (all courses were offered by the School of Arts and Sciences) and convenience (access to the course). A one-way ANOVA determined that no significant differences existed between the multicultural and comparison groups in terms of participants' demographics and educational backgrounds.

of different groups. Typically, members of minority groups view identity as more central to their lives (Sears et al., 1999). The second hypothesis examined differences in processes experienced by students from majority and minority backgrounds, immigrant and non-immigrant students, and different gender groups. The following predictions were tested to explore these differences:

- *Hypothesis 2a)* At the beginning of the course, minority students' levels of ethnic/racial identity, democratic understandings, positive views of conflict, and intergroup attitudes will be higher than those of students from majority backgrounds. Similarly, female students' scores on these constructs will be higher than male students', and immigrant students' will be higher than non-immigrant students'. As a result of a ceiling effect, changes experienced by students from dominant groups (White students, men, and non-immigrants) may be greater than changes experienced by minority members attending the course.

In addition to a difference in identity awareness and importance, majority members frequently associate their identities with hierarchy-enhancing attitudes, such as support of inequality (Deaux, Reid, Martin, & Bikman, 2006; Levin et al., 1998). Their participation in a multicultural course should change these understandings, making their identities more compatible with democratic goals (Gurin et al., 1999). These assumptions are reflected in the following predictions:

- *Hypothesis 2b)* At the beginning of the course, White students' identity levels will be associated with negative intergroup attitudes, views of conflict, and democratic outcomes (or attitudes that are more negative than those of identified minority students).

- *Hypothesis 2c)* This relationship will be moderated by course participation, such that White students at the end of the course will develop more positive relationships between identification and intergroup, conflict, and democratic attitudes compared to White students not attending the course.

Analyses of group differences in student outcomes may mask within-group diversity of student negotiations of identity and the development of attitudes towards others. For this reason, self-other relationships were explored in greater depth using a qualitative analysis. Self-positionings as a basis of identity construction were examined using a narrative task in which students explored an imagined interaction around issues of race/ethnicity (Narrative Task). This analysis aimed to answer the following questions in a descriptive (open-ended) manner:

- How do students represent themselves and others as members of particular ethnic/racial groups (White, Latino)?
- How are these self-representations narrated in a particular social and political context (a disagreement about work access; Affirmative Action)?
- What are the focal issues and conflicts that students describe around their identity in relation to these contexts?
- How does identity negotiation affect relationships with different others (e.g., the story protagonists, the story's narrator)?
- How do student narratives develop reasoning linking interpersonal processes to social structures (social analysis)?

3. Forms of pedagogy employed in diverse classrooms interact with course content to produce student outcomes. Classroom practices, including student responses to

particular class content, were directly observed and coded to examine the presence or absence of mechanisms that were hypothesized to produce the desired changes. These mechanisms included:

- Incorporation of student concerns into class material
- Discussions of material in a manner that promotes critical viewpoints
- Implementing cooperative learning structures in the classroom
- Modeling interactional skills that facilitate student dialogues across competing viewpoints and ways of managing class conflict.

This hypothesis examined whether differences in classroom practice produce different student outcomes. In addition, a part of the post-survey examining the perceived effects of the course was used to assess the impact of particular aspects of the course from the students' perspective.

4. Educational practice is embedded in specific schooling structures and ideologies.

To examine the philosophy guiding multicultural practices at Hunter College, documents describing the rationale and implementation of policies on educating diverse students were analyzed (e.g., The Pluralism and Diversity Requirement; Report of the Presidential Committee on Campus Climate [1993]). Because only a single institution was studied, this analysis served as a frame to the detailed examination of educational practices occurring in the two sections of the course under study. However, interviews conducted with the two instructors teaching the course illustrated how differences in educational philosophy may structure specific classroom practices resulting in different student outcomes.

The setting

Hunter College. Hunter College is part of the City University of New York, a system of 11 4-year and six 2-year colleges and a graduate school, all contained within the 5 boroughs of New York City. The total number of students is approximately 198,000, and the total number of faculty is 5,777. It is the largest and most diverse public urban university system in the United States (Hunter Newsroom, 2003). Hunter College is attended by approximately 20,000 students. The undergraduate student body is a reflection of the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity characteristic of New York City, with over 18,000 undergraduates being members of minority groups.

Hunter students come from more than 140 nations and speak more than 100 languages. About 70% of the student population are women and 4% are foreign students. More than 50% of students are the first in their families to attend college. Founded in 1870, Hunter is one of the oldest public colleges in the country. In its mission statement, the college emphasizes its service to a student body that reflects the diversity of New York City. In particular, the school aims to enable the people of New York to combine the strengths of their varied experiences with the skills they need to participate effectively in the wider society. To achieve a pluralistic community, Hunter College offers a curriculum designed to meet the highest academic standards while also fostering understanding among groups from different racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Hunter newsroom, 2003).

The Pluralism and Diversity Requirement. Hunter was one of the first colleges in the nation to pass a 12-credit curriculum requirement in courses addressing issues of pluralism and diversity. Currently, the requirement stresses the importance of the

growing interdependence of the world's political, economic, and cultural relations, along with the increasingly diverse character of the American citizenry in general and the students of Hunter College in particular. All students who entered the university after the Fall of 1993 have to choose three credits from each of the following four groups: courses reflecting scholarship emerging from the perspectives of a) non-European societies, particularly those of Africa, Asia, Latin America, or those indigenous to the Americas; b) groups in the United States of America: African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans; c) women and/or issues of gender or sexual orientation; and d) traditions of Europe, including the ways in which pluralism and diversity have been addressed.

Sociology 217: Race and Ethnicity. This elective course has been instituted as part of the undergraduate curriculum in Sociology while simultaneously fulfilling the Pluralism and diversity requirement applicable to undergraduates in all disciplines (group B). The course examines the nature of race and ethnicity and the experiences of ethnic and racial minorities in modern societies. Specifically, it compares the various types of groups usually defined as "minorities" (religious, linguistic, racial, etc.) and the positions they hold in various societies ("racial minorities," "middle man minorities," immigrant groups, regional minorities, colonial and semi- colonial populations, etc.) (see sample syllabus, Appendix A).

A major text employed in this course is Norman Yetman's (Ed.) *Majority and Minority: The Dynamics of Race and Ethnicity in American Life* (Yetman, 1999, 6th edition). The book is shaped by concerns that grew from the Civil Rights movement, dealing with the persistence of racial and ethnic inequality and intergroup conflict in the

U.S. society. The book is divided into four parts: 1) Introduction: Definitions and perspectives, 2) Historical perspectives, 3) Models of ethnic integration in the United States, and 4) The American people and the future of ethnicity. Each part is preceded by an introductory essay written by Yetman, which discusses definitions, perspectives, and current issues in the field, while inter-relating and integrating the various articles within each section. In addition to the textbook, other texts are employed by the course's instructors to reflect current concerns in the study and practices surrounding cultural diversity. Among these books are The Ethnic myth: Race, ethnicity, and class in America (Steinberg, 1981), and White privilege (Rothenberg, 2002).

The structure of the course follows a typical format of undergraduate education. In the Fall of 2003, the requirement for this course included one or two in-class essays and a non-cumulative final. In addition, in one section of the course, students were required to write a term paper on a topic relevant to the study of race and ethnicity. The assignment allowed the use of any format, from a traditional research paper to an ethnographic study, critique of a debate or theory, discussion of a media frame, or any other form students might find compelling to approach the subject matter under study.

Typically, two to three sections of the course are offered each semester with approximately 55 students enrolled in each class. In the Fall of 2003 during which the proposed study took place, three sections of the course were offered, resulting in a total enrollment of approximately 165 students. One section was offered during the day class schedule (Mondays and Thursdays, 9:45-11:00) and two sections during the evening class schedule (Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00 – 9:15; Monday and Wednesday, 8:25 – 9:40). The two evening sections examined in this study were taught by a female adjunct faculty

who was a doctoral student at Columbia University and by a male adjunct instructor who was a doctoral student at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Both teachers have taught the course several times in the past.

Sample

Participants were 117 Hunter College students, 68 (51%) of whom attended SOC 217: Race and Ethnicity (Multicultural group) and 49 (42%) attended PSY 170: Theories of Human Sexuality or PSY 220: Theories of Personality (Comparison group). In the multicultural group, the original recruitment rate was very high, N = 76 out of 77 (98.7%) students. The resulting participant rate of 68 students reflected student attrition over the semester (course drop) and student absence during the Time 2 phase of the study. In the comparison group, the final participation rate (at both time points) was about 50%.

The multicultural and comparison groups were closely equivalent in terms of age, gender, and ethnic/racial background, as assessed by a one-way ANOVA.

Table 2 describes the demographic characteristics of the study participants. Of the students attending SOC 217: Race and Ethnicity, 14 (21%) were males and 54 (79%) were females. The mean age of participants in this group was 24 years, ranging from 19 to 38 years. Almost half of the participants were born in the United States (N = 33, 48%), others were immigrants (N = 24, 42%) and the immigration status of 11 participants was unknown. The majority of the participants were of Hispanic/Latino origin. Sixteen participants (23.5%) categorized themselves as Hispanic or Latino, seven (10%) were Dominican or Ecuadorian, four (6%) Colombian, and one (1.5%) Mexican. There were ten Black participants, of which five categorized themselves as African American (7%) and five as West Indian (7%). There were 16 White participants (23.5%),

of which 7 (10%) categorized themselves as White, five were Eastern European (7%), two were Greek, one Lebanese, and one Swedish. Six students (9%) were of Asian origin, and three students were of mixed race 4.5%). About one third of participants (N = 21, 30%) spoke English in their homes.

Some participants indicated that they attended the course because it was a part of their major or distribution requirement (N = 26, 38%); others attended because of a mixture of interest and requirement reasons (40, 59%). On average, the participants completed 84 college credits and their average GPA was 3.00.

Study procedures

Recruitment. With the permission from the Sociology department and the Psychology department (Appendix B), I recruited participants from the two evening sections of the course Sociology 217: Race and Ethnicity. At the same time, participants were recruited from two additional courses for comparison purposes. These courses were Psychology 170: Psychology of Human Sexuality and Psychology 220: Personality, where only the student survey was administered.

During the first three weeks of classes, I was introduced to the students by the class instructor, to establish the legitimacy of the study by demonstrating the support of the department and course instructors. After the introductions, I explained the purpose of the study to the students, the requirements made by the research project on students' time, and their rights as participants in research. I stressed that no connection exists between Hunter College and the investigator, so that student participation in no way affected students' grades or their standing as Hunter students. Then, students were asked to

volunteer to participate in the study. During this time, the instructor left the room to ensure that students would not perceive his or her presence as coercive to participation.

Students who agreed to participate in the study signed informed consent forms (see Appendix C). The consent form specified different levels of participation in the study, such that students elected what sources of data would be collected from them by the investigator. For example, some students agreed to participate in the survey part of the study but did not agree that their papers written as part of the Narrative Task would be included in the study. Students kept one copy of the consent form for their record, and returned another copy to me. The class instructor was not told which students became participants in the study.

Data collection. Data collection took place during the entire semester of Fall 2003. Table 3 presents an overview of the study measures.

- *Pre- and post- student survey*, collected during the second, third and final weeks of the semester. Class time was provided for data collection with alternate activities designed for students wishing not to participate in the study.
- *The Narrative Task*, describing an imaginary cross-cultural encounter, was administered approximately in the middle of the course.
- *Classroom observations* were conducted once a week (every other class) during the entire semester. Together with a research assistant, I collected written notes reflecting the content and format of the class lectures, topics of class discussions, forms of participation, and interpersonal dynamics occurring during class, including emotional engagement by the students, expressions of conflict and understanding, and other

interactions emerging as a function of the course and material taught (for a sample class observation form, see Appendix D).

- *Archival data.* In addition to data collected from students and classrooms, documents pertaining to Hunter College's multicultural policy were analyzed for content. These included the LeClerc Report (1993) and various documents concerning the implementation of the Pluralism and Diversity Requirement.
- *Teacher interviews.* I interviewed both instructors. The interviews, lasting approximately 1 hour, assessed pedagogical assumptions guiding each instructor's teaching practice and reflections on implementing these assumptions in classrooms, in a semi-structured format.

Anonymity. Students who participated in the project did so anonymously. This ensured that at no time could student names or any other personal identifiers be used to communicate information to the class instructor or the school administration. At the beginning of the study, participants created nicknames to be used consistently for data identification purposes throughout the study. After collecting the list of nicknames, I created nickname labels that were subsequently applied to any following pieces of data (by students).

Measures

Level 1: Institutional policy. An analysis of policy guiding multicultural education at Hunter College was used to explore the connections between different levels of social context (institutional, classroom) that frame educational and identity processes experienced by the students. According to dialogical theory, institutions play an important part in identity development and learning by creating specific opportunities for

social interactions. Because only a single institution was assessed in the study, the goal of this analysis was not comparative. Instead, the analysis was used to trace the development of multicultural education practices at Hunter College in its current form.

Factors guiding Hunter College's policy on educating diverse students were assessed by: a) archival data analysis and b) teacher interviews.

Documents describing the school's multicultural policy were analyzed using content-analytical techniques. This analysis identified assumptions about the role of diversity in education, views on the sources of student ability, and the scope of educational goals as defined by the university. Finally, a part of the teacher interview was used to identify the degree to which the institution's policy is reflected in teachers' assumptions guiding their classroom practice (see Teacher Interview script, Appendix E).

On this level, the research was guided by the following hypotheses:

An effective multicultural curriculum is a product of:

- Recognizing diversity of students' perspectives as a value
- Viewing students' ability in contextual rather than individualistic terms
- Establishing both academic and democratic outcomes as educational goals
- Responding to concerns generated by the community to solve local issues

Level II. Classroom practices. An analysis of classroom practices was used to identify classroom interactions that promote or hinder students' identity development and learning. According to dialogical theory, these interactions occur as a result of establishing multiple audiences in the classroom, represented by both the curriculum (theory) and the expression of students' perspectives. Dialogical development is promoted by curriculum content that presents a range of perspectives in a non-

deterministic manner and incorporates student concerns, classroom discussions that encourage the exchange of diverse viewpoints, the implementation of cooperative learning structures, and the modeling of skills facilitating student dialogues.

Classroom practices were assessed by: a) direct observations of class interactions, b) student feedback, and c) teacher interviews.

The analysis of classroom interactions used discourse-analytical techniques to identify the participant structures characterizing the course. This analysis focused on forms of classroom practice that promote student dialogues by: a) presenting material in a manner that reflects concerns arising from students' lives, for example, by incorporating students' suggestions for inclusion of relevant topics, b) by allowing students to discuss their views on the topics presented and fostering the expression of counter-narratives, c) by creating a classroom structure in which students engage with each other's views, for example, by implementing cooperative learning strategies, d) by modeling listening techniques and other interactional skills to facilitate student dialogues across competing beliefs (see Classroom Observation Protocol, Appendix D).

A part of the teacher interview was used to assess the techniques by which the teachers attempt to practice multicultural pedagogy. The rationale for implementing selected course materials, classroom participant structures, and modeling of skills that may foster or hinder student dialogues was explored in a semi-structured manner. In addition, the teachers were asked to discuss the effectiveness with which the various parts of the course were implemented and possible obstacles to implementation (e.g., class size, availability of suitable materials, inadequate institutional support) (see Teacher Interview script, Appendix E).

On this level, the research was guided by the following hypotheses:

An effective multicultural practice will result from:

- An incorporation of students' concerns into class material
- Encouraging discussions of material in a manner that promotes critical viewpoints
- Implementing cooperative learning structures in the classroom
- Modeling interactional skills that facilitate student dialogues across competing viewpoints.

Level III. Student processes. An analysis of student processes focused on changes in understandings of self and others and student learning. According to dialogical theory, these changes arise from interactions taking place in the classroom, resulting from student engagement with the course content (theory) and dialogues among students and between students and the class instructors. Dialogical exchanges should increase students' learning, their understanding of differences across viewpoints, and their ability to view conflict as a positive mechanism of change. In addition, these insights should promote students' own ethnic/racial identification, by virtue of reflection and elaboration of various self positions. These changes should develop together with a greater tolerance toward others and a critical assessment of intergroup relations, incorporating social analysis into students' understandings of the role of race and ethnicity in people's lives. Finally, students should come to view themselves as social actors capable of contributing to solving social issues (empowerment). Student processes constituted a measure of the course effectiveness. Effectiveness was defined as the following:

- Changes in learning, quantity and quality of intergroup relations, and ethnic identification.

- Increasingly complex representations of the self and other and a critical understanding of intergroup issues (a dialogical understanding of difference).
- Understanding of conflict as a positive mechanism of change.
- Increases in academic and civic engagement, a sense of empowerment to make a contribution to solving important social issues.

Student outcomes were assessed by: a) a pre- and post survey assessing students' learning, intergroup relations, and identity, and b) the Narrative Task describing an imaginary interaction between the self and students from other cultural backgrounds. In addition, students' demographic characteristics and students' feedback on the course were collected as part of the post survey.

The pre- and post-survey was based on an instrument used in Gurin et al.'s (2002) study of diversity in higher education. The survey assessed four general classes of outcomes: a) *learning outcomes*, including intellectual engagement, academic skills, and active thinking, b) *democratic outcomes*, including citizenship engagement, racial and cultural understanding, perspective-taking, the compatibility of difference and democracy, and views on conflict, c) *intergroup outcomes*, including the amount and quality of students' contact with diverse peers, and d) *identity outcomes*, assessing the importance of group membership to one's sense of self. The survey consists of 48 items, scored using a 5-point Likert scale format unless noted otherwise (see Appendix F for a full survey).

Learning outcomes

According to dialogical theory, multicultural education promotes students' learning by increasing the level of academic skill, intellectual engagement, and active thinking

strategies. These outcomes are related to each other: intellectual engagement, resulting from classroom exchanges that reflect concerns in students' lives, creates a learning environment facilitating the acquisition of academic skills. In turn, by allowing students to voice their own perspectives, students learn to think critically about personal and social issues.

Intellectual engagement was measured by self-assessments of academic ability, drive to achieve, intellectual confidence, and listening ability (measure 1, Appendix F, p. 234). The students were asked to "rate [themselves] on each of the following traits [academic ability, etc.] as compared with the average person [their] age." The possible answers were "highest 10%, above average, average, below average, and lowest 10%". This 4-item index, based on Astin (1993), had an alpha of .71 and .80 pre- and post-test, respectively.

Academic skills were measured by self-reported changes in general knowledge, analytic and problem-solving skills, ability to think critically, writing skills, and foreign-language skills (see measure 3, items 1-4 and 7, Appendix F). Students were asked: "Compared with when you started college, how would you now describe your [general knowledge, etc.]?" Possible answers ranged from "much stronger" to "much weaker." This 5-item index, based on Astin (1993), had an alpha of .66 and 76 pre- and post-test, respectively.

Active thinking was measured by 7 items from Fletcher, Danilovics, Fernandez, Peterson, and Reeder (1986) who defined their scale as a measure of motivation to understand human behavior, the tendency to think about underlying processes, and to prefer complex to simple explanations (see measure 4, Appendix F). An example is "I enjoy analyzing reasons for behavior". Students were asked to endorse these statements

by stating "how well these statements described [them]", on a scale ranging from "not at all like me" to "very much like me." The modified version of the scale, developed by Gurin et al. (2002), had an alpha of .76 and .74, pre- and post-test, respectively.

Democratic outcomes

Dialogical theory links academic success to democratic participation. Students who engage with diverse viewpoints during classes will learn to view themselves as social actors rather than passive recipients of education (citizenship engagement). By engaging in dialogues across difference, it is hypothesized that students will gain a greater awareness and appreciation of cultural/ethnic differences (racial and cultural understanding). Incorporating multiple viewpoints into their understanding will increase students' ability to consider different perspectives (perspective-taking) and the view of differences and conflict as positive resources in a democracy (compatibility of difference and democracy and views on conflict).

Citizenship engagement was measured by 5 items, assessing students' motivation to participate in activities that affect society and the political structure (see measure 2, Appendix F). These activities included "influencing the political structure", "influencing social values", "helping others in difficulty", "being involved in programs to clean up the environment", and "participating in a community action program". Students were asked to "indicate the importance to [themselves] personally" of these activities, with answers ranging from "essential" to "not important." This index, based on Astin (1993), had an alpha of .71 and .74, pre- and post-test.

Racial and cultural understanding was measured by students' self-ratings of how they described their "their knowledge of people from different races/cultures" and

"ability to get along with people from different races/cultures", compared to when they first started college (see measure 3, items 5 and 6, Appendix F). Possible answers ranged from "much stronger" to "much weaker." This 2-item index, based on Astin (1993), had an alpha of .74 and .77, pre- and post-test, respectively.

Perspective-taking was measured by 4 items from Davis' (1983) longer scale of empathy, assessing the tendency to consider other people's points of view (see measure 11, Appendix F). An example is "I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the other person's point of view" (reversed). Possible answers ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The 4-item measure had an alpha of .69 and .73, pre- and post test, respectively.

Compatibility of difference and democracy identifies student views about the compatibility of an emphasis on difference and democracy, assessing whether students view similarity as crucial to finding intergroup understanding (see Diversity as sameness or difference, p. 9). This construct was measured by 4 items, assessing the belief that diversity is non-divisive (for example: "The University's commitment to diversity fosters more intergroup division than understanding", reverse-scored), and by asking students how much difference in values they perceived between their own racial/ethnic group and other groups (see measure 5, Appendix F). Possible answers ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." This index, developed by Gurin et al. (2002), had an alpha of .77 and .72, pre- and post-test, respectively.

Views on conflict were assessed by eight items, combining two 4-item scales: Positive Beliefs about Conflict and Negative Beliefs about Conflict (see measure 7, Appendix F). These items reflect the views that conflict can have positive consequences, is a normal

part of life, is healthy in a democracy, and can enrich the learning process (Positive Beliefs) and that conflict is a win-lose situation, should be avoided, rarely has positive consequences, and hinders discussions of social issues (Negative Beliefs). Possible answers ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." These scales were combined into a single scale and had alphas of .68 and .72, pre- and post-test, respectively.

Intergroup outcomes

Dialogical interactions in the classroom are hypothesized to increase students' willingness to enter such interactions outside of the class. Students' greater understanding and appreciation of cultural/ethnic differences should make it possible to engage in more frequent cross-cultural interactions in which differences of viewpoints are explored and shared, and to establish cross-cultural friendships.

Amount and quality of contact with diverse others was assessed by 3 items. Two questions probed the positive quality of such interactions, asking students how much these interactions involved "meaningful and honest discussions about race and ethnic relations" and "sharing of personal feelings and problems" (see measure 8, Appendix F). Possible answers ranged from "not at all" to "a great deal." The scale had a correlation of .77 and .73, pre- and post-test, respectively. Another single-item question assessed the quantity of interracial contact across different groups other than one's own (see measure 10, Appendix F). These scales were developed by Gurin et al. (2002).

Identity outcomes

Dialogical theory establishes identity as a key process in developing understanding of the self and other. By engaging in interactions with diverse others, students should

experience changes in their subjective assessment of the role of ethnic/racial group membership in their lives (strength of ethnic identity). In addition, students should come to view identity in a non-deterministic manner, expressing a range and fluidity of identity positions (identity complexity) across relational contexts rather than a fixed understanding of how group membership affects one's self.

The assessment of this key concept combined quantitative and qualitative measures. The quantitative measure assessed changes in the importance of identity to one's self-concept using a numerical scale. Two qualitative measures were used to explore identity processes in-depth. One created an imaginary social context around issues of affirmative action policy (Narrative Task). The other measure used a real dialogical context of the classroom to assess how students explored their identities as they interacted with course material, the teachers, and with each other (Course Feedback).

Assessing identity processes by quantitative and qualitative measures reflects differences between the theoretical approaches typically associated with the two methodologies. The quantitative assessment of identity determines the degree to which participants value their group membership and how often they think about its role in their lives. In contrast, the qualitative assessment of identity examined a narrative process in which participants construct particular representations of their selves in relation to specific social, historical, and interactional contexts. In this way, the qualitative assessment of ethnic/racial identity was combined with assessments of intergroup relations and democratic processes, such as social/political participation, perspective-taking, and racial and cultural understandings (assessed by separate scales in the quantitative survey).

Ethnic identity was measured by 4 items, assessing the importance of one's ethnic group to oneself, how often one thinks about being a member of one's group, the extent to which one's ethnic identity affects one's life, and how proud one feels about one's group (see measure 12, Appendix F). This measure, developed by Gurin et al. (2002), had an alpha of .79 and .72, pre- and post-test, respectively.

The *Narrative Task* was used as a qualitative measure of identity and intergroup relations. The measure was developed by the investigator to study the ways in which subject positionings produced by a narrative defines identities and relationships between the self and the other. In this task, students were asked to write an imaginary scenario following a prompt:

> "Some policies create controversies that affect our lives and those of others in different ways. As an example, consider the following scenario:
>
> Nancy is a student from a working-class Irish background. She is the first in her family to go to college. A great internship opportunity has opened up. Nancy interviews for the position but another student Julio, from a minority background, is hired. Nancy says: This is so unfair. Just because I am White, I don't get the same opportunities as others." Julio replies to her: "Your family has had better opportunities than mine. My mother never learned to read and write. And besides, no one says that I got hired because of my minority background." Nancy says: " Oh, isn't it obvious!" Julio says: "You should try to see what it's like to have people always doubt your abilities just because you are a minority. No matter how good you are, people will always say you had an advantage."

What happens next in the exchange? What will Nancy and Julio do?

How do you feel listening to this exchange?

What would you say to Nancy?

What would you say to Julio?

Do you think the employer did the right thing? Why or why not?"

This exercise was used to identify ways in which one's ethnic/racial identity structures interactions across race or ethnicity. Narrative analysis following Bamberg (1997) was used to answer the following questions:

a) What is the relationship among the characters in the story? On this level, the narrative was coded to examine the relationship between the protagonists of the story (Nancy, Julio) and his or her audiences (e.g., the employer, policy makers).

b) What is the relationship between the narrator (the student) and his or her audience? On this level, the narrative was coded to define the ways in which the narrator relates the story to his or her listeners.

c) What is the relationship of the narrator to himself/herself? On this level, the narrative was coded to define the narrator's identity as produced by telling the story.

In sum, the analysis of the story allowed for an examination of students' identities construed in terms of narrative relationships. This technique, closely related to the dialogical approach, created a given social context, by letting students work with an imagined social situation that remained constant across participants. Differences in the ways in which students narrated the situation served as measures of students' understandings of self and others.

Another form of assessing identity processes used students' open-ended feedback on the course (administered as part of the post-survey). Here, several codes were constructed to reflect ways in which students learned about themselves and others during the course and experienced changes in their identity strength and awareness in relation to class discussions and class materials (see Appendix F).

Comparison variables. Because the main purpose of the study was to assess the impact of the course and course-related activities on student outcomes, it was necessary to account for interactions and understandings related to identity and intergroup processes generated in other settings during the course of the semester. To examine these influences, the post-survey contained three questions probing the extent to which race-related issues were addressed in other courses the student has taken, and events (including ethnic festivals/concerts, films, news events, family events, work events) that may have sparked debates or thoughts around race and ethnicity outside of school settings (see Appendix F). Possible answers to these questions were "yes" or "no."

Perceived effect of the course. In this part of the post-survey, students answered 14 questions about their perceptions of the course (see Course feedback questionnaire, Appendix F). Specifically, these questions probed students' views about the course materials (What materials have been most/least engaging/relevant to your life?), the participant structure of the course (Responsiveness of the instructor to student concerns, opportunities for class dialogues, perceptions of the effectiveness of these dialogues, feelings towards other students in the class), and self-changes as a result of attending the course (Increased knowledge of issued related to race/ethnicity, increased academic and social engagement, changes in understanding of the self and others). Possible answers

ranged from “not at all” to “very much.” These 3-point Likert-scale format questions served to examine whether student perceptions of the course related to student outcomes assessed through other measures (survey and qualitative tasks) and to identify differences in students’ interpretations of classroom factors and their effects on students’ lives. The questions were not combined into an index; instead, single items were used in the analysis.

Analyses

Quantitative analyses

The analysis of the survey data used a mixed within-between subject design. Research hypotheses were tested by conducting the following statistical tests:

Hypothesis 1. Attending a course teaching about race and ethnicity will produce changes in students’ learning, intergroup, democratic, and identity outcomes.

This hypothesis was tested by a gain score analysis, using a series of difference scores reflecting Time2-Time1 changes in student outcome measures (learning, intergroup, democratic, and identity measures). These scores were used as dependent variables in a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), with course participation entered as a between-groups factor. The resulting significance of the Wilk’s Lambda evaluated whether the population means were equal between the two groups of students. When significant differences were found for any student outcomes, follow-up post-hoc tests (ANOVA’s) assessed the nature of these group differences, using a Bonferroni adjustment to control for Type I errors.

Hypothesis 2: Changes in student outcomes as a function of course participation will differ by membership in racial/ethnic, gender, and immigrant groups.

This hypothesis was tested by a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Main effects of students' group membership and course participation were entered on Steps 1 and 2, with an interaction term of group x course entered on Step 3. When the interaction term reached statistical significance for any of the outcomes, median splits were used to assess the nature of the differences found.

Group membership was operationalized in several ways: a) groups were created based on race, resulting in two groups: White and non-White[3]; b) groups were created based on gender, resulting in two groups: male and female; c) groups were created based on immigration status, resulting in two groups: immigrant and non-immigrant.

Group-specific hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a): *At the beginning of the course, minority students' levels of identity, democratic understandings, positive views of conflict, and intergroup attitudes will be higher than those of students from majority backgrounds.*

To test whether dominant group members entered the course with different levels of identity, intergroup, and democratic outcomes than minority members, a series of one-way multivariate analyses of variance were conducted. Time 1 outcome scores were used as dependent variables and group membership was entered as a between-groups factor. In this way, differences in Time 1 scores were tested for White and non-White students, male and female students, and students of a different immigration status (assessed by three separate MANOVA's).

[3] The decision to divide students into White and Non-White groups was based on several considerations. The diversity in participants' backgrounds would require to test differences among a large number of groups for which the sample size did not allow. In addition, my past research with the Hunter student population showed that grouping by participant race yielded meaningful differences in student outcomes (e.g., Martin, Deaux, & Bikman, 2001).

Hypothesis 2b): *At the beginning of the course, White students' identity strength will be associated with more negative intergroup attitudes, views of conflict, and democratic outcomes than those of minority students.*

To assess group differences in the association of identity with views on conflict, intergroup relations, and democratic attitudes, a two-way interaction effect was tested using a multiple hierarchical regression model. Time 1 scores were entered on the predictor side of the equation, controlling for main effects of identity and group membership (step 1 and 2), followed by an interaction effect, identity x group, on step 3. Time 1 scores assessing views on conflict, intergroup relations, and democratic attitudes served as dependent variables.

Hypothesis 2c): The relationship between identity strength and democratic outcomes will be moderated by course participation. At the end of the course, identified White students who participated in the course will have less negative views of conflict, intergroup relations, and democratic outcomes than identified White students who did not participate in the course.

To assess the impact of the course on the association of identity and outcome measures for White and non-White students, a three-way interaction effect was tested using a multiple hierarchical regression. Time 2 identity scores, group membership, and course participation were entered as predictors (on steps 1, 2, and 3, controlling for main effects), followed by an interaction effect identity x group x course on step 4.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS PART I.

The Effects of Multicultural Education

The examination of multicultural education focuses on two issues: the practices and mechanisms produced as a function of the multicultural framework, and the effects of these practices on students. To assess the effects of an intervention allows us to say whether the practice achieves the goals it has set out to accomplish; it provides an answer to the question: "Is it working?" In turn, to examine mechanisms produced by the intervention is to identify ways whereby the desired change is attained; the "How is it working?" part of the question.

I will first present results showing the effects of a single multicultural curriculum on Hunter College students over the course of one semester. These results establish, in quantitative terms, the effectiveness of the multicultural framework. However, they only show a partial view of what goes on inside a multicultural classroom, located in a diverse urban college in a North American metropolis. Although the quantitative data provide answers to immediate concerns, such as, is multicultural education a good thing?, they also generate a multitude of questions, such as, good for whom?, and what and who defines "good education"? Therefore, the results describing the effects of a multicultural curriculum will be used as a stepping stone to other questions and partial answers, focusing on the processes and the contexts in which specific effects and outcomes become materialized.

The survey

A survey administered at the beginning and end of the semester was used to measure changes in student outcomes over the course of the semester. Using a comparison group

of students attending other social science courses, this method identifies the unique effects of the multicultural curriculum, as compared to other curricula, on Hunter College students. Known as a quasi-experimental design (Cook & Campbell, 1979), the strength of this design lies in its ability to distinguish between effects accruing to all Hunter College students over the course of a semester (the comparison group) and those effects uniquely found in the target group (the Multicultural curriculum group, or the experimental group). However, the results drawn from this design need to be interpreted with caution because no random assignment was used and self-selection bias may have partially moderated the results. To evaluate this possibility, pre-survey differences were examined for group equivalence.

