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Transformative Pedagogy for Democracy and Social Justice

BIREN (RATNESH) A. NAGDA
University of Washington, School of Social Work, 4101 15th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98105, USA

PATRICIA GURIN
University of Michigan, Program on Intergroup Relations, 3000 Michigan Union, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, USA

GRETCHEN E. LOPEZ
Colgate University, Department of Psychology, 13 Oak Drive, Hamilton, NY 13346, USA

ABSTRACT *The authors propose a theoretical model of engaged learning for democracy and justice that draws from multicultural education and critical pedagogy, Freireian dialogic education, and Kolb's active, experiential learning. Engaged learning is defined as applying concepts and ideas from the classroom to out-of-class cognition and action. An empirical investigation (n = 203) examines the impact of a course focusing on intergroup relations and social conflict. The course is shown to increase students' structural attributions for racial/ethnic inequality and socio-historical causation. The course also increases students' action orientation away from individual blaming to individual action toward institutional targets, and institutional and societal change. On pre- and post-test measures, engaged learning is shown to mediate the impact of course content and active pedagogy on students' active thinking and understanding of socio-historical causation as well as students' action strategies that promote more tolerance. On post-test only measures, engaged learning mediated effects on socio-structural understanding, understanding others, and learning about conflict. The authors discuss the importance of content, active pedagogy, and engaged learning, and implications for future research and practice on teaching about democracy and social justice.*

Education has traditionally been seen as an important socializing arena for preparing students to become active citizens. Conceptions of active citizenship and the role of education in citizenship, however, have varied. On one hand, the economic and instrumental needs of society drive toward technically oriented citizens who will fill necessary workforce roles (Giroux, 1992). Universities and colleges serve as a pipeline, socializing and training prospective workers to fulfill economic interests. On the other hand, higher education institutions are also an arena for preparing citizens for a *public* democracy, for civic leadership and public service.

> At least since the time of Thomas Jefferson, American education has been seen as a means for preparing young people for democratic citizenship.

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> Schools have long been sites for the 'socialization' of students according to dominant notions of privately oriented democratic citizenship. However, a number of critical educational theorists have argued that the schools can play an important role in promoting alternative understandings of democracy, and can thereby help build a more democratic and just society. (Sehr, 1997, p. 83)

To participate in a public democracy, students need to be educated to bring a range of competencies and world-views to understand and respond to human and social dilemmas.

The need to understand both the practical and the political nature of education is more urgent now than ever before. Compelled by demographic shifts in racial/ethnic diversity and increasing access to higher education opportunities for students of color, educators are challenged not only to prepare students to participate in an increasingly diverse democracy but also to respond to such diversity within their own sites of learning and teaching (DeMulder & Eby, 1999). Colleges can provide unique opportunities for students to develop higher order thinking skills as well as relational skills with people who are different from themselves (Mann & Moser, 1991; Barber, 1992; Parker, 1996, 1997; Guarasci *et al.*, 1997; Gurin, 1999). Educational practices that help students look at issues in broad social contexts, hone their abilities for deep and critical inquiry, constructively consider multiple viewpoints and perspectives in dialogue with others, and engage in socially just actions can prepare a new citizenry for our increasingly pluralistic democracies (Sleeter, 1996; Gay, 1997; Sehr, 1997; Banks, 1997; Edwards & Marullo, 1999). The critical question is: how do colleges accomplish this?

Actual *practices* and *experiences* offered to students are what will achieve the aims of diversity and democracy on college campuses. Simply having diverse campuses does not automatically lead to direct effects on learning outcomes (Deppe, 1989; Chang, 1996). Colleges and universities must use that diversity to create learning opportunities in classrooms and in the broader campus environment for students to learn from each other. White students who socialize with someone of a different race, discuss racial issues (Chang, 1996), and have more multicultural friendship groups develop more humanitarian values and social concerns (Deppe, 1989). Other studies show that students' intergroup interactions in residence halls or peer groups are associated with an openness to diversity and active thinking (Hurtado, 1996; Pascarella *et al.*, 1996).

In this article, we focus on the actual educational practices regarding diversity that are enacted in a college classroom. We examine the impact of a multicultural education course in nurturing democratic sentiments and capacities among a group of diverse college students. By democratic sentiments, we mean the ability to think actively and structurally about people's behaviors and social issues, to understand the perspectives of other people, and think about actions to resolve intergroup conflicts. This definition of democratic sentiments derives from a participatory conception of citizenship. Mathews (1996) defines citizens as people who are active in the public sphere of the community and can deliberate with a diversity of

perspectives and people; they have 'the ability to keep an open mind, to stand in another person's shoes, to change and to make decisions with others' (p. 275). This participatory view of democracy differs from the earlier view of democracy as voting and providing input.

We draw from three interrelated streams of knowledge and practice—multicultural education and critical pedagogy, dialogic education, and active learning—to develop a theoretical model of the overall aims of the course and its pedagogical approach. We describe the overall structure of the course, and then consider three questions: (a) What do the students say about their involvement in the course? (b) How did the course affect students' democratic sentiments? (c) What aspects of the course account for these effects?

Education for Democracy and Social Justice

Contributions from Multicultural Education and Critical Pedagogy

Over the last three decades, multicultural education has come to be seen as a viable educational transformation that addresses the excluded voices of racial and ethnic minority groups and challenges institutional racism (Sleeter, 1996). Critical pedagogy, a more recent field, argues for a concerted anti-oppression and emancipatory approach to education (Nieto, 1995). Critical pedagogy keeps at its center the need to problematize both the overt and covert exercise of domination–subordination in social structures and processes as part of exploring points of commonalities among various social groups. While coming from different epistemological foundations, the focus of both multicultural education and critical pedagogy is to analyze social life through a lens of diversity and social justice and to prepare students to be transformative democratic agents. They are essentially multifaceted concepts with a common underlying philosophy and methodology: 'they both employ a language of critique, and endorse pedagogies of resistance, possibility, and hope' (Gay, 1995, p. 156).

