

Teaching and Learning for a Just Society

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Key Value Questions for Teaching and Learning

- Are students becoming more materialistic?
- Are students becoming more apathetic?
- Is racial diversity a less salient issue for students today?

If so, how do we counter prevailing norms in higher education? How do we train students for a complex society that requires ethical decision-making?

Trends: Students' Personal Goals Rated Essential or Very Important

Raising a Family	76% Highest in 40 years
Helping Others in Difficulty	67% Highest in 20 years
Influencing social values	46% Also high point in 1992
Improving my understanding of other countries or cultures	49% First monitored after 9/11, risen steadily since then
Integrating spirituality into my life	41% Slight decline since 2000
Becoming a community leader	35% Highest in ten years (over half at HBCUs)

Materialism or Financial Concerns?

73% rate “becoming very well-off financially” as important or essential (87.5% at HBCUs)

64% of students indicate they have some or a major concern about their ability to pay for college—higher for students from lower incomes

44% expect to get a job during college to help pay for expenses--highest in 30 years

Racial/ethnic Experience and Tolerance

9 out of 10 White students grew up in a mostly white neighborhood, whereas over half of Black students grew up in mostly non-white neighborhoods

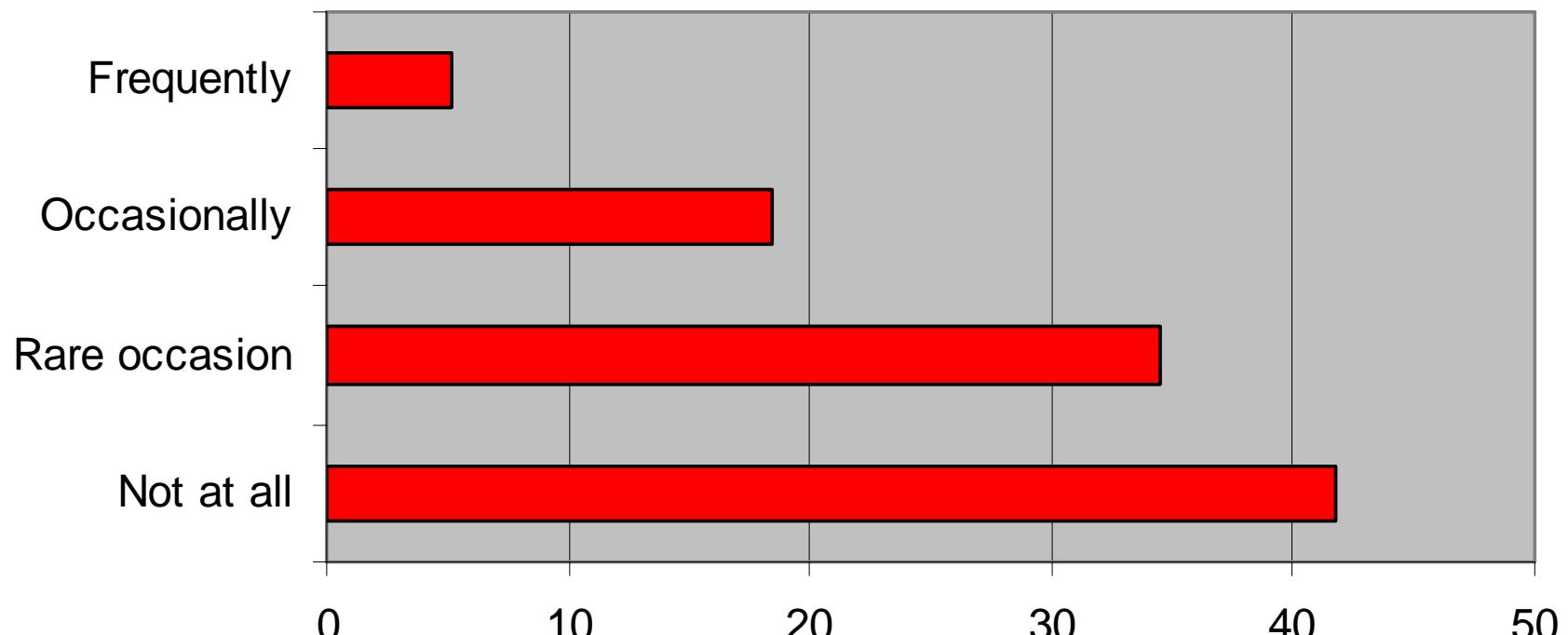
19% believe that racial discrimination is no longer a problem in America