Following the contention that educational outcomes are manifested in different areas of learning and self-development, student outcomes were categorized into four distinct groups. The first group assessed the *strength and awareness of students' group identity*; the second assessed the *quantity and quality of student intergroup contact*; the third group assessed students' *understanding of democracy and civic engagement*; and the fourth group assessed *academic and learning outcomes*.

Categorizing student outcomes into these distinct categories allowed not only to assess the differential impact of the curriculum, but also to assess the relationships among these areas, pointing towards possible mechanisms of change. As hypothesized, self-development and learning takes place as a function of changing social and material contexts; therefore, identity and academic skills have been examined in relation to students' social interactions and civic participation.

Analyses

To measure the magnitude of student change over time, difference scores were computed by subtracting Time 1 scores from Time 2 scores for all survey items (except Ethic Identity Scale Revised, see below). Table 4 depicts the mean difference scores for all the aggregate measures (scales) used in the study and mean difference scores for individual scale items on several measures for both the multicultural and comparison groups.

Identity outcomes. There were no significant differences between the multicultural and comparison group in identity strength and awareness in the pre- and –post survey, or in the change of identity strength and awareness, measured by the Ethic Identity Scale. The pre- scores were relatively high, especially for the multicultural group (scale $M_{\text{pre-MC}} =$ 2.94, out of a total range of 4; a score of 3 corresponded to a rating of “sometimes” or “somewhat”). In both groups, an item assessing identity pride received the highest ratings both pre- and –post, ranging from $M = 3.43$-3.51 for the comparison group and $M = 3.45$-3.42 for the multicultural group (placing most students’ ratings of identity pride between “somewhat” and “a great deal”).

The relatively high pre- survey scores on the Identity scale may have created a ceiling effect making it difficult to detect differences over time (regression to the mean, Cook & Campbell, 1979). Therefore, a revised Ethnic Identity scale was added to the post-survey (see Appendix F). In this scale, the four Ethnic Identity items were reworded to reflect perceived changes over the course of the semester. For example, Ethnic Identity item #1 stated: “How often do you think about being a member of your group and what you have in common with others in your group?” In the revised version, this item read: “Over the

course of the semester…have you been thinking about being a member of your ethnic group and what you have in common with others in your group?" The possible answers were 1) less than usual; 2) about the same as always; 3) more than usual.

Using the revised Ethnic Identity Scale, the multicultural group reported significantly greater increases in identity strength and awareness compared to the comparison group (M_{MC} = 2.21, M_{com} = 2.04, t (111) = -2.27[4], p < .05; see Figure 2). Most students in the multicultural group indicated awareness and interest in their own identity "more often than usual" while the comparison group participants' average answer was "about the same." Similarly, the multicultural group scored significantly higher than the comparison on two of the identity items: Ethnic Identity # 1, assessing the salience of students' ethnic identity (M_{MC}= 2.25, M_{com}= 1.87, t (111) = -3.15, p < .01), and Ethnic Identity # 4, assessing the significance of this identity in their lives (M_{MC}= 2.10, M_{com}= 1.89, t (111) = -2.10, p < .05; see Figure 2).

As hypothesized, these results indicate that participation in a multicultural curriculum increased students' identity strength and awareness by making them think of their group membership more often, and making them appreciate the extent to which their own lives are connected to those of others their racial or ethnic group. In addition, these findings confirm that the multicultural curriculum affects not only students' academic knowledge (factual knowledge), but also their view of themselves vis-à-vis others (relational knowledge). It is the latter effect that needs to take place in order for students to internalize multicultural values and to prepare to use them in action (Nagda et. al, 2004).

Intergroup outcomes. Contact with members of other racial/ethnic groups was assessed by two measures, focusing on the quality and frequency of contact across racial

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[4] All t-tests were two-tailed.

and ethnic lines. In the first measure, two questions assessed whether the students experienced a) "meaningful and honest discussions about race and/or ethnic relations outside of class" and b) "sharing of their personal feelings and problems" with a person of a different race or ethnicity. In response to the first question, students in the multicultural group significantly increased the frequency of their contact compared to the comparison group over the course of the semester (see Figure 3). At the beginning of the semester, the multicultural group reported having fewer discussions with members of other races/ethnicities than the comparison group (M_{com}= 3.95, M_{MC}= 3.50, t (111) = 2.01, $p < .05$). At the end of the semester, however, the multicultural group reported having more discussions with other group members than the comparison group, experiencing a significantly more positive change in the frequency of these discussions ($M_{com\text{-}diff}$ = -.20, $M_{MC\text{-}diff}$ = .28, t (111) = -2.30, $p < .05$). In response to the second question, there were no significant changes in the reported amounts of sharing personal feelings and problems in the multicultural or the comparison groups.

Another way of measuring cross-group contact was by assessing the quantity of interactions with members of various groups. In this measure, 6 items inquired about the frequency of contact with members of specific racial/ethnic groups representative of the Hunter College population: African Americans, Asian Americans, White Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, West Indians, and White non-Americans. Then, an index score was created by averaging all interactions across groups. Over the course of the semester, the multicultural group significantly increased the amount of their interactions with members of various groups compared to the comparison group whose interactions had slightly

decreased in frequency ($M_{\text{com- diff}}$ = -.08, $M_{\text{MC-diff}}$ = .16, t (108) = -3.19, p < .01; see Figure 4).

Furthermore, these changes in interaction frequency were not specific to any single target group. While the comparison group has decreased the amount of interactions with members of each group (with an exception of African Americans with whom interactions remained unchanged), the multicultural group has increased their interactions with every racial/ethnic group. The differences in changes experienced by the multicultural group compared to the comparison group (increases versus decreases, specifically) were statistically significant for interactions with Asian Americans, White Americans, and Hispanic/Latino students (t_{Asians} = -2.69, p < .01; t_{Whites} = -1.79, p = .07; $t_{\text{Hispanics}}$ = -1.98; p < .05).

These results support the hypothesis that multicultural education increases students' interactions with diverse others, both in terms of quantity and quality of contact. According to theory, these effects are the results of an exposure to the perspectives of diverse groups (class curriculum) and the development of a greater understanding of how group membership structures these perspectives, including one's own (identity changes, see above).

Understanding of democracy and civic engagement. Democratic outcomes were measured by five scales, assessing citizenship engagement, racial and cultural understanding, perspective-taking, compatibility of difference and democracy beliefs, and views on conflict, respectively. There were significant differences between the multicultural and comparison groups in the amount of citizenship engagement and racial and cultural understanding change over the course of the semester. At the beginning of

the semester, the multicultural group scored slightly lower on citizenship engagement than the comparison group (M_{com}= 2.53, M_{MC}= 2.49, t (111) = .45, n.s.). However, the multicultural group's scores increased and surpassed the comparison group's scores by the end of the semester (M_{com}= 2.49, M_{MC}= 2.70, t (111) = -1.81, p =.07); the mean difference score was also significantly greater for the multicultural group ($M_{com\text{-}diff}$ = -.02, $M_{MC\text{-}diff}$ = .20, t (111) = -2.88, $p < .01$; see Figure 5). Out of the five items comprising the scale, the largest contrast was manifested in students' answer to the question "Indicate the importance to you personally…of influencing the political structure (Item # 1). Whereas the comparison group's average answer decreased to "somewhat important" at the end of the semester, the multicultural group's answer increased towards "very important", ($M_{com\text{-}diff}$ = -.12, $M_{MC\text{-}diff}$ = .20, t (111) = -2.34, $p < .05$).

Racial and cultural understanding was assessed by a 2-item scale. There was a marginally significant increase in the amount of racial and cultural understanding during the semester in the multicultural group, compared to a decrease in understanding manifested by the comparison group ($M_{com\text{-}diff}$ = -.16, $M_{MC\text{-}diff}$ = .04, t (111) = -1.66, p = .09). The difference was particularly pronounced in students' answer to a question "How would you describe your…knowledge of people from different races/cultures?" Whereas the comparison group's answer manifested a decrease of knowledge resulting in the average answer "no change (since you first started college)" at the end of the semester, the multicultural group increased their answer to an average "stronger – much stronger" knowledge, ($M_{com\text{-}diff}$ = -.18, $M_{MC\text{-}diff}$ = .08, t (108) = -2.09, $p < .05$; see Figure 6).

There were no significant differences in perspective-taking, beliefs in the compatibility of democracy and difference, and views on conflict.

These results confirm the hypothesis that participation in a multicultural curriculum affects students' understandings of democracy. Specifically, students increased their knowledge of diverse others, preparing them for more frequent and more pleasant cross-racial interactions. In turn, increases in citizenship engagement show that these understandings are coupled with a preparedness for democratic action in the wider community, particularly in the form of taking action to improve the political structure.

Learning outcomes. Learning outcomes were assessed by an intellectual engagement scale, aspiration to attend graduate school, academic skills scale, and active thinking scale. There were no significant differences in the changes experienced over the semester by the multicultural and comparison groups.

The analyses reported above provide general support of the hypothesis stating that attendance of a multicultural course has a beneficial impact on student outcomes (Hypothesis 1). Specifically, the benefits have been demonstrated in three out of the four proposed areas: students attending a multicultural curriculum increased their scores on identity strength and awareness, democratic understanding and civic engagement, and intergroup contact, in comparison to students attending other social science curricula. There were no direct affects demonstrated in the area of learning and academic outcomes.

The next set of analyses tests the hypotheses stating that different groups of students experience different kinds of changes (e.g., increases versus decreases) as a function of attending a multicultural curriculum (Hypothesis 2a). These analyses attend to the cultural and gender diversity within the multicultural group, testing differences between majority and minority members, defined as White and non-White students, men and women, and immigrants and non-immigrants. Last, an analysis of relationships between

identity strength and awareness and student outcomes serves to answer questions about the developmental mechanisms leading to student change. Similarly, by exploring other links among the variables, possible mediating processes are identified. Together, these analyses will start answering the question of how the benefits of a multicultural curriculum occur, leading to an elaboration of the socio-psychological processes of learning and development towards social justice.

Student diversity: Who benefits from a multicultural curriculum?

The considerable diversity of students at Hunter College not only makes the delivery of a multicultural curriculum unique (see Chapter 6 on the effects of the educational context), but also creates differences in how the curriculum is received by individual students. There are three traditional sources of diversity present at Hunter College: a) *gender diversity*, with women comprising about two thirds of the total student population and being slightly older than the male students; b) *racial and ethnic diversity*, referring to the considerable variation in ethnic and racial backgrounds of the students, operationalized in the current analysis as students of White and non-White origins, with the majority of students (approximately two thirds) coming from non-White backgrounds; and c) *immigration status*, attending to differences in native versus immigrant status, where first generation immigrants comprise about one half of the total sample (see Chapter II for sample details).

Although the differences described above can be further combined to create groups of, for example, white versus non-white immigrant or non-immigrant women versus men, in the current analysis, student diversity was operationalized using the three factors of race, gender, and immigrant status, for which the sample size allowed. Another reason for

creating these particular groupings was to capture the differences between students belonging to dominant and minority status groups. In terms of race and ethnicity, students who were White/Caucasian were categorized as belonging to a racial/ethnic majority in the U.S, regardless of their native or immigrant status. All other students, including Latino/Hispanic, Asian, African-American, and West Indian students among others, belonged to a minority non-White background. In terms of gender, men are said to participate in a dominant group compared to women, and students who are born in the U.S. are considered to hold a higher status (to be a majority) compared to students who are immigrants.

Several hypotheses were tested that focused on the differential effects the multicultural curriculum may have on students from high-status and low-status backgrounds. Hypothesis 2a predicted that overall, students from minority backgrounds would manifest greater levels of identification, intergroup contact, and democratic understanding compared to students from dominant backgrounds. These effects were hypothesized based on Standpoint Theory (Harding, 1991) and Symbolic Politics Theory (Sears et. al, 1999) which claim that for low-status individuals identity issues are more salient, intergroup contact more frequent, and democratic action aimed at changing social hierarchies more desirable than for higher-status individuals. Because of these initially raised levels reflecting greater awareness of multicultural issues, minority students in the multicultural group were hypothesized to experience smaller or no increases on these measures compared to students coming from dominant backgrounds (Hypothesis 2b).

The next hypothesis focused on the relationship among identity and intergroup and democratic outcomes. For students coming from dominant backgrounds, the relationship

among identification and intergroup and democratic attitudes is hypothesized to be negative (or less positive than for students of minority backgrounds), unless moderated by participation in the multicultural course, in which case the relationship would become more positive (Hypothesis 2c).

Experimental effects by student race. At the beginning of the semester, a one-way ANOVA identified elevated identity scores for students of non-white backgrounds compared to white students (M_{White}= 2.59, $M_{Non\text{-}white}$ = 3.04, t (110) = -3.22, $p < .01$). This finding confirms Hypothesis 2a, stating that students from minority backgrounds experience higher levels of identification than students from dominant (White) backgrounds. Similarly, overall, non-White students reported greater increases in identity over the course of the semester, M_{White}= 2.01, $M_{Non\text{-}white}$ = 2.19; t (110) = -2.10, $p < .05$. However, there were no differences in the amount of identity change between the multicultural and comparison groups, as predicted by Hypothesis 2c, which stated that attending a multicultural curriculum would especially elevate scores of students from dominant backgrounds. In fact, White students in the multicultural condition demonstrated the *smallest* increases in identity, with an average score of 2, describing that their identity "stayed about the same" from the beginning to the end of the semester.

There were no initial differences in the levels of democratic outcomes for majority and minority students. However, the pattern of change experienced after participating in the multicultural curriculum was different for White and non-White students, as measured by two scales, Perspective-Taking and The Compatibility of Difference and Democracy. In the multicultural group, White students manifested an increase in perspective taking at the end of the semester whereas the comparison group showed a slight decrease; the

pattern was reversed for minority students although the changes were very small in that group (F [3, 108] = 3.86, $p < .05$; see Figure 7).

Similarly, White students in the multicultural group increased their scores on the belief in the compatibility of democracy and difference, M_{before}= 2.75, M_{after} = 3.03, while Whites in the comparison group experienced decreases, M_{before}= 3.38, M_{after} = 3.02. For minority students, small decreases were experienced in both conditions: in the multicultural group, M_{before}= 3.44, M_{after} = 3.23, and in the comparison group, M_{before}= 3.41, M_{after} = 3.35 (F [3, 108] = 4.76, $p < .05$; see Figure 8). These results support hypothesis 2b, stating that students from dominant backgrounds (White students) may especially benefit from multicultural instruction by increasing their understanding of the democratic process.

Finally, there was a difference in the changes on the Active Thinking scale (F [3, 108] = 4.62, $p < .05$) between White and non-White students in the two curricula. Contrary to hypothesis, White students attending the multicultural course decreased their Active thinking scores, M_{before}= 4.19, M_{after} = 3.77; t (14) = 3.39, $p < .01$, while in the comparison group, the White students' scores stayed the same. The scores of non-White students showed no changes in either of the groups.

Experimental effects by student gender. Differences in the effects of the multicultural curriculum by student gender were found on measures of identity. In both groups, women's initial scores were higher than men's. In the multicultural group, men experienced identity increases such that they surpassed the women's scores at the end of the semester. In contrast, in the comparison group, men's identity scores continued to decrease (F [3, 108] = 3.54, $p = .06$; see Figure 9). These results, although only

marginally significant, support the contention that students from a majority background, in this case, males, experience greater positive changes, such as increases in identification, after attending a multicultural curriculum (Hypothesis 2b).

Experimental effects by student immigrant status. There were significant differences in the effects the multicultural curriculum had on immigrant and non-immigrant students, as measured by Views on Conflict. Although immigrants showed increases in the belief that conflict can have positive consequences in both conditions, native-born students increased their scores only in the multicultural group; in contrast, the scores of native-born students decreased in the comparison condition (F [3, 94] = 7.10, $p < .01$; see Figure 10). These results support Hypothesis 2b, stating that majority students, in this case, students of native-born backgrounds, benefit more from multicultural instruction than students from non-native backgrounds whose scores tend to remain high without any educational intervention.

Experimental effects on the relationships between identity, democratic, and intergroup outcomes by student race. Hypothesis 2c stated that identification with one's ethnic group typically has either no or a negative effect on dominant students' (Whites') democratic and intergroup attitudes. Yet participation in the multicultural curriculum may moderate this relationship so that it becomes more positive for White students in the multicultural condition. The first part of the hypothesis was not supported: there were no initial differences in how ethnic identification was associated with attitudes of White and Non-White students. However, participation in the multicultural curriculum did affect the strength of the relationship between identity and perspective-taking, and between identity and views on conflict, two measures of democratic attitudes, among White students.

In the multicultural condition, White students who experienced increases in identity also experienced increases in perspective-taking ($r = .73$, $p < .05$), although no such relationship was detected in the comparison group ($r = .29$, n.s.). For non-White students, the relationship between identity change and change in perspective-taking was not significant, although it was more positive in the multicultural condition than in the comparison condition, $F(6, 112) = 5.16$, $p < .05$. Changes in perspective-taking for White students with low and high identity changes are depicted in Figure 11.

Similarly, increased identification was related to increased scores on Views on conflict, a scale that measured the belief that conflict is a normal part of democracy. This effect occurred for White students attending a multicultural curriculum ($r = .70$, $p < .01$), although there was no such relationship in the comparison condition ($r = .25$, n.s.). For non-White students, there was no significant relationship between identification and views on conflict changes

Learning outcomes by student race and gender. One of the major rationales for teaching multiculturalism is its positive effect on academic outcomes. This effect is said to take place by engaging students' ethnic and racial identities in the process of learning about multiculturalism and other subjects, in turn promoting students' interest in school so that the learning environment is viewed as supportive rather than detrimental to students' experiences outside of a classroom. The first set of analyses, testing changes in learning outcomes among students attending the multicultural course and their peers in the comparison group, yielded no significant differences between groups. However, when student diversity was taken into account, we find that the multicultural curriculum indeed was coupled with academic outcomes of certain students: specifically, majority-group

students whose identity scores had increased during the course of attending the multicultural class and minority students whose citizenship engagement scores increased.

Across groups, there was a marginally significant relationship between increases in identity strength and increases in self-perceived academic ability (consisting of academic ability, drive to achieve, intellectual self-confidence, and a listening ability), $r = .18$, $p = .06$, supporting the claim that identification with one's ethnic group helps students view themselves as more capable and more successful in academic work. However, this effect was moderated by experimental group and student race, $F\ (6, 111) = 3.44$, $p < .05$ and by experimental group and student gender, $F\ (6, 111) = 2.36$, $p = .07$, as described in the following section.

The relationship between academic ability and identity increase was the strongest for White and male students in the multicultural condition: $r_{\text{Whites-MC}} = .75$, $p < .01$; $r_{\text{males-MC}} = .65$, $p < .05$. Identity increases were also marginally related to academic ability of non-White students in the comparison condition: $r_{\text{Non-White-com}} = .33$, $p = .07$, but not to their counterparts in the multicultural course. Similarly, majority students in the comparison group experienced no academic ability changes as a function of identification change.

For White students in the multicultural condition, changes in identity were further linked to marginal increases in cross-race interactions ($r = .47$, $p = .08$) and to stronger beliefs that conflict can be an effective tool of democracy (Views on Conflict), $r = .58$, $p < .05$. These results suggest that for White students in the multicultural curriculum, identification becomes coupled with democratic understanding and intergroup contact, as well as academic confidence (see Figure 12).

For minority students in the multicultural condition, academic ability changes (measured by Academic Skills, including general knowledge, problem-solving, critical thinking, foreign language, and writing skills) were related to increases in Racial and Cultural Understanding ($r = .33$, $p < .05$) and to Citizenship Engagement ($r = .33$, $p < .05$). These relationships were similar to those found in the comparison group and in the overall sample, since experimental condition did not affect minority students' intergroup or democratic outcomes. Moreover, the lack of a relationship between identity and learning outcomes in the minority group may signal that the mechanisms whereby minority students achieve academic confidence may be different from that of majority students. The link between learning and Citizenship engagement among minority students suggests the importance of social action and similarly, the relationships between learning and Racial understanding may imply a more collective basis of academic success.

Discussion

The results presented above provide a moderate but systematic evidence that a multicultural curriculum engages students in ways that prepare them with skills crucial to functioning in a multicultural society. It was found that an attendance of a single course focusing on race and ethnicity can boost students' identity strength and awareness, their understanding of democracy, and intergroup attitudes and actual contact with peers from other racial/ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, these changes are linked to changes in academic confidence and perceived school success, particularly for students of majority backgrounds.

In fact, the strongest support of the multicultural hypothesis was found among White and male students attending the multicultural class, for whom identity outcomes became linked to democratic attitudes, intergroup contact, and learning skills. This finding may be explained by the initially lower scores (although not significantly so, except for identity strength) that majority students obtained on these measures compared to minority students. In fact, even after participating in the multicultural curriculum, White students still lagged behind minority students on most measures, including Ethnic Identity, Views on Conflict, Compatibility of Democracy and Difference, Racial Understanding and Cross-Racial Interactions. Therefore, the reported changes among White students in the multicultural group may reflect mainly the closing of the gap majority students experience vis-à-vis the minority students in terms of these outcomes.

It is interesting to find that White students attending the multicultural course start associating their ethnic membership with stronger academic motivation. Typically, multicultural scholars predict this effect for minority students, where the focus on one's race and ethnicity helps bridge the gap between mainstream academia and minority students' divergent life experiences. In fact, one of the pervading myths about multicultural education is that it benefits primarily minority students. The results obtained in this study show that the opposite may be the case: those majority students who experienced greater identification as a result of attending the multicultural course also increased their democratic understanding and intergoup and learning outcomes. However, it must be noted that White students are generally unlikely to strengthen their identity awareness; in the multicultural condition, only 61% White students indicated that their

identity stayed the same or became stronger over the semester, compared to 88% of minority students who did so.

Are these results indicative of the greater need majority students may have in terms of identity and racial education, compared to their minority peers who may bring a strong identity and understanding of democracy to school at the outset? Or could it be that the way multicultural education is practiced in the classroom proves more effective for certain groups of students? Can we assume that all students perceive multicultural instruction practiced in today's college classrooms as equally valid and educational? Do the issues raised in class suggest similar or different concerns to students of diverse backgrounds?

To answer these questions, we need to turn to the educational context to evaluate how the multicultural classroom operates, including the philosophy and teaching styles guiding the instruction, how the teaching is perceived by different students, and the particular dynamics of participation that underlie these emerging understandings. Related to this goal, we need to examine how students understand and represent themselves in terms of their group identities vis-à-vis specific audiences represented in the multicultural classroom. These audiences include but are not limited to, their teachers, peers from various backgrounds, the voices behind theories learned in class, and the wider community outside the school's walls.

As the next chapter will show, it is not sufficient to evaluate the effectiveness of a diversity curriculum, unless the specific mechanisms of learning and student development are also addressed. In turn, understanding the processes of constructing oneselves and others, and with it, the beginnings of a more just society, within classroom

contexts may shed light on how institutions can be changed to support particular types of student development. These transformations will position schools at a crucial place of educational and democratic change.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS PART II.

Identity: Connecting the Personal To the Social

This chapter focuses on a key concept underlying the current project: student identity and its development in relation to learning in the context of higher education. The current analysis aims to supplement and expand on the results obtained by the quantitative survey reported in the previous chapter, with the use of qualitative methodology based on class observations and open-ended feedback describing student learning. To that end, several theoretical issues need to be considered, warranted by the differing assumptions underlying cognitive and discourse theories.

Redefining "identity"

The theoretical underpinnings of this project, specified by dialogical theory, define identity as an interpersonal process, as opposed to a static state or a psychological "property" of each individual. To adequately relate the survey methodology to the narrative data, the term "identity" itself needs to be redefined. I propose that the analysis shifts to the examination of identity as a feature of a *multicultural system*, in which learning is a key activity defined by dynamic exchanges between the self and other. Using such framework, the subjective experience of student ethnic or racial membership, originally defined as "ethnic/racial identity" by the survey instrument, will be seen as a part of a larger process of learning characterized by the appropriation of both academic and non-academic knowledge across various contexts.

The term "system", drawing on Leont'ev's (1981) "activity system," refers to a community in which all members are motivated by the same object and who, by different actions, contribute to its achievement (Wells, 2004). In educational contexts, a system

refers to a school or a classroom where students and teachers together pursue the goal of education. Like other systems, classrooms are continually evolving; their changes are brought about by interactions with other systems (for example, various school and city communities, other institutions) as well as by participants' identities that develop within the system (Wells, 2004). Encountering contradictions in the system, for example when members share opposing perspectives, is a particularly powerful mechanism of both personal and system change (Engestrőm, 1999).

In this study, differences in theoretical perspectives are tied to the types of data collected and the ways in which the data are applied to answer the study's questions. In the survey, racial and ethnic identity was operationalized as endorsement of statements about the importance of racial and ethnic membership to the sense of one's self, the frequency of thinking about being a member of one's group, the extent to which one's ethnic identity affects one's life, and how proud one feels about one's group. An averaged score results in an index of a particular person's "identity level." In contrast, the narrative analysis portrays identities as understandings evolving as part of relational processes, such as assuming diverse perspectives during class discussions, reflecting on educational practices in which students participate, and engaging with academic and public discourses. All together, these processes invite complex negotiations of multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings from which student identities are fashioned.

Connecting the personal to the social: identifying mechanisms of change

Dialogical theory specifies that learning encompasses changes in the way self and other are construed. This is also a basic tenet of multicultural education; by virtue of relating student identities to class topics and providing space for identity negotiation, new

forms of learning emerge. Specifically, this study and others, (e.g. Gurin et al., 1999) that examined outcomes of multicultural curricula, have focused on changes in four major areas: self-understanding (including understanding of one's racial and ethnic membership), intergroup contact, understanding of democracy, and academic success. The aim of putting the theory into practice lies in connecting these areas together, to create bridges between schools and learners, and academic and public discourses, and transforming the process of learning from a personal -- student-based -- into a social, or public, project.

The quantitative survey described in Chapter III established that students attending the multicultural course experienced significant changes that can be attributed uniquely to participation in Sociology 217: Race and Ethnicity. Based on comparisons with students attending other social science courses, the results provided support for the hypothesis that students' views regarding their identity awareness, intergroup contact, and understanding of democracy are positively affected by the multicultural curriculum. Thus, the survey results confirmed an important feature of the multicultural system, specifying the magnitude and direction of student development in various areas. The next set of analyses will extend the examination to the study of how the multicultural system fosters various pathways to learning by shaping identity development, learning, and interpersonal processes in the classroom.

Academics and mechanisms of change

Multicultural theory specifies that increasing student awareness of their cultural identity and the role it plays in their and others' lives serves as an important mechanism of boosting traditional student outcomes, such as academic success and academic

confidence. As their cultural knowledge becomes validated and transformed, students may gain an understanding of the self as a social agent, contributing to their success as both students and as citizens of a democracy.

As predicted by theory, the survey found that students attending the multicultural course reported an increase in their self-perceived "levels of identity[5]" at the end of the semester. This means that students started to think more about their own racial or ethnic status, and found it a more important part of their self-concept, one that greatly affects their lives in general. As predicted, minority students entered the course with "higher identity levels", and they increased their identity levels significantly more than students from dominant (White) backgrounds; in fact, White students were the least likely to increase their identity while attending the multicultural course.

Despite these changes, the expected connections between identity and academic outcomes were not supported. Overall, students attending the multicultural course did not increase their self-reported academic ability or confidence compared to their peers in other courses. Changes in White students' identity levels (although infrequent) were linked to increased academic confidence but there was no such connection in the minority sample. In fact, minority students' identity was not associated with any of the outcomes examined in the study. However, among minority students, self-reported academic ability was associated with interracial understanding and citizenship engagement.

Why is it that the positive changes in how students, and especially, students from minority backgrounds, view their ethnic membership were not experienced as, or translated into, academic confidence and success? The survey methodology does not

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[5] The quotation marks placed around several constructs are used to reflect the differing conceptualizations of identity in cognitive and dialogical theories, requiring minor shifts in language.

provide answers to this question as it does not allow for the examination of social-psychological processes that take place in the classroom. To understand these, the survey results need to be supplemented by an in-depth qualitative analysis of student identity discourses and the classroom mechanisms that shape them. Therefore, the next analysis will use qualitative methodology to answer the following questions: What are the mechanisms by which different groups of students arrive at particular identity interpretations? How do these mechanisms relate to students' prior knowledge and home backgrounds, to the ongoing discussions about theories presented in class, and to students' changing positions within wider socio-political contexts? Finally, how do these evolving identity interpretations relate to students' academic success?

Student course feedback

To gain insight into students' experiences during the semester spent in the Race and Ethnicity course, a content analysis of class feedback was performed. The feedback form was a structured open-ended measure that asked students to answer the following four questions: 1) Has the course in any way changed your way of thinking about yourself and others? If so, how?; 2) Describe in your own words which parts of the course you liked best and why; 3) Describe in your own words which parts of the course you liked least and why; and 4) What would make this course a better course?

Fifty-nine students (87% of the 68 students attending SOC 217: Race and Ethnicity) provided responses to the class feedback questions. Of these, 35 students (60%) answered all four questions, and another 13 students (22%) answered 3 out of the 4 questions. Their answers to each question were typically one or two sentences long.

Based on the class feedback response formats, several constructs forming the elements of a multicultural system were operationalized[6]:

Learning in the course. Students who said they have learned from the course described changes that took place as a result of their participation in the course. These changes were broadly defined as "changes in the way students think of themselves and others", targeting specifically students' developing sense of identity and their actual or imagined relationships with diverse others. Thus, when students described "learning in the course", they may not have reported on learning about theories presented in class, characteristic of academic-type learning. In fact, the nature of the connection between learning about one's self and others (student identity development) and the development of academic learning and confidence will be a topic addressed in detail later in this chapter.

Students who reported "learning" from the course. Overall, of the students who provided answers to the first question ("Has the course in any way changed your way of thinking about yourself and others? If so, how?"; N = 45, 76%), the majority of students (N = 27, 60%) either stated specifically that they learned something about themselves and others, or they implied such learning by describing what they had learned. This result confirmed the survey finding that many students in the multicultural course experienced greater changes in their understanding of self and others compared to students not attending the course.

The types of learning that took place in the course and major mechanisms contributing to this learning may be summarized using correlations between responses of students who

[6] All qualitative coding was conducted by me. To ensure consistency within coding categories, I checked the application of codes several times and corrected discrepancies between early and later coding versions.

responded positively to Question No. 1 (“Have you learned anything from the course about yourself and others..?”) and items on a Likert-type feedback scale that formed a part of the survey instrument. Specifically, students who “learned from the course [about themselves and others]” tended to also view the course as “interesting” (r [45] = .45, $p <$ .01), they thought it discussed issues they “cared about” (r [45] = .42, $p < .01$), they found the discussions useful to learning about the class topics (r [45] = .40 $p < .01$,), and connected this learning with “decisions about their lives, such as decisions about one’s career or decisions to go to graduate school” (r [45] = .49, $p < .01$). These results indicate that students’ engagement with the course topics developed together with their understandings of themselves and others (identity development) by virtue of participating in class discussions, and learning about others, among other strategies. Also, learning in this course was associated with the students’ lives outside of the school setting, suggested by its effect on decisions regarding “one’s career” and the course’s inclusion of topics that “students cared about.”

Students who reported “not learning” from the course. The course feedback also shed light on the responses of those students who “did not learn” from the multicultural course. Less than half of the students (N = 18, 40%) stated that they did not learn anything about themselves or others, sometimes supplying specific reasons. A common explanation for “not learning” was that the student already knew what the course attempted to teach (N = 6, 13%). For example, some students already had a strong sense of identity, many multicultural friends, prior knowledge of racial issues, took classes on the subject, and/or experienced identity and racial issues in real life. To illustrate, one student stated: “I haven’t learned anything in this class that I haven’t already known, for

the most part." Another student said: "This course has not changed the way I think of myself or my ethnicity because I have a strong sense of self and I would like to think that I have always been open to other ideas and people before this class."

Learning mechanisms. The open-ended responses provided further insights into what kinds of processes students interpreted as learning, the mechanisms that students believed led to better learning, and what they had particularly enjoyed during the course of their learning. Analyses of these responses distinguished among the following areas of learning and mechanisms that supported the learning process:

- *Identity Awareness.* Students described their learning as learning about the role their ethnic/racial identity plays in their or others' lives;
- *Perspective-taking.* Students described taking of different perspectives as a process that helped them learn, by participating in class discussions or engaging diverse theories;
- *Academic discourse.* Students discussed traditional academic tools, such as theories, textbooks, authors, and teachers and their role in the learning process;

Identity Awareness. Nineteen students (42% of the 45 students who provided answers about their learning in the course) reported an increased "identity awareness" as a result of attending the course. Identity awareness was defined as a statement that a student gained new knowledge of ethnic/racial identity issues, either in her own life or the lives of others. For example, one student said: "This course has changed my way of thinking about myself because I learn more things about my identity." Another student stated: "I have learned to allow people express their individualism. I have stopped thinking that everyone is the same in an ethnic group (stereotyping)."