Educational efforts and programs grounded in these approaches recognize that the challenge in educating for democracy is more than instilling new knowledge. Education for democracy requires an ongoing process of 'changing the environmental, cognitive, and pedagogical contexts in which teaching and learning occur' (Gay, 1995, p. 160). Content and pedagogy may be sources of domination, but they can also be a basis for grappling with ethical responsibility, conducting critical analysis, and enacting the democratic ideals of equality, freedom, and justice (Greene, 1993; hooks, 1994; Nieto, 1995). At the content level, transformative education includes previously excluded perspectives and experiences of groups that historically have had marginalized participation in educational settings. At its best, the content should develop a comprehensive structural and contextual analysis of dominant–subordinate relationships in society (Sleeter, 1996). At the pedagogical level, or teaching–learning processes, transformative practice engages students as critical thinkers, participatory and active learners, and envisioners of alternative possibilities of social reality. Nieto (1995) suggests that multicultural education can be invigorating when

students can participate in a 'democratic apprenticeship,' that is, an experiential involvement in the processes of democracy.

The integration of content and pedagogical process is a theoretical prescription for success. Yet, it is practically difficult. Many educators focus on one or the other rather than their joint process. Content without a transformative pedagogy may be rhetorical, intellectualizing, and divorced from reality. An active and engaging pedagogy without a critical knowledge base may result in temporary 'feel good' emotions. To elucidate the possibilities of conjoint multicultural and critical content and pedagogical learning strategies, two additional interrelated streams—dialogic education and active learning—are relevant for our consideration here.

Contributions from Freirean Dialogic Education

In differentiating dominating educational practices from emancipatory strategies, Freire (1970) introduced the concepts of banking and dialogic education. In his analysis, Freire portrayed banking pedagogy as privileging the role of the teacher as an expert knowledge source and subordinating the student as an empty receptacle of this knowledge. The banking metaphor evokes the image of the teacher depositing the knowledge into the student, who lacks any critical analyses or agency. Freire contrasted this with dialogic education in which the knowledge, perspectives, and experiences of students *and* teachers are honored as central to the education process.

Freire's dialogic approach is more than recognizing the multiple perspectives that are present among learners. In fact, Friere's particular contribution to social inquiry examines the unequal power relations that underlie the multiple voices and perspectives. Freirean critical inquiry is directed toward unearthing the silenced and subjugated voices, and examining why these voices have been suppressed. Multiple voices are honored but not unquestioned; stories and perspectives are entered into the educational arena to serve as entries for critical social interrogation. Through problem posing, students and teachers examine their experiences and perspectives in light of those of other people in relation to larger public issues and processes of domination and liberation. Such a multiplicity of perspectives under meaningful inquiry can illuminate students' understanding of why people and groups experience both common and different social realities, and why they act in the ways that they do (Nieto, 1995).

In this democratic and emancipatory process, students and teachers engaged in dialogic pedagogy can become active citizens, challenging injustices both within and among themselves, and in the social world around them. The processes of reflection and dialogue are central to the educational endeavor. Reflection, both self and social, coupled with dialogue can foster a critical consciousness by which students and teachers see their experiences situated in historical, cultural, and social contexts and recognize possibilities for changing oppressive structures. Reflection alone, however, is not enough. 'Critical consciousness is not the result of intellectual effort alone. … [it] results through praxis, or *the authentic union of action and reflection*' (Stage *et al.*, 1998, p. 56; emphasis added). The action piece fully integrates critical consciousness into a daily ongoing reality. We turn, therefore, to active learning

theory to describe how reflections on individual experiences and dialogue with others can be translated into increasingly deep understandings and effectual actions.

Contributions from Kolb's Model of Active, Experiential Learning

Freire's emphasis on praxis—action and reflection—is pedagogically illuminated by Kolb's (1984) active learning cognition theory. Kolb emphasized students bringing their lived experiences into the classroom and subjecting them to reflection and experimentation. Through self and social reflection as well as through reading to gain knowledge, students should be able to develop more abstract understandings of those experiences. Then they can experiment in the outside world for confirmation, disconfirmation, or refinement of their theories. The cyclical nature of learning provides for continuous reflection, dialogue, and action.

Kolb suggested that this process can be generated not only from lived experiences of the students but also from activities, simulations, case studies, or videos in the classroom. Asking students to reflect on and debrief such classroom experiences through discussion or journals can produce many of the same positive effects. Coupled with knowledge content—lectures, readings and other conceptual input—students can develop a more abstract understanding of social life, and that understanding can be tested outside the classroom and in new situations. To link understanding and action, teachers ask students to engage in class-based action projects and role playing to see how their in-class learning relates to out-of-class environments (Svinicki & Dixon, 1987). Thinking, talking, and applying class concepts, and acting upon these, all reflect engaged learning. These thoughts, conversations, and applied understandings may be brought back to class as content for further exploration and meaning making. The permeable boundaries between the classroom and the larger world can allow students to continually reflect on their in-class learning in relation to the outside, and vice versa.

A Theoretical Model of Engaged Learning

Table I summarizes the key concepts, tensions, and implications for courses that emanate from these three streams of contributions. Our review of these streams points to an emerging theoretical model of what we call *engaged learning* (see Fig. 1). In this model, content knowledge and participatory pedagogy foster engaged learning, which in turn fosters the development of citizenship. We stress three components: content, an active learning pedagogy, and engaged learning.