35% seek to promote racial understanding

Yet, 65% expect to socialize with someone from another racial/ethnic group in college

2005 Your First Year of College Survey, Higher Education Research Institute

Percentage of First Year Students Reporting How Frequently They Fell Asleep in Class (N=41,054)



Essential Theoretical Components of Educating for a Just Society

- Moving students from their own embedded worldviews—disequilibrium in transition
- Individualism vs group commitments, advancing the notion of self in an interconnected world
- Human action creates new social structures, or reinforces existing structures—human agency in daily practice

Role of Diversity As Central to Teaching and Learning

- Diversity creates these opportunities for disequilibrium, balance of group or individual considerations, and enhances knowledge about different perspectives/backgrounds
 - Diverse curriculum (enlightenment)
 - Interaction (contact)
 - Representation (inclusive of perspectives and people)

Key Outcome Examples

Complex thinking—capacity to think about behaviors as socially and historically linked

Perspective-Taking—ability to see the world from someone else's perspective

Pluralistic Orientation—ability to function in multicultural groups, willingness to have own views challenged, ability to negotiate differences

Undergraduate Experiences, Independent Effect on Outcomes

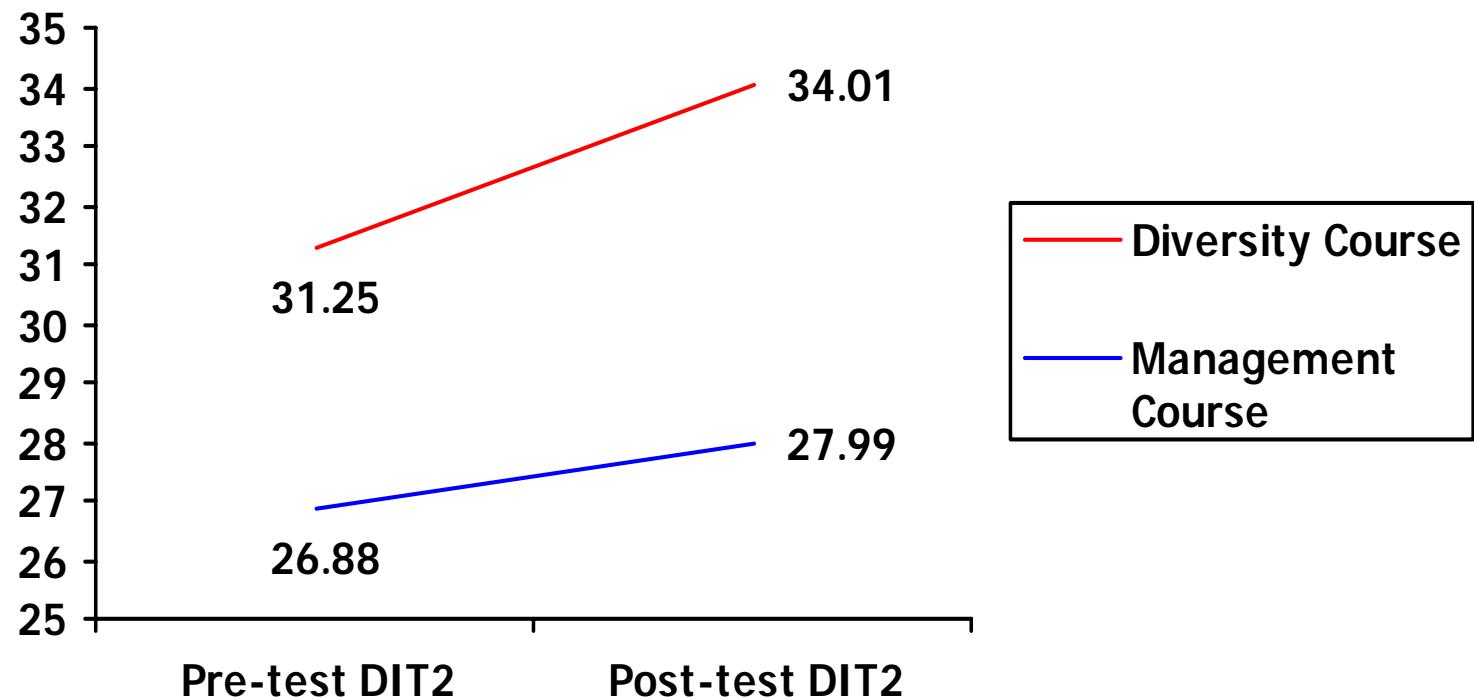
<u>Outcome</u>	Posit. Informal Interaction	Diversity Course	Intergroup Service Dialogue	Service Learning
Analytical Problem-Solving Skills	**		*	
Complex Thinking	***	***	*	
Perspective-taking	***	**	***	
Importance of Making a Civic Contribution	**	***		***
Voting in Govt. Elections		***	(*)	