The link between learning and identity awareness was further supported by a statistical analysis. Students who stated or implied that they had learned from the course also tended to demonstrate increases of their scores on the survey identity item No.4, assessing the perception that "the extent to which something that happens in your life is affected by what happens to other people in your group", r [45] = .38, p = .01. As suggested by multicultural theory, this finding confirms that creating a connection between one's own experiences and those of others serves as a powerful learning mechanism and that learning is fundamentally connected to students' identities, including their understanding of racial and ethnic membership.

Several students expressed regrets about their prior lack of knowledge, experiencing an "opening of the eyes" to the reality of diverse America. One student stated: "..before this class I had a bit of pride being white, privileged and American – I had this "pride" exposed by taking this class.." Another student commented that the class "made [him] realize how diverse our society really is. [It] made [him] see life outside of [his] rich suburban lifestyle."

Related to such changes in perspective, several students noted that they had now an easier time relating to their friends or classmates. For example, one student stated that she "[has] a greater respect for others by communicating with them than before." Another student said that the course "helped [her] tremendously to understand some of [her] best friends even better – some of the conditions they have grown up in.." In these cases, learning took shape of an "un-learning" of what some students have been taught and experienced prior to taking the course. Such reformulations of students' perspectives are illustrative of the power of a dialogical process taking place in the classroom. By

contrasting one's perspectives with others, students' views not only expand but become fundamentally revised by integrating new, and sometimes contradictory, frames of knowledge.

Perspective-taking. Another major category describing what students learned in the course identified *perspective-taking,* a mechanism related to changes in understanding diverse others. A student who learned to take different perspectives was one who stated the importance of seeing another person/group's point of view and its contribution to learning. There were ten (22%) students who described their learning in terms of learning to take different perspectives. Examples of their responses were as follows: "[I] look at people different. [I] respect people's views." "This course has given me new insight and more perspective on different racial/ethnic groups." "Yes it has made me look and think carefully about others before coming to a conclusion about them."

Not only did students feel that they learned from appreciating different perspectives in the course, many also stated that practicing different views was the "best part of the course." When analyzing responses to the second feedback question, "Describe in your own words which parts of the course you liked best and why", the most frequent response (N = 16, 30%) described the value of taking different perspectives, in words such as "Seeing other's point of view on the topics of race and discrimination and how they were similar or different from mine."

The relationship between the ability to take different perspectives and self-development is the cornerstone of dialogical and developmental theories (Hermans, 2001; Piaget, 1985). In the student feedback discussed above, this connection was well articulated by students expressing how their ability to see others' perspectives helped

them understand themselves better as well as to relate to diverse others. Several other results lend support to this hypothesis. First, students who stated that they benefited from perspective-taking tended to increase their scores on identity scale item No.1, assessing how often students "thought of being a member of one's group and what they have in common with others in one's group" (r [50] = .27, p = .05). This correlation suggests that perspective-taking fosters identity negotiation and development, further illustrating the interactional mechanisms contributing to students learning in the course (see Figure 13).

The association between learning and perspective-taking is also supported by statistical evidence based on quantitative feedback. In the survey items assessing different parts of the course, students who stated that they "learned about the perspectives of others" also tended to "learn more from the course" (r [62] = .49, $p < .001$), considered the course "more interesting" (r [62] = .35, $p < .01$), "learned more about themselves" (r [62] = .31, $p < .01$), and felt that the course helped them "make decisions about their life, such as deciding on a career, or going to graduate school" (r [62] = .32, $p < .01$).

Identity discourses of majority and minority students

The results of the survey showed significant differences between the responses of majority (White) and minority (non-White) students. These differences were manifested in several areas. First, minority students entered the course with higher "identity levels", assessed by reporting a greater awareness of identity issues at the start of the course. They also tended to increase their "identity level" scores more than the majority students, pointing to the different effects attendance of the multicultural course had for different groups of students. Finally, increased identity scores were linked to different processes in each group of students; for White students, raising identity awareness was linked to

academic confidence while for minority students, no such link was found; instead, minority students' academic ability was associated with interracial understanding and democratic engagement (for details, see Chapter III).

To further explore the differences in the experiences of White and non-White students, qualitative course feedback was assessed. In this analysis, responses of students who reported "learning from the course" were contrasted with responses of students who reported "not learning" from the course to examine what processes contributed to learning in each group. In this way, a 2x2 descriptive matrix was formed to organize student responses by both race and course outcome (race x learned vs. not-learned) (see Table 5).

A*cademic Discourse*. Similar percentages of students from majority and minority backgrounds reported "learning" and "not learning" from the course: 8 White students (61%) and 24 minority students (60%) reported learning from the course. In analyzing the responses using the categories described above (learned/not learned x race), however, a qualitative difference emerged in the way different groups of students described their learning experiences, or the lack thereof. In the group of White students who reported "learning from the course", the majority (N = 7, 88.%) used a language referring to texts, theories, authors, and teachers as the sources of their learning. This discourse was defined as "*academic discourse*" because it showed students' engagement with theory and other tools of traditional schooling (e.g., textbooks, teachers' explanations, student papers). For example, one White male student described his learning experiences as follows: "Through the socio-historical analysis in this course, I learned the answers to questions I had." A Greek female student commented: " I liked the variety of authors we read

because it showed us different points of view…" Another White female student said that she "…liked the research paper – doing the research and the freedom to do what interested [her.]

In contrast, minority students identified traditional academic sources of learning only rarely in their descriptions of what they have learned (N = 2, 8%). In one of the two cases in which a minority student, a Haitian immigrant, used an academic discourse to describe what she learned in the course, she spoke primarily of other students' learning: "[I liked] the readings – they help to make sense of things. It's forced some ignorant White folks to face the issues, even though they don't care." This anecdotal evidence supports the contention, suggested by these data, that academic texts have the unique power to "teach" White students while they may have a lesser role in educating minorities.

How do minority students describe their learning in the course? Instead of speaking of traditional academic exchanges among texts, teachers, and students, minority students tended to speak of learning in the course as a means of identity development and of gaining a greater understanding of others. Of those minority students who reported "learning from the course", the vast majority (N = 17, 71%) spoke of gaining a greater awareness of their and others' identity ("identity awareness") and 9 students (38%) appreciated the value of taking different perspectives ("perspective-taking") as a means of their learning.

For example, a second-generation Hispanic female described her learning in the following words: "It's made me realize that I should be more up to date on issues of my parents' native country, Dominican Republic." This student's greater awareness of her racial/ethnic identity and her desire to explore her heritage in greater depth was

connected to the discussions that took place in her class, "when other students described how they felt about certain issues pertaining to them." Another student, a Puerto Rican female, said that the course has made her realize how "[conforming] to the social constructs of race/ethnicity", "you essentially have created yourself and humanity", describing the power that social constructs have in people's every-day reality. This learning was linked to the student's appreciation of "discussions," because "it's important to learn others' points of view."

The dichotomy discovered in the open-ended responses of majority and minority students echoed certain findings from the survey; namely, that a student's learning about identity, a major mechanism of learning in the course, was connected to changes in perceived academic ability for the sample of White students but not in the minority sample. However, few White students increased their identity awareness as a result of taking the course compared to minority students whose identity increased greatly on average. Why is there no relationship between academic learning and the development of students' racial or ethnic identity among minority students?

Differences in uses of academic discourse among White and Non-white students

To examine the differences in the use of academic discourse among minority and majority students, responses were analyzed according to the feedback question which they answered. When the discourse appeared in an answer to question 1 or 2, asking about what students liked about the course and how it helped them learn, the academic discourse was categorized as *praise* of the practices that the student encountered. In contrast, when the academic discourse was applied in answers to questions 3 and 4,

describing what students didn't like about the course and what could be improved, the discourse was interpreted as *critique* of the existing practice.

Using this analytical strategy, an interesting difference in usage emerged. In addition to using the academic discourse more overall than non-White students (69% compared to 49%, respectively), White students were just as likely to employ it in praise of the course practices (N = 5, 38%) as to critique them (N = 5, 38%). This suggests that among White students, engaging with the academia and its tools, such as theories, texts, teachers, learning formats and exams, was not specifically tied to either agreement or disagreement of the practices described. However, among minority students, academic discourse was more likely to be used to critique the course and its practices. In answer to the question about what they liked about the course, 5 minority students (12%) used academic discourse; when they were invited to critique the course, 13 (32%) students identified issues related to the academia (see Figure 14).

To illustrate, a female student who identified herself as White American, when describing which parts of the course she liked best and why, said: "The readings [because] they were sampled from a large population and you get to see what the general consensus really is [regarding] race and ethnicity." A European American male identified specific theories taught in class: "The socio-historical clarity of Steinburg and the thought-provoking concepts in Rothenburg. These were authors of issued readings." Similarly, a Russian-born female student commented on course topics that she liked: "I liked the beginning of the semester (1st part) b/c it was more interesting, the topics were wonderful (assimilation). I always wanted to find out how it occurred."

Such responses stood in marked contrast to what minority students typically identified as most valuable parts of the course: the discussions that took place among the students (identified by 12 students, 30%) and the opportunity to learn others' perspectives the discussions fostered (identified by 17 students, 43%). For example, a Hispanic female student said: "I enjoyed the discussions b/c it gave people a chance to talk about how they felt and their experiences." A Puerto-Rican female said: "I enjoyed discussion about other racial backgrounds because it was good to learn more about other people and how they view race." Some students felt they benefited both from the discussions and the readings that opened up interesting topics. An Asian female student said she liked "The discussions of the different racial/ethnic groups and the various perspectives on them, especially from the articles, where there is real life application."

However, when it came to critiquing the course, the minority students offered a more elaborate analysis of the academic world than their White peers. Although both groups of students focused their suggestions on increasing class discussions time and applying theory to real-life issues, minority students supplied more concrete examples of how this could be done. One White student stated that the course needs "less regurgitation of information" and "more applying concepts to given situation", but like other White students, he did not follow the suggestion with concrete examples of what issues need to be addressed. In contrast, a Guyanese female student suggested to "focus on the influence that society has on poverty and racism." A Haitian female student suggested to discuss "employment opportunities for minorities" and "corporate niche for glass ceilings that blacks can't get into."

Minority students also discussed different ways of teaching the course by focusing instead on teacher's respect of student ideas and the various formats that could be employed to bridge theory and current issues. For example, a West Indian female suggested that the course needed "more discussion time and the professor understanding and respecting different thoughts. The professor should be more emphatic to every one beliefs and personal experiences." A Latina female suggested to "have class presentations, so everybody has the chance to express their ideas." A Colombian female elaborated: "I would have liked to hear more theories and views coming from more diverse minorities (not just educated Black Americans, e.g. Wilson), and suggested new formats for teaching the course: "More audio/visuals, hands-on examples, non-academic readings."

Many of the student responses stressed the need for a connection between personal experience and theoretical readings assigned in class. For example, a Korean student commented: "I kind of liked having students' opinions in class rather than textbook because in this way I could know that what kind of problems or things [are] happening to different ethnicity." In suggesting how to improve the course, she said: "We should have more resources from what's going on today. We could discuss about the related articles or issues in class. Historical events [are] important but it would be better if we talk about current issues." A Bengali female immigrant complained that "[she] didn't like that there was so much reading – and that the readings were so long." Instead, she suggested, "we should have done a project or something related to understanding and appreciating other cultures. The readings were helpful in understanding concepts but real-life experiences

and projects involving talking to different groups of [people] about their cultures and such would have made the class much more interesting."

What is the significance of students addressing academic issues either through praise or critique of school practices? And how does each discourse function as a unique mechanism of participating in, and learning from, a multicultural curriculum? The answer to these question may depend on how "academic" engagement is defined and appropriated through student discourse.

In the student survey, statistical relationships pointed to a connection between academic engagement and identity increases in the sample of White students; however, no such relationship was found among minority students although as a group, they most benefited from course attendance in terms of strengthening their identity awareness and pride. Yet when the use of academic discourse was correlated with scores on the student survey, it was related to significant increases of identity level scores over the course of the semester (measured by a mean change score on the identity scale) for both groups of students (r_{White} [11] = .51, $p = .10$; $r_{\text{Non-white}}$ [39] = .38, $p < .05$).

This finding suggests that engaging with academia, either through praise or critique of its practices, is related to positive changes in the development of a student self-concept (identity) that is in turn connected to learning, the taking of various perspectives, and decisions about one's life (see Figure 13). However, it also suggests that a critique of academic practices, such as the critique and suggestions for improvements of the course minority students offered abundantly, may not be perceived, by either the teacher or the students themselves, as a "valid" or publicly recognized academic project. When rating their self-perceived academic ability, White students (who also had a higher GPA at the

start of the semester) reported consistently higher scores, both before and after attending the course, than minority students (M_{White} = 3.8–4.00 [“above average”], $M_{\text{non-White}}$ = 3.3-3.5 [“average”]; $t[64] = 2.23$, $p < .05$). However, when the use of Academic Discourse was correlated with change scores on this measure, a marginally negative relationship emerged in the minority sample: students who used the Academic Discourse (mostly for critique) tended to decrease their scores on self-perceived academic ability over the course of the semester (r [38] = -.26, p = .10). This relationship was most apparent on an item assessing student Intellectual Self-Confidence, r [38] = -.28, p = .08.

Discussion

The set of analyses presented above illustrated the utility of expanding the research framework to include qualitative methodology. Using qualitative feedback describing students’ learning in the course allowed for an interrogation of results obtained from the quantitative survey and supplied a thick description of processes on which student learning is based. This data triangulation method yielded several results. First, it provided a strong support for the claim that student learning in the course is fundamentally related to identity negotiation and perspective-taking, dialogical processes fostered by student discussions on class topics. Second, it showed that differences in learning mechanisms exist between majority and minority students, such that White students rely more strongly on learning through traditional academic methods using texts and theories and non-Whites learn from sharing their perspectives with others during class discussions. Finally, the data provided an insight into how a traditional academic discourse holds different meanings for the two groups of students.

Dialogical processes as a basis of learning. Class discussions were identified by a majority of students as a unique source of learning in the course, by virtue of facilitating the sharing of various perspectives on a given topic. This finding confirms the notion that learning is a social-relational process, fundamentally connected to students' developing sense of who they are in relation to diverse others. Not only did students find such learning engaging, they also used their new insights to develop a greater understanding of theories taught in the course. In addition, dialogical learning was seen as highly relevant to students' personal lives, reflected in the connection between what students learned in the course and the impact this learning had on their future, such as making decisions about their career, or going to graduate school.

These results illustrate the benefits of student-centered learning, or forms of learning that closely reflect students' own questions and concerns, and their growing understandings of themselves as individuals and social actors. When students' voices are supported during class discussions, their identities become validated, fostering motivation and agency in relation to students' education and future goals. The need for more time devoted to class discussions was emphasized by students in their suggestions how the course could be further improved.

Complicating "learning." An unexpected finding emerged when the class feedback of majority and minority students was contrasted to examine the different ways in which students learned in the course. Minority students were more likely to describe their learning in terms of the dialogical processes discussed above, stating that they learned most from class discussions in which they were able to compare their perspectives with those of others. White students, in contrast, spoke more frequently of learning from texts

and homework assignments, presenting a more traditional picture of academic work. This finding raises several questions. It is possible that indeed, minority students learn better when experiential forms of learning are employed, such as class discussions and other inquiry-based methods (Nagda et al, 2004). However, it may be that White students have been socialized into a more traditional academic discourse and this is how they speak about their academic experience.

An analysis of how the academic discourse was applied to praise or critique course practices shed further light on these issues. The results showed that when asked to reflect on "what would make this a better course", minority students offered frequent examples of "academic discourse." In fact, their elaboration of the many ways in which the subject could be taught better, the particular issues that should be addressed, and the pedagogical attitude needed to support student learning illustrated that they, too, engaged deeply with academia. Interestingly, all students' use of academic discourse was associated with their increasing identity awareness, measured by the survey scale. This result, although supported only by correlational evidence, shows that engaging with academic issues, either through praise or critique may be a powerful mechanism of validating and developing students' selves.

These findings suggest that in the multicultural classroom, many different definitions of "learning" and "academia" may co-exist. There are differences in how students understand their own learning that may result in their preferred reliance on particular teaching methods. But there may also exist differences, as this data suggests, in what is understood as a proper subject of learning and academic work in general. The missing relationship between minority students' identity development and academic learning may

be perhaps explained by this variation in meanings. The data showed that for minority students, their critique of academic practice was associated with a *decrease* in academic confidence. Is this a sign that by critiquing academia, these students become alienated from the academic domain? If so, why? How can critique serve instead as a vehicle of further learning, and possibly a useful modification of the course itself?

In the next chapter, I will examine these issues by investigating the processes that surround classroom dialogues. The aim of this analysis will be to identify how various meanings related to learning, the roles of teachers and students in academia, and intergroup issues, are constructed during class exchanges. This examination will question the notion that students come to class with different “learning styles.” Instead, I will suggest that participation in educational dialogues shapes students’ attitudes toward learning, by locating students in particular positions vis-à-vis academia represented by teachers and academic theories, which in turn helps shape how and what students learn.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS PART III.

The group context: Working through issues together

The changes that students experienced in the course define the developmental aspect of the multicultural system that affects individual students and the system as a whole. By virtue of interacting with the system, students shape their learning environments as they themselves are changed by them. Each system has unique properties characterized by the specific interactions it allows. Far from remaining static, however, the interactions also evolve as the understandings of students -- and sometimes teachers and school administrators -- change and new relationships are established, including relationships to one's classmates, teachers, theories taught in class, and to the communities that form the real-life extensions of student lives.

Group processes that facilitate academic learning also provide basis for self-development, including an elaboration and negotiation of one's ethnic and racial identity. The previous chapter outlined some of the relationships between perspective-taking, identity development, and academic learning, as reported by students reflecting on their class experiences. This chapter will focus on actual interactions that give rise to these individual processes, in the form of class discussions and narrative activities that explore engagement with diverse others. The goal of this analysis is to help identify a pedagogical framework conducive to facilitating particular types of educational dialogues leading to learning for democracy and social justice.

As these data will show, participation in group interactions (class discussions and other narrative activities) helps shape unique developmental trajectories of diverse students. Because students come to class with different experiences of and various

degrees of knowledge regarding race, ethnicity and relations of power, they enter the multicultural education system at different points of understanding, which in turn impact on their responses to the material and the narrative positions they assume during class discussions. This analysis will exemplify how the diversity of students' perspectives, initially structured by race, length of stay in the United States, and other demographic factors, interacts with the diversity of viewpoints displayed in the classroom to create new understandings, strategies of learning, and ways of relating to the self and others in students' ongoing elaboration of their own identities.

Class interactions

In the following section, data from a class observation will be used to describe student interactions with each other, with the teacher, and the theories presented in class. As these dialogues evolve over time, students negotiate various meanings, experiences, and theoretical positions, sometimes in agreement with each other and many times, in open conflict and contradiction. The aim of this analysis is to illustrate how the classroom can serve as a laboratory in which equitable relations are identified, learned and rehearsed (Boler, 2004; Nagda et al., 2004). At the same time, the examination of the discourses generated in class will show how these processes are fundamentally tied to the negotiation of student identities.

A total of ten classes were observed during the semester in one section of the multicultural course, providing data about approximately one half of all class interactions occurring in that course. In this analysis, a single class session, observed early in the semester, was selected to illustrate how classroom processes structure students' representations of themselves and their learning. The class session presented here

contained a wide range of mechanisms, such as conflict, critique, and perspective-taking, that emerged as key processes of student change. The selection of this class session was intentional rather than random; its purpose was to provide a representative example of the many dialogues that shaped the development of the multicultural system during the semester.

The class observation opened a contextual analysis drawing on several layers of data. First, class dynamics around the teaching of theories of assimilation will be described. Utterances made by several students will illustrate the dialogues of self-construction and learning that take place in the context of class discussion. Next, the selection of a few target students will illustrate the range of different developmental trajectories taken by students from various backgrounds as they interacted with each other and their teacher in class.

Next, student reflections on class discussions will be presented to examine how the understandings formed during discussions contributed to student learning and changes they have experienced in their views of self and others. Another analytical frame will be created by analyzing students' imaginary narratives in which they respond to an interpersonal conflict triggered by selective hiring practices. Finally, in the following chapter, student interactional processes will be discussed from the perspectives of the class teachers and the larger institutional climate. Together, these analyses will create a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of a multicultural education system at work, providing a powerful "in-vivo" analysis of education as self-development.

"One lecture, multiple understandings"

On September 18, the class topic was racial and ethnic assimilation. The teacher introduced Park's Race Relations Cycle theory (Park, 1950), contrasted it with Straightline theory (Gans, 1979), and asked students why theories of assimilation "don't work", in order to invite critique. A White male student ("Danny") stated that "not everyone assimilates." He elaborated on a concept of merit-based opportunity that is used to support the notion of assimilation. The teacher praised Danny's explanation and confirmed it by reading from text. Then, the teacher again invited critique, explaining that when "there is ideology of 'assimilation is right', we can blame those who don't assimilate, who don't achieve", and she gave an example of Black underachievement that is incorrectly attributed to personal rather than structural forces.

During this exchange, we saw a traditional model of education at work: the teacher described theories, and a student elaborated on concepts and supplied "correct answers" to questions aimed at understanding the material. The teacher confirmed the student's learning by reading from the textbook. Although the teacher invited critique three times, no critical response came from the students. The dialogue occurred only between two persons, the teacher and Danny; the only "authority" questioning the theories was that of the teacher, and the teacher's "critique" followed the position stated in the textbook.

After the statement about Black underachievement, an older Black female student ("Grace", self-identified as African-American/West Indian) asked: "Does society allow Black people to assimilate?" The teacher replied: "Personally, I don't think so." Grace: "This is what sociology is about: [it presents an] assimilation model. But from our (Black) perspective, things are different." Teacher: "Do you think I advocate assimilation? I don't, it's the author (of the article)." Some negotiation followed. The

teacher tried to explain that she didn't represent any one theory; a conflict developed. Finally, the teacher attempted to terminate the dialogue, saying: "You have to do the reading." Grace replied, emphatically: "I DID the reading, that's why I'm asking." More negotiation followed. The student explained her motivation, stating that she "wanted the theory shot down." The teacher acknowledged the student's desire: "Good. We need dialogue in class. I am not surprised this touches you emotionally." Grace offered a final commentary: "People believe this kind of crap a very long time."

This exchange was very different from the first one we witnessed, and it broke many assumptions of traditional pedagogy. The student, Grace, had posed a question instead of answering the teacher's question and insisted on learning the teacher's personal opinion that is typically not subject to student examination. With her questions, Grace made the teacher accountable for her personal views and the views that she teaches in her class under the umbrella of "sociological theories" while questioning the impact the teaching of these theories may have on other students and society in general. By doing so, Grace made a bid to teach a lesson to the class, including the teacher herself, whose pedagogical methods she questions. The teacher countered by accusing Grace of not studying the assigned material, thus invalidating her inquiry and regaining the upper hand in the threatened teacher-student hierarchy. This response invited anger from the student. The teacher rounded up the exchange by expressing empathy with Grace's feelings and giving praise for opening up a difficult dialogue.

Interestingly, no credit was given to Grace for her academic efforts. Unlike other students, Grace offered extensive critique when critique was called for and yet, she was accused of not doing her academic work ("not doing her reading") as a result. Similarly,

her desire to "shoot the theory down" was attributed to Grace's personal "emotional" needs. Ironically, this occurred while the teacher presented a theory that critiques Black underachievement as a White response to Black people's unwillingness to assimilate. Similarly, when Grace challenged her White teacher's authority on the subject of teaching race relations, she was labeled a "bad" student. In both cases, the (White) teacher's attribution was made to the individual (Black) student and her ability, as opposed to structural forces. Thus, the classroom exchange echoed the injustice occurring in a wider society at the same time that an academic critique of such forms of injustice was being taught.

During the exchange between Grace and the teacher, none of the other students responded. When the lecture resumed, the next comment came from Danny. This comment now had a decidedly critical tone: "How does Park want assimilation to come about? How should Black people do that, with all their history"? The teacher replied by explaining the historical background of Park's theory ("It's 1926", meaning: Blacks were not accepted by White society yet). The student apologized for making an "incorrect" comment ("Long day!"), followed by a nervous laughter. For the second time, the teacher suppressed student critique, after officially "inviting" it. This time, Danny, invested in his role of a good student praised earlier in class, apologized and made light of his critique.

At the end of the lesson, students started discussing different models of ethnic coexistence, including cultural pluralism. As they now spoke to each other, multiple perspectives were offered: a Haitian student ("Maria") said that everyone would assimilate eventually ("after a while, it [American culture] grows on you"), a White student commented that she had NOT assimilated: "I was born in Washington Heights

and am still the same", a Hispanic student said that people assimilate in other countries, like in her country of origin, ("Back in time, bi-racial marriage was unheard of"), and an Asian student asked a question about what is meant by "marginal culture." Grace replied, agreeing that this was an important question: "Exactly my question."

Maria, the Haitian student, now claimed that American culture was influenced by other (minority) cultures, although a moment earlier she accepted the necessity of one-way assimilation of minority cultures. Grace agreed and went on to make several statements, in a heated manner: "American culture is a melting pot; "we" influence American culture. I have read sociology, OK. I love America. All my family loved it but no one forgot their Caribbean roots." She continued to direct her comments to the teacher who again clarified some theoretical points but also now praised the evolving critique, stating that "it [the subject matter] is complex."

At this point, the dynamic of the class became more open to multiple voices. No longer a traditional teacher-student dialogue, or a power struggle around who asks questions and who holds the answers, the class discussion now allowed for diverse points of view to emerge simultaneously, while the role of the teacher receded into the background as students started to *listen to and learn from each other*. Grace, who had at first positioned herself as a self-elected "teacher", was now carefully listening to and responding to other students' comments while she continued to elaborate her point of view that underlined minority groups' need for social recognition. To lend greater authority to her statements, she now used both personal experience (her family tradition) and her academic knowledge (reading sociology) although previously she had dismissed academic theory as one of the sources of oppression.

Next, Dolores, a Latina student, summarized the issues involved in assimilation and retaining one's original culture, the importance of getting ahead but also not forgetting and passing culture down to one's children. Students praised her summary and gave many personal examples, making complex connections between theories, life experiences and their own hopes and aspirations for their personal lives and for society as a whole. They now openly acknowledged the value of teaching one another. In response to Dolores's speech, Maria, the Haitian student, responded: "Beautifully said." And then continued: "But, long term – what about forgetting? My nephew goes home and doesn't understand [his culture]…" The Latina student replied:" Teach him!"

The discussion ended with Danny bringing up comparisons of race relations in other countries and how they differed from those in the US, following the teacher's prompt "How about other countries?" After he outlined some differences, the teacher explained that "this is 'social construction'," and stated that "in homogeneous White society, there might be more pressure to assimilate," opening up the possibility of alternative construction of race and ethnicity.

This example illustrated changes in several students' self-constructions and specific "dialogical shifts" in the multicultural educational system:

Danny, the White male student, displayed the academically-oriented discourse ("Academic discourse") identified in other narratives produced by White students. He originally accepted the "optimistic" theory of assimilation, then moved to a) question the theory, after Grace's negotiation with the teacher (although his critique was tentative, subject to the teacher's approval) and b) elaborate another theory (social construction) that accommodates different ethnic models (after witnessing general discussion in class

and another prompt for critique from the teacher). He never spoke to other students, only to the teacher; however, he seemed to react to students' comments by shifting his inquiry to become more critical over time, while always in accordance with the teacher's directions.

Grace[7], an older Black female student, displayed a critical discourse, associated with personal and group experience, that was more typically heard in the voices of minority students. This discourse confronted accepted truths as well as traditional formats of teaching, sometimes by using emotionally charged statements. The critique she offered was aimed at both the teacher and the choice of material and the field of sociology and academia itself, in an attempt to uncover the structural patterns that work in opposition to social justice.

The open critique of Grace's discourse helped create an honest and emotionally charged atmosphere seeming to serve as a catalyst for opening student discussions. At times, Grace positioned herself as an educator, correcting and challenging the class teacher, the text, and "sociology" as a whole. At first, Grace's confrontational discourse earned her a label of a "bad student" from the teacher ("You didn't do the readings"). But later, Grace entered the student discussion, where she participated in and encouraged evolving student critique. From her position as one of the students voicing social critique, Grace confronted "sociology" again, and this time the teacher praised the students. Grace also started to use "academic discourse", supporting her statements using both personal experience and academic knowledge. Over the period of the lecture, the dynamic of the

[7] Although several students offered critical perspectives throughout the semester, Grace was the most vocal in voicing her critique. There were at least five class sessions during which she challenged the theories taught in class while creating an emotionally charged atmosphere, defined here as "class conflict."

discussion shifted from what some viewed as an interpersonal conflict between Grace and the teacher to a sanctioned critique of students against "bad models in sociology."

Maria, the female Haitian student, was an older student whose interactional style was accommodating, other-oriented, and based in personal experience rather than academic knowledge. Her collective-oriented discourse was an example of the perspective-taking skills and concern with communal values (both of the classroom itself and her cultural group's) that was frequently found in the narratives of minority students. In the beginning of the lecture, she accepted the necessity of assimilation, along with a few other students. However, her position shifted after Grace and others had expressed criticism of the model. As she spoke to other students, eventually, she and they evolved a more multicultural perspective, in line with the cultural pluralism model. The discussion in which Maria participated revolved around personal examples, family, and children – the importance of passing tradition down, how to not forget while being able to fit in this country. Maria always spoke to the whole class. She did not initiate topics but participated in ongoing dialogues that shifted students' understandings to establish a social analysis to fit deeply personal concerns based on their sharing of theories and individual experience.

The examples of student participation in and responses to class discussion show the dynamics of agreement and disagreement, perspective-taking, and speaking through multiple positions assumed vis-à-vis various audiences that characterize educational dialogues. The interactions witnessed in the class discussion described above suggest that both agreement and conflict play an important role in the development of students' discourse and in their ability to voice social critique. In addition, the diversity of students'

participation styles and responses to these dialogues confirms the notion that important differences exist between students from majority and minority backgrounds and that these differences structure their experiences in school.

The differences in students' participation in the multicultural education system may be at one level traced to students' race and ethnicity, as well as age, gender, and other characteristics, as seen in the examples above. More importantly, these characteristics seem to structure students' interactional styles in the classroom; for example, younger majority students may be more invested in agreeing with the teacher and learning according the traditional model than older students coming from non-White backgrounds or minority students with styles oriented by collective concerns. Similarly, teachers may selectively support or discourage some students' styles as compared to others. For example, academic discourse may be more valued by teachers than discourse based in experience or social justice values (see also Chapter IV, Teacher Narratives).

In the following section, connections between students' race and the positions they assume in actual classrooms and while narrating imaginary dialogues will be described together with the effects such activities have on students' learning and identity processes. Specifically, these analysis will focus on the value of class conflict and open discussions of issues that touch on controversial topics, such as Affirmative action in hiring practices. Together, these analyses will exemplify the significance of both the content of class discussions and the particular interactions around this content in students' learning and engagement with academia, and in their evolving ability to voice social critique.

Student feedback

Class discussion, perspective-taking, and conflict. In student feedback, class discussions were identified as common psycho-social mechanisms fostering the exchange and appreciation of different perspectives. Many student responses (N = 14, 26%) identified class discussions about various topics as “the most interesting part of the course” (open-ended feedback obtained in response to Question 2; N = 54). Describing these effects, many students talked specifically about how class discussions allowed them to learn about various points of view. For example, one student stated: “[I liked it] when other students described how they felt about certain issues pertaining to them.” Another student said “I liked the class discussions where the students were involved b/c it gave me different sides to every story.”

However, as illustrated above, class discussions also sometimes led to conflict in which students were not able to reconcile their differing points of view. One student commented on the results of certain discussions: “The class was a little upsetting at time b/c people would seem to get offended.” Yet other students believed that even disagreements had a place in the course. One student stated: “With this course I realized some people have too many issues unresolved. [It was] sometimes useful for the class.” The students acknowledged that conflicts sometimes aid in understanding the multiplicity of perspectives around a single topic. At the same time, conflicts may disrupt the flow of discussions, as this student observed, saying that the best part of the course was “when other people were able to discuss without interruptions.”

The class observations described above and student reflections on the discussion process raise an important question: are disagreements in class a barrier to learning or do

they facilitate new understandings by engaging students' emotions and critical thinking? Statistical analyses of class feedback forms (close-ended) provide some answers to this question. The frequency of class discussion was associated with the frequency of witnessing conflicts, r (63) = .28, $p < .05$, suggesting that conflicts are a normally occurring part of exchanges among students.

