



Social Science and Educational Diversity: A 21st Century Perspective

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Key Question:

- What are the effects of school and classroom composition on educational outcomes?



Answer is important because of demographic changes

- The US is becoming increasingly diverse as a nation
- Since the late 1980s, US schools resegregating
- Fast approaching pre-*Brown* racial isolation
- Irony: as US becomes more diverse, our schools are becoming less so



Diverse schools and classrooms have positive consequences:

- **Short term**
 - **Grades, test scores, racial attitudes**
- **Long term**
 - **Educational and occupational attainment. Intergenerational perpetuation of racial understanding**



Preponderance of evidence indicates

- **Cognitive Gains**
 - Achievement: grades, test scores
- **Noncognitive Gains**
 - Appreciation of those who are different
 - Preparation for life and work in diverse communities and workplaces
 - Preparation for citizenship in a multicultural democracy



Compared to racially isolated schools desegregated schools offer. . .

- **Greater teacher quality and material resources**
- **Greater depth and breadth of curricular coverage, including more AP courses**
- **Stronger academic press [expectations from teachers, peers, positive academic school climate]**



Desegregated schools offer

[con't]

- **Greater stability of teaching staff and student populations**
- **Access to broader social networks and cultural capital**
- **Greater parental involvement**



Positive effects from diversity occur at

- elementary
- middle
- and high school levels.



Cognitive outcomes of diversity

- **On mathematics and language achievement.**
- **For students from all racial and social class backgrounds.**



Noncognitive Outcomes of Diversity

- **Breaks intergenerational transmission of racial fears and hatred**
- **Diverse residential neighborhoods**
- **Employment in diverse workplaces**



How diversity affects achievement :

- **Inhibits automaticity in thinking.**
- **Stimulates critical thinking and problem solving skills of all students.**
- **Creates positive academic climate inhibiting misbehavior.**



Diverse conditions foster decreases in racism if

- Sustained interracial contact
- Legitimized by authorities
- Equal status
- Joint effort toward common goal



How diversity affects status attainment

- Expands social networks
- Multiple role models
- Greater exposure to cultural capital



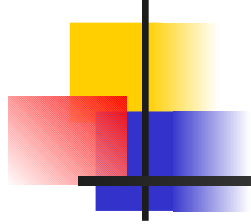
Racial isolation

- Harmful to African American and Latino students
- Research less clear about negative effects for Whites and Asians
- But growing body of research suggests racial isolation hurts Whites and Asians as well.



Are Social Class and Ethnic Diversity the Same? **NO**

- Racial composition is related to but not equivalent to socioeconomic composition.
- Diversity at both levels is important.



Thank you!