1. In terms of *content*, all the streams emphasize a structural analysis of oppression and inclusion of marginalized voices.
2. In terms of *pedagogy*, Freire's dialogic process—encouraging collective inquiry into social reality—corresponds to the reflective learning in Kolb's model and to the participatory learning that is emphasized in multicultural education. Active learning is seen to be critical. Education must encourage students to become active inquirers and transformers of the world around them.

TABLE I. Theoretical and practical contributions

	Multicultural education & critical pedagogy	Friere's dialogic learning	Kolb's active, experiential learning
Key principles	1. Egalitarian and effective practices for diverse populations 2. Systemic analyses of oppression	1. Enpowerment through dialogue among equals 2. Unearthing subjugated voices and examining structural factors	1. Learning as a process 2. Learning is grounded in experience 3. Learning requires resolution of conflicts between dialectical modes
Key conflicts and tensions	1. Pluralism/ oppression perspective 2. Content/pedagogy	1. Banking/dialogic education 2. Critical consciousness through *praxis*—reflection/action 3. Classroom (micro-level) processes/ systemic (macro-level) issues	1. Concrete experiences/ abstract learning 2. Reflection/action learning
Key implications for courses (content and pedagogy)	*Content* 1. Structural and historical analysis of oppression (re: race, gender, class, disability and others) 2. Inclusion of marginalized voices 3. Critical content on democracy and its contradictions	*Content* 1. Structural analysis of oppression	*Content* 1. Use concrete experiences of learners as content 2. Deliver conceptual, theoretical input through lectures and readings
	Pedagogy 1. Critical thinking 2. Participatory, cooperative and active learning 3. Envision alternative futures 4. Participation in "democratic apprenticeship"	*Pedagogy* 1. Problem posing 2. Dialogue as a way of collective reflection on systemic nature of oppression 3. Dialogue as a way of engendering agency to impact oppression	*Pedagogy* 1. Experiential activities, simulations and case studies 2. Reflection (self and social)—journal writing, dyads/small group discussions 3. Action experimentation—role plays, action projects, conversations outside of class

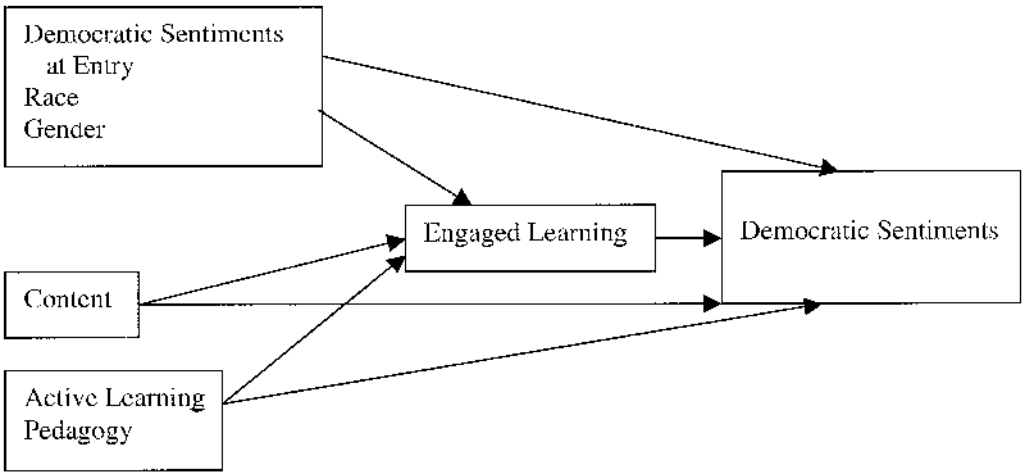

FIG. 1. Theoretical model of engaged learning.

3. In terms of *engaged learning*, the three streams also converge in expanding the boundaries of the learning environment from inside the classroom to include students' outside-the-classroom experiences. Kolb and Freire stressed the importance of action as a means to motivate engaged learning. Kolb's active learning model does this in asking students to apply classroom concepts to the world outside for experimentation and refinement of their theories. Freire did this in asking students to transform the world around them to undo unequal social power relations. While engaged learning and active learning are clearly interrelated, they are distinct. Active learning refers mostly to in-class generated activities that involve the students in the learning process. Engaged learning, as we define it in this model, is not simple engagement with classroom learning tasks. It is primarily students' out-of-class engagement with issues related to the course, reflecting on concepts after class, applying concepts to real-life situations, and talking with others outside of class.

Fig. 1 shows the theoretical model. Content and active learning directly influence democratic sentiments and also indirectly through their impact on engaged learning. The theories reviewed thus far do not explicitly articulate the predisposing factors that may influence engaged learning, but we hypothesize that democratic sentiments and experiences with which the students enter the learning situation will influence how likely they are to use their in-class learning in their broader world. Tatum's (1992) research on teaching about racism, for example, shows that students of color and white students have different learning trajectories. Thus, attention must be paid in the theoretical model to account for such predisposing influences.

The critical pieces of the model center on the teaching methods included in the course (the content and active learning methods) that when enacted in multicultural classrooms foster student engagement with the world around them. A number of different relationships are thus specified in the model below.

1. Students' democratic sentiments at pre-test are hypothesized to affect both their engagement and their democratic sentiments at post-test. Race and gender are control variables.
2. Content-based learning is hypothesized to affect students' engagement and democratic sentiments.
3. Active learning is hypothesized to affect students' engagement and democratic sentiments.
4. Engaged learning is hypothesized to be a mediator between content and democratic sentiments, and between active learning pedagogy and democratic sentiments.