However, students who witnessed conflicts decreased their scores on the measure of the compatibility of difference and democracy, r (63) = -.26, $p < .05$, reflecting their ambiguity regarding conflict that was also found in the open-ended feedback. Specifically, some students' reservations about conflict in class were expressed by increasingly endorsing the statement "The current focus on multiculturalism in our schools undermines the common ties that bind us" (Compatibility of Difference and Democracy, item #4, reverse-coded).

Regardless of these reservations, students who witnessed class conflict generated more writing using Social Analysis Discourse during the Narrative Task (r [40] = .33. $p < .05$) in which their critical thinking was engaged. Likewise, students' perception that the class did not skirt important but perhaps controversial topics ("Important issues were missing from class") was related to an increase in Social Analysis Discourse, r (41) = -.36, $p < .05$; and to an increase in the beliefs in the compatibility of difference and democracy, r (64) = -.24, $p < .05$.

As Figure 15 shows, these correlations support the contention that participating in and witnessing conflict may have a beneficial impact on student learning by providing an open and relevant context to academic questions. The frequency of class discussions was directly related to the opportunity to witness conflict. Although students tended to judge

conflict in class negatively ("multiculturalism in school is divisive"), it seemed to contribute to their ability to engage in social critique (Social Analysis). Similarly, the perception that discussions about important issues (often conflict-laden) were absent ("Important issues were missing from class discussions"), was associated with a decreased ability to formulate social analytical discourse, suggesting that it is precisely this potentially divisive nature of discussions about important topics that contributes to students' development as social actors.

Diversity of student responses to conflict. White students seemed to be particularly affected by the presence of conflict during class. In addition to the results presented above, White students who reported that class discussions featured disagreements among students also tended to say that they learned more from the course (r [14] = .57, $p < .05$) and that they learned more from the perspectives of others (r [15] = .86, $p < .001$). In addition, these students tended to believe that "class discussions helped them understand class topics better" (r [14] = .45, $p < .10$).

Based on class observations and teacher interviews, it was determined that one section of the course was more prone to conflict than the parallel section. This may have been due to the presence of a single student who was very vocal and articulate in her critique of dominant ideologies and academic theories that perpetuate them (see "Grace" in "One lesson, multiple understandings" and also Teacher Interview) and often triggered controversy in class. When responses of White students were compared by course section, the beneficial impact of class conflict was greatly visible in the conflict-ridden section of the course: in this class, all of the five White students (100%) said that disagreements were useful to their understanding of the perspectives of others and helped

them in understanding the class topics (but see a teacher's perspective on class conflict, p. 153).

In contrast, among minority students, the witnessing of class conflict was associated with a marginally stronger expression of student emotions (r [33] = .32, $p < .10$) and with formulating social analysis (r [31] = .40, $p < .05$), both measured by the Narrative Task, regardless of which section of the course they participated in. This findings suggests that minority students may already have experience witnessing conflicts over race and social justice compared to White students, and although they engage emotionally with these issues, they may not "learn" any new lessons. The ability to form social analysis as a correlate of participating in class controversy, however, attests to the power disagreements may have to help all students elaborate a critique voicing an increasingly stronger commitment to social justice.

Narrating imaginary conflicts

Open debates and conflicts around issues of race, social inequality, and other controversial topics may be relatively infrequent in college classrooms. As will be explored in more detail below (see Teacher interviews), college teachers as well as their students seem greatly invested in maintaining positive relations in the classrooms. Selective "silencing" of student voices, according to some authors, is inevitable in educational practice and is part of typical classroom management (Burbules, 2004). In the same vein, the silencing of "risky" and "volatile" student exchanges is often desirable and seen as part of the teacher's responsibility to secure a "positive" learning environment for all.

In view of these limitations presented by real-time classrooms, this study designed a learning activity around intergroup conflict to serve both as an educational intervention and a measure of student response to conflict. In the observed class discussions, even when disagreement did arise among students and the teacher, only a few students became overt participants in the conflict, leaving the responses of other students unknown or subject to speculation. In addition, the "vocal" students most likely represent a non-typical part of the student population, also attested to by the fact that the same students were engaging in such conflicts over time.

The Narrative Task presented all students with an imaginary conflict scenario in which two student characters participate in an exchange around minority hiring practices (for more details, see Method). The scenario reads as follows:

"Some policies create controversies that affect our lives and those of others in different ways. As an example, consider the following scenario:

Nancy is a student from a working-class Irish background. She is the first in her family to go to college. A great internship opportunity has opened up. Nancy interviews for the position but another student Julio, from a minority background, is hired. Nancy says: This is so unfair. Just because I am White, I don't get the same opportunities as others." Julio replies to her: "Your family has had better opportunities than mine. My mother never learned to read and write. And besides, no one says that I got hired because of my minority background." Nancy says: " Oh, isn't it obvious!" Julio says: "You should try to see what it's like to have people always doubt your abilities just because you are a minority. No matter how good you are, people will always say you had an advantage."

Following this prompt, the students were instructed to answer the following questions:

What happens next in the exchange? What will Nancy and Julio do?

How do you feel listening to this exchange?

What would you say to Nancy?

What would you say to Julio?

Do you think the employer did the right thing? Why or why not?"

The narratives were used to examine how ethnic/racial identity structures interactions, and especially, conflicts, around intergroup issues. Bamberg's positioning analysis (1997) provided a method in which the construction of the narrator's identity is traced to the discourses used in the narrative, and the rhetorical positions the narrator assumes vis-à-vis his or her audiences.

Fifty-seven students (84%) provided responses to the Narrative Task. The responses were quite detailed, showing that students were engaged by the task. A typical response used several sentences to reply to each open-ended question. Based on these responses, the analysis focused on three areas: intergroup relations, including conflict resolution and evaluation of employer's action, narrator's situational discourse/positioning in the scenario, and individual processes, including emotions, personal experience, identity negotiation, and viewing the exchange in personal versus social-structural terms. Taken together, an examination of these categories provides a method of illustrating the narrative construction of the self in a particular social context where issues of diversity, multiculturalism and social justice are highlighted, while the imaginary nature of the scenario allows for a safe exploration of students' reasoning and action around these

issues. Table 6 depicts a summary of student Narrative Task responses and the relationships among them and other study variables.

Intergroup outcomes: Conflict resolution. Student conflict resolution skills were assessed by their answer to the question: “What happens next in the exchange?” A 3-item Likert scale was created to differentiate between conflict escalation (e.g., the two characters engage in a physical fight, pursue a legal suit etc.), conflict maintenance (the characters continue arguing or part ways with no resolution), and conflict resolution (the characters arrive at an understanding and end conflict). The most common response was conflict maintenance (N = 41, 69.5%). As an example, one student stated: “I think the exchange will continue in the same fashion. Neither one will change their views.” White students were somewhat more likely than non-Whites to describe conflict escalation (N = 4, 29%, compared to N = 5, 14%, respectively). Only six students (10%) described a positive outcome. For example, one student said: “They could compare the resume and/or try to talk out the problems.”

One reason why few students imagined a change in the scenario’s outcome may be the fact that the actual reasons for hiring Julio were not known. When asked to evaluate the employer’s actions, the most frequent response said that students could not judge whether the employer made a right or wrong decision because it wasn’t clear whether Affirmative Action of merit ruled the decision (N = 22, 37%): “I don’t really have sufficient information to know why Julio got the job.” This ambiguity presumably gave the characters, and student narrators, little ground to formulate solutions. However, almost a third (N = 17, 29%) of the students said that indeed, the employer made the right decision because Julio had stronger qualification than Nancy: “I think the employer did the right

thing because they chose the individual who was most qualified." This response was somewhat more common among minority students (N = 13, 35%) than Whites (N = 3, 21%) who tended to qualify that the employer made the right decision only *if* he hired Julio based on merit: "[He did the right thing] if he actually accepted Julio BECAUSE of his qualification" [original emphasis]. Perhaps it was that doubt of the employer's motives that contributed to the White students' conflict escalation scenarios.

The other reason why students only rarely imagined a positive outcome of the conflict between Nancy and Julio may be the fact that they have learned to avoid or ignore conflicts around intergroup issues, especially those that invited strong controversy, or that students actually did not know the answers to solving such debates. One student commented: "I think this is a real-life case with no right answer." Another student argued: "I can understand both sides of the argument. It's hard for me to go one way or another." "It's a "touchy" subject." The issues involved were well summarized by this African American student: "I feel torn between this exchange, because affirmative action is a double-edged knife. While it helps [some] it disenfranchises others. And the ones who got benefit sometimes lose respect…from others…I am at odds with the perceived positives and negatives of affirmative action." In addition, some students felt that the topic of the scenario described a taboo that would not be openly addressed in real life: "I feel that this exchange is a common mentality among many American whites, however I doubt that a dialogue like this will ever take place."

The ambiguity students experienced when responding to the scenario together with the many imagined outcomes of the exchange may have opened a fascinating class debate allowing for students to learn from each others' perspectives and for teachers to address

intergroup conflict and how it may be structured by policy and other institutional actions. However, the teachers in both sections of the course chose to forgo any discussion of the Narrative Task and the student responses, stating that the task did not reflect any of the classes' educational goals. This action may have reinforced the students' perception that the normative way to respond to conflict is silence and that the issues described in the scenario have no real answers.

Narrator's positioning. The students were asked to enter the scenario by speaking to the characters, evaluating the character's actions, imagining the outcome of the exchange, and reflecting on its meaning. These rhetorical actions are important clues to student reasoning around ethnicity, race, and intergroup issues, and provide students with the means to elaborate a version of their own self by construing a particular version of events and interpersonal dialogues (Bamberg, 1997). Although students narrated a wide variety of responses to the scenario, five responses were the most frequent among all participants and will be described below.

"*Siding with Julio*." The most common response to the characters' conflict was to take the side of one of the protagonists, Julio. Almost 2/3 of minority students (63%) and more than a third White students (36%) supported Julio's point of view against Nancy's: "I feel Nancy is biased. Julio makes a good point of being a minority." Or, "being from a minority group…I kind of empathize with Julio."

Narrating one protagonist "right" and the other "wrong" does not facilitate complex intergroup skills. The "siding with Julio" response, I will argue, is not a dialogical response to the scenario. Instead, it describes the conflict in individualistic terms, where pitting the characters against each other precludes the perspective-taking and social

analysis required to arrive at a result that addresses and possibly corrects a wider social injustice. Perhaps for these reasons, siding with Julio against Nancy was most directly associated with a negative scenario outcome ($r = -.25$, $p < .05$). Among White students, "siding with Julio" was also associated with being very engaged in the course, assessed by higher scores on quantitative class feedback items 1 and 2 ("course was interesting" $r = .60$, $p = .06$; "course discussed issues I cared about, $r = .78$, $p < .05$). Finally, students who sided with Julio exhibited stronger emotions in response to the exchange, $r = .25$, $p < .05$. These findings suggests that engaging deeply in the conflict without the ability or willingness to see others' points of view and consider socio-structural factors may result in an escalation rather than a solution of intergroup problems.

"*Julio should ignore Nancy*." Ten students (17%) said that they would advise Julio to ignore Nancy and her accusations. For example, "I would tell [Julio] to continue doing what he's doing and not let other individual's opinions get in his way." Or: "Ignore what Nancy had said."; "Julio should not let other people's comments bother him." Again, this type of response shows little ability to step beyond immediate personal issues and, compared to the response that "sides with Julio against Nancy", it does not even attempt to take a stand in the controversy. Instead, the advice to "ignore Nancy" silences the entire issue and models a strategy of distancing oneself from both interpersonal and societal problems. In terms of dialogical engagement, this response is one of avoidance rather than an engagement in a dialogue. This interpretation is further supported by the finding that students who believed Julio should ignore Nancy's remarks were also the least engaged in the course itself and reported little learning during the semester : "How

interesting was Race and Ethnicity to you?”: $r = -.40$, $p < .01$; “How much have you learned from the course?”: $r = -.34$, $p < .05$.

“*Nancy should stop making assumptions*.” A small percentage of students (N = 7, 12%) reported that they would correct Nancy by explaining that she is making erroneous assumptions about Julio and his hiring. For example, one student said: “I would tell Nancy that she should not assume that Julio got the job based on his minority status.” Another student said: “I feel that Nancy underestimated Julio’s ability.” These responses represent a common discourse around race that locates social injustice in individual “cognitive error” (Stephan, 1999), suggesting that once a person learns the correct view, he or she will stop stereotyping leading to discrimination.

The individual focus of this response does not lend itself to a social-structural view of intergroup relations; however, it shows a sensitivity to other people’s points of view and to the fact that these views may be constructed in error. In this way, the “cognitive error” view is dialogical. One student, a bi-racial Black-Dominican male, explained the problematic with a sophisticated analysis of the multiple points of view: “[I would tell Nancy], ‘Don’t assume that affirmative action is the reason Julio is successful. Some people feel that it is insulting.’ [I would tell Julio], ‘Understand that Nancy is upset about losing a chance at a job and that she has worked as hard as you.’” Is perspective-taking and feeling other people’s reactions conductive to reaching conflict solutions? Based on the data, the answer to this question is negative. None of the cognitive error responses were associated with a positive solution to the conflict. The student quoted above, after outlining each characters’ positions and feelings, had concluded: “If Nancy is your friend, maybe you shouldn’t be friends.”

Nine minority students (24%) and one White student (7%) said that "*Julio should defend himself against the stereotype*." This type of response to the scenario addressed the exchange between Nancy and Julio in dialogical terms, frequently using social analysis as a frame of narrating the personal conflict and providing a response that aimed to change ideologies that underlie social injustice. This response was much more frequent among minority students than among Whites and even if sometimes coached in interpersonal terms (e.g., "I would tell Julio…"), it was associated with social critique ($r_{\text{defend against stereotype, social analysis}}$ [57] = .23, p = .08). However, I will argue that it is a problematic way of solving the conflict and correcting the assumed injustice which spurned it.

Telling Julio to take a defensive action towards stereotyping acknowledges the social reality of stereotyping and discrimination. One student said: "I feel that this is a very common thinking amongst any group today" and agreed with Julio "on how people will assume such things [e.g., that minority hiring is due to affirmative hiring policies]." Several students suggested that the stereotype is not only used to hurt minority individuals but also as an excuse for other people's failures. For example, one student stated that he would tell Nancy: " Grow up. Try to find out why you didn't get the job. Don't blame your failure on external circumstances." Another student took a more general view: "I feel people should stop using race as an excuse or reason to explain certain things."

Although many of these students recognized that the interpersonal conflict was structured by a wider social stereotype ("minorities get jobs only as a result of affirmative action policies") and pointed out the injustice (the accusation that Julio took a job he

didn't deserve), many felt that it was Julio's responsibility to *prove the stereotype wrong,* typically by displaying *"hard work"*. Sometimes, this advice seemed to suggest an agentic coping strategy. For example, one student who said "I have been placed in this situation many times" advised Julio to "prove the 'majority' wrong, " asserting Julio's confidence in his skills to foster a sense of agency in face of the accusations.
Other students, however, felt that Julio should be reminded of his obligations: "Even though you are a minority, don't use that as an excuse to get success. Work hard regardless." Another student stated: "Affirmative action can get you through the door but once you are in you have to prove yourself. Make sure you deserve the position because then Affirmative Action maybe taken away from others because you did not prove that you earned the position." Or, "I would encourage Julio to keep working hard and to never give a reason to say that he's accomplished BECAUSE of his minority status." These statements, although well-meant, seemed to undermine or even contradict the belief that Julio was in fact qualified for the position.

The Narrative exercise provided an interesting window into students' reasoning around social and interpersonal issues, and, significantly, their understanding of the connections between the two, forming a basis for understanding issues of social justice. Several conclusions can be made based on the analyses described above. First, the majority of students participating in the exercise displayed a great degree of engagement in the scenario. The engagement, associated with the students' overall engagement in the course, showed that student have a real interest in intergroup relations and debates about justice, topics that have been generally missing from class discussions. Unfortunately, perhaps because students had little opportunity to discuss and elaborate on such issues in

class, this interest did not translate into the ability to generate solutions to the conflict presented by the scenario.

Analyses of student positioning as they “entered” the scenario showed that forming a social analytical view of the situation, or seeing the interpersonal conflict in terms of wider social arrangements and ideologies, may provide a crucial insight to help students with conflict-solving. The response in which students “sided with Julio”, accompanied by emotional engagement, but did not incorporate socio-structural analysis, was correlated with the least positive scenario outcome ($r = -.25$, $p < .05$). Thus, engagement in certain debates may be counterproductive if it’s not accompanied by a reflection on wider societal issues and a recognition of their role in daily interactions with others.

Finally, the solution in which students advised Julio to “defend himself against the stereotype”, although it draws on social analysis, is troubling in that it suggests an individualistic strategy to correct a wider social injustice. In contrast, the few students who generated a positive solution to the conflict seemed able to employ a more collectively-based perspective on intergroup relations. For example, “Mickey”, an African American male, said: “I feel that the exchange is a reality situation. There are going to be a few more minorities that are going to get ahead in a ‘mainstream’ world.” Another student, who suggested a positive solution to the scenario, a Dominican-American female, thought that perhaps “if the employer was also a minority, then he might have favored Julio.”

The idea that a collective action may bring some solutions to interpersonal conflicts around race is further supported by another result. Among minority students, identity awareness, one of the mechanisms of learning in the class, was associated with a more

positive result in the narrative exercise ($r_{\text{identity awareness, narrative result}}$ [30] = .49, $p < .01$; $r_{\text{learning in class, narrative result}}$ [30] = .38, $p < .05$). These results suggest that raising student awareness of racial and ethnic identity, associated with overall learning in the class, may help students elaborate connections between identity and social structures that lead to a greater understanding of social justice, exemplified in this study by conflict-solving the imaginary scenario.

Finally, both White and minority students who generated more positive endings to the scenario tended to increase their scores on the Active Thinking scale over the course of the semester (r [46] = .34, $p = .01$). This scale measured “motivation to understand human behavior, the tendency to think about underlying processes, and to prefer complex to simple explanations.” The individual scale items where significant increases were found assessed students’ ability to “analyze reasons and causes of people’s behaviors” (Items 1 and 4) and, more significantly, Item 6, measuring to what degree students “think a lot about the influence that society has on [their] behavior and personality.” This finding suggests that the Narrative Exercise benefited some students by not only giving them opportunity to practice and voice their views on intergroup conflict and social justice, but also, through having engaged in reflection on these issues, giving them the opportunity to discover possible solutions.

Discussion

In this chapter, various sources of student data were analyzed to examine the ways in which peer activities, such as class discussions and entering an imaginary interpersonal scenario, develop students’ thinking about the self and others, their intergroup skills, including coping with agreement and conflict, and how these skills and understandings

structure students' commitment to academia and social change. The data gathered during class observations provided a useful window into the micropolitics of the classroom process. The range of student responses to the material illustrated the diversity of perspectives with which students from different backgrounds approach multicultural content and the divergent goals that shape these responses.

As noted in previous data, minority students relied more frequently on experience-based discourse oriented towards their peers and communities. In contrast, White students followed a more traditional "academic" discourse of question-and-answer directed by and towards the teacher. However, the participation in student dialogue displaying a range of perspectives shifted some students' understandings to become more critical -- on the part of students who were originally reluctant or unable to formulate social critique -- as well to speak increasingly through "academic discourse" -- on the part of a student who originally relied exclusively on experience. These shifts in the students' positions confirm the importance of dialogue in the development of learning for both academic success and social justice. The positive response of the teacher to the resulting mixture of academic and critical discourse the students developed helped move the class interactions from teacher-led activities to a more open student-centered environment.

These results show that many students need assistance in order to assume increasingly critical positions towards their education and other social issues of relevance to themselves. The prevalence of critical discourse among minority students may be tracked to their relative familiarity with intergroup issues compared to White students (e.g., Hurtado, 1992) as well as their greater engagement with issues concerning their

communities, evidenced by increased commitment to democratic citizenship and issues concerning their ethnic and racial groups, and a stronger sense of ethnic or racial identity (see Chapter 3, Results of the survey). In class discussions, minority students' knowledge may act as a trigger to develop majority (White) students' points of view to become more critical of the status quo, by modeling critical discourse as well as by sharing their life experiences that may contradict the "official line." In turn, students heavily relying on experience may learn to insert "academic discourse" into their statements, after witnessing the authority it lends to the speaker when addressing the classroom.

Further, the data provided important insights into the role of conflict in educational and intergroup dialogues. The class observations, supplemented by students' feedback, documented both positive and negative effects of the witnessing of and participating in conflict. Among the positive effects was the remarkable change in students' voicing of critique after a conflict erupted in the class between a student and a teacher. This beneficial impact was further supported by students' comments on the role of conflict and by statistical analysis showing connections between witnessing disagreements in class and students' assessment of the class as an honest and open space conductive to formulating critique.

However, critique can come at a cost and conflicts may shut down conversations as well as open them. The class observation revealed that a critique coming from a student, when not following the prescribed point of view, may be viewed by the teacher as a lack of understanding of the course material, a disagreement that may carry academic implications for the student. Other students shy away from conflicts in class, viewing

them as disruptive of their learning because of the emotional distress caused to students and possibly, to the teacher (see also Teacher Interview).

Further, the Narrative Exercise demonstrated a general ambiguity about how to deal with conflicts based on diverse points of view. The responses students generated to the interpersonal scenario suggested that taking a side in such a conflict, on the part of the minority character who may have been falsely accused, tended to accelerate misunderstandings rather than resolve them, and this was the most frequent response represented in the student narratives. Although non-White students tended to view the conflict more frequently in social-structural terms than their White counterparts, they still placed the burden of "correcting" stereotyping on the minority character, Julio, who was supposed to work hard in order to dissipate negative representations of his group.

What are the triggers in classrooms that allow for open discussion and productive critique to emerge, and what are the sources of its silencing? How can a classroom discussion move from a teacher-led activity to a democratic sharing of perspectives, engagement and elaboration of material resulting in personal as well as educational change? In the next chapter, I will turn to the wider institutional frame in which classroom discourses are practiced, to identify factors fostering dialogues and social critique that underlie students' development. I will focus on the broad frame of multicultural education policy in the institution that orients both students' and teachers' understandings of teaching and learning towards particular goals. I will argue that only when schools understand and support diverse students' goals and learning styles can there be a productive learning environment based on dialogical principles. Further, the compatibility of the students' and teachers' views of education testifies to the

communication between academia and learning communities that is a crucial step for democratic participation and creating leadership in and through education.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS PART IV.

The educational process: Transforming education by teaching for social justice

The previous chapters outlined individual and group processes operating in multicultural education and their effects on student learning. The results of several analyses relying on quantitative and qualitative methodology illustrate the nature of learning under conditions of diversity and for a particular goal, attaining social justice, by providing all students with means of achieving success in a multicultural society. The mechanisms of such learning, proposed under the umbrella of multicultural education, are tied to the development of student racial and ethnic identities and pedagogical strategies that rely in great part on student participation. As the data show, this type of learning also transforms some major assumptions about education, raising questions about students and teachers as legitimate holders of knowledge, the role of personal experience in the educational process, and the management of conflict that arises once controversial issues are openly addressed.

In this section, I will describe the educational environment in which the study took place. I will start with a historical background of the course and the development of a multicultural education policy at Hunter College. Then, I will focus on the teachers' philosophy with which they approach teaching diversity courses and, specifically, SOC 217: Race and Ethnicity, followed by a detailed examination of the pedagogical issues that confront them. The inclusion of student voices, based on class feedback data, will illustrate the similarities and differences between the views of the educational establishment, the teachers, and the students themselves. The goal of this analysis will be to answer the following questions: What are the connections between educational institutions and the communities they serve? How do institutions structure conditions for

intergroup dialogue? What is the role of teachers in facilitating this dialogue towards social change, when teaching a curriculum whose goals are both academic and democratic? How do students view their own education, and are their views compatible with the educational philosophy embraced by the institution that educates them?

Multicultural Education at Hunter College

Hunter College has traditionally served a large population of ethnically and racially diverse urban students. As such, it has instituted multiple ways of dealing with issues of race, multiculturalism, and racial equity starting in the early 1990's. Among those efforts, the Pluralism and Diversity Requirement came into place in 1993, to reflect the diversity of the student body in the school's curriculum in ways that significantly modify the traditional Eurocentric basis of the educational canon. SOC 217: Race and Ethnicity, a course that has been taught in the Sociology department for at least 35 years, has been one of the founding courses of the Diversity Requirement.

In the Spring of 1991, a student protest led by Hunter College students triggered an institution-wide discussion about Hunter College's social and educational climate. This incident was characterized by hostility expressed by all sides and culminated in a student lockout of the Hunter community from the East Building. As a response, President LeClerc established a Presidential Commission on Campus Climate whose task it was to examine the current environment at Hunter and identify sources of the mounting tensions between students, faculty and administration and to suggest possible remedies. The Commission included representatives of all groups constituting the Hunter community. Separate panels addressed issues regarding academic issues, equity, campus dissent, governance, personnel relations, student concerns, and quality of life. After the meetings

of the panels, open hearings were conducted in 1992, followed by workshops in which possible solutions to problems identified by the panels were discussed.

The Commission's work resulted in a report that offered a detailed analysis of the institutional backdrop to student and faculty life at Hunter and an insight into the societal conditions for learning and pedagogy that this environment fosters. Although at the time of this study, the Le Clerc Report is ten years old, it remains the most articulate document available to describe the larger institutional climate at Hunter. In addition, because it spells out specific problems existing at that time and suggestions of how to address them, this study can serve as a test of how the goals outlined in the Report have or have not been met in the succeeding years.

The connection between school and community: "Where am I in all this"?

In order for a school to equally represent and benefit the community which it serves, it needs to become open to the voices of those whom is attempts to educate. The concept of school or class permeability to cultural knowledge (Lelutiu-Weinberger, 2004) transforms the traditional distribution of power around knowledge acquisition and breaks major assumptions of learning in mainstream academia. This permeability, it is proposed, is a "key mechanism for achieving an affirmative education for all students, who need to become contributors to their development and social justice efforts" (Lelutiu-Weinberger, 2004). Because students are the recipients of education, they should have a degree of control over their educational process, exemplified by open communication between the student body, faculty, and school administration.

Multicultural education seeks student involvement for reasons of motivating students to succeed in academia. By relating their own experiences to the academic content, all

students are given an opportunity to engage in the theoretical conversations that constitute academic knowledge. In turn, sharing experiences with others creates an educational environment that promotes democratic engagement and intergroup communication skills. Proponents of multicultural education agree that for an effective dialogue to emerge in classrooms, it is essential that students bring their own diverse, and often contradictory perspectives, to the table (Nagda et al., 2004).

The importance of dialogical processes in education has been illustrated in the preceding chapters by examining the role of student discussions and perspective-taking that facilitates both learning of the class material as well as the ongoing development of student identities. This section will focus on school philosophy that promotes student participation in its various forms, the teachers' views and strategies employed to include students in class discussions, and the students' opinions on practices related to issues of inclusion and equal representation of voices in the classroom.

In the introduction to the Report of the Presidential Committee on Campus Climate (RPCCC, 1993), the Chair of the commission David Julian Hodges said: "we must become a community bent upon listening to each other: indeed, listening aggressively, listening with a keen determination to hear" (p. 6). These words echo the commission's wider concerns about the lack of communication between students and faculty, departments, day and evening students, racial, ethnic, and gender groups, and the sense of isolation this gap in communication creates. But it also specifically invited a dialogue about the social conditions in which all of these separate groups live and work. For example, Hodges says: "Many of Hunter's students make their way to the college each day through trash-lined streets in crime-ridden neighborhoods where race has been

directly or indirectly responsible for sub-standard housing, unemployment, and inadequate health care" (p. 6). "Today's student enters Hunter College with a keen awareness that things in the world are plenty wrong and – not unlike every generation of young people – these students possess a burning, even impatient, desire, to do something about it all" (p. 6). Similarly, Scott, in advocating the values of Afrocentrism as a tool to dismantle the traditions of White supremacy, admonishes teachers to "be appreciative of and adaptable to the experiential backgrounds that students bring with them into the classroom"(RPCCC, p. 131).

With these ideals in mind, what opportunities do Hunter students have in voicing their experiences and concerns during class time, and how does it benefit their education? The majority of students in SOC 217, Race and Ethnicity, reported that their professors were willing to listen to their ideas "very much" (N = 50, 78%) and that class discussions were "very useful" to their understanding of class topics (N = 46, 71%). While professors' willingness to listen to students' ideas contributed to the frequency of student discussions (r [67] = .27, $p < .05$), the amount and quality of discussion was associated with greater learning from the course ($r_{\text{amount of discussion, learning}}$ [63] = .32, $p < .01$; $r_{\text{quality of discussion, learning;}}$ r [63] = .54, $p < .001$; see Figure 15). However, a large percentage of students stressed that still more class discussion was needed to make the course better (N = 16, 32%): "The readings were helpful in understanding concepts but real-life experiences and projects involving talking to different groups of [people] about their cultures and such would have made the class much more interesting."

One of the teachers in Race and Ethnicity said that he encourages students to talk to get feedback which helps him to teach more efficiently: "I like the students…that come to

class prepared and talk a lot…It's more interesting when I get feedback. It also helps me know what they're thinking…the more I know about how they learn, the better."

However, the kind of talk that's encouraged in this class is academic rather than talk based on personal experience. The teacher said: "I don't encourage them to talk about their personal experience" and when asked why, he continued: "it's kind of being pushy, you know, going into people's personal experiences." Although the teacher admitted that he wants students to think of their experiences, he feels that sharing these experiences in class is not appropriate: "it's not about their personal feelings." "It's not the Oprah Winfrey show." Yet later he wondered whether students who are mostly immigrants, when reading textbooks on immigration theories, sometimes "[compare and contrast] their own experiences.." and he answers himself: "I don't know if the book allows for that. I suppose it must, it's impossible to read something and [not] say well, where am I in all of this..?"

The teacher of the other section of the course was more appreciative of the potential that students bring to class once they disclose and reflect on their own experiences. She said: "I try to let [students] be reflexive...when I talk about the social construction of race and ethnicity..it's their personal experiences that are so valuable, because they are immigrants…and they are minorities, so they experience discrimination, and they live within an American culture that is to some extent still very white…and since they live in these neighborhoods, I think it's a perfect connection between their experiences and the sociological research, as it's trying to get at their experiences. So, I think that in class discussion, their experiences really come out…sociology lends itself [to it.]" This teacher

also believes that "first hand experience really adds to the texture, the discussion, ..and people are much more savvy about the application of some of these theories."

The sharing of personal experience in classrooms opens up new and productive dimensions of learning; however, the personal nature of these experiences also brings in a range of emotions and the possibility of conflict over different interpretations of "reality." Many authors have argued that such conflicts and the accompanying emotions themselves add to the memorability and effectiveness of the lessons (e.g., Berlak, 2004; Ericson, 2004). What are the experiences of students and teachers in SOC 217: Race and Ethnicity? Does the sharing of one's feelings and open disagreements over controversial issues promote or shut down student dialogues in those classes? Do the teachers support or suppress such exchanges, and view them as learning tools or as bothersome disruptions?

Feelings and conflicts

Chairperson Hodges, in his forward to RPCCC, says: "Ours must be a college community that does not become frustrated and confused when students, too bright to accept as normal those awful streets neighborhoods, injustices, and agonies, by which they are surrounded, and expect their college classrooms, their college professors, and indeed their college community to nurture and support their righteous indignation" (p. 6). However, he acknowledges that at present, the response of faculty and staff to conflict has been "either, at its worst, in-your-face confrontation or, only minimally better, mute withdrawal from what arenas are available for discussion, debate, and change."

For these reasons, the Commission worked to establish proper channels "wherein divisions can be bridged and the strain resolved constructively and creatively" (p. 25).

The first step was to form a Panel on Campus Dissent that defines dissent as "the business of the academy" because schools are "key places to test ideas and promote new knowledge" and their responsibility is to learn, nurture and protect mechanisms of dissent (p. 64) to invite synthesis that is inclusive of differing positions. The dialogical nature of dissent was also stressed: "Dissent is always against something, reactive, even if the 'something' is an underlying ideology that is not explicitly stated" (p. 64).

These words have been written eleven years prior to the time this study took place. How is dissent incorporated into the college classrooms today?

Silencing conflict in the classroom: "It's not a sensitivity training course"

Opening up the classroom to student experience invites both the risks and benefits of a free exchange of ideas. One of the teachers in Race and Ethnicity agreed that exposing diverse experiences "adds a great dimension to learning", but she was also wary of the conflicts and negative feelings it may spawn: "students talking about inner city and jobs, …discrimination in public places…, a lot of the White students will feel uncomfortable…a lot of the White students have never been discriminated against in that way, and all of the Black students will, really, be chiming in, yeah, this happened to me…so..[once] personal experience comes in, that personal experience is always raced."

As in any debate exposing contradictory perspectives, it is possible that misunderstandings arise and students' feelings get hurt as they share and exchange their perspectives. At worst, a free debate can shut down a dialogue and its possibilities even before similarities in views can be found and appreciated (Burbules, 1996). For this reason, it is important that students learn, along with the freedom to debate their differing views, how to negotiate opposing perspectives.

