Transforming Institutional Climate Through Strategic Intergroup Dialogue Programs

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Bringing Intergroup Dialogue to Cornell

• Increase capacity for interaction and excellence
• Build academic base for diversity and inclusion
• Join national research conversation
• Address overall institutional climate
• Provide form of diversity work relevant to all
• Right place, right time
Exploring Difference

Identify how you are distinctive within your campus community and/or what unique perspectives you have to offer.
What is Intergroup Dialogue?

• Experiential intercultural pedagogy
• Structured, peer-facilitated course
• Students explore interactions and intersections of social identities
  • race
  • gender
  • sexual orientation
  • socioeconomic status
  • (dis)ability
• Students develop skills for effective communication across difference in social and institutional contexts
Cornell model

- EDUC 2610 Intergroup Dialogue: Fall and spring semesters (3 hour seminar); peer-facilitated sections center around a single topic
- EDUC 3610 Advanced Intergroup Dialogue: Spring semester; prepares students to facilitate
- EDUC 4980 Practicum: Peer facilitators enroll in a practicum course taught by IDP team; peer facilitators are mentored by a faculty or staff instructor
EDUC 2610: The Intergroup Dialogue Project’s Impact on Student Attitudes and Behaviors Regarding Diversity and Inclusion

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General Background

- The value of “diversity” in university settings is widely accepted and supported by various institutions and policies across the United States.
- Recent research literature has made it increasingly clear that compositional diversity in the student body alone does not produce social capital that leads to a richer educational environment (Gurin, 2013).
- In order to leverage this diversity for educational benefits, educators and university officials are creating academic initiatives that promote guided interaction and intellectual engagement between students of different backgrounds and life experiences (MIGR Guidebook, 2012).
General Background

- The Intergroup Dialogue Project is a 14-week undergraduate course curriculum led by trained undergraduate facilitators.
The present study

• Survey adapted from the The Multi-university Intergroup Research (MIGR) Project
• Analysis of one year of data Fall 2012-Spring 2013
• Independent variable: Completion of EDUC 2610
• Dependent variables:
  • Intergroup Understanding
  • Intergroup Relationships
  • Intergroup Collaboration & Action
  • Diversity & Social Justice
Research Design (MIGR)
Research Design

Pre-test → EDUC 2610: Intergroup Dialogue Project → Post-test
Research Design

Pre-test → EDUC 2610: Intergroup Dialogue Project → Post-test

Demographic variables
Dependent Variables

**PRETEST CONSTRUCTS (SURVEY I)**

**Intergroup Understanding**
- Active Thinking (Fletcher, Danilovics, Fernandez, Peterson, & Reeder, 1986)
- Interest in Politics and Societal Issues (adapted from Lopez, Abboushi, & Reifman, 1992)
- Openness to Multiple Perspectives (adapted from Davis, 1983)

**Social Identity Measures**
- Cognitive Centrality* (Gurin & Markus, 1988)
- Common Fate* (Gurin & Markus, 1988)
- Collective Self-Esteem (adapted from Cracker & Luhtanen, 1990)
- Identity Engagement (adapted from Crock & Luhtanen, 1990)

**Beliefs about Conflict** (Gurin, Peng, Lopez, & Nagda, 1999)

**Recognition of Variability Within Groups** (new measure, developed for the study)

**Commonality of Values with Other Race/Ethnic Groups** (Michigan Student Study, 1990)

**Awareness and Attribution for Race/Gender Inequality** (Gurin, 1972 and subsequently modified for the Michigan Student Study, 1990)

**Causal Analysis of Poverty and Wealth** (Feagin, 1972)

**Intergroup Relationships**
- Comfort in Communicating with People of Other Groups (Nagda, Maise-Swanson, Kim & Kim, 2005; Zúñiga, Nagda, Sevig, Thompson, & Dey, 1995)
- Motivation to Bridge Differences (Nagda, Kim & Truelove, 2004; Zúñiga, Nagda, Sevig, Thompson, & Dey, 1995)
- Positive/Negative Emotions in Intergroup Settings (adapted from Stephan & Stephan, 1985)
- Intergroup (Parallel and Relational) Empathy (new measure, developed for the study)

**Intergroup Collaboration & Action**
- Frequency of Positive/Negative Intergroup Interactions (Michigan Student Study, 1990)
- Campus In-group and Intergroup Interactions (Michigan Student Study, 1990)
- Skills in Dealing with Conflict (adapted from Gurin, Peng, Lopez, & Nagda, 1999)
- Involvement in Campus Organizations and Activities (Michigan Student Study, 1990)
- Post-College Anticipated Involvement in Redressing Inequalities (Cooperative Institutional Research Program, Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, 1989)
- Confidence and Frequency of Taking Self-Directed, Other-Directed and Intergroup Collaborative Action (Nagda, Kim & Truelove, 2004)

**Diversity & Social Justice**
- Attitudes Toward Multicultural Education and Diversity (Michigan Student Study, 1990)
- Positions on Political Issues in Society (adapted from national election studies)
Participant Information

Participants by Race

- African American
- Asian American
- Latino/a
- Native American
- Arab American
- White

Participants by Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

n = 56 students

Year

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Unclassified

Neighborhood You Grew Up In

- All White
- Nearly Mostly White
- Half and Half
- Mostly Nearly POC
- All POC
Participant Information