In a previous article, we found that both content-based and active learning, when considered separately, affected students' understanding of structural causation of inequality (Lopez *et al.*, 1998). This study extends the previous research in three ways: (a) it includes measures of democratic sentiments (perspective taking and attitudes toward intergroup conflict as well as various measures of thinking); (b) it considers the impact of content and pedagogy as a holistic learning endeavor instead of as discrete effects; and (c) it considers students' continued engagement and learning outside of the class.

The Democracy and Social Justice Education Project

This study focuses on a course, 'Intergroup Relations and Conflict.' The course, drawing on many of the principles and strategies reviewed above, was designed: (a) to introduce students to the historical, conceptual, and empirical roots of social differences and social inequalities; (b) to provide opportunities for engaging with others whose viewpoints, experiences, and social backgrounds differed from their own (see Sfeir-Younis, 1993); and (c) to foster engagement in participatory democracy.

The *course content* covered structural and historical bases of various forms of oppression (Sleeter, 1996). It also included material on personal and social transformation to give students different visions and possibilities for change. The course content, therefore, combined a structural critique of inequality with possibilities for social change. A number of educators consider it an ethical imperative that courses that deconstruct social reality also offer possibilities to reconstruct it (Freire, 1970; Gay, 1997). Lectures and readings presented historical and contemporary patterns of inequality, social identities, social conflict, and change. They also addressed issues of nonviolence, personal transformation, and alternative methods of conflict resolution such as arbitration, mediation, and negotiation.

The *course pedagogy* encouraged active learning through many different mechanisms. Students met in discussion sections of about 20 students to debrief the lectures and readings, and to participate with other students in experiential activities and simulation games that were designed to illustrate course concepts. Students also took part in small diverse groups (8–10 students) in which they discussed current social issues, participated in cultural activities (through visits to different places of

worship, residence halls, and other settings) and participated in collaborative action projects (such as volunteering at soup kitchens and a children's hospital). The discussion sessions, and these groups especially, provided what Nieto (1995) referred to as a 'democratic apprenticeship.' Citing the lack of true participation in democratic decision-making prevailing in our society and in our schooling, she wrote:

> Not only is the *process* of democracy missing, so is the critical *content* of democracy that would expose all its contradictory dimensions. If schools are to provide students with an apprenticeship for the possibility of participation in democracy, both need to be included. (p. 207)

Reflection was encouraged through weekly journals in which students articulated their understanding of issues covered in the course in relation to their own perspectives and experiences. Reflection guidelines were provided to stimulate their writing, but students had the freedom to write about topics most beneficial to their own learning.

Method

Participants and Design

Students in an introductory class on 'Intergroup Relations and Conflict' participated in this study ($n = 203$). A pre-test was administered during the first day of class and a post-test given to the students to complete during the last class. All students completed both the pre- and post-tests.

The racial/ethnic composition of the students was: 18 African Americans (9%), 18 Asian Americans (9%), 5 Hispanic Americans (3%), 2 Native Americans (1%), and 151 White/European Americans (74%). Four students (2%) indicated 'other' as their racial/ethnic identification, and 5 students (3%) did not answer this question. Just over two-thirds of the students were women; three students did not indicate their gender. The students' age ranged from 16 to 33 years. Two-thirds of the students were 18 years or younger, almost 15% between 19 and 22 years old, and about 2% were 24 years or older. The majority of the students (85%) were in the first year in college.

Measures

In an attempt to understand the impact of the course, we used pre- and post-test questionnaires. Measures assessing learning outcomes related to cognitive complexity (such as active thinking, socio-historical causal analyses, and structural thinking about racial inequality) and democracy outcomes (such as perspective taking) were used in both the pre- and post-tests. In the post-test, we also included a number of questions that inquired about: students' own assessment of their learning outcomes, such as social structural understanding, learning about conflict, and understanding others; students' involvement and importance of various

pedagogical methods that comprised both content- and active-learning orientations; and students' continued engagement with the course material outside of the class. We explain all the measures more fully below.

Thinking and Understanding of Social Phenomena

Measures with pre- and post-test scores.

1. Active thinking. To assess students' interests in thinking deeply about reasons for people's behavior, we used four items from Fletcher and colleagues' (1986) attributional complexity scale. For example, 'I prefer simple rather than complex explanations for people's behaviors' and 'I enjoy analyzing reasons for behavior.' The response scale ranged from 1 (not at all like me) to 5 (very much like me). Items were reversed so that higher scores would reflect interest in more complex thinking (Cronbach's α: pre-test = 0.62, post-test = 0.61).

2. Socio-historical causation. Also from Fletcher *et al.* (1986), items in this scale assessed students' interest in thinking about larger societal and historical influences on their own and others' behaviors. Items included 'When I analyze a person's behavior, I often find the causes form a chain that goes back in time' and 'I think a lot about the influence society has on my behavior and personality.' As in the active thinking scale, the response scale ranged from 1 (not at all like me) to 5 (very much like me) and items were reversed so that higher scores would reflect interest in more complex thinking (Cronbach's α: pre-test = 0.68, post-test = 0.71).

3. Structural thinking about racial inequality. This scale assessed students' understanding of racism, its structural causes, and its prevalence. Items included 'In the United States, there are still great differences between social levels—what one can achieve in life depends mainly on one's family background' and 'In the generation since the Civil Rights Movement, our society has done enough to promote the welfare of people of color.' The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Higher scores reflected higher structural-level thinking (Cronbach's α: pre-test = 0.68, post-test = 0.66).

Measures with only post-test scores.