Theory suggests that the teachers can act as role models and conflict negotiators, by posing and restating questions, pointing out biases, and otherwise assuring that all views get an equal chance of being heard (Glass, 2004). The Panel on Campus Dissent, established as part of Hunter's Commission on Campus Climate and Relations, suggested that "faculty workshops should be provided to include how to encourage and handle dissent in and outside of the classroom. Conflict resolution techniques and skills are needed to recognize and disarm attacks on individuals or groups for their differing views" (p. 65).

Unfortunately, it seems that few teachers invite conflict in any form into their courses, or know how to manage conflict once it occurs spontaneously in class. In fact, teachers, at least those examined in this study, are more likely to see their role as gatekeepers who make sure that no one get upset on their class time. One source of the instructors' unwillingness to engage in class conflict is a concern for being sensitive to their students' feelings. One of the teachers said: "You need to maintain quite a vigilance about being sensitive to all people in the class." "Issues like race, diversity and so forth…are often fraught with a lot of emotional content. Um, actually I stay away from that as much as possible…I try to make it not about people's feelings…it's not a sensitivity training course."

Whose feelings are the teachers protecting? Minority students', who may be forced to consider stereotypes about their own abilities as part of the course content, or majority students, who are viewed as perpetrators of these stereotypes, and the various forms of discrimination that follows them? Or the teachers', as they are trying to maintain their image of authority and legitimacy although they may not possess the first-hand

experience related to the theories that their students have? It may be for all of these reasons that teachers feel unprepared to deal with conflict in the classroom. It is important to ask the question, however, what are the effects of having class conflict stifled in its conception?

One of the teachers said that "it's very natural that [students] gonna feel like there are these negative stereotypes that we have to talk about, and it makes them uncomfortable and it makes them defensive." The teacher brought up the example of Grace, an African American/West Indian woman who was a student in her class: " I think she was furious that we're dealing with the stuff that was extremely unpleasant and makes her very upset, and we are talking about it in this very nonchalant way." In the class observation, we have seen one of the teacher's responses in which Grace was accused of not understanding the material. In the interview, the teacher elaborated: "The book… is taking an angle that is very liberal,…and critiquing biological explanations and cultural explanations…[but Grace saw] these statistics and said, it's like this book is trying to tell us that Black people are stupid. You know, …that was her…simplistic reading, and also her emotional reaction." Yet at least one other student, identified as Guyanese, expressed a view proposed by Grace in her class feedback, saying "I didn't like the fact that African Americans were portrayed as deviant and destructive members of society."

The teacher's interpretation that Grace "could not control her feelings" supposedly "made it difficult" because, as she said, "I had to manage her and, you know, and manage the rest of the class." Who did Grace make matters difficult for? The teacher said: "I think it's difficult for White students who are dealing with this stuff, they are the minority in the classroom, they are…a part of the group of people who have perpetrated inequality,

so sure, there is soreness…" Generally, the teachers believed White students tend to be silent about their grievances. One of the teachers said "there was a White student who told me…that she heard from talking after class…there were these White students who felt they couldn't say anything because the classroom is very ganged up on them." Similarly, the other teacher said: "I wonder about [White students] a lot….I often wonder, there have to be a couple…Republicans… which is fine, I just imagine they don't say anything. They're at Hunter, it's a liberal school, so yeah, I'm sure that there is a lot of self-censorship in that regard."

In fact, a White American student expressed her anger at what she saw a bias in favor of "the so-called minority" in her feedback form: "[The course needs to be] looking at both sides of the spectrum and escaping the victimization act that many 'minorities' play on…the world is how it is. I don't get a free ride and work very hard for the place I have and I don't blame my race for my struggles. [People] need to see it's not a racial issue but something deeper." A Haitian student agreed: "I hated people in the class who use race/the past or being a minority as an excuse for everything. It's important, but as something it's up to you to make something of yourself. Face the fact that life is not fun + some has to work harder than others to survive."

Based on this evidence, it seems that there is a silencing of certain voices on all sides of the racial "spectrum". This may be related to the teachers' views that a discussion about personal experiences, displays of feelings and judgments, and other positions that may alienate some people in class are inappropriate, or that such exchanges are simply hard to supervise and manage. However, one of the teachers admits to the educational value of having disagreements in class: "They bounce off each other's responses, [it] also

indicates that there is camaraderie and it's a safe environment. If you have two students who don't agree on something, I find that really great and I try to manage that…and, being a teacher in this course, you've got to be diplomat."

Managing conflict: "I don't want to sound like I have a political agenda"

When teachers are put into a position of a boundary broker, bridging and interpreting students' differences, they may not only be called to use conflict resolution skills but may also be pressed to expose their own positions on the issues at hand. For example, the teacher of Grace's class described how she normally tries to "avoid…teaching these issues about minorities and stigma and inequality" because such debates lead to questions about how we should respond to injustice. One of the possible responses, anger, the teacher labeled as a personal issue, explaining that "sometimes there are students who are troubled." Then the teacher described how Grace walked out of the class one day: "it was just her frustration…the fact that people should be angry and people aren't. That people should do something about this and they don't." "She just really overreacted I think, and the other students thought so too." After the incident, there was a short discussion about what happened: "when she left…some of them tried to interpret…where she was coming from and others were trying to make me feel better and said, you know, I don't think it's you…and then other people said…what do we do?"

Not only did Grace manage to press students to formulate the question about what should be done as a response to injustice, she put the teacher's beliefs and actions under the class's scrutiny as well. The teacher explained how she finds it hard to speak from her position as a White Jewish middle class woman: "If I were Black or Hispanic, I might have more legitimacy, or I might make them feel more comfortable or something."

Similar sentiments have been echoed by the teacher of the other course section: ”From the perspective of a White male, Midwestern, upper-middle-class environment, my experience is obviously…very different from perhaps a lot of my students.”

Possibly for these reasons, both teachers felt it was best to avoid addressing the gaping differences in their backgrounds and those of their students and maintain a “vigilance about being sensitive to all people in the class.” One of the teachers focused on historical perspectives rather than current issues: “I try to not make it [about] feelings or…people’s sense of identity. So I try to make it as social and historical as possible.”

The other teacher talked in length about how her own identity and sense of privilege, both by virtue of being White and the teacher, makes her feel vulnerable teaching to minorities and how she struggles for her identity to remain in the background while posing solely as an interpreter of other people’s theories: “Being a White woman, dealing with…issues of status and privilege… if I didn’t have control over the material, then I would feel very vulnerable, or if I didn’t have control over the students.” “I try to make the environment as democratic and open as possible…I don’t have to try that hard because I’m not covering up any personal biases…at the same time I don’t want to sound like…I have a political agenda…I try to be as neutral as possible.”

Clearly, some students in these teachers’ classes did not appreciate the teachers’ “control” of the material, the focus on historical events, their “neutrality” or, sometimes, the race and status of the teachers themselves. A foreign student from Sweden commented: “I’m a White student but I think that this course should be taught by a person who is non-White so that people of other ethnicities feel like that they can relate to the professor. I also think the professor did a poor job involving students in meaningful

discussions." Other students thought the teacher was hiding behind her textbook instead of stating openly her own positions on controversial issues: "This course would be better if the professor had a better concept of the topic. She didn't seem too sure about what she was talking about. She taught from the textbook, which made me think she had no personal views on the topics," a male Jewish student commented.

The entry of student personal experience into the class context alters traditional classroom methods and creates particular changes in the class dynamic. The data suggests that student discussions are an important vehicle of identity negotiation that in turn affects students intergroup attitudes, their democratic understanding together with an ability to form a social-analytical view of the world around them, and that these changes contribute to students' academic success. Students themselves voiced the importance of the teacher's ability to address issues relevant to their lives and maintaining openness of class discussion as an important factor in their learning. A Black/West Indian student said: "[To improve this course, we need to allow] for more discussion time and the professor understanding and respecting different thoughts." A Mexican American student said: "More OPEN discussions would have opened a lot of good conversation, the sharing of ideas, and the approving and disproving of certain theory."

Statistical analysis of the student quantitative feedback forms further support for the relationships among teacher's openness, amount and quality of class discussion, student learning in the course, and student identity and intergroup skills development. Figure 16 shows these relationships and the crucial role that teacher's openness plays in fostering an optimal educational environment.

In addition, some interesting differences emerged when comparing the effects of teachers' openness to student ideas by race. In the sample of White students, teacher's openness was linked to increases in academic skills, which was earlier identified as White students' main vehicle of learning in this course. Those White students who perceived their professor as willing to listen to students' ideas also manifested significant increases in their scores on critical thinking, r [15] = .47, $p = .07$, and self-perceived academic skills, r [15] = .72, $p < .01$. In contrast, minority students' perceptions of the professor's openness to dialogue was connected to increases in democratic understanding and intergroup skills. Most notably, all students' learning and interest in the course, related to class discussions facilitated by teachers willing to listen to student voices, was linked to students' making decisions about their own life and future career, such as going to graduate school (see Figure 16).

These connections stress the importance of an open environment inviting student dialogues in class. They suggest that teachers who support student discussions do not allow merely for an elaboration of the class content leading to better grades. More importantly, by interrogating their own and others' views, students' lives are affected on a fundamental level, as they gain understandings and skills to make important decisions about their own lives.

The teachers interviewed in this study seemed well aware of the importance of allowing some degree of discussion in class and the significance of properly handling controversies erupting in class, either by trying to avoid them or trying to "manage" them. Interestingly, neither one of the teachers mentioned the role of Hunter College and the Sociology department in creating a safe educational environment committed to

allowing students voice their concerns and work out possible disagreements. Apparently, the teachers never received any kind of conflict resolution or sensitivity training support suggested by the LeClerc Commission and did not seem to consider the institutional climate as a factor in the expression of student conflict in their classes or in the possible responses to this conflict. The teacher in Grace's class mentioned her fear that Grace may stop attending her class after she walked out in rage: "In fact, I was worried…what's gonna happen. She'd stop going to class…", a fear that may have been related to her standing in the department as a junior adjunct faculty.

The data described above suggest a gaping discrepancy between the professed institutional commitment to student and faculty support around intergroup relations, conflict resolution, and creating a safe and democratic environment for learning and actual classroom practice. The teachers' uncertainty when dealing with intergroup conflict may be traced to this lack of institutional support as well as a failure to recognize the University's responsibility to support and nurture open dialogues in and outside of classrooms. Although ostensibly the topic of the course is the role of social institutions in structuring individual identities and intergroup relations, neither of the two teachers identified these factors when discussing the educational climate in their own classes. Instead, conflicts in class were discussed in terms of individual responsibility, both students' and the teachers', and interpersonal etiquette. One of the teachers described his response to students' disagreement in class: "I will just intervene and I'll say, look, you're stating your view, we are allowed to disagree…I can't even think of any examples, people are really *nice*." When students are not "nice" and do engage in extensive critique, however, they may become the recipients of negative labels, such as

"troubled", "overreacting", or "not doing their reading," labels that may have serious implications for their academic standing.

These findings illustrate the importance of a connection between the school and the student community. Understanding student lives and their goals is a crucial factor in supporting students in their learning. Teachers' expectations and evaluations of their students importantly structure the classroom climate and affect class participation, in turn shaping what students learn and the ways in which they view themselves as learners.

Institutional versus student goals

In order for schools to adequately serve their student communities, a detailed understanding of the various goals with which students enter the educational process is needed. Are students pursuing knowledge for knowledge's sake, or are they under pressure to advance their careers and incomes by a college degree? Do students have the leisure to explore various academic fields and to participate in extracurricular activities, or do they rush to their jobs and family responsibilities before and after their classes? When students do not succeed at Hunter, can they transfer to another school or is their college education effectively over?

Connected to the issue of student goals are the expectations that teachers have of student work, motivation, participation and engagement in the educational process. In the eyes of their teachers, what constitutes a "good student" and are these images compatible with the various realities of student lives? And when student and teachers' goals are incompatible, what are the costs of the disconnect between academia and the student population?

The LeClerc report addressed such concerns when considering issues pertaining to students during an open hearing on academic issues. Regarding teacher-student relationships, the report stated that “students and teachers sometimes have adversarial relationships as student expectations are different from those of faculty (p. 59).” One source of this disparity is a so-called “unintellectual climate” among students who are seen as “pursuing social and economic advancement” and are “not prepared for intellectual activities.” Instead, students are said to be placing “an emphasis on the grade rather than learning (p. 59).”

Similar concerns were echoed in both interviews with the teachers in SOC 217: Race and Ethnicity. The teachers expressed the view that students enter the class with a wide range of academic skills and that many are ill-prepared to fulfill the demands of their academic careers. For example, one of the teachers stated: “There is a skill diversity, it can make learning very difficult, because…you have students who come from very bad schools and don’t have the writing skills and then they are in the same class with people who come from private schools.” The other teacher put this even more bluntly: “ There is a basic skill issue…writing…is atrocious, by and large...[students range] from absolutely extraordinary, students who would succeed at any college anywhere, to students who probably didn’t belong in high school.”

However, the issue of traditional academic “basic skills” becomes complicated when other sources of student knowledge become recognized. One teacher said that motivation and engagement can sometimes make up for the lack of academic know-how: “I think ability is a very tough word…[skills] don’t necessarily translate into a good student…you got students in terms of motivation...there are students who regardless of their difficulty,

they are so engaged, they are so creative, and there is the dimension of their difficult lifestyle, with work, family, how much time they can put in…" The ability to use personal life experiences to reflect on academic material may constitute a hidden strength of a typical Hunter student. For example, "night students who are much older…who haven't been in school for a very long time and have experienced life and have learned and have grown…they are coming at these materials with a lot more life experience than the 20-year olds. That's why…educational performance isn't something that is very straight-forward."

As an example of such a motivated older student, the teacher named Grace, "this woman who was angry." Unfortunately, as was seen from their earlier class exchanges, integrating students life experience into academic discussions may be fraught with tensions, some of which revolve around questions of the legitimacy of knowledge and classroom conduct. Similarly, life experience may not translate easily into a wholesome agreement with academic theorizing. When describing what prompted Grace to leave class one day, the teacher said, "it was a frustration with the academic side, or academic view of these things…how could you sit and theorize poverty and problems, there is this anger that it's the safe way to look at it."

Another source of misunderstanding between students and their teachers is what has been termed an "unintellectual climate" of the school. In the LeClerc report, it has been said that "students are pursuing social and economic advancement…They place an emphasis on the grade rather than learning" (p. 59). This sentiment has been echoed by one of the teachers in Race and Ethnicity who said that "students are very instrumentally-minded...They want to get their degree, they want to get a job…students are very single-

minded in their focus on 'is this going to be on the test' kind of attitude….so, often times, this doesn't make for the best class discussion."

However, does students' frequent focus on the practical benefits of education, such as a degree, or an accumulation of a number of college credits, access to jobs, and improved social and economic status, translate into an educational failure? Or does the complaint about "an unintellectual climate" describe the degree to which the institution's and students' aims differ from each other? Hernandez, in his discussion of "the Other college at Hunter" (Le Clerc Report, p.124-125) tells a story about the real benefits that many students, traditionally described as "unprepared for regular college study" and who frequently fail to graduate, receive by attending Hunter for a period of time in their lives. He says that "the positive side of the high 'drop out' rate from Hunter College is the success of the Other College in preparing students for middle-level and administrative employment." Apart from economic advantages of putting "some college" on their resumes, during their school attendance, students "improve their English, learn how they fit into an American society, pick up social skills relating to others, and create value for their minds as thinking adults who will continue learning in life. Rather than blame the students for their "unintellectual attitude", the school should take steps "to better integrate the Other College into their academic system" and develop more effort encouraging students to envision the traditional college as a realistic avenue for personal betterment," he recommended (Hernandez, pp. 124-125).

This study found that teachers in Race and Ethnicity, if not enthusiastic about the students' preoccupation with "grades," were in fact well-attuned to the complexity of students' lives that underlies the seeming disconnect between traditional schooling and

"the Other College." Both teachers, when asked what in their view is the most important thing that students learn in college, identified critical thinking skills. Such skills are often required not only for understanding and assessing academic materials, but useful in every day life as they allow students to orient themselves to practical issues. One teacher said: "One thing that students should get out of an education is really to think critically about what they do every single day…people don't really think critically about their environment, about the kinds of being a consumer, and I mean a consumer in a broadest possible way."

Critical thinking has been identified also as a bridge between academic knowledge and personal experience, the very connection that lays a foundation to schools serving adequately their communities and one of the underpinnings of multicultural educational theory. When asked about the relationship between academic theory and critical thinking, one teacher said: "Theories are examples of critical thinking…having access to theory…brings us out of ourselves, our every day, mundane [concerns]…gives us imagination and perspective." In turn, engagement with the "unfamiliar" gives growth to inspiration that underlies motivation and success: "I think it enables [students] to explore…areas of study and professions…so a lot of students are coming here to evaluate where they're going and the choices that they have."

The ability to listen to students' real-life concerns, to make class material relevant to their lives and to broaden their aspirations is fundamentally connected to the dialogical engagement, on part of the teachers and the institution, with students' voices. One can start from the very conflict between the overt academic goals the college professes and the realities of students' lives. One teacher said: "I think it's important to acknowledge

it…why [students] are here…I admit to them, I'm here because I'm getting a paycheck…this is a market transaction." The teacher uses the occasion to explain that higher education is a type of business in which students are purchasing the teacher's labor. "Higher education is a business and it's becoming more like a business all the time. And that may be a good thing or it may be bad, and we can talk about that too, but most important is for them to think about it, period." He identifies a way out of the seeming contradiction: "[although] it's kind of a paradox that we want [students] to be learning…and they just want to get their degree…it's not so much [of a paradox]…they still learn things. I believe that. I believe that my students come out of my class remembering certain things."

Creating an educational community

Wells (2004) states that one of the crucial goals of education is the building of a learning community in relation to the identities of its members. The themes described in this chapter illustrate this need by portraying tensions between the school's educational philosophy and its practical implementation, between the desire to support various students' strengths and a denigration of student skills described as "unintellectual," between a willingness to help students solve issues affecting their lives and a fear that introducing controversial topics will disrupt the class.

The student data point strongly to the beneficial impact of having a class environment "permeable to student knowledge" (Lelutiu-Weinberger, 2004). When professors are perceived as listening to student voices, there are more frequent and more open class discussions, greater understanding of class material, and greater learning. However, the reality of being "open to student voices" presents teachers with difficult choices and

dilemmas, some of which were previously described by other practitioners in multicultural education (Boler, 2004).

Among the major issues the teachers face is the need for open sharing of student views and experiences in a manner that fosters trust instead of divisions between students and teachers. In order to provide a “safe place” for student learning, the teachers in this study opted to silence controversial dialogues in the class, focusing instead on historical perspectives which many students found irrelevant to their current concerns. Similarly, in order to “protect” their students, the teachers did not come forth with their personal views on political and social issues. However, the effects of such pedagogy of silencing seemed more harmful than supportive, at least in regard to some minority students who attempted to delve into controversial issues in class.

The teachers did not seem to realize that by not addressing concerns raised by students, they were not simply sidestepping the issues at hand but also effectively modeling an attitude of avoidance and uncertainty around social action. By refusing to state their political preferences, or invite the sharing of diverse experiences of students in class, they conveyed a message that intergroup dialogues are undesirable, unsafe, and need to be closely monitored. Further, when a student insisted in bringing controversial material to class, she was labeled “angry” and “troubled” and the conflicts raised by her exchanges with the teacher were interpreted as the student’s inability to manage her own problems.

These findings clash profoundly with the school’s expressed support of “dissent as an educational tool.” In fact, they show that the school failed to support both the teachers and the students in creating meaningful and safe dialogues across difference in

the classrooms. The proposition that teachers receive training in conflict management was not carried out by the school (D.J. Hodges, personal communication, November 18, 2005). The teachers came to view class management issues in terms of their own and students' responsibility, not once indicating that Hunter College had any place in fostering attitudes of trust by facilitating teachers' skills and student spaces in which dialogues could be safely conducted. In this way, the teachers modeled an attitude of hopelessness and ineptitude in regard to their and students' chances to affect their own learning environments.

Interestingly, when the teachers expressed their views on what constitutes a "good" student, their definitions were more supportive of student perspectives and needs than when issues of race were at stake. The LeClerc Report suggested that at Hunter, a variety of student skills and educational goals may be found, yet that some of the skills are incorrectly viewed as "unintellectual" by school officials and teachers. In this study, although both teachers expressed some reservations about student basic skills, especially student writing, they seemed excited to work with the challenges and appreciate other strengths that Hunter students possess. In particular, one teacher supported students' alternative views on education (instrumental versus intellectual goals) by not only listening to their views but also by providing a social analysis of how such views are constructed. The other teacher was very appreciative of the experience that non-traditional students brought with them to the classroom and of the engagement with the material they displayed. Similar to her colleague in the other class, she was able to build on these skills to expand students' critical thinking skills, which created a bridge between students' background and academic material.

These findings suggest that different pedagogical processes may be used when different topics are addressed in class. When faced with issues of race and inequality, the teachers were uneasy to broach controversies in class and actively silenced student discussions. However, when students' skills and goals were discussed, the teachers were able to use these discussions to not only support student-centered views but also to launch a critical analysis of public education. Perhaps in the latter case, the teachers felt that their students were united in their views so that no conflict would erupt as a result. Or, the teachers, themselves White and middle class and at the beginning of their professional careers, did not feel distanced from their students on the topic of pursuing economic opportunities.

The pedagogical continuum that differently affects the teaching of particular topics may be indicative of a broader silencing around inequality and social action in school classrooms. Marri (2005) found that even progressive teachers who use critical pedagogy methods in their teaching failed to stress the importance of social action in their classes. Like the teachers examined in this study, they focused instead on teaching individual democratic skills, such as promoting critical thinking, and discussion and deliberations skills. Although dialogical teaching and learning rests on competence in these areas, it may not be sufficient to create a truly democratic environment if social action, starting with a critical analysis of one's own learning environment, is not simultaneously stressed.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to describe connections between a multicultural educational framework and student processes that foster academic achievement and learning towards social justice. The two goals, student success and social change, have underlined efforts to educate diverse youth in desegregated schools since Brown v. Board of Education (1954). Today's challenge is more specifically defined in terms of bridging the notorious "achievement gap" in educational outcomes that differentially affects the opportunities of students from dominant and minority cultures. The issue at hand is no longer that of equal access, or "letting people in," but rather identifying how institutions can serve all students equally well (Zirkel & Cantor, 2004).

The shift of focus from individual students to institutional practices is well suited to a social-psychological analysis that examines how individuals develop in and together with social and institutional contexts. The traditional approach to the achievement gap promised to "treat all students equally" while supporting a practice that continued to value a single cultural form of knowledge and that excluded many students from the educational process. Today's multicultural framework aims to correct the Eurocentric bias by tailoring education to its diverse recipients and their developmental goals. In this process, student identities, shaped by student cultural backgrounds and experiences, play a crucial role. This study, applying theories of identity and self development to multicultural classrooms, shows that educational practice that views cultural differences as a resource rather than an impediment to learning importantly contributes to academic competence as well as social change.

Connections between theory, method, and practice: The Multicultural system

To adequately understand how student identities emerge in and interact with educational settings, this study relied on a multi-level theoretical model of development in education, described as a multicultural system. To bridge the various theories and methods used in the study, I proposed the notion of a multicultural system to serve as a theoretical tool and a framework to organize the study's findings. Informed by the writings of Vygotsky (1978), Leont'ev (1981), the Dialogical theory of self (Hermans, 1996), and the specific contexts of a multicultural school (the dialogical model of multicultural education, p. 24), the multicultural system combines several key requirements for the study of identity in context: a) it depicts the self as a product of ongoing social relationships (dialogues); while b) conceding that these relationships give rise to a multiplicity of self-positions triggered by contradictory, and sometimes, conflictual viewpoints; and c) specifying that participation in developmental dialogues is shaped by institutions that regulate who may enter particular dialogues and what forms of participation are legitimate. In turn, institutions are changed by the ongoing activities of their members. Based on this model, interactions between individuals and institutions are viewed as fundamentally reciprocal; individual development is both a product and a vehicle of social change.

Many scholars call for theoretical models in the study of identity and intergroup issues that incorporate the study of individuals and their perceptions, social interactions, and larger social structures, embedded in ideologies and institutions that represent them as they regulate public and private lives (Ashmore et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1997). In particular, social psychology has been in need of models that span the macro (institutional), meso (interactional), and micro (individual) levels of analysis. Only such a

multi-level analysis can tell a coherent story about how individuals develop in society and what can be done to aid particular forms of development. The goal of integrating person, culture, and change lies in transforming social environments to accommodate individuals across diverse contexts (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Pettigrew, 1997).

But transformations do not come about easily, as the field of multicultural education aptly illustrates. While schools struggle with the task of educating students from increasingly diverse backgrounds, and as multicultural education programs multiply, teachers are often unsure of how to implement the various cultural content entering their classrooms. Mirroring social tensions in wider society, teachers and students are often wary of conflicts among students, parents, and school administrators that inexpert, or even well-executed, diversity initiatives sometimes elicit.

This study makes a strong case suggesting that conflicts are not only inevitable in a system that allows a true exchange between the self and other but serve important developmental purposes. The dynamic nature of disagreements pushes students to encounter and address increasingly more complex positions on a given issue, requiring them to negotiate differences that are sometimes accompanied by frustration and discomfort. Such events, in turn, trigger developmental shifts that move the individual towards an increasingly complex point of view (Mugny & Doise, 1978; Piaget, 1985).

From a dialogical point of view, tensions between meanings are generated when students address diverse audiences (Hermans, 1996), alternately speaking to their peers and teachers in class, their cultural backgrounds, and the institutions in which their schooling takes place. As this study illustrates, the social relationships formed across such lines of difference allow for an exploration and integration of multiple social

positions that may promote students' skills in a variety of contexts. Such variability and sensitivity to social contexts in individuals has been identified as a sign of healthy development, emphasizing the importance of educational environments that promote, rather than limit, the expression of multiple voices (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004).

Thus, for a multicultural system to be effective, allowing for and dealing with conflict must take place. As this study shows, addressing conflict rather than avoiding it as a sign of educational, or personal, failure may allow schools to engage students intellectually as well as personally, while helping bridge educational and democratic goals (Marri, 2005). Alongside the understanding that conflicts may be a necessary condition for creating equal opportunities for student participation in the classroom, and elsewhere, students and educators can develop a trust that it is safe to disagree and that solutions to social problems may be collectively found.

Examining student development across levels of context

The examination of student development in the various contexts of the multicultural system, including individual perceptions, classroom exchanges, forms of pedagogy, and institutional policy, required a mixed-method study design. A quantitative pre-post survey was used to identify the dimensions and magnitude of change that students experienced as a function of attending the multicultural course. In turn, these findings were supplemented by an extensive qualitative analysis of the psycho-social processes taking place in the multicultural classroom, describing the dynamic nature of the multicultural system and the mechanisms that serve to facilitate or hinder the emergence of particular student processes.

In theoretical terms, the qualitative analysis served to extend the scope of the survey findings and to suggest answers to questions these findings have raised. This research method, known as methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1997) allowed for a comparison of data resulting from a combination of research designs, serving to overcome intrinsic biases of single method studies. It also allowed to juxtapose and confirm findings across levels of contexts.

The practical significance of the multi-level design lies in its linking of student processes to the features of educational environments that support them. As many studies have now confirmed the effectiveness of at least some forms of diversity education, scholars point to the need to more fully describe how multicultural education operates on a classroom level, and how it affects different groups of students (Zirkel et al., 2004).

This study's results provided several answers to illuminate the nature of psycho-social processes in the multicultural classroom. First, the study illustrated that students' self-development is fundamentally a social process, embedded in forms of class participation around academic, social, and personal topics. The diversity of students' viewpoints forms an environment in which perspectives could be contrasted and elaborated, a negotiation sometimes accompanied by tensions among teachers and students. Yet conflicts, by deeply engaging students' feelings, also serve to move the dialogues towards more complex representations of selves and others, and an increasing ability to formulate social critique. At the same time, the classroom system changes as students' understandings deepen. Finally, differences in developmental trajectories reflect students' status as majority or minority members of society to form distinct pathways to learning. The various results supporting these points will be discussed in detail below.

Student development as a social process

The study's survey data served to outline socio-psychological changes affected by students' participation in the multicultural classroom, largely confirming previous results describing the effects of diversity education (e.g., Gurin et al., 1999). This study found that after attending a multicultural course, students' understandings of their own and others' ethnic and racial identity significantly increased. This finding serves as evidence that multicultural education affects not only students' academic knowledge but also their relational self-knowledge as students internalize multicultural values and prepare to use them in action (Nagda et al., 2004).

The relationship between learning and social engagement was supported by the finding that students who participated in the multicultural course increased their intergroup contact and democratic engagement. Students in the multicultural class had more frequent contact with persons from different backgrounds, were more likely to have discussions across lines of ethnicity and color, and developed a greater understanding of racial and cultural difference, compared to students attending other classes. By providing students with practice in intergroup dialogues, the interactions with classmates around topics dealing with group membership helped students extend theoretical understandings (Gurin et al., 1999). Because only schools attended by diverse students provide environments where intergroup dialogues can take place, it is imperative that schools continue to actively promote educational integration.

More frequent contact with diverse others, coupled with a better understanding of their racial and cultural histories, may translate into a readiness to participate in activities promoting social change. The survey measured "democratic outcomes" as various forms

of citizenship engagement intended by the students. The results showed that students in the multicultural classroom significantly increased in their desire to "influence the political structure." This finding supports the aims of progressive educational scholars (e.g., Gurin et al., 1999; Sleeter & Grant, 1993) who propose that multiculturalism, promoting relational knowledge in intergroup settings, extends education to not only academic but also democratic goals.

The qualitative analysis of students' class feedback, using a semi-structured, open-ended format, largely echoed the results of the survey. The results showed that students' learning in the course was strongly associated with the elaboration of students' own ethnic and racial identity and the understanding of the role of identity in the lives of others. In addition, this understanding relied on students' participation in class discussions where the perspectives of others were explored. The relational skills the students gained during the practice of intergroup dialogues combined to form a deeper understanding of the academic material by practicing new ways of being in relation to diverse others. Finally, students engaged in educational dialogues around diversity viewed the course as highly relevant to their own lives and informative in making decisions about their lives, increasing the connection between home and school knowledge and potentially fostering a lasting change in students' perspectives.

The Multicultural System as a laboratory of intergroup relations

The survey findings, while supporting the major theoretical tenets of this study, also posed several questions. First, the survey's measure of "democratic participation" seemed to have only a limited validity. The definition of "democracy" in the Citizenship Engagement Scale was restricted to several statements focusing on a desire to influence

politics, to help others, to clean the environment, and to participate in an unspecified "community action." Although these statements describe the willingness to participate in community life and some degree of altruism, it is arguable that they encompass the complex understandings and skills needed for enacting equitable social relationships.

This point is made clear with the concrete and vivid examples of how social relationships across difference are formed in the context of the multicultural classroom, emerging from face-to-face and imaginary dialogues. This set of results illustrates the complexity that defines relationships among participants in a multicultural system, located not in an imaginary context of a community program, but the very context of the classroom and the school itself. The results of the analyses examining relationships that govern class participation and the micropolitics of teaching a class that deals with a variety of identities and personal and social goals complicate the idea of "democratic participation." Specifically, they show that student's voices are strengthened or silenced in relation to the particular audiences they address. As other researchers have found, the variety of audiences allows for the voicing of selves that are both adaptive, supporting traditional school norms, and subversive, introducing values that reflect students' subjective concerns (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004).

The complexity of meanings generated within the multicultural system also clarified the lack of a connection between student outcomes following participation in the multicultural course and their academic confidence and success, when measured by the survey. The link between multiculturalism and academics is one of the main rationales behind multicultural initiatives (Markus et al., 2000), aimed especially at improving minority students' outcomes. The qualitative findings described the social construction of

"academics" and "learning" in the classroom, and the various meanings that students attach to these concepts. More specifically, the various expressions of what constitutes student success arose from the activities of the participants in the multicultural system, such as student discussions or the writing of narratives about social conflict. These results suggest that when a course explicitly focuses on issues of diversity, it needs to do so not only on a theoretical level but also on the level of pedagogy. Making sure that students' diverse experiences are validated by providing opportunities for the expression of alternative meanings may in turn help students become "successful" across contexts.

Differences in learning of White and non-White students

Although some of the study results presented a relatively uncomplicated picture of students' multicultural learning, others revealed important, and sometimes troubling, differences in which the multicultural curriculum was received by majority and minority students. For White students in these classes, the learning about their own and other's identities was interpreted primarily as an academic project. These students spoke of the importance of theories and traditional class exercises, such as exams, in their increasing understanding of the subject as well as of themselves in relation to the subject. In contrast, minority students relied on class discussions and the exchanges of perspectives these discussions have fostered in their learning. They were more likely than the White students to appreciate the sharing of students' experiences around the subject of diversity, which helped them to elaborate on the theoretical perspectives presented in class.