Undergraduate Experiences, Independent Effect on Outcomes

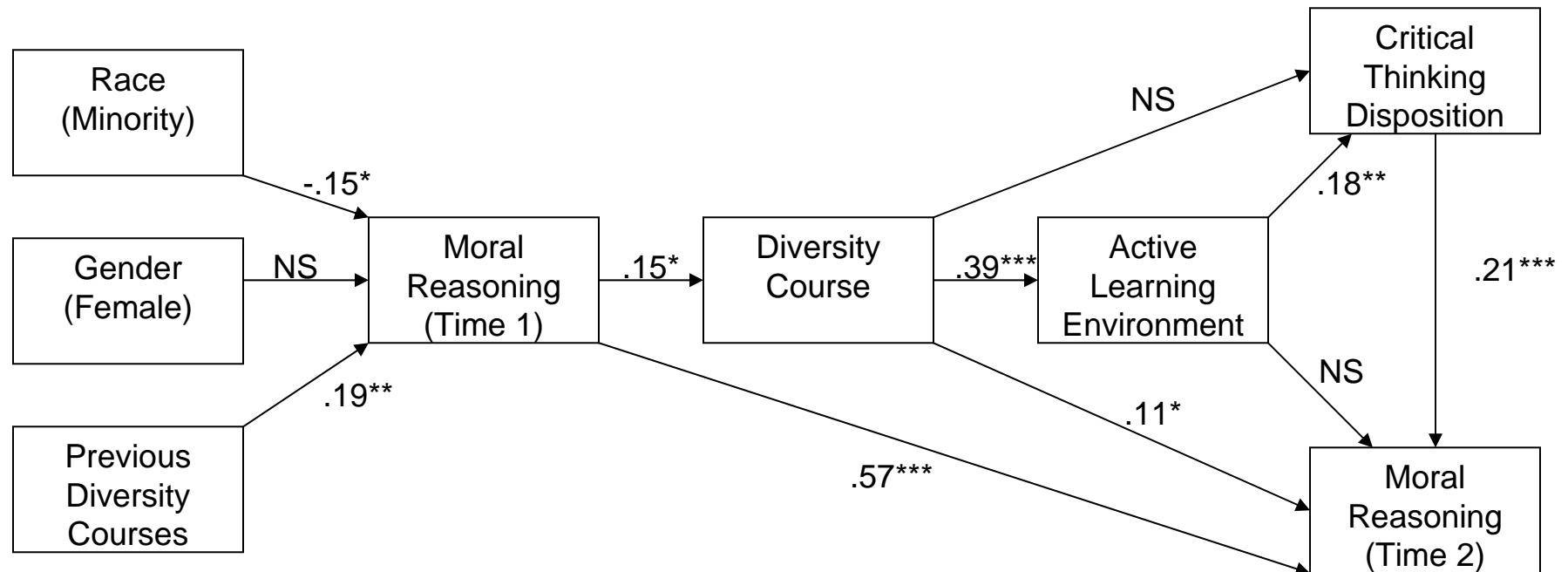
<u>Outcome</u>	Positive Informal Interaction	Diversity Course	Intergroup Dialogue	Diversity Co-curric.
Interest in Poverty Issues	***	***	**	***
Pluralistic Orientation	***	*	***	**
Cultural Awareness	***	***		***
Concern for the Public Good	***	***		***

University Classroom Study

Moral Development



Predispositions, Diversity Content, and Pedagogy Effects On Moral Reasoning



Linking Social Responsibility and Critical Thinking

- Students who had a strong desire to influence society scored highest on the critical thinking disposition test, complex thinking scale, and open-mindedness subscale
- Interaction with students of color was associated with open-mindedness and inquisitiveness scales on CTDI

Implications

- Students are entering with key dispositions, enhancing their development is our task
- Taking a social justice lens to the work we do is essential if we wish to produce leaders willing to close social gaps in society
- Intentional educators do not take learning or interactions with diversity for granted

Resources

- Higher Education Research Institute
www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri
- The Black Undergraduate (Allen, et al, 2005)
- Upcoming reports: The First in My Family, First generation report in spring
- 40 Year Trends on April 2nd
- Linda Sax, book on gender differences
Jossey-Bass