4. Social structural understanding. One of the course's main emphases was to understand intergroup relations in an institutional and societal context. Sample items under this domain included 'I am gaining a good understanding of concepts/principles concerning groups and intergroup relations' and 'I don't feel any more aware about societal problems now than when I started the course.' The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). Some items were reversed such that higher scores reflected more positive learning. (Cronbach's α: post-test = 0.86).

Understanding Others

Measures with pre- and post-test scores.

5. Perspective taking. As a way of assessing students' disposition toward democratic processes, we used three items from Davis's (1983) perspective taking/empathy scale. An example is 'I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.' The response scale ranged from 1 (not at all like me) to 5 (very much like me). Higher scores indicated higher perspective taking ability (Cronbach's α: pre-test = 0.62, post-test = 0.68).

Measures with only post-test scores.

6. Understanding others. This domain reflected an appreciation of their learning in the course about others' perspectives and experiences. Two items were included: 'I am learning to value new viewpoints and reconsider some of my opinions' and 'I like being exposed to the experiences and perspectives of other groups.' The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree) (Cronbach's α: post-test = 0.63).

Attitudes toward Conflict

Measures with only post-test scores.

7. Learning about conflict. Given that the course introduced students to the issues of social conflict as well as normalizing conflict, we included these two items: 'I have learned to identify the main points and central issues concerning conflict management and resolution' and 'I have learned that conflict is a normal part of life.' The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). The items were reversed such that higher scores reflected greater understanding of others. (Cronbach's α: post-test = 0.63).

Commitment to Action

Measures with pre- and post-test scores.

8. Targets of change actions. In response to an intergroup conflict vignette (see Lopez *et al.*, 1998), we asked students to endorse actions they would take to respond to the situation. Eight different action items were used that targeted toward persons, interpersonal situations, or structural entities:

> (a) *Person targets*: 'Oscar should be less sensitive,' 'The other student should be more tolerant of people who speak more than one language' and 'Oscar should talk to the other person about it.'
> (b) *Individual action toward institutional targets*: 'Oscar should talk to some University authority about it' and 'Oscar should make others aware of it by distributing fliers, writing a letter to the *Michigan Daily* newspaper or by organizing a workshop on the issue.'

(c) *Structural targets*: 'The 'general' climate of the university would have to change' and 'Certain aspects of the wider society would have to change.'

The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). Items were reversed so that high responses indicated a victim nonblaming and active response.

Learning Assessment

9. Content-based learning. Students were asked to rate the importance and their involvement in lectures and readings. Ratings of both importance and involvement were scaled from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very). In addition, students responded to a specific question about the readings, 'I did most of the readings in the course,' by indicating their extent of agreement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly disagree). This item was reversed so that a higher score would mean greater agreement (Cronbach's α: post-test = 0.71).

10. Active learning. Students were asked to rate the active learning components of the course: the importance and their involvement in experiential activities, journal assignments, and multicultural learning groups. In addition, more specific questions about the journal writing assignments included, 'The journal assignments were helpful in my learning in the course' and 'The journals allowed me to express my ideas and thoughts well.' The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly disagree). Items were reversed such that higher scores would reflect more agreement (Cronbach's α: post-test = 0.76).

11. Engaged learning. To measure students' continued and active learning *outside* of the class, we developed a three-item measure of engaged learning. One item, 'I am learning to apply principles/concepts from this course to real life situations,' was scored 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). This item was subsequently reversed such that a higher score would indicate more agreement. Two other items were 'How much have you discussed the material of this course with people outside of the class?' and 'How much have you tended to think about the course material on your own?' The response scale for both items ranged from 1 (not at all) to 3 (a great deal). Since the items had different response scale ranges, a scale was formed using standardized z-scores for each item. (Cronbach's α: post-test = 0.72).

Results

Student Experiences of the Different Learning Elements in the Course

Descriptive statistics show that students rated the active learning components of the course higher than the content-based learning ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.55$ compared to $M = 2.74$, $SD = 0.62$, both on a scale of 1–4). A paired t-test reveals a significant difference ($t = 6.994$, $p < .001$). As expected, students indicated that the active learning components were more important in their learning and that they

were more involved with these aspects of the course than in the content-based learning.

Did the Course Have an Effect on the Students?

We studied student learning in the course in two ways. First, we looked at students' self-reported learning outcomes. Second, we compared students' pre-test and post-test scores to assess change over time. Here, we examined three domains: interest in thinking about social, historical, and structural factors for inequalities, understanding others' perspectives, and, thinking about actions to address intergroup conflict.

Self-reported learning outcomes. Descriptive statistics on students' assessment of their own learning showed that students tend to agree with most of the learning outcomes envisioned in the course design. On a scale of 1–4, average scores were consistently around 3.13 or 3.14. Students reported gaining a good understanding of concepts and principles in intergroup relations as well as a deepened interest in the subject matter ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.55$). They also reported learning about the central issues in conflict management and resolution. They came to see conflict as a normal part of life and that conflict can have constructive consequences ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.57$). Lastly, students reported that they became more interested in learning about the lives and perspectives of their fellow classmates ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.53$).

Change as a result of the course overall. Paired *t*-test analyses (see Table II) show that students increased their capacity for thinking about people's behaviors in a more socio-historical framework ($t = 2.484$, $p = 0.007$, one-tailed). Furthermore, in thinking specifically about racial and ethnic inequality, students gave more structural-level attributions at the end as compared to the beginning of the course ($t = 7.085$, $p = 0.001$). While the students' scores on active thinking ($t = 0.299$, $p = 0.388$) and perspective taking ($t = 1.474$, $p = 0.142$) did not change significantly over the course, the direction of change was positive.