This finding echoes what Nagda and her colleagues (2004) described as differences in two mechanisms of classroom learning: content learning (lecture and readings) and active or dialogic learning (participation in experiential exercises). In their studies, they showed

that the two learning styles combine to produce a more powerful teaching, where the participation in student dialogues mediated traditional content learning, by allowing students "to actualize and directly apply" their face-to face learning (Nagda at al., 2004). Interestingly, they also found that minority students rated their involvement in dialogical learning significantly higher than White students did. The students of color in those classes felt that their voices were validated and recognized, when allowed to speak in class, undoing some of the isolation minorities feel in academia (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Similarly, others have described the importance of experience-based discourse in African-American learning communities, one of whose functions is to supplement and contradict Eurocentric academic theories and connect learning to students' lives (Ball, 2000; Lee, Rosenfeld, Mendenhall, Rivers, & Tynes, 2004).

This study may shed some additional light on the differences in learning styles exercised by White and non-White students in multicultural classrooms. Rather than locating learning style differences solely in prior cultural and schooling experiences, this study suggests that learning is also constructed daily in the classroom, through teacher-student and student-student interactions that shape what is learned and how the learners themselves are defined. When studied as a multicultural system in which relational activities by its members importantly define student experiences, it becomes evident that student learning is structured by relationships of power (Fine, 1997; Fine, Anand, Jordan, & Sherman, 2003; Pruitt, 2004). Yet power, in dialogical theory, does not function uni-directionally to simply reproduce relations of dominance that exist outside of the classroom. As this study shows, by contesting accepted values and adopting a variety of narrative styles, including "academic discourse" that reflects the dominant voice of

academia, students may also introduce new meanings and thus transform the understandings formed within the multicultural system.

Observations of one classroom participating in this study illustrated the complexity of discourses that support, or disrupt, the learning process, by responding to the various audiences – academic, professional, and cultural, among others -- that teachers and students bring with them to the class while they speak to each other. This analysis provides a strong argument for looking separately at the school experiences of different groups of students rather than assuming that their perceptions of what goes on in the classroom are similar to each other's (Markus et al., 2000). If a course functions to elaborate student identities, it is imperative to understand the different trajectories along which majority and minority identities develop, the different places from which they originate, and in turn, the different places to which the passage through the multicultural education system may propel them. I will argue that it is the nature of class interactions, including interactions that occur in the school's hallways, cafeterias, and administrative offices, that may "make or brake" the promise of multiculturalism.

Constructing intergroup dialogues in the classroom

The examination of a classroom as a system reveals that power operates on several levels to shape exchanges among students and teachers. One level is the discourse of academic theory speaking with an authority on which the school itself is resting. Supporting the status quo, academic theory typically presents the voices of the privileged. A typical educational practice described as a "banking pedagogy" (Freire, 1993) perpetuates the privileged voice by students appropriating this knowledge in an uncritical manner. This practice is aided by classroom discipline (Ball, 2000) maintained by

teachers who are invested with the power of gatekeeping the display of student voices in class.

Non-White students might not easily identify with or reflect on the discourses of academic theories, some of which portray their own group members in negative terms (Gasman et al., 2004). For them, the teaching of such theories may need to be bracketed by explicitly stating the teacher's or the school's (critical) position vis-à-vis these theories to make students comfortable enough to safely participate in learning. For example, Grace, an African-American/West Indian woman and one of the observed students, exemplified in her class comments the experience-based discourse found frequently and valued highly among minority students. From this position, she also spoke to academic subjects, such as theories presented in class and the ways they are taught, with a goal to attack stereotypes these theories have perpetuated in wider society.

However, instead of validating Grace's point of view, the teacher interpreted the critique as evidence that Grace "did not do her reading" and misunderstood the aims of the lesson. This dynamic revealed that this classroom's discourse was regulated by both stated and unstated rules of participation. It showed that only certain lines of critique were perceived as legitimate, such as those supported by the textbook, which the teacher said was "very liberal". In contrast, an unsanctioned line of critique delivered by Grace became "her emotional reaction" and was viewed as an unintellectual and unwanted form of class participation.

The White students in class, who seemed to follow the official line of sociological theory without deeper questioning, had no difficulty fully participating in the academic process. Perceived thus by their teachers, they also tended to view themselves as

successful learners in the course, and increased confidence in their academic ability over the course of the semester. The non-White students, however, did not connect their learning in the course to academic goals and competence. In fact, the more they engaged in critique of the course on their feedback forms, the less academically competent they saw themselves. This variation exemplifies the social construction of the students' self-images during the course of their learning and the differential impact their engagement with official discourses of schooling has on their academic selves. Understanding the different orientations students and teachers form towards the subject of study, to academia, and to each other during the learning process, is a crucial step to establishing safe and just learning environments.

Building academic competence through multicultural education

Studying the classroom as a multicultural system allowed for the examination of relational processes that underlie student learning and academic attitudes. When identity development is described as a social process, the experiences of majority and minority students are oriented not only by their differing backgrounds but also by the ways in which these backgrounds inform their learning together. Understanding how different groups of students receive the multicultural curriculum may offer explanations for the lack of the connection between course attendance and students' academic outcomes, standing in direct contrast to the claims that multiculturalism serves to boost minority student's academic motivation and achievement. In the survey, the only support for the hypothesis that multicultural education builds academic competence, in the traditional sense, was found among the – relatively small -- group of White and male students in the study.

Student experiences at the start of the class may importantly color the development of their learning and academic attitudes. The role of culture and identity in people's lives may be more significant for White students whose experiences are typically viewed as unrelated to White racial identity than to minority students who often enter with an elaborate understanding of minority identity. To support this view, this study found that minority students had a greater understanding of and awareness of racial/ethnic identity at the beginning and end of the semester than their White counterparts. In fact, minority students' identity awareness significantly increased during the course of the semester.

The finding that only in the White sample did learning about identity lead to increases in self-perceived academic competence may suggest that identity may be differentially related to establishing trust in the classroom. The class's focus on racial and ethnic identity may be, at times, perilous for both groups of students, yet for different reasons. For minority students, the academic discussion of social issues affecting their communities, such as negative stereotypes, poverty, and other forms of injustice, may bring up feelings of shame, rage, or frustration, such as when a student felt that members of her group were portrayed as "deviant and destructive members of society". The academic treatment of these deeply-felt issues, which one of the teacher described as "nonchalant," may be seen as a diversion from the need for social action and alienate students from participating in academic dialogues. It is when teachers fail to connect the goals of academia with social action and students' desire for change is interpreted as unintellectual that students become further removed from seeing themselves as part of an academic community.

On part of the White students, the learning about White identity and its relationship to minority identities may be accompanied by other negative feelings. Seeing themselves, perhaps for the first time, as actors in the system of dominance and oppression, may be deeply traumatic (Boler, 2004). As one teacher in this study said, students who are part of the group that has perpetrated inequality feel “soreness.” Perhaps as a measure to protect themselves from such negative implications, White students attending largely diverse institutions, such as Hunter College, frequently downplay the importance of their identities (Gurin et al, 1999; Sears et al., 1999). This may be also the reason why the White students in this study did not strengthen their identity awareness to the degree that their non-White counterparts did. It is also possible that those few White students who started to identify more strongly with their group and understood its importance in their lives did so on a primarily intellectual level to counter those negative feelings, explaining the connection between White identity and academic confidence.

However, there exist possibilities for breaking such predictable patterns of constructing racial identity, academic competence, and intergroup relations as seen in the above examples. The multicultural system allows for changes in the participants’ interactions by virtue of the development of its individual members. As students and teachers increase their understandings of themselves and others, and the material under study and its connection to their lives, their particular roles in the multicultural system, such as “the good student”, “the troublemaker”, “the teacher as a sole source of knowledge” may slowly shift, and the once distinct voices may start blending together, adopting a multiplicity of discourses. Similarly, the teacher’s approach to his or her class does not remain static but reflects and responds to the changing dynamics of knowledge

negotiation in the classroom, illustrating not one form of pedagogy but a pedagogical continuum (Ball, 2004). I will argue that conflict is a crucial element in these changes driving classroom dynamics, in its potential to radically shift the balance between alienation and trust, shock and comfort, and educational failure and success.

The role of conflict in multicultural education

As the data collected for this study made apparent, the diversity of student voices in the classroom, and the various paths the students take as they learn with and from their teachers and peers, makes it inevitable that conflicts arise. Some of these conflicts may be silenced and internalized rather than expressed openly by students, possibly resulting in an alienation from the academic environment. Other conflicts are addressed head on, stirring the feelings of students and teachers alike, disrupting the regular flow of the classroom. However, I will argue that all of these conflict are a normal, and even desirable, part of education about difference and democracy. If managed in an informed manner, conflicts may serve as a unique source of learning, by providing a deeply felt experience of the voices of others, and forging first difficult relationships across lines of difference.

This study brought several sources of data to examine the role of conflict in the multicultural classroom. The most vivid illustration of class conflict and its short-term effects came from the class observation involving exchanges between Grace, her teacher and her fellow students described in “One lecture, multiple understandings”. This brief snapshot of class dynamics around conflict demonstrated several issues. First, engaging in conflict may present a threat to all parties involved. It makes students vulnerable to critiques of exhibiting an “unintellectual” or simply an adversarial attitude that may

decrease their academic standing in class. For teachers, when conflict erupts, issues of class management become paramount in an effort to avoid full-scale expressions of hostility, the loss of authority, or both. For those witnessing the conflict, the classroom may cease to be perceived as a safe place in which one's feelings are protected, a perception that may become replaced by anxiety affecting one's academic focus and performance.

At the same time, the class observation demonstrated the potential of class conflict to open up new lines of reasoning and understanding, possibly by shaking ingrained attitudes and the pressing need to articulate one's position more clearly when confronted with an opposing view (Berlak, 2004; Piaget, 1985). In the class session described above, the conflict between a student and the teacher, although remaining unresolved at the moment, seemed to have shifted the class's dynamic to a increasingly open examination of multiple positions resulting in a collective redefinition of intergroup issues that formed the current topic of study.

Interestingly, the changes in students' participation following class conflict seemed to affect all students regardless of their reliance on traditional academic pedagogy. Although other data have shown that White students tended to primarily rely on teachers' lectures and class texts in their learning while non-Whites "learned more" from class discussions, the observation showed that conflict triggered changes in perspectives on all sides of the racial spectrum in the class. In that observation, while the White student became increasingly critical, the African-American student started to appropriate the "academic discourse" into her own voice, thus bridging the gap between experiential and content-based learning that had originally divided majority and minority students. These changes

show the development of the multicultural system towards meanings that are increasingly dialogical, by allowing for students to rehearse multiple roles.

The qualitative and quantitative feedback confirmed what the class observation showed about the dual nature and effects of class conflict. Students who witnessed conflicts in class expressed an ambiguity about the benefits of publicly allowing for differences to emerge. For example, those students who witnessed more class conflicts tended to increase their belief that democracy and difference are fundamentally incompatible. Yet, this ambiguity was coupled with clearly demonstrated, if not consciously acknowledged, benefits of witnessing class conflict. Students who witnessed conflicts in class increased their use of social analysis in the Narrative Task. Moreover, White students, particularly those attending Grace's class, significantly increased their reported learning in the course, their understanding of class topics, and an appreciation of the perspectives of others, as a correlate of witnessing conflict.

Finally, it is important to note that definitions of what constitutes conflict and how we should act on our conflicting beliefs, may vary significantly across cultures and contexts. Thus, the teacher's interpretation of what went on in Grace's class that guided this analysis may have differed from how Grace interpreted the exchanges, or from interpretations by other students. According to Markus and Lin (1999), for African Americans, conflicts may have both individual and relational meanings. Similarly, emotional engagement, typically seen as inappropriate in arguments conducted among White Americans, may be a sign of commitment when performed by a person of African American background (Markus & Lin, 1999).

The Narrative Task served as another source of data examining how students view intergroup relations; specifically, conflictual relations over limited resources (job access). Its goal was to examine the ways students reason about possible solutions while giving them an opportunity to start re-imagining some of the relations experienced in their daily lives. The results of the Narrative Task showed that, unfortunately, the majority of students viewed intergroup conflicts as having no real solutions. This view supports the previous finding that students (and teachers) do not welcome conflict and may try to avoid it when possible. The analyses of students' responses to intergroup conflict in the Narrative Task showed that the most typical response was to side with one of the characters against the other, a position supporting the students' view that conflicts are inherently divisive and that multiculturalism, in exposing differing perspectives, may foster adversarial attitudes rather than commonality.

Another response to the scenario presented by the Narrative Task, common among minority students, was to advise the minority character to defend himself against negative stereotyping of his group by "hard work". Although this view incorporated a social analysis of intergroup relations (the presence of stereotyping), it nonetheless reproduced some of these stereotypes by placing responsibility on the oppressed to show that they are "worthy" of being treated equally. However, the shifting of the characters' conflict from interpersonal to social-analytical frame, exemplified by this response, may have served as a first step to imagining possible conflict solutions. This result was supported by the finding that students who narrated a more positive outcome of the imaginary scenario demonstrated increases in their scores on their ability to think in more complex terms about individuals and their relations to wider social arrangements.

Taken together, these findings sit uneasily with the fact that the teachers saw no need to incorporate the Narrative Task into their class discussions, showing a disconnect between the pedagogical practice that guided the multicultural class system and students' developmental goals. Although the exercise was structured to provide students with a safe space to explore intergroup differences, and possible solutions, and the sharing of these responses could have helped them to articulate barriers to understanding as a first step to overcoming them, such opportunity was not exercised. Similarly, class conflicts were rarely followed by discussions of what happened and how the conflict may had affected the dynamics and learning in the class.

These findings raise important questions about institutional regulation of student participation in class, existing gaps in teacher training regarding multicultural pedagogy, and the ways in which difference may be incorporated as a legitimate mechanism of promoting equitable group relationships. To address these issues, I will turn next to the connections between classrooms practices, pedagogy, and institutional policy. I will argue that for multicultural education to be effective, explicit changes need to be made on an institutional level, in turn creating spaces in classrooms that allow for a free exchange of diverse voices.

Democracy and academia: How to support an uneasy relationship

To frame the practices and goals of multicultural education and multicultural relations at Hunter College, this study used an archival document, the LeClerc's Report on Campus Relations. With this document, I described how an institutional climate may affect and structure teaching content and process, class interactions, and student outcomes, answering calls to study institutions in their capacity to reproduce or interrupt

unjust social arrangements (Bourdieu, 1991; Fine, 1997). More particularly, in the field of multicultural education, the latest task centers on identifying features of an "optimal climate" in which diversity initiatives may flourish, to finally realize the goal of true educational integration (Hurtado, 2005; Zirkel et al., 2004).

The LeClerc Commission on Campus Relations was a direct result of a single "critical moment" that occurred in the Hunter College hallway: a public exchange of hostile, racially-colored insults between student leaders and school officials. The following two years of institutional soul-searching, in which students, faculty and staff on all levels were involved, writing reports, sharing ideas during workshops and panels, suggesting solutions, showed the power of conflict to bring about change. Perhaps for this reason, one of the areas the final Report addressed was the key role of dissent in academia, both as a means of intellectual development and of creating a community of trust.

However, ten years later, a multicultural classroom examined in this study showed little signs of incorporating dissent, or controversy of any kind, as a meaningful teaching tool. Instead, the students and their teachers expressed a profound ambiguity about bringing up views that may create conflicts in class, for a variety of reasons. Most notably, none of the study participants identified Hunter College as responsible for fostering the lack of trust that fundamentally affected the tone of exchanges in their classes, and in turn, their learning and an overall relationship to academia.

It would be easy to pinpoint the teachers' anxiety about class conflict as the proximal cause of the selective silencing of voices witnessed in class. However, it is important to consider the institutional environment in which these teachers work and the way it

structures their own pedagogy and relationships to students. Although the LeClerc Report proposed that training is offered to prepare teachers for pedagogical issues faced in diverse classrooms, and to deal with conflicts in and outside of the classrooms, no such measures were taken. In fact, none of the recommendations made by the Panel on Campus Dissent, including the establishment of an office to deal with channeling and addressing racial conflict, were ever followed (D.J. Hodges, personal communication, October 18, 2005).

At the same time, as the ratio of courses taught by adjunct faculty, such as the teachers participating in this study, rises (Testimony of the Professional Staff, 2005), the opportunities for meaningful dialogues in and outside of class diminish. To safely address and negotiate class controversy, teachers need not only pedagogical but also structural tools: small class size to facilitate dialogues and the development of trust among students, frequent contact, such as twice-weekly class schedule, accessibility of support in the form of abundant office hours (Gaines, 2004; Glass, 2004). However, at Hunter College, adjunct faculty members, typically students themselves and often balancing multiple part-time jobs, do not spend enough time on campus to provide such continuity and face-to-face support to students. Their shared office space does not lend itself to intimate conversations with students to address possible fears and concerns.

The other level of institutional structuring that may have affected the conversations in SOC 217: Race and Ethnicity was the effective removal of a large population of students inclined to create class controversies from the college itself. During the 1990's, as funding for CUNY as well as other public universities continued to decline, Hunter students themselves have changed: poor and working-class students receiving public

funds have been increasingly replaced by middle-class students, and students of color were disproportionally displaced (Bowen, 2005). One of the reform's effects is that the new Hunter College student, from his or her more privileged position, is less knowledgeable and sensitive about injustice, less vocal, less willing to risk future academic standing in the service of an ill-defined educational community (D.J. Hodges, personal communication, October 18, 2005). To counter the effects of a conservative backlash affecting public education, it is important to reintroduce relevant debates, including controversial material, into the classroom.

The strengths and limitation of the study

Research design. One of the major strengths of this study lies in its combination of methodologies that allows for the spanning of the various levels of context, ranging from individual to the institutional, that structure self-development in education. The mixed-method design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) serves to locate psychological processes in the particular contexts in which they develop, allowing for psychological theory to address social issues instead of reducing them to individual concerns. From a methodological standpoint, mixed-method designs present an opportunity for a triangulation of results, by juxtaposing findings achieved through various methods, and amplifying themes that connect across results.

In this study, the qualitative data, consisting of class observations, open-ended feedback, interviews, and archival documents, were used to supplement and "complicate" the quantitative results from the survey. At times, quotes were used to reflect the participant voices and convey the complexity of their concerns. At other times, qualitative data were "quantisized" by creating variables based on themes found in the

data, and related, by means of correlations, to the survey data, together creating a rich, multi-layered picture of student development in multicultural education. In this way, the study exemplifies a research model that values equally "the subjective and the objective", focusing on lived experience and hypothesis-testing, and may speak to a variety of audiences (Rabinowitz & Martin, 2001), including scholars and practitioners in the fields of psychology and education.

Further, the examination of data focusing on classroom interactions allowed for analyses of mediating processes between institutional frameworks (multicultural education) and individual outcomes (student identity and achievement). Scholars addressing current issues in multicultural education (Zirkel at al., 2004) identified social relationships structuring the school climate as a crucial variable in the success of failure of diversity interventions. This study provided several suggestions on how such relationships operate to produce or hinder the goals of student development and social change. Specifically, it showed how classroom practices and patterns of participation, such as identity elaboration, perspective taking, and conflict negotiation, affect the reception of the multicultural curriculum by various groups of students.

There are several ways in which the design of the study could be further improved. Securing a larger sample of participants would allow for a statistical testing of mediational models by means of path analysis, to statistically examine relationships the current study suggested based on correlations among the variables. For example, Nagda et al. (2004) used a path analytical design to differentiate between the effects of traditional, enlightment-based instruction and a "dialogical encounter" instruction with the result of identifying instructional features that enhance multicultural learning.

Similarly, a comparison of several classrooms teaching the same curriculum would provide important insights into which pedagogical strategies may work best for various students.

Some of the measures used in this study could be improved to ensure a greater internal validity of the results. Specifically, several single-item measures were used to assess constructs such as the quantity and quality of intergroup contact, racial and cultural understanding, and students' perceptions of the course. Instead, future research should rely on validated aggregate measures (scales) of these constructs to avoid the threat of inflating standard errors of estimates that make it harder to detect true changes (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

Another limitation of this study lies in its two time-point pre-post design that does not allow for a rigorous tracking of the developmental processes the students undergo during the course of the semester. Because development does not proceed in a linear fashion, it is important to document the moments that shift students' understandings. Although in this study multiple class observations were collected, the students' anonymity did not allow to track the paths of individual students' progress. This limitation could be overcome by a design incorporating student feedback at several times during the semester, either by using focus groups or student journals reflecting on students' ongoing experiences. Similarly, the development of class dynamics could be traced by securing teachers' reflections on the classroom process several times a semester, which could be used to triangulate the students' responses.

The careful attention to the developmental trajectories of various students in multicultural classes would benefit from being informed by a stage theory of racial

identity development. For example, Gaines (2004), in his analysis of a course on interethnic relations applied racial identity development theory (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990; Tatum, 1992) to describe the various stages through which his students, White and non-White, passed during the semester, as they interacted with the theories taught in class and with each others' perspectives on these theories. Better understanding of interactions between identity development and intergroup contact around race education may provide practitioners with useful models of managing the pedagogical challenges of multiculturalism.

Finally, interactions between particular theories and their reception by students should be studied, to better understand the types of academic discourse that may provide student engagement or alienation. For example, Gaines (2004) contrasted the differential reception by students of two major intergroup theories, that of DuBois and Allport, to illustrate that academic content is not "neutral" in its effects on students, and that teachers need to structure class discussions in a way that incorporates these differences in a manner that enhances rather than disrupts, class cohesion and learning.

The sample. The selection of the study's sample contributed to the validity of its findings while presenting several limitations. The pre-post quasi-experimental design allowed for a statistical comparison of two groups of students, those attending the multicultural course, and their peers who attended other social science courses. The results clearly demonstrated the positive effects of the multicultural course, thus contributing to the growing literature on the benefits of diversity education (e.g., Gurin et al., 1999). The lack of a random assignment restricts these findings; however, true experiments can only rarely be conducted in field settings (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

Although in general, student participation rates in the study were very high, especially among the multicultural group (67 out of 68; 98.5%), the number of participants varied across the types of data collected and analyses performed, rendering some results more valid and generalizable than others. Thus, in statistical terms, the survey results rated higher in validity and reliability than the qualitative results, or the results of the combined quant-qual analyses. For example, due to the small numbers of participants available for some analyses, this study included several results that were only marginally statistically significant ($p < .10$), providing less robust evidence of the suggested effects.

However, the validity criteria for qualitative research diverge from those following traditional positivist designs. The requirements for validity in qualitative research, defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as “trustworthiness” of interpretative work, were fulfilled in this study by a prolonged engagement with participants and persistent observation, and the use of multiple methods or triangulation.

Another technical “limitation” of the current sample lies in the unequal numbers of participants representing various cultural groups in the study. The uneven distribution of race across the sample reflects the racial composition of the school as a whole, making the findings generalizable to, at minimum, other classes taught at Hunter College. However, sampling from a greater number of sections of SOC: 217 would allow for collecting greater numbers of responses by students who were currently underrepresented. Among these, the perspectives of White, native-born students would be valuable for examining their full range of responses to a multicultural curriculum. At present, the responses of native White students were combined with those of White immigrants, most of whom came from the former Soviet republics, yet there are

important differences between these samples (see, for example, Deaux, Reid, Martin, & Bikmen, 2006). Similarly, a greater differentiation of responses by ethnicity and culture in the non-White sample, as well as by gender and other areas of difference, would be helpful.

The course. The selection of the course under study presented other advantages and disadvantages in terms of making conclusions about multicultural education at Hunter College. Sociology 217: Race and Ethnicity is representative of multicultural education in that it deals directly with issues of racial and ethnic identity and intergroup relations. Taught from a position of sociological theory, the course may differ, however, from courses taught in psychology departments, for example, that may place a greater emphasis on identity development and interpersonal and group processes. However, at this time, SOC 217 was the only course offered at Hunter College dealing with race and ethnicity in general terms (while other courses examine, for example, Latino identity, gender and sexual identity, etc.).

One of the conclusions of this study was that the multicultural course presented students with only a limited exposure to critical theories of diversity and race relations, delivered by largely traditional forms of pedagogy ("enlightment model of instruction", Nagda et al., 2004). However, instructors teaching the course structure the educational content and process according to their own resources and teaching philosophies, so that an examination of other sections of the course, taught by different instructors, could yield very different results. Also, the current study examined only the evening sections of the course, typically attended by students who are older and work full-time. In comparison,

day students may be younger, less experienced, but perhaps more familiar with diversity education that has become widespread in recent years.

Finally, the apolitical nature of the course may have been partially a function of its theoretical emphasis; the course functions as a general survey of the histories of various racial and ethnic groups and their progress in the American society. Other courses, focusing exclusively on the history of one cultural group, may be able to delve deeper into its relations with other groups and the structural and political factors that shape them. For example, courses on issues affecting African-Americans in the United States and elsewhere, and theories developed from within minority cultures (e.g., BLPR 220: African Spirituality in the Diaspora; BLPR 290.63: Modern South Africa; BLPR 428.59: African-Centered Critical Theory) were reported to be more political in nature than SOC 217: Race and Ethnicity, as well as courses dealing with Latinos (e.g., BLPR 290.35: Dominican Identity). These course offerings are available through the Department of Africana and Puerto-Rican-Latino Studies and are also a part of the Pluralism and Diversity Requirement (D.J. Hodges, personal communication, October 18, 2005).

Implications for ongoing research and practice

Implications for research. The research presented here makes a strong case for the desirability of developing further connections between psychological theory and educational practice to inform multicultural efforts. As diversity programs are increasingly implemented across the nation’s schools, educators lament the lack of practical models to guide them in implementing the goals of multiculturalism (Leistyna, 2003; Marri, 2005). Simply exposing teachers to readings in critical theory does not translate into progressive educational practice; in fact, practitioners find it difficult to

make links between the theoretical rhetoric and the needs of their own classrooms (Ball, 2000; Marri, 2005). Similarly, on the level of institutions, the lack of clarity regarding the goals and application of multicultural education may risk aggravating interethnic tensions that multiculturalism is designed to alleviate (Bekerman, 2004).

The divorce between theory and practice in multicultural education can be addressed by research guided by specific methodological and theoretical considerations. As this study has shown, much is to be gained from employing multi-method models which allow the examination of individual processes together with the social and institutional environments in which they develop. Such methodology, relying on a combination of qualitative and quantitative observations, can identify specific opportunities for educational interventions. For example, collecting data on the effects of the institutional climate, including multicultural policies, procedures, and levels of institutional and interactional diversity (Gurin et al., 1999) can help design school environments that best facilitate the implementation of a multicultural curriculum (Zirkel et al., 2004). Similarly, data describing different forms of pedagogy, ranging from traditional to more critical and experience-based approaches, can inform initiatives to aid teachers of multicultural courses. The study of class group dynamics, by means of observational techniques, journals, and interviews, may tell us what kinds of class climates inspire the cohesion and trust necessary to address controversial material. Finally, the individual processes of students participating in multicultural curricula need to be documented over time, with a careful consideration of the fact that their experiences may differ greatly from one another's. These data may help design instructional models that effectively deal with diversity not only "in society" but also in the schools' own classrooms.

Theoretically, multicultural research needs to implement a levels-of-analysis framework (Doise, 1997; Pettigrew, 1997) that best describes identity and learning processes in the variety of their contexts, as this study has shown. For studying developmental processes, such frameworks are compatible with socio-relational theories of Vygotsky (1987), the theory of a dialogical self (Hermans, 1996), and more recent work by scholars in the socio-cultural and narrative traditions of development (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Rogoff, 1995).

Additionally, multicultural education research would benefit from incorporating theories on racial identity development, group dynamics, teacher development, and democratic education. Tatum, Cross, and Helms offered stages-of-racial-identity-development theories that may be applied to processes experienced by students in multicultural classrooms (cited in Gaines, 2004). The study of group processes, such as conflict negotiation, may bring a framework for understanding and supporting the interactional skills students need for conducting successful dialogues in classrooms. For example, Berlak (2004) applied a theory of trauma and witnessing based on Felman and Laub (1992) to analyze her students' reactions to an interracial conflict in the classroom, and to guide students to a successful transformation of some of their views in the conflict's aftermath (Berlak, 2004).

To understand issues of teacher development, Ball (2000) offered a useful framework of teachers working on a pedagogical continuum in terms of implementing the goals of critical theory. With this model, researchers may categorize teaching practices to conduct cross-classroom studies as well as to track the development of individual teachers across time. Finally, theoretical links between multicultural education and education for

democracy need to be made explicit. Currently, there is a gap between the two theories that were developed separately and with somewhat different aims; however, the two perspectives are fundamentally complementary (Marri, 2005). Clarifying exactly how multicultural education may help the goals of a democracy can shift its practice into the realm of education that is "multicultural *and* social reconstructionist" (Sleeter & Grant, 1988, emphasis mine) from more superficial versions of multiculturalism that only mask and perpetuate injustice (Leistyna, 2002).

Implications for practice. One of the major findings of this study pointed to the fact that in multicultural courses, teachers are not only teaching about identity and coexistence in a pluralist society, but they are, perhaps more importantly, modeling it. This fact has significant implications for teaching practice, school policy, and for students who often find their own identities, relationships and other "stuff of real life" under class scrutiny. Teaching for social change towards effective multiculturalism means that multiple transformations take place in the schools and classrooms. Among those, the content of curricula, pedagogical practices, and institutional as well as personal understandings of academia and learning need to be redefined.

Most recent scholarship on multicultural education, in its examination of what features of the integrated environment are necessary to foster social change (Zirkel et al., 2004) consistently calls for a rigorous institutionalization of support for diversity programs (e.g., Fine et al., 2003, Hurtado, 2005; Pinel, Warner, & Chua, 2005; Zirkel et al., 2004). This means that schools need to create official policies regarding diversity, provide explicit training and support for teachers in multicultural courses, help design interventions, such as interethnic dialogues among students, recruit and retain diverse

faculty and student body to establish trust and provide opportunities for contact. Similarly, Fine et al. (2003) speak of the need of careful planning of spaces in which all youth can “rise to the occasion” and fulfill the promise of educational and social integration. Yet, these spaces cannot occur without a vision and a leadership. In fact, it has been shown that diversity initiatives that do not take the issues at hand seriously (e.g., by only superficially “adding cultures to the mix”), may be not only ineffective but harmful (Yeakley, 1998).

The curricular and pedagogical changes needed to support multiculturalism include the shifting of traditional lecture-based classroom practice to models that incorporate the sharing of student experiences. The discussions that students participate in, as was shown in this study, form a crucial element of learning about oneself and others that gives rise to a more complex understanding of multicultural issues. Because experience-based discourse is largely devalued in academia (Gasman et al., 2004), it may be necessary to build explicit experience-based models of instruction to supplement traditional methods of teaching. For example, Nagda et al. (2004) showed the particular effects of a combined lecture-and-intergroup-dialogue instructional model on student motivation and learning about diversity. Further, including student-centered teaching methods will greatly aid in supporting diverse students’ voices. As was shown in this study, academic practice that relies on a rigid model of instruction can be not only irrelevant to some students’ experiences, it can be harmful once these experiences are labeled “unintellectual” and “anti-academic.” By combining experiential learning with traditional lecture formats, students can process the material by making links to their own lives, practice intergroup

dialogues, and have the opportunity to bring their own agenda to the table knowing that their concerns will be heard.

In the past few years, several books were published addressing the practice of multicultural education that may be of great relevance to practitioners, thus bridging the gap between theory and practice outlined above. For example, a volume edited by Megan Boler (2004), Democratic dialogue in education: Troubling speech, disturbing silence, offers multiple perspectives on how to manage class conflicts around diversity and other controversial issues. The book's platform, stating that controversial dialogues are desirable, nonetheless takes very seriously the challenges of allowing conflict into classrooms and the relationships between speaking and (the inevitable) silencing of particular voices. Because one of this study's major findings was the significance of class conflict in triggering student and class changes, I would recommend Boler's book to teachers willing to take the risk and introduce difficult dialogues in their classes.

Another useful guide to classroom practice is a book edited by Peters-Davis and Shultz (2005): Challenges of multicultural education: Teaching and taking diversity courses. In this book, both faculty and student experiences with multicultural education are recorded. Specifically, education that centers on students' identities is highlighted, with a discussion of how such teaching can be connected to a critical analysis of political agendas that privilege some and disadvantage others, connecting multiculturalism to a struggle for justice.

Pepi Leistyna's analysis of one school's effort to implement a multicultural program (Defining and designing multiculturalism: One school system's efforts, 2002) may guide school administrators as they design and implement diversity curricula. In this book, one

can trace the development of a diversity program in a community, the goals the program was to serve, and the ways in which it was implemented. The remainder of the book details the results of the intervention, juxtaposing various points of view, including those of students, faculty, and administrators, in their descriptions of how the program did or did not work to achieve its objectives.