**Major**
- Social Science
- STEM
- Business
- Arts/Humanities
- Other

**Intergroup Dialogue Prior Experience**
- No
- Yes

**Previous Related Coursework**
- 0 courses
- 1 course
- 2 courses
- 3+ courses
Results

- Paired-samples t-test to compare means from pre to post tests (evidence of effect is demonstrated when the means are significantly different)
- Bonferroni’s correction was used to minimize type I error/familywise error rate
- Univariate ANOVA performed to investigate demographic differences

<table>
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<th>Variables</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th></th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>Actual P value</th>
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<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
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<td>Active Thinking</td>
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<td>Collective Self-Esteem</td>
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<td>Positive Emotions in Intergroup Setting:</td>
<td>M=3.77</td>
<td>M=4.145</td>
<td>0.374</td>
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<td>Confidence in taking Intergroup Collabc</td>
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<td>Frequency of taking Intergroup Collabo</td>
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<td>0.534</td>
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Results: Highly Significant Variables

- **3. Intergroup Collaboration & Action**
- Frequency of Taking Self-Directed, Other-Directed and Intergroup Collaborative Action $p$-value=0.001*
- Partial eta squared of .119 indicating a small-medium effect size (.13 = medium)
Results: Non-significant variables approaching significance

• 1. Intergroup Understanding
  • Active Thinking
  • Interest in Politics & Societal Issues
  • Causal Analysis of Poverty and Wealth
  • Common Fate
  • Collective Self-Esteem

• 2. Intergroup Relationships
  • Frequency of Positive Intergroup Interactions
  • Frequency of Negative Intergroup Interactions

• 3. Intergroup Collaboration & Action
  • Confidence in Ability to Act
Discussion & Conclusions

- The study suggests that participation in EDUC 2610 may significantly increase students’ tendencies to take action to promote social justice causes, including making efforts to educate themselves, interacting with others from diverse backgrounds, and join organizations to promote diversity.

- This “action” component or the mobilization of students to become agents of social change is one of the primary goals of the course.

- Limitations include the small sample size, lack of a control group and random assignment, self-report bias, and removal of unusable surveys.

- Further evidence is needed to corroborate previous research findings on the topic, which may include re-conceptualizing the outcome variables as they did not vary together.
Discussion continued

• Hypothesis was supported & findings were somewhat consistent with previous literature

• However, in total 20 of 24 of the sub-scales were significant in MIGR as opposed to 9 out of 24 as approaching significance or significant.

• The MIGR reported the following variables as also significant: Intergroup Empathy, Motivation to Bridge Differences, Post-college Involvement, Involvement in Campus Activities, Openness to Multiple Perspectives, Cognitive Centrality, Identity Engagement, Beliefs About Conflict, Recognition of Variability Within Groups, Commonality of Values with Other Groups, & Awareness of and Attribution for Race and Gender Inequality
Future Directions

• Correction of limitations - including the use of a control group of waitlisted students now that the course has grown in popularity

• Findings may be used to shape policies and practices surrounding the course such as the Towards New Destinations initiative

• Provides insight into the unique demographic at Cornell University
References

Staff IGD

- History of programs at Cornell
- Cornell D&I framework
- “Creating a Culture of Respect” pilot (Fall 2014/2016)
- 2016 and beyond
History of programs at Cornell

• **1978-89:** Administrators and staff create anti racism trainings
  Human Relations Training Program (HRTP)

• **1989-2000:** HRTP → Peer Educators in Human Relations (PEHR)
  Undergraduate students trained to lead ongoing training

• **FY 2012-13:** Cornell University initiative, “Towards New Destinations”

• **Fall 2012:** IDP begins at Cornell
“Moving the Diversity & Inclusion Needle”

Foundation Compliance

Awareness – Level I
Self-awareness

Awareness – Level II
Single Topic Issues

Awareness – Level III
Intersectionality

Awareness – Level IV
Training facilitators to lead

One Cornell – Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds
Pilot Objectives:

• To provide opportunities for staff to experience and explore diversity, identity, intersectionality and its connection to workplace issues.

• To practice and further enhance essential skills

• To increase self awareness, engage in dialogue and identify action steps to address equity and inclusion in work place

• To build alliances and collaborations with colleagues across dept.’s/colleges
“Creating a Culture of Respect”

• Fall 2014: 19 hours/3 days
• 14 Participants: 7 men, 7 women; 4 ppl of color/10 white ppl; 2 ppl with disabilities; 4 LGBT ppl
• Facilitators – 1 lead facilitator, 2 facilitators in training
• Departments involved
  • Human Resources and Safety Services (HRSS), Organizational Development for Faculty and Staff, Talent Acquisition,
  • Student & Campus Life- Health Services Center, Community Centers, Dean of Students; Student Disability Services
Feedback

• “This pilot stayed with me in a way that other diversity programs haven’t before. So often we don’t get the tools for getting deeper in the way this did.”

• “…It made me examine how I live and work in the world. Very powerful.”

• “So often here we soft sell [diversity] because we don’t want to create discomfort. We have intellectual conversations about it because we don’t want to create discomfort...we went through the discomfort & continue to feel it means to me that it is the right level of discomfort.”
Lessons Learned

• “I thought I knew but then I realized I didn’t know as much as I thought I did”
• Owning one’s privilege is hard.
• Dealing with strong emotions. Time to talk & share experiences was key.
• Find the balance with assigned readings and experiential exercises. Journal assignments increased self awareness.
• Get buy-in from supervisors!
• Into the future – More skill development (develop allies, building solidarity, dealing effectively with conflict) and practice with case studies
## What’s next

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<th>2017</th>
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<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
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<td>Immersion Course &amp; Practicum</td>
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