In the action strategy measures, students more strongly envisioned actions that show individual agency toward institutional actors (such as an authority person or newspaper) ($t = 3.379$, $p < 0.001$), or change in larger systems (such as the university or society) ($t = 5.705$, $p < 0.001$). They less often emphasized individual action toward oneself: 'Oscar should be less sensitive' ($t = 1.675$, $p = 0.048$). Actions asking for more tolerance on the part of the perpetrator or communication between the perpetrator and victim did not show any change.

These results, assessing overall impact, show that the course was successful in achieving its goals of increasing structural appreciation of systemic inequality as well as helping students envision action strategies that recognize both individual empowerment and structural change. The students did not show changes in their motivation for active thinking or in considering multiple perspectives.

TABLE II. Pre- and post-test analysis of change (using paired *t*-tests)[a]

Scale	Pre-test	Post-test
Causal thinking		
Active thinking (response scale 1–5)	3.79 (0.73)	3.80 (0.71)
Socio-historical thinking (response scale 1–5)	3.45 (0.93)	3.60* (0.87)
Structural attributions (response scale 1–4)	2.78 (0.51)	3.01*** (0.47)
Relational understanding		
Perspective taking (response scale 1–5)	3.65 (0.74)	3.72 (.70)
Action strategies (higher scores imply less individual blaming)		
Individual targets		
Oscar should try to be less sensitive.	5.08 (1.69)	5.36* (1.59)
The other student should be more tolerant of people who speak more than one language.	6.58 (0.80)	6.59 (0.82)
Oscar should talk to the other person about it.	5.80 (1.13)	5.79 (1.21)
Individual action toward institutional target		
Oscar should talk to some University authority about it.	4.24 (1.55)	4.59** (1.64)
Oscar should make others aware of it by distributing flyers, writing a letter in the [school newspaper], or organizing a workshop on the issue.	3.74 (1.67)	4.16*** (1.56)
Structural targets		
The general 'climate' of the University would have to change.	4.21 (1.62)	5.05*** (1.53)
Certain aspects of the wider society would have to change.	4.99 (1.53)	5.52*** (1.33)

[a] Results for 'Structural attributions' and 'Action strategies' were reported in an earlier paper (Lopez *et al.*, 1998) but are included here in a slightly different format. We include these results here as we are testing a new theoretical model that was not part of the previous article and that specifies mechanisms of change for these and additional outcomes.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$ (one-tailed).

How Did the Different Learning Elements in the Course Predict Change?

How can we demonstrate what parts of the course help explain change? A path model, using hierarchical regression analyses, was used to explore the full theoretical model, that is, to understand the impact of course content, pedagogy, and engaged learning on students' learning. The theoretical model posits engaged learning as a mediator in the relationship of the pre-test measures, content, and active learning to the post-test measures of outcomes. Baron and Kenny (1986) provide specific conditions under which mediation can be statistically verified: (a) all the independent variables should have a significant relation with the dependent variable of interest; (b) the independent variables (in our case, pre-test score, content, and active learning) must be significantly related to the mediating variable (engaged learning); (c) when the mediator is added into the equation, it should be a significant predictor and the previously significant relationship between the independent variables—pre-test score, content, and active learning—and the dependent variable should be reduced or become non-significant. A sequence of three equations was used to define the paths in the theoretical model. These were:

$$\text{Step 1: Engaged learning} = \beta_{pr}\text{pre-test score} + \beta_{cl}\text{content} + \beta_{al}\text{active} + (\beta_c\text{Constant} + \beta_g\text{Gender} + \beta_r\text{Race}) \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Step 2: Post-test score} = \beta_{pr}\text{pre-test score} + \beta_{cl}\text{content} + \beta_{al}\text{active} + (\beta_c\text{Constant} + \beta_g\text{Gender} + \beta_r\text{Race}) \quad (2)$$

$$\text{Step 3: Post-test score} = \beta_{pr}\text{pre-test score} + \beta_{cl}\text{content} + \beta_{al}\text{active} + \beta_{el}\text{ engaged learning} + (\beta_c\text{Constant} + \beta_g\text{Gender} + \beta_r\text{Race}) \quad (3)$$

Step 1. In Step 1 of the path model, engaged learning was the dependent variable, with the pre-test score, content, and active learning modes as the dependent variables. Table III shows the results. Across the pre–post-test measures in the four dimensions—Thinking and Understanding of Social Phenomena, Understanding Others, Attitudes toward Conflict, and Commitment to Action—content and active learning were highly significant predictors for engaged learning. The standardized beta coefficients for content ranged from 0.233 to 0.269, and for active learning from 0.444 to 0.457. Between 34% and 37% of the total variance is explained in the equations. The pre-test socio-historical causation was significantly predictive of engaged learning ($t = 2.641$, $p = 0.005$, one-tailed) while pre-test perspective taking was marginally significant ($t = 1.568$, $p = 0.060$, one-tailed). The effects of content and active learning were statistically reliable after taking account of these predispositions. None of the other possible pre-tested predispostions measured proved to be statistically reliable.

Step 2. In Steps 2 and 3 in Table III, the post-test score of interest is the measure of thinking and democratic outcomes (preferred actions and perspective taking). In Step 2 of the hierarchical regression model, pre-test score, content, and active learning were the independent variables (controlling for gender and race). When content or active learning are significant in this step, it means a change in that aspect will produce a change in the post-test when all the predictors are held constant. In particular reference to content and active learning, a significant coefficient for one is independent of the effect of the other. The control variables, gender and race, were not significant predictors in any of the equations and are thus not reported in the tables. As shown in Table IV, the pre-test score significantly predicts the post-test score in all instances.