An underlying theme in these books is the need to transform not only the ways in which multicultural issues are taught but also to change entire schools and communities as they struggle to address oppression and injustice in their midst. The need to connect multicultural education to real-life issues in the students' lives, by way of sharing experiences, and discussing not just the histories but current issues facing various groups and society as a whole, is a move against the increasing de-politization of diversity programs and education in general. Fine et al. (2003) and Ball (2000) connect the profound ambivalence with which schools approach education about democracy to the fact that social justice attempts often disrupt academic traditions.

The practitioners and students who take the considerable risks of enacting democracy in classrooms often follow what hooks (1994) calls transgressive pedagogy, a practice model that explicitly acknowledges that the classroom is a site of political and personal struggle over knowledge. Documenting this struggle is one way in which those who participate in it can inform others and start conversations about solutions aimed at the balancing of unequal power relationships that plague multicultural and traditional classrooms alike. The clash over the aims of public schooling (Marri, 2005), when viewed through the debates over multiculturalism, is really a clash about whether schools should continue to support the status quo or to disrupt it. With this study, I hope to

contribute to the view that radical transformation is necessary, on personal as well as institutional levels, in order to fulfill the promise of multicultural democracy.

Table 1.

Summary of design: the contexts of multicultural education.

Analysis	Context
What is multicultural education in its official form?	Institutional policy
How is multicultural education implemented in classrooms?	Class syllabus and forms of pedagogy
How are students socialized into the discourses of multiculturalism? How do they practice their understandings of multiculturalism under the teachers' guidance?	Class dynamics
How do students practice multiculturalism using a vicarious (imagined) interpersonal scenario?	Narrative Task
What are the unique effects of multicultural education? What are the social-relational processes shaping these effects?	Survey Student feedback

Table 2.

Participants' characteristics.

		Multicultural group	*Comparison group*
Mean age		24 years	23 years
Range		19-38	18-45
SD		3.9	5.3
Gender		14 (21%) male	7 (14%)
		54 (79%) female	42 (86%)
Immigration status		33 (48%) native-born	16 (39%)
		24 (42%) immigrants	25 (61%)
Ethnicity:			
	Hispanic/Latino	16 (23.5%)	7 (14.5%)
	Colombian	4 (6%)	0 (0%)
	Dominican/ Ecuadorian	7 (10%)	0 (0%)
	Mexican	1 (1.5%)	1 (2%)
	African-American	5 (7%)	7 (14.5%)
	West Indian	5 (7%)	4 (8.3%)
	White	7 (10%)	7 (14.5%)
	East European	5 (7%)	5 (10.4%)
	White-other	4	7 (14.5%)
	Asian	6 (9%)	7 (14.5%)
	East Indian	0	1 (2%)
	Mixed race	3 (4.5%)	2 (4.1%)

Table 3.

Overview of study measures.

Level of analysis	Construct	Measures
Institutional factors	• Emphasis of difference • Views on student ability • Educational goals	• Content analysis of archival data on institutional policy • Teacher interviews • Student feedback (qualitative)
Classroom practices	• Curriculum emphasizing diverse perspectives • Curriculum reflecting students' lives • Modeling dialogical engagement and skills (perspective-taking and conflict negotiation)	• Observations of classroom practices • Teacher interviews • Student feedback (quantitative and qualitative)
Student processes	• Identity awareness • Positive intergroup relations • Academic success • Democratic engagement • Dialogical skills (perspective-taking, conflict negotiation)	• Student survey (quantitative assessment of learning, democracy, and identity outcomes) • Student feedback (quantitative and qualitative) • In-class exercise (discourse analysis)

Table 4. *Means and standard deviations by experimental group.*

	Experimental group					
	Multicultural N = 68			Comparison N = 49		
	Before score M (SD)	After score M (SD)	Difference score M (SD)	Before score M (SD)	After score M (SD)	Difference score M (SD)
Self-perceived academic ability	3.45 (.64)	3.62 (.76)		3.59 (.64)	3.63 (.69)	
Intellectual self-confidence	3.66 (.76)	3.64 (.82)		3.36 (.78)	3.40 (.81)	
Active thinking*	3.88 (.71)	3.73 (.71)	-.14 (.63)	3.83 (.69)	3.74 (.72)	-.07 (.58)
Citizenship engagement*	2.49 (.60)	2.70 (.63)	.20 (41)	2. 53 (.43)	2.49 (.54)	-.02 (.42)
Racial/cult. understanding*	3.08 (.74)	3.15 (.66)	.04 (.66)	3.11 (.60)	2.94 (.62)	-.16 (.67)
“Had meaningful discussions w/diverse others” *	3.50 (1.3)	3.78 (1.17)	.28 (1.06)	3.95 (.95)	3.75 (1.07)	-.20 (1.17)
“Shared feelings and problems w/diverse others”	3.92 (1.24)	3.90 (1.17)	0 (1.30)	4.10 (1.03)	4.06 (.80)	0

Table 4. continued

	Experimental group					
	Multicultural N = 68			Comparison N = 49		
	Before score M (SD)	After score M (SD)	Difference score M (SD)	Before score M (SD)	After score M (SD)	Difference score M (SD)
Interaction frequency w/diverse others*	2.89 (.61)	3.06 (.52)	.16 (.44)	3.11 (.53)	3.01 (.60)	-.08 (.35)
Views on conflict	3.76 (.60)	3.77 (.62)	.01 (.54)	3.64 (.64)	3.78 (.57)	.14 (.56)
Perspective-taking	4.05 (.90)	4.03 (.85)	-.01 (.75)	4.03 (.74)	4.06 (.79)	.05 (.69)
Compatibility of democracy and difference	3.28 (.95)	3.18 (.93)	-.10 (.87)	3.40 (.88)	3.22 (.71)	-.17 (.91)
Identity scale	2.94 (.72)	2.92 (.72)	-.02 (.54)	2.86 (.68)	2.97 (.60)	.10 (.54)
Identity scale revised*			2.21 (.41)			2.04 (.38)

Note: * indicates that significant differences between the scores of the two groups.

Table 5.

Mechanisms of student learning

		Identity Awareness	Perspective-taking	Academic Discourse	Critique: need more discussion
Students who reported "learning" from course	White students	5 (62.5%)	2 (25%)	7 (87.5%)	2 (25%)
	Non-White students	17 (70.8%)	9 (37.5%)	9 (37.5%)	9 (37.5%)
Students who reported "not learning" from course	White students	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)
	Non-White students	0 (0%)	8 (50%)	9 (56.2%)	5 (31.2%)

Table 6.

Responses to Narrative Task and correlations with other variables.

Coding Category		Whites	Non-Whites	Correlations with other variables
Conflict Resolution	Positive resolution	1 (7%)	4 (11%)	Active thinking change r (59) = .34, p = .01
	Conflict maintenance	8 (57%)	28 (75%)	Emotions r (59) = -.24, p = .06
	Conflict escalation	5 (36%)	5 (13%)	Side with Julio r (59) = -.20, p = .11
Responses to Narrative Task	"Siding with Julio"	5 (36%)	14 (38%)	Conflict escalation r (59) = .20, p = .11 Emotions r (59) = .24, p = .05
	"Julio should ignore Nancy"	2 (14%)	5 (13%)	"How interesting was the course?" r (59) = -.40, p < .01 "How much have you learned from the course?" r (59) = -.34, p < .05
	"Nancy should stop making assumptions"	2 (14%)	5 (13%)	
	"Julio should defend himself"	1 (7%)	9 (24%)	Social analysis r (59) = .23, p = .08

Figure 1. A model of dialogical multicultural education.

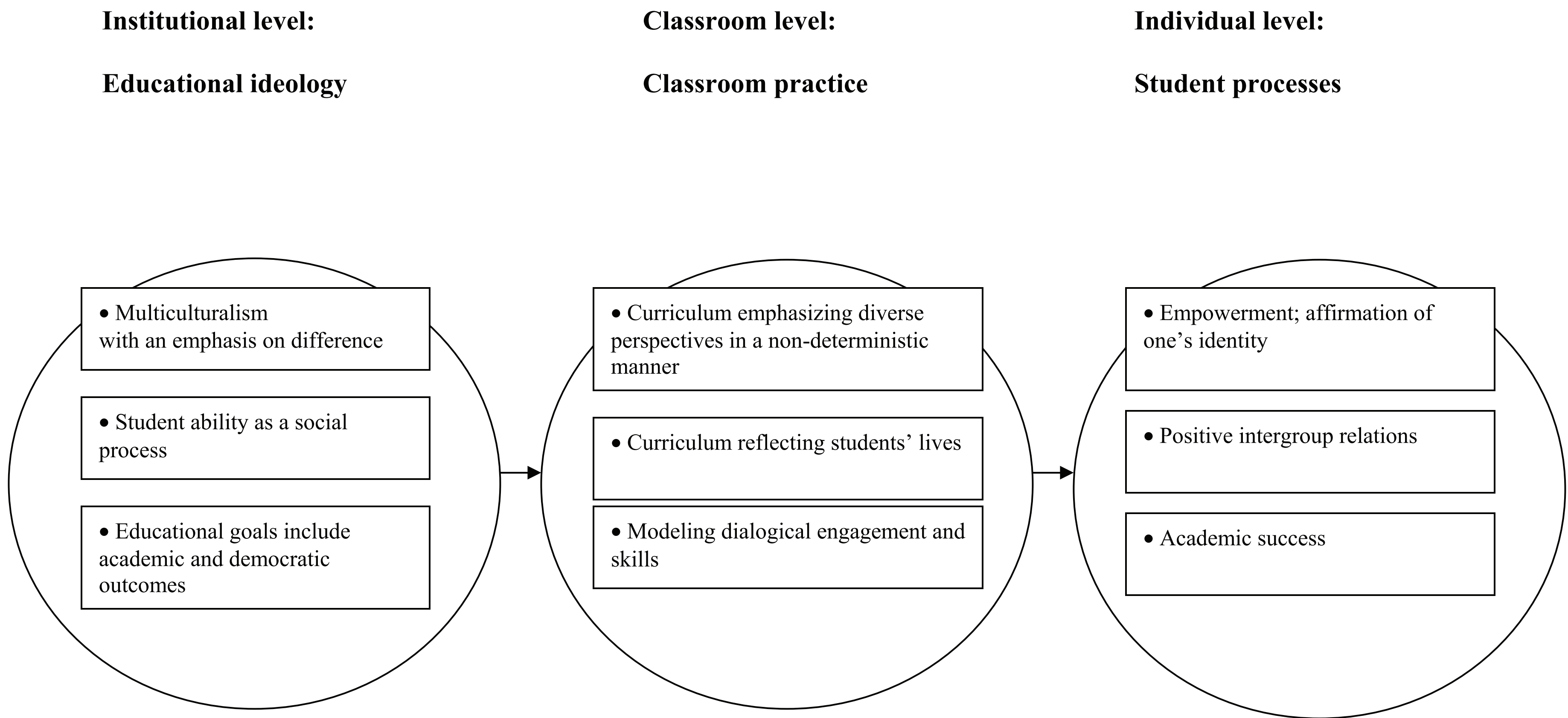

Figure 2. Ethnic identity changes.

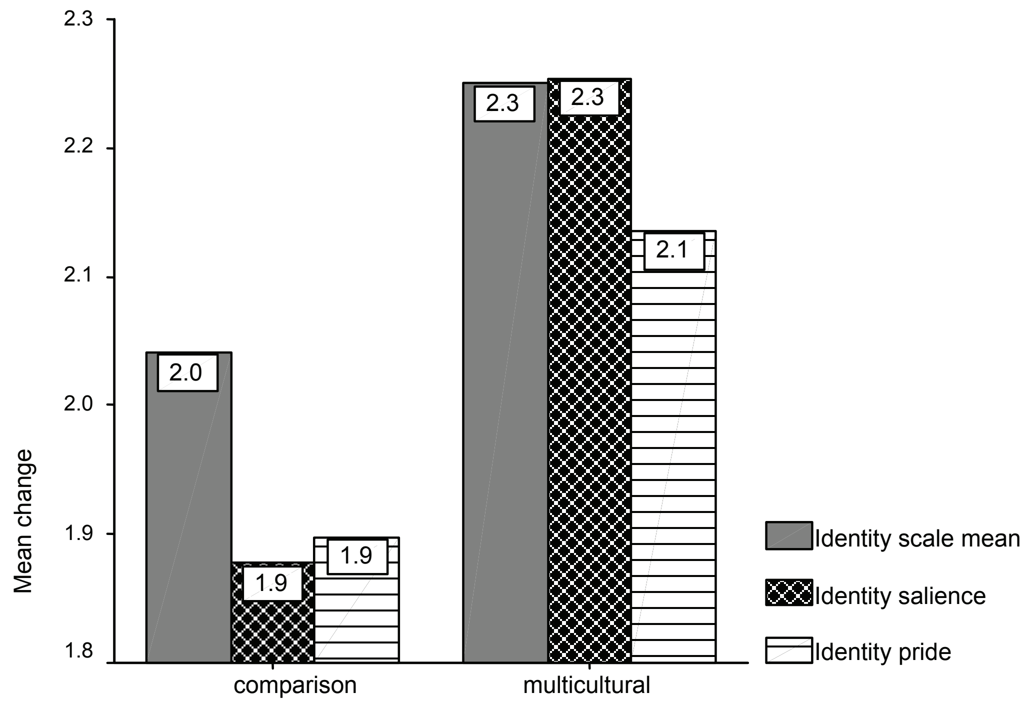

Figure 3. “Had meaningful discussions with a person of different race/ethnicity”, before and after scores.

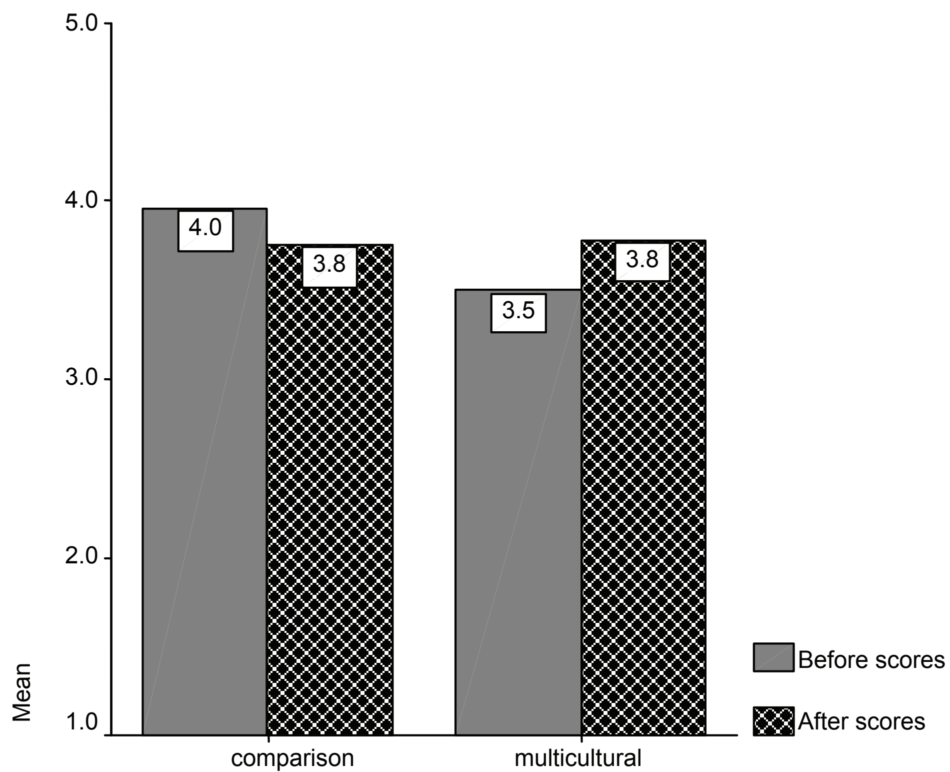

Figure 4. Averaged interactions with members of various racial/ethnic groups, before and after scores.

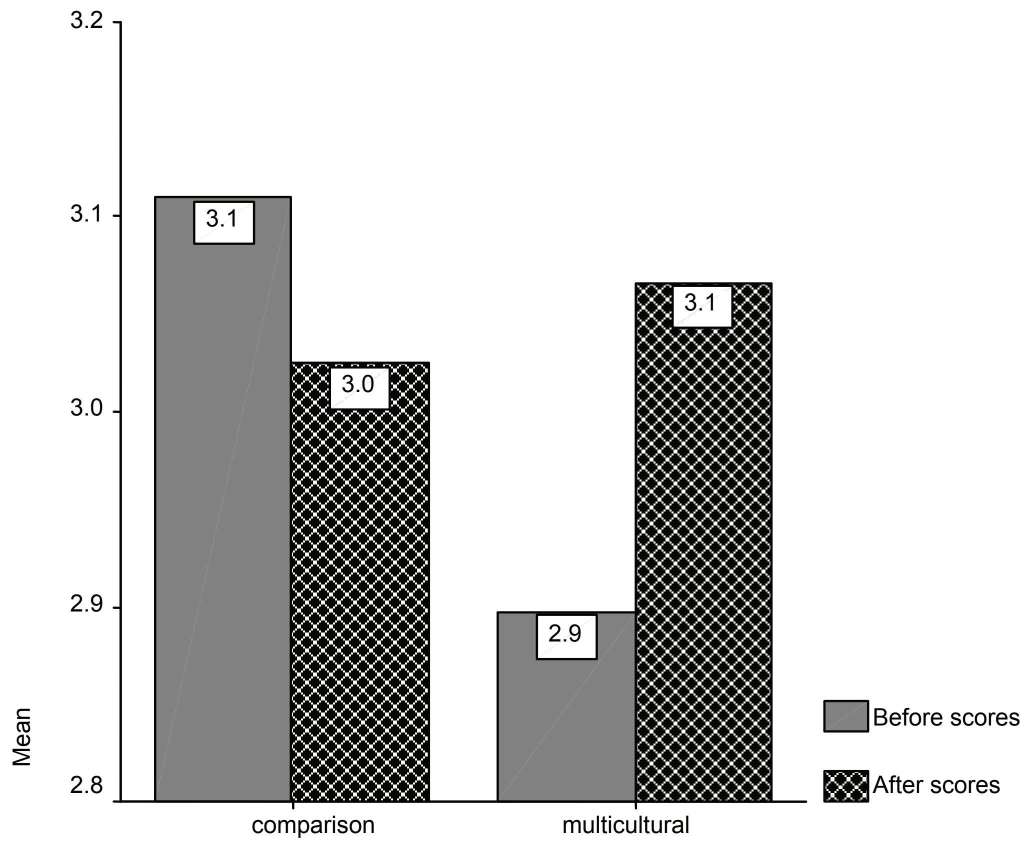

Figure 5. Changes in citizenship engagement (scale), and desire to "influence the political structure"

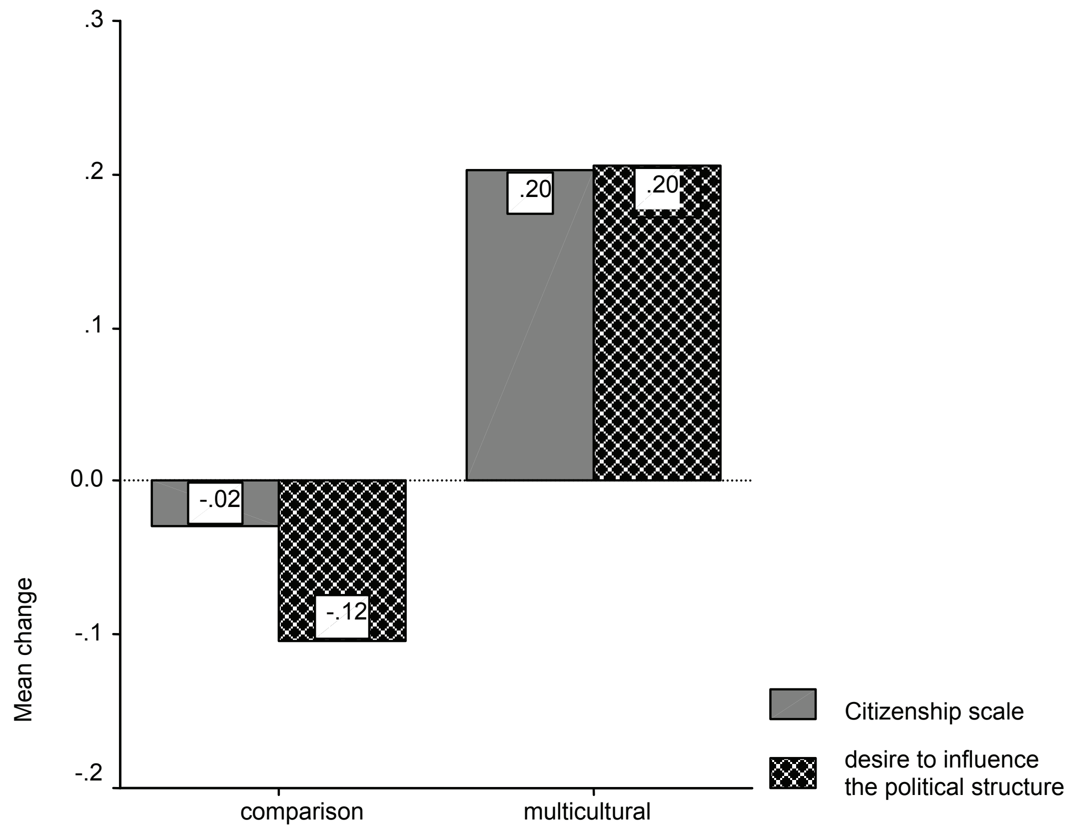

Figure 6. Changes in racial and cultural understanding.

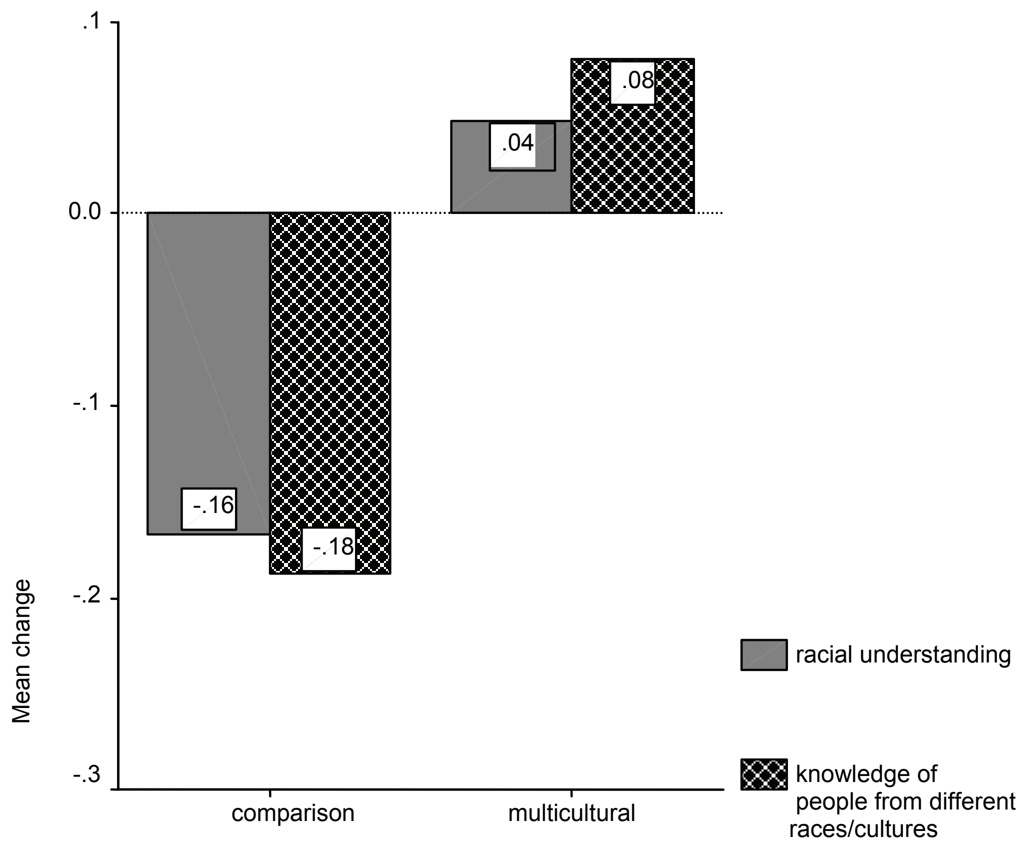

Figure 7. Changes in perspective-taking by student race.

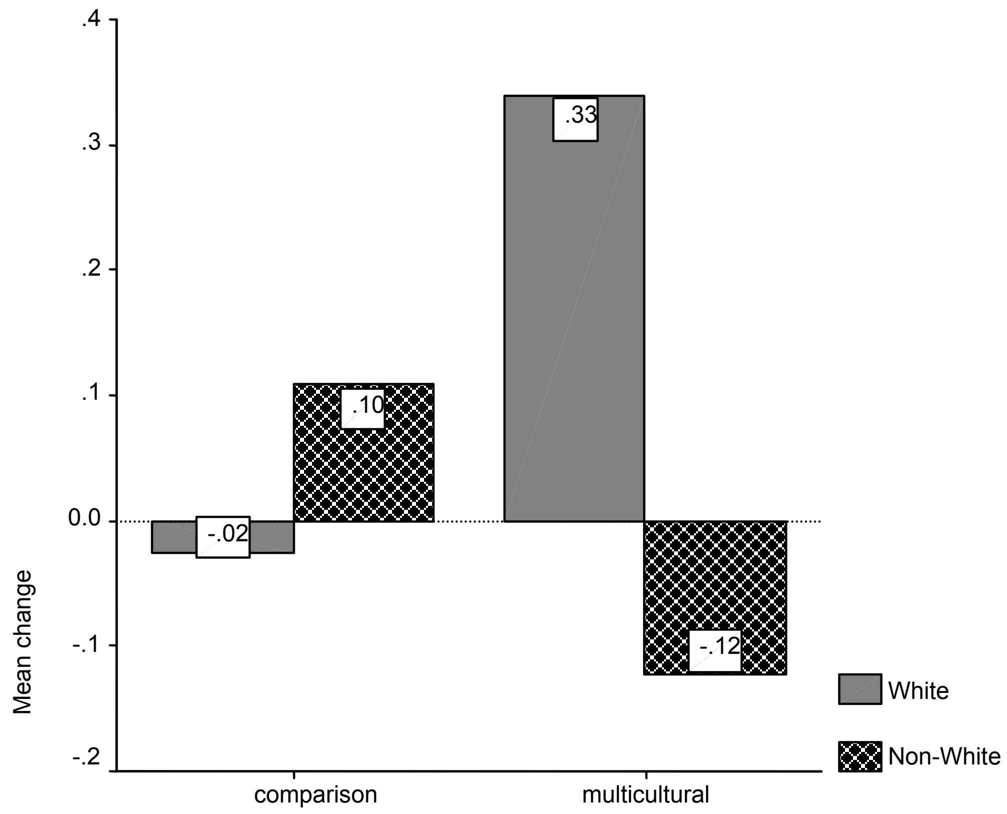

Figure 8. Changes in the beliefs in the compatibility of difference and democracy by student race.

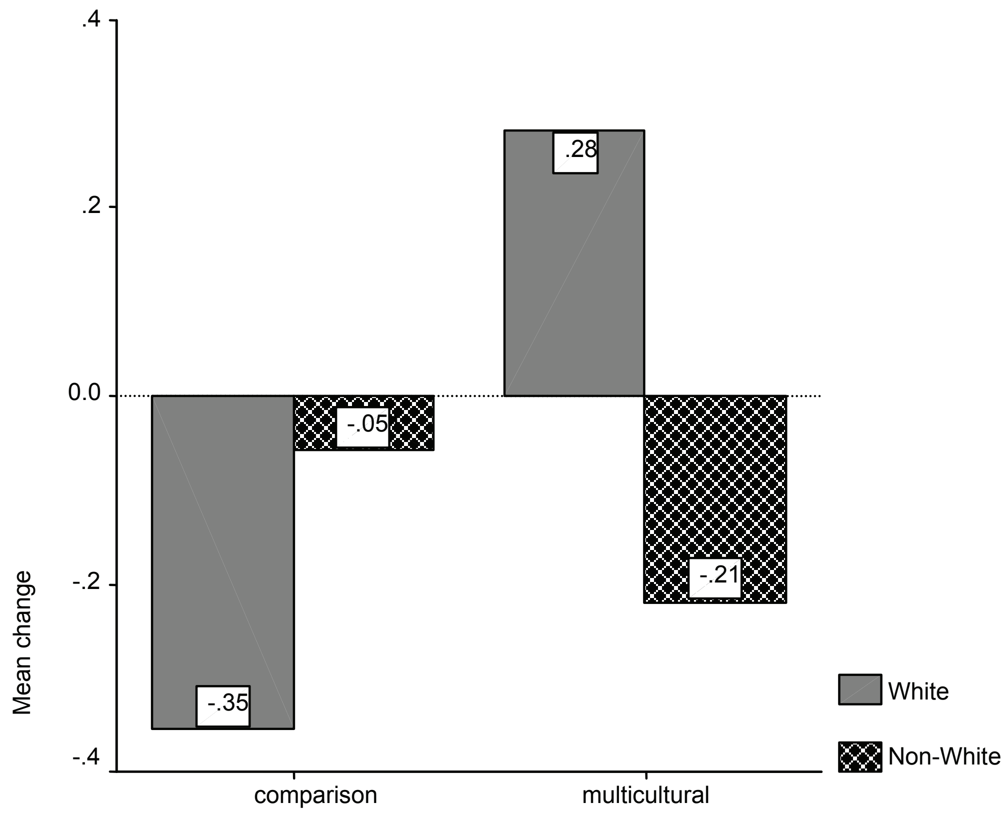

Figure 9. Changes in identity by student gender.

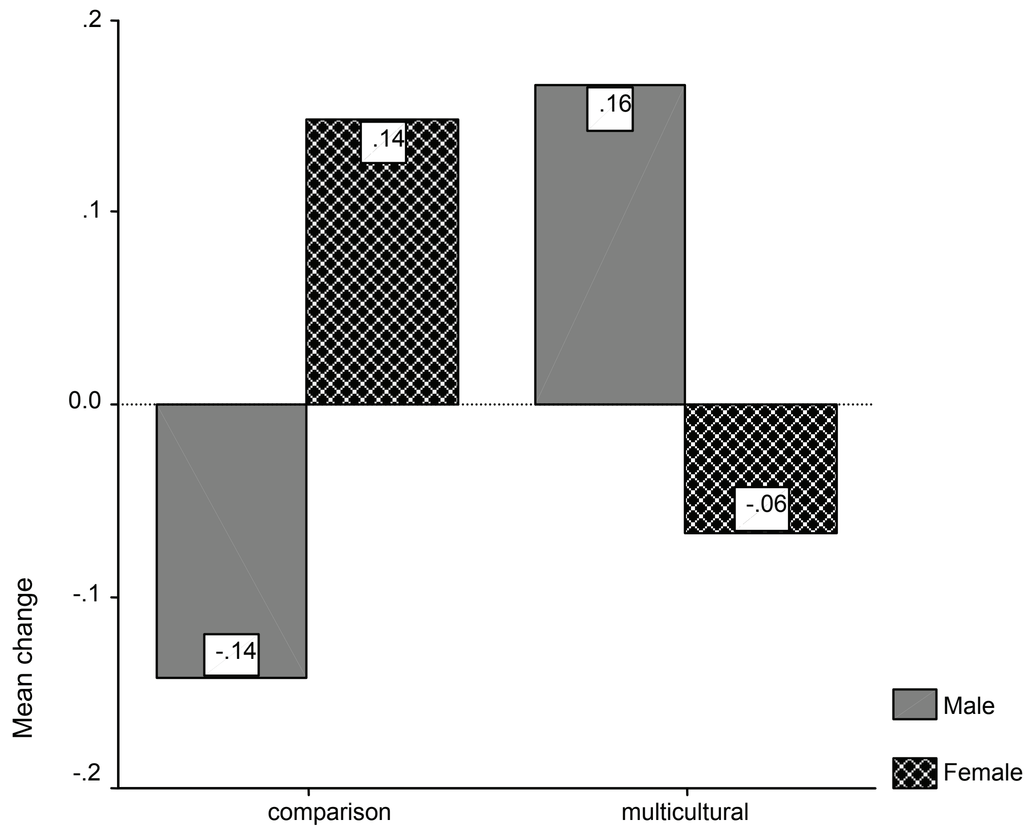

Figure 10. Changes in Views on conflict by student immigration status.