The results from Step 2 regressions in Table III show that both content-based learning—through lectures and readings—and active learning—through journal writing, experiential activities, and multicultural learning groups—fostered structural-level thinking and active thinking. However, content-based learning was uniquely important in increasing a particular kind of structural-level thinking in which students showed a heightened understanding of the impact of history (socio-historical causation). The role of history in explaining current inequalities was especially thoroughly covered in readings and lectures in the course, and these results support that they were effective in achieving this kind of structural-level thinking among students.

TABLE III. Impact of content, pedagogy and engaged learning: outcomes with pre- and post-test measures[a]

Dependent variable and predictors	*B*	*SE B*	*β*
Step 1: Engaged learning ($R^2 = 0.352$)			
Active thinking (pre-test)	0.070	0.071	0.061
Content	0.335	0.083	0.258***
Active learning	0.755	0.106	0.456***
Step 2: Active thinking (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.357$)			
Active thinking (pre-test)	0.475	0.062	0.486***
Content	0.190	0.073	0.166**
Active learning	0.220	0.093	0.151**
Step 3: Active thinking (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.368$)			
Active thinking (pre-test)	0.467	0.062	0.478***
Content	0.152	0.075	0.133*
Active learning	0.133	0.105	0.091
Engaged learning	0.115	0.066	0.131*
Step 1: Engaged learning ($R^2 = 0.373$)			
Socio-historical causation (pre-test)	0.142	0.054	0.163**
Content	0.302	0.082	0.233***
Active learning	0.737	0.104	0.444***
Step 2: Socio-historical causation (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.363$)			
Socio-historical causation (pre-test)	0.514	0.060	0.533***
Content	0.216	0.092	0.151**
Active learning	0.140	0.116	0.077
Step 3: Socio-historical causation (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.404$)			
Socio-historical causation (pre-test)	0.473	0.059	0.491***
Content	0.131	0.092	0.091
Active learning	−0.068	0.127	−0.037
Engaged learning	0.283	0.081	0.256***
Step 1: Engaged learning ($R^2 = 0.349$)			
Structural thinking (pre-test)	0.030	0.103	0.019
Content	0.343	0.083	0.264***
Active learning	0.758	0.106	0.457***
Step 2: Structural thinking (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.343$)			
Structural thinking (pre-test)	0.455	0.059	0.506***
Content	0.082	0.047	0.112*
Active learning	0.136	0.061	0.144*
Step 3: Structural thinking (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.345$)			
Structural thinking (pre-test)	0.454	0.059	0.505***
Content	0.070	0.050	0.095
Active learning	0.109	0.070	0.115
Engaged learning	0.037	0.043	0.065
Step 1: Engaged learning ($R^2 = 0.358$)			
Perspective taking (pre-test)	0.108	0.069	0.096 +
Content	0.334	0.082	0.257***
Active learning	0.743	0.106	0.448***
Step 2: Perspective taking (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.392$)			
Perspective taking (pre-test)	0.573	0.058	0.587***
Content	0.073	0.069	0.065
Active learning	0.101	0.089	0.070

Step 3: Perspective taking (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.393$)			
Perspective taking (pre-test)	0.569	0.059	0.582***
Content	0.061	0.073	0.054
Active learning	0.072	0.101	0.050
Engaged learning	0.039	0.064	0.045
Step 1: Engaged learning ($R^2 = 0.357$)			
Oscar less sensitive (pre-test)	− 0.043	0.030	− 0.088
Content	0.360	0.083	0.276***
Active learning	0.776	0.106	0.472***
Step 2: Oscar less sensitive (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.252$)			
Oscar less sensitive (pre-test)	0.400	0.063	0.427***
Content	0.171	0.174	0.068
Active learning	0.446	0.221	0.141*
Step 3: Oscar less sensitive (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.253$)			
Oscar less sensitive (pre-test)	0.403	0.064	0.431***
Content	0.142	0.183	0.056
Active learning	0.383	0.254	0.121
Engaged learning	0.080	0.160	0.042
Step 1: Engaged learning ($R^2 = 0.359$)			
Other student more tolerant (pre-test)	0.021	0.072	0.018
Content	0.352	0.083	0.270***
Active learning	0.757	0.106	0.461***
Step 2: Other student more tolerant (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.281$)			
Other student more tolerant (pre-test)	0.548	0.075	0.471***
Content	− 0.028	0.087	− 0.022
Active learning	0.306	0.111	0.188**
Step 3: Other student more tolerant (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.296$)			
Other student more tolerant (pre-test)	0.545	0.075	0.469***
Content	0.082	0.091	0.063
Active learning	0.191	0.125	0.117
Engaged learning	0.152	0.079	0.153*
Step 1: Engaged learning ($R^2 = 0.367$)			
Oscar talk to other student (pre-test)	0.061	0.043	0.087
Content	0.355	0.083	0.273***
Active learning	0.741	0.106	0.452***
Step 2: Oscar talk to other student (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.133$)			
Oscar less sensitive (pre-test)	0.295	0.073	0.295***
Content	0.120	0.139	0.064
Active learning	0.372	0.178	0.158*
Step 3: Oscar talk to other student (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.140$)			
Oscar talk to other student (pre-test)	0.286	0.073	0.285***
Content	0.070	0.146	0.037
Active learning	0.263	0.201	0.112
Engaged learning	0.148	0.129	0.102
Step 1: Engaged learning ($R^2 = 0.359$)			
Oscar talk to University authority (pre-test)	0.001	0.033	0.002
Content	0.352	0.084	0.270***
Active learning	0.759	0.106	0.462***