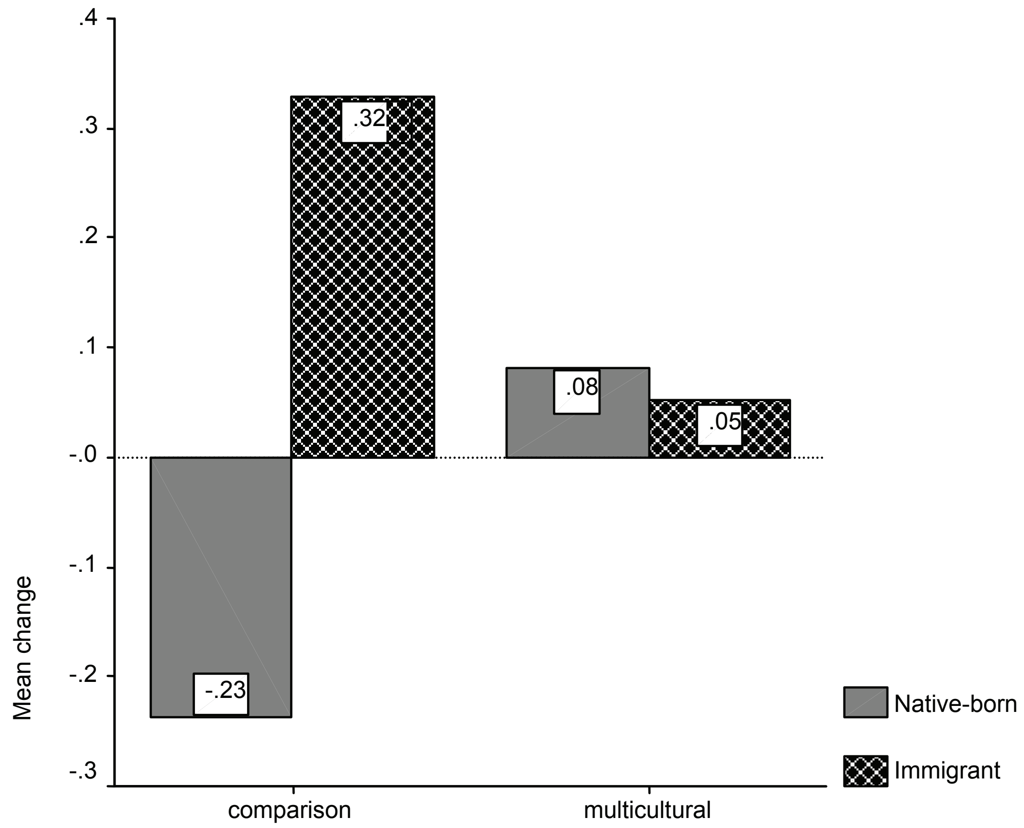

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Figure 11. Changes in perspective-taking by changes in identification of White students.

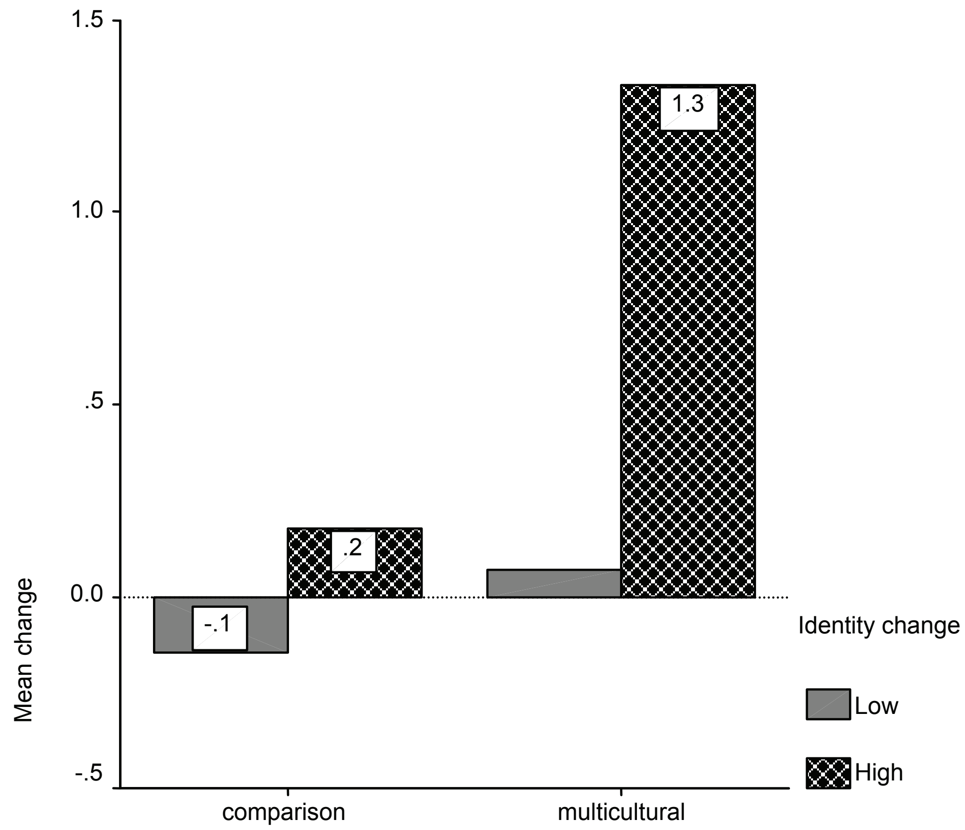
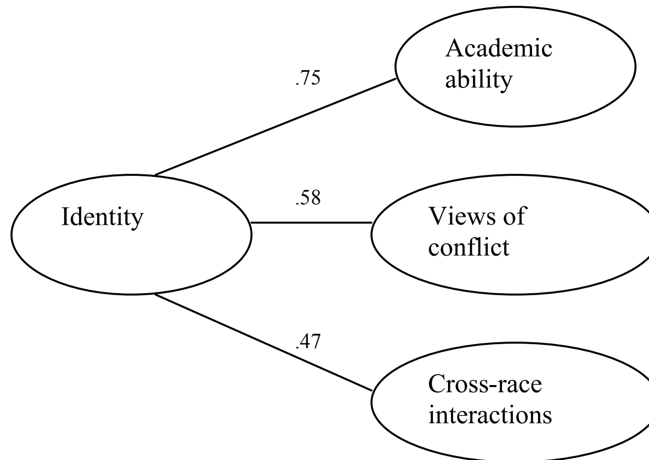


Figure 12. Relationships between identity, academic, democratic, and intergroup score changes among White students in a multicultural curriculum. [8]



[8] This diagram as well as all others appearing in this text depict only conceptual relationships among variables based on correlational evidence. These diagrams do not represent statistically tested models of path relationships.

Figure 13. Relationships among learning in the course, racial/ethnic identity awareness, perspective-taking, life decisions, and academic discourse.

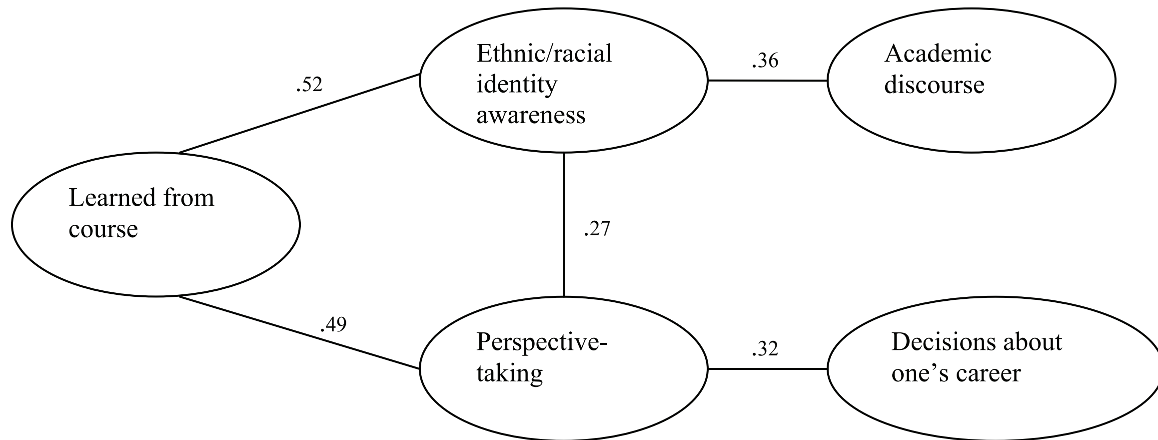


Figure 14. Use of Academic Discourse among White and Non-white students.

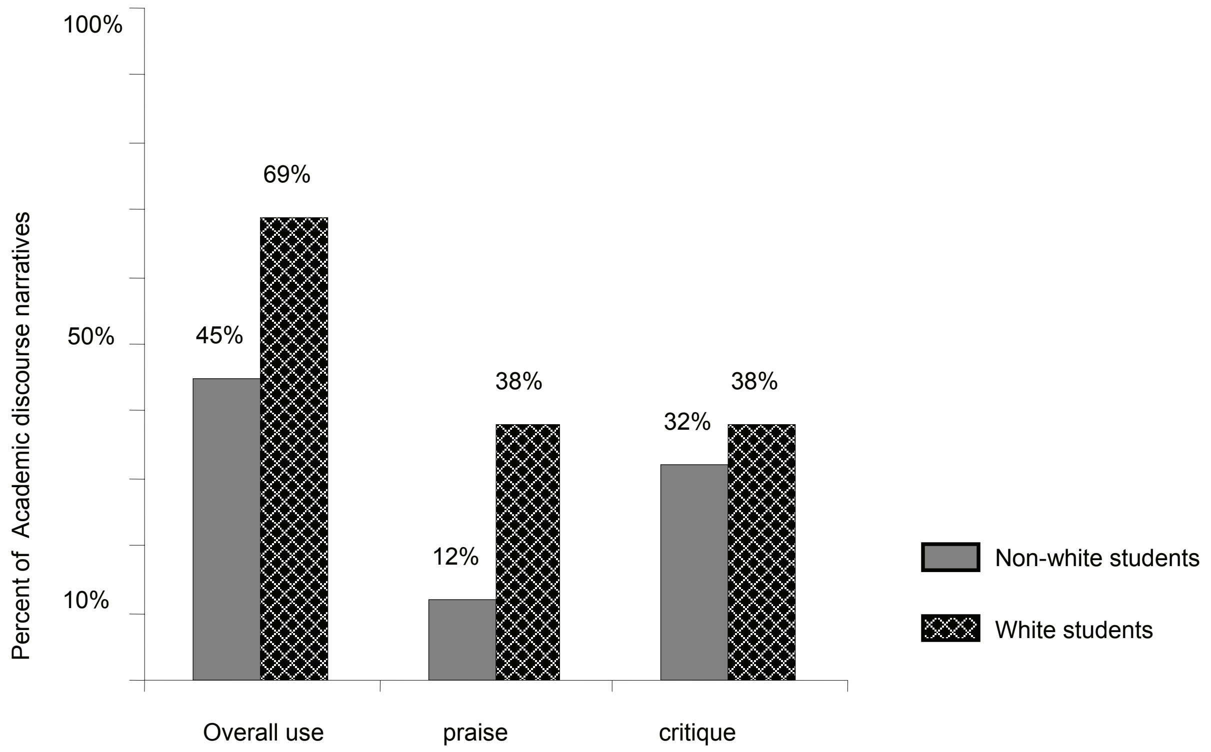
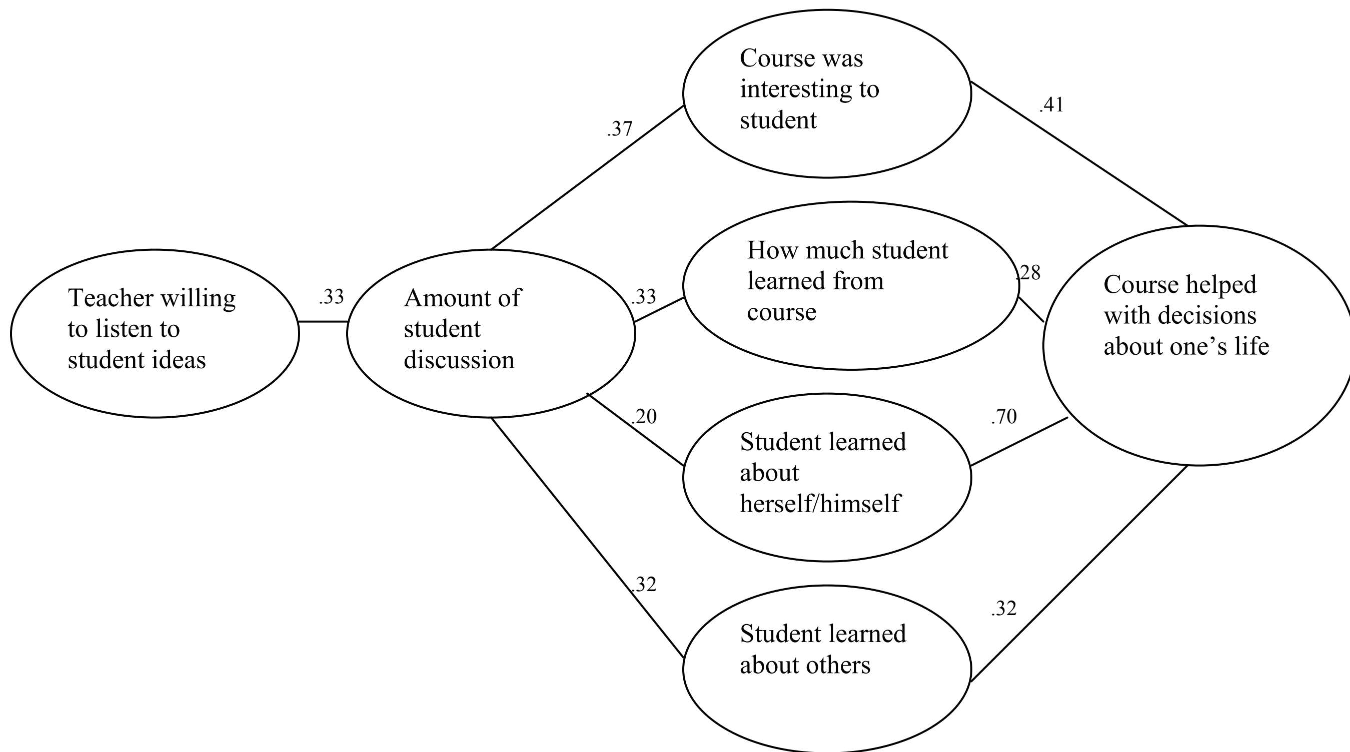


Figure 15. Relationships between classroom climate (discussions, conflict, perceiving class as an open space) and student ability to narrate social analysis.

Figure 16. Relationships between teachers' willingness to listen, amounts of discussion in class, students' learning, and student life decisions.



Appendix A

Sample class syllabus

SOC 217 – Race and Ethnicity
Spring 2003

Overview:
This course will examine racial/ethnic patterns of incorporation in U.S. society as well as how individuals come to identify with certain racial/ethnic categories of meaning. IN addition to examining the *structural* forces or external barriers that shape the life chances of certain groups, we will focus on the complex way *culture* interacts with or even gives rise to social, political, and economic conditions. We may ask, for example, is "success" in the host country best understood in terms of the cultural norms or class resources of immigrants? What causes an individual to have a strong or weak ethnic/racial identification and in what social contexts do racial/ethnic classifications change or become mobilized? How are these identities tied to attitudes and behavior? Why do racial antagonisms develop in certain social and historical contexts?

The course is roughly divided into two sections. The first half will consider the situational conception and salience of racial/ethnic categories themselves and later explores the history of American immigration and assimilation. Relying heavily on group comparisons, we will investigate the social processes commonly said to determine how a group will fare in the "land of opportunity". The second half looks more closely at issues of racial discrimination and poverty, particularly in the experience of African Americans. Here we are especially interested in comparing ethnic to racial stratification, and how other minorities are affected by the black/white classification system said to dominate race relations in the U.S. Lastly, we will explore the social and economic status of post-1960 immigrants. These groups stand apart from previous waves of immigration in very interesting ways and are dramatically changing the face of class and ethnic stratification as we know it.

Because of the extraordinary racial/ethnic diversity at Hunter, it is hoped that students will approach these materials reflexively. You may find the personal relevance of the material makes it impossible not to. I invite and encourage you to think in terms of your own experience in and outside of class discussions and especially in writing assignments.

Requirements:
The course consists of two in-class essay exams. The final is not cumulative but deals only with material covered after the midterm. In addition, students are required to write a term paper on a topic relevant to the study of race and ethnicity. The assignment can be anything from a traditional research paper to an ethnographic study, critique of a debate or theory, discussion of a media frame, or in any other form you find most compelling to approach the subject matter you have chosen.

Required text: (at Hunter College Bookstore)

Norman Yetman (Ed.). *Majority and Minority: The Dynamics of Race and Ethnicity in American Life*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.
Any readings listed that are not contained in your reader (marked with an asterix) will be handed out.

Course Outline:

I. Basic concepts
Yetman, "Introduction: Definitions and Perspectives"

II. The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity
Nagel, "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethic Identity and Culture"
Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity"

III. Three models of Minority Integration
Yetman, "Patterns of Ethnic Integration in America"
Gordon, "Assimilation in America: Theory and Reality"

IV. Ethnic Histories: The Who and How of the American Dream
Yetman, "Historical Perspectives
Bean and Tienda, "The Structuring of Hispanic Ethnicity: Theoretical and Historical Considerations"
Mar and Kim, "Asian Pacific Americans, Historical Trends"
Waters and Eschbach, "Immigration and Ethnic and Racial Inequality"
--------------------------- Midterm Exam ---

V. Explaining Poverty and Race
Wilson, "Work"
Feagin, "The Continuing Significance of Race: Antiblack Discrimination in Public Places"
Anderson, "Code of the Streets"

VI. The 'Oppositional Culture' Argument and Structural Critiques
Fordham and Ogbu, "Black Students' School Success: Coping with the Burden of 'Acting White'"*
Portes and Zhou, "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants"
Waters, "Ethnic and Racial Identities of Second-Generation Black Immigrants in New York City" *

VIII. The Future of Immigration
Yetman, "Race and Ethnicity in the United States at Century's End"
Massey, "The New Immigration and Ethnicity in the United States"
Sassen, "America's Immigration 'Problem'"
Waldinger, "The New Urban Reality"

Appendix B

Department of Psychology
Phone: (212) 772-5550/5551

June 26, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

I give my full support to the research entitled "Identity and difference as a tool of multicultural education: A social-psychological study of college diversity practices", to be conducted by Daniela Martin in two psychology courses, Theories of Personality and Theories of Human Sexuality in the fall 2003. I have reviewed the study and am in full agreement with its purposes and methodology. I understand that the study poses no known risks to the students.

Daniela Martin has no connection to the department or the courses, and this will be made clear to the students. Therefore, student participation in the study will be entirely voluntary and will in no way reflect on the performance of the students in the course.

Sincerely,

Vita C. Rabinowitz, Ph.D.

Professor and Chairperson

Department of Psychology

Hunter College of the City University of New York

Department of Sociology
(212) 772-5585

June 26, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

I give my full support to the research entitled (Identity and Difference As A Tool of Multicultural Education: A Social/Psychological Study of College Diversity Practices), to be conducted by Daniela Martin in two sections of the course Sociology 217, Race and Ethnic Relations in the Fall 2003. I have reviewed the study and I am in full agreement with its purposes and methodology. I understand that the study poses no known risk to the students and may provide benefits in terms of evaluation and curriculum development relevant to the course.

Daniela Martin has no connection to the Department of Sociology or the course. Therefore, Student participation in the study will be entirely voluntary and will in no way reflect on the performance of the students in the course.

Sincerely,

Charles Green
Chairman
Department of Sociology

Hunter College of The City University of New York 695 Park Avenue New York NY 10021

Appendix C

Consent forms

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Please read the following description carefully. If you agree to participate in this study, please sign your name at the bottom of this form.

My name is Daniela Martin and I am a student in the Social Personality Psychology Ph.D. Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and Principal Investigator of the project, entitled Identity and Difference as a Tool of Multicultural Education. This is a research study of college diversity practices. The study is expected to evaluate the effect of the course SOC 217 Race and Ethnicity on Hunter College students, in terms of academic and democratic outcomes. I would like your permission to collect data for my study. You need to be 18 years or older to participate.

You can participate in this study in different ways. Please review the study components below and check the box next to the parts of the study in which you agree to participate. You can participate in <u>all</u>, <u>some</u>, or <u>none</u> of the parts of this study.

Student Survey

Fill out a brief survey at the beginning and end of the course (about 30 minutes). In the survey, you will be asked questions about your academic ability and engagement, your views on democracy and racial/ethnic relations, your cross-cultural experiences, and the importance of ethnic identity to your self-concept. In addition, in the second part of the survey, you will be asked about your perceptions of the course.

In-class essay

As part of your course participation, you will write an in-class essay describing an imaginary debate between yourself and a person from a different ethnic/racial background. By checking this box, you agree that your essay will be released for use by the investigator.

Biographical interview project.

As part of the course, you will participate in an interview project that will become the basis for your final paper. In this project, you will learn interviewing techniques and conduct your own interview with another student. By checking this box, you agree that the interview materials (including your interview script, tape of the interview, and your final essay) will be released for use by the investigator.

Your participation in the study will be entirely <u>anonymous</u> and <u>will not affect the grade you receive</u> in the course in any way. Your instructor will not be informed whether or not you have participated in this research.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will select an alias that will be used by the investigator to identify your documents instead of your real name. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I and my advisor will have access.

The study poses no known risks. However, participating in the study may have educational benefits as it will allow you to reflect on issues related to the course. Furthermore, your participation will help to create better educational opportunities for your fellow-students by helping us understand what kinds of teaching are most effective.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time, or decide not to complete selected parts of the study, with no penalty. Even after your initial agreement, you can decide not to participate in parts of the study.

If you have any questions regarding this research, you can call me at 631/979-3363 (dmartin@gc.cuny.edu) or my advisor Colette Daiute at 212/817-8711 (cdaiute@gc.cuny.edu). If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Hilry Fisher, Sponsored Research, CUNY Graduate School and University Center, at 212/817-7523, hfisher@gc.cuny.edu.

Thank you for your help.

I agree with the above conditions and choose to participate in the research study as described.

…………………………. ………………………

Participant signature Date

…………………………. ……………………….

Researcher's signature Date

INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Daniela Martin and I am a student in the Social Personality Psychology Ph.D. Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and Principal Investigator of the project, entitled Identity and Difference as a Tool of Multicultural Education. This is a research study of college diversity practices. The study is expected to evaluate the effects of learning about race and ethnicity on Hunter College students. You need to be 18 years or older to participate.

You will be asked to fill out a brief survey at the beginning and end of the course (about 30 minutes). In the survey, you will be asked questions about your academic ability and engagement, your views on democracy and racial/ethnic relations, your cross-cultural experiences, and the importance of ethnic identity to your self-concept. In addition, in the second part of the survey, you will be asked about your perceptions of the course.

Your participation in the study will be entirely anonymous and will not affect the grade you receive in the course in any way. Your instructor will not be informed whether or not you have participated in this research.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will select an alias that will be used by the investigator to identify your survey instead of your real name. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I, and my advisor will have access.

The study poses no known risks. However, participating in the study may have educational benefits as it will allow you to reflect educational issues. Furthermore, your participation will help to create better educational opportunities for your fellow-students by helping us understand what kinds of teaching are most effective.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time, or decide not to complete selected parts of the study, with no penalty. Even after your initial agreement, you can decide not to participate in other parts the study.

If you have any questions regarding this research, you can call me at 631/979-3363 (dmartin@gc.cuny.edu) or my advisor Colette Daiute at 212/817-8711 (cdaiute@gc.cuny.edu). If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Hilry Fisher, Sponsored Research, CUNY Graduate School and University Center, at 212/817-7523, hfisher@gc.cuny.edu.

Thank you for your help.

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Please read the following description carefully. If you agree to participate in this study, please sign your name at the bottom of this form.

My name is Daniela Martin and I am a student in the Social Personality Psychology Ph.D. Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and Principal Investigator of the project, entitled Identity and Difference as a Tool of Multicultural Education. This is a research study of college diversity practices. The study is expected to evaluate the effects of learning about race and ethnicity on Hunter College students. I would like your permission to collect data for my study.

Class observations

By checking this box, you will agree that your class will be observed once a week for the duration of the semester. In these observations, topics of discussion and student reactions to them will be recorded using written notes. In addition, teaching strategies associated with particular topics will be noted, such as instructor's responses to student input and participation formats.

Teacher interview

By checking this box, you will agree to being interviewed at the end of the semester. In this interview, you will be asked about your experiences teaching the course, your teaching philosophy, and your thoughts regarding teaching diverse students about race and ethnicity.

Your responses will be kept confidential. You will not be identified by your real name in any reports resulting from this study. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I and my advisor will have access.

The study poses no known risks. However, participating in the study will allow you to reflect on issues related to the course and help create better educational opportunities for your students.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time, or decide not to complete selected parts of the study, with no penalty. Even after your initial agreement, you can decide not to participate in parts of the study.

If you have any questions regarding this research, you can call me at 631/979-3363 (dmartin@gc.cuny.edu) or my advisor Colette Daiute at 212/817-8711 (cdaiute@gc.cuny.edu). If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Hilry Fisher, Sponsored Research, CUNY Graduate School and University Center, at 212/817-7523, hfisher@gc.cuny.edu. Thank you for your help.

I agree with the above conditions and choose to participate in the research study as described.

…………………………. ………………………

Participant signature Date

…………………………. ……………………….

Researcher's signature Date

Appendix D

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Date:
Observer:

Topic (e.g., modes of assimilation, immigration policy, symbolic ethnicity)	**Teaching Format (e.g, lecture, discussion, group work)**	**Materials (e.g., textbook, news articles, Internet searches, personal experiences)**	**Student Reactions (e.g., interest/lack of interest – how expressed?)**	**Student questions, teacher responses & other class dynamics**

Appendix E

TEACHER INTERVIEW SCRIPT

1. In your view, what is the role of student diversity in education? Do you see it as a barrier to effective teaching or as a resource? In what ways?
2. What are your views on student ability? What makes students good students? What makes them prepared for college?
3. What do you think is the most important thing that students learn in college? Why is this important?
4. What are your views on the Diversity and Pluralism Requirement at Hunter College? What are your views on other diversity initiatives in the school? Do you see them as a) effective, b) important?
5. How do you think your course addresses the great diversity of students at Hunter? How do you think your course is affected by this diversity?
6. What are the sources of your curriculum? Why do you consider these materials effective or why not?
7. What is the role of students in your class? For example, how much can they handle responsibility for understanding and discussing class materials, introducing new topics, sharing personal experiences etc.?
8. How much have you used group work in your class and what was your experience with it? Do you believe that students can learn from each other, and if so, what are the best ways of incorporating such work into the class?
9. How do you handle class conflict (for example, a hostile exchange between students in class)? How does conflict in your class make you feel? What skills do you think students need to manage such conflicts and where can they learn such skills?
10. Could you make your course better and if so, how? What are some of the barriers to making improvements in your course (e.g., class size, resources)?

Appendix F

Student survey

1. Rate yourself on each of the following traits as compared with the average person your age. We want the most accurate estimate of how you see yourself.
   (Mark one in each row).

	Highest 10%	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Lowest 10%
Academic ability					
Drive to achieve					
Self-confidence (intellectual)					
Listening ability					

2. Indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:
   (Mark one of each item)

	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
Influencing the political structure				
Influencing social values				
Helping others who are in difficulty				
Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment				
Participating in a community action program				

What do you plan to be doing after finishing college?
(Mark all that apply)

Attending graduate school/professional school

Working full-time

Working part-time

Participating in a community service organization

Serving in the Armed Forces

Attending a vocational program

Traveling, hostelling, or backpacking

Doing volunteer work

Staying at home to be with or start a family

No current plans

3. Compared with when you first started college, how would you now describe your: (Mark one for each item)	Much stronger	Stronger	No change	Much weaker
General knowledge				
Analytical and problem-solving skills				
Ability to think critically				
Foreign language ability				
Knowledge of people form different races/cultures				
Ability to get along with people of different races/cultures				
Writing skills				

4. How well do these statements describe you?

	Not at all like me	Not much like me	Cannot tell	Sort of like me	Very much like me
I tend to take people's behavior at face value and not worry about the inner causes for their behavior.					
I prefer simple rather than complex explanations for people's behaviors.					
I don't enjoy getting into discussions where the causes for people's behaviors are being talked about.					
I really enjoy analyzing the reasons or causes for people's behaviors.					
I think a lot about the influence that society has on other people.					
I think a lot about the influence that society has on my behavior and personality.					
When I analyze a person's behavior I often find the causes form a chain that goes back in time.					

5. How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The University's focus on diversity puts too much emphasis on differences between racial/ethnic groups.					
The University's commitment to diversity fosters more division among racial/ethnic groups than intergroup understanding.					
The University's emphasis on diversity means I can't talk honestly about ethnic, racial, and gender issues.					
The current focus on multiculturalism in our schools undermines the common ties that bind us as a nation.					

6. How similar or different are your values from those of the following groups?

	Much more similar than different	Sort of similar	Sort of different	Much more different than similar
African Americans				
Asian Americans				

White Americans

Hispanic/Latino

West Indians

White non-American (Eastern European)

7. How much do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I believe that intergroup conflict can have positive consequences.					
I believe conflict almost always ends up with one side winning and the other side losing.					
I learned that conflict is a normal part of life.					
I learned that the best thing is to avoid conflict.					
I believe that conflict is healthy in a democracy.					
I learned that conflict rarely has constructive consequences.					
I believe that conflict and disagreements in classroom discussion enrich the learning process.					
I am afraid of conflicts when discussing social issues.					

8. Indicate whether you have experienced the following with a person from another race/ethnicity:	Not at all	Not really	Rarely	Sometimes	A great deal
Had meaningful and honest discussions about race and/or ethnic relations outside of class.					
Shared our personal feelings and problems.					

9. List your six closest friends in New York and describe their gender and race/ethnicity:

	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
Friend 1.	----------------------	----------------------
Friend 2.	----------------------	----------------------
Friend 3.	----------------------	----------------------

Friend 4. ---

Friend 5. ---

Friend 6. ---

10. Students vary in how much interaction they have with students from various groups in school. Please indicate the extent to which you interact with students from each of the following groups:

	No interaction	Little interaction	Some interaction	Much interaction	The most interaction
African American students					
Asian American students					
White American students					
Hispanic/Latino students					
West Indian students					
White non-American students (Eastern European)					

11. Indicate the extent to which you can be described by the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other person's" point of view.					
I am sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.					
I try to look at everybody's side of an disagreement before I make a decision.					
I believe there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.					

12. How do you identify yourself in terms of race and ethnicity?

Fill in the name of a racial/ethnic category:

…………………………………………………………

	Hardly ever	Rarely	Sometimes	A lot
How often do you think about being a member of your group and what you have in common with others in your group?				

	Not very important	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat important	Extremely important
Rate how important your group identity is to the way you think about yourself:				

	Not at all	Not sure	Somewhat	A great deal
How proud do you feel when a member of your group accomplishes something outstanding?				
Indicate the extent to which something that happens in your life is affected by what happens to other people in your group				

Course feedback questionnaire
(Post-survey)

We would like to ask you a few questions about this course. Your answers will help us understand what courses are most effective in teaching students about issues of race and ethnicity.

	Not at all	**Somewhat**	**Very much**

Compared to other courses you have taken in college…

1. …how interesting was SOC 217 Race and Ethnicity to you?
2.
3. …how much did this course discussed issues you care about?
4.
5. …how much have you learned from this course?
6. …how much was your professor willing to listen to students' ideas?
7.
8. … how much student discussion took place in the class?
9. …how useful were class discussions to your understanding of class topics?
10. … were there disagreements between students during class discussions?
11. …were there issues that you felt should have been discussed but were not?
12. … how much did you learn about yourself?
13. …how much did you learn about the perspectives of others?
14. …how much did this class help you in making decisions about your life

    (e.g., deciding on your career, deciding to go to graduate school)?

Has the course in any way changed your way of thinking about yourself and others? If so, how?

……
……
…………………………………………………………………

Describe in your own words which parts of the course you liked best and why:

……
……
……

Describe in your own words which parts of the course you liked least and why:

……
……
…………………………………………………………………

What would make this course a better course?

……
……
…………………………………………………………………

<u>Please tell us a little about yourself:</u>

Your age:………………………

Gender:………………………..

Your ethnic/racial identification:…………………………..

Generation? (e.g., if your parents came to this country as immigrants, you are the 2nd generation):

…………………………………

If you are an immigrant yourself, how many years have you lived in the U.S.?………………….

Your GPA:…………………….

Number of college credits:……

Do you speak any other language in the house? Yes No

During the course of this semester, have you:

- …taken another course that addressed issues of race and ethnicity? Yes No
- …participated in any events (e.g., concerts, festivals, workshops) that made you think about issues of race and ethnicity? Yes No
- …experienced an event (e.g., media event related to your ethnic group, discrimination) that made you think about issues of race and ethnicity? Yes No

What were your reasons for taking this class? Check one:

- It is required for my Sociology major (or one of the required group)
- It is part of the Distribution requirement (Diversity and Pluralism requirement)
- It is required but I *also* have an interest in the subject
- I am interested in the subject
- No particular reason, it fits my schedule
- Other: ……………………………………..

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