TABLE III.—*Continued.*

Dependent variable and predictors	*B*	*SE B*	*β*
Step 2: Oscar talk to University authority (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.185$)			
Oscar talk to University authority (pre-test)	0.380	0.076	0.354***
Content	− 0.002	0.192	− 0.001
Active learning	0.626	0.243	0.188**
Step 3: Oscar talk to University authority (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.187$)			
Oscar talk to University authority (pre-test)	0.380	0.077	0.353***
Content	− 0.038	0.204	− 0.015
Active learning	0.552	0.277	0.166*
Engaged learning	0.098	0.176	0.049
Step 1: Engaged learning ($R^2 = 0.366$)			
Oscar make others aware (pre-test)	0.066	0.030	0.014
Content	0.347	0.084	0.266***
Active learning	0.772	0.106	0.468***
Step 2: Oscar make others aware (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.221$)			
Oscar make others aware (pre-test)	0.364	0.064	0.397***
Content	0.088	0.178	0.035
Active learning	− 0.015	0.225	− 0.005
Step 3: Oscar make others aware (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.223$)			
Oscar make others aware (pre-test)	0.363	0.065	0.396***
Content	0.045	0.187	0.018
Active learning	− 0.110	0.258	− 0.035
Engaged learning	0.123	0.162	0.064
Step 1: Engaged learning ($R^2 = 0.351$)			
Climate of University change (pre-test)	− 0.039	0.031	− 0.080
Content	0.352	0.084	0.271***
Active learning	0.756	0.106	0.465***
Step 2: Climate of University change (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.095$)			
Climate of University change (pre-test)	0.205	0.071	0.219**
Content	0.078	0.191	0.031
Active learning	0.384	0.240	0.123
Step 3: Climate of University change (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.111$)			
Climate of University change (pre-test)	0.216	0.071	0.231**
Content	− 0.028	0.199	− 0.011
Active learning	0.158	0.272	0.051
Engaged learning	0.296	0.172	0.156*
Step 1: Engaged learning ($R^2 = 0.354$)			
Wider society change (pre-test)	− 0.049	0.032	− 0.097
Content	0.351	0.083	0.272***
Active learning	0.747	0.105	0.459***
Step 2: Wider society change (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.188$)			
Wider society change (pre-test)	0.322	0.060	0.378***
Content	0.116	0.157	0.053
Active learning	0.341	0.198	0.125*
Step 3: Wider society change (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.195$)			
Wider society change (pre-test)	0.330	0.061	0.387***
Content	0.057	0.165	0.026
Active learning	0.215	0.225	0.079
Engaged learning	0.168	0.144	0.100

Step 1: Engaged Learning ($R^2 = 0.363$)			
Nothing can be done (pre-test)	− 0.032	0.031	− 0.064
Content	0.354	0.083	0.272***
Active learning	0.769	0.106	0.468***
Step 2: Nothing can be done (post-test) ($R^2 = .102$)			
Nothing can be done (pre-test)	0.239	0.065	0.269***
Content	0.080	0.175	0.034
Active learning	0.357	0.223	0.122
Step 3: Nothing can be done (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.102$)			
Nothing can be done (pre-test)	0.238	0.065	0.268***
Content	0.089	0.184	0.038
Active learning	0.377	0.255	0.129
Engaged learning	− 0.026	0.161	− 0.014

[a] Hierarchical regression analyses (race and gender as controls).
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$, + $p = .06$ (one-tailed).

Turning to the measures of preferred action strategies, we found that active learning, but not content-based learning, increased students' commitment to several types of action. Looking at the action items on which active learning had significant change, we see that these items are closely aligned to validating the impact of injustices ('Oscar should be less sensitive'), increasing intergroup understanding ('Other student should be more tolerant'), the power of dialogue in constructive conflict resolution ('Oscar should talk to the other student about this' and 'Oscar should talk to University authority about this'), and the need for systemic change ('The general climate at the University would have to change'). The only non-significant relationship involved making others aware.

Step 3. Step 3 in Table III shows the role of engaged learning in the path analytic model. Theoretically, it is considered to be a mediator between content-based learning and the outcomes, as well as a mediator between active learning and outcomes. As in equation 2, a significant coefficient indicates that the effect of that particular predictor is unique in controlling for the effect of the other predictors. The results generally support the importance of engaged learning with respect to students' understanding of social relations. Engaged learning significantly and positively predicted both active thinking and socio-historical causation (although not structural thinking). Students who were more likely to think deeply and contextually about people's behaviors were also more likely to apply course concepts and materials out of class.

In looking at the mediating role of engaged learning, we find that it did play such a role in accounting for positive effects of the course on active thinking and socio-historical causation. In the case of active thinking, engaged learning partially mediated the effects of content-based learning on active thinking as evidenced by the reduction in the β-coefficient in Step 3($\beta_{cl} = 0.133$, $p < 0.05$) compared to Step 2 ($\beta_{cl} = 0.166$, $p < 0.01$). Engaged learning fully mediated the effects of active learning on active thinking; the significant effect of active learning in Step 2 ($\beta_{al} = 0.151$, $p < 0.01$) was non-significant in Step 3 ($\beta_{al} = 0.091$, $p > 0.05$). In the case of socio-historical causation, engaged learning fully mediated the effect of content. The significant effect of content on socio-historical causal analysis in Step 2 (β_{cl}

$= 0.151$, $p < 0.01$) became non-significant with the addition of engaged learning in Step 3 ($\beta_{cl} = 0.091$, $p > 0.05$).

Since active learning had no direct effects on socio-historical causation, mediation effects of engaged learning are not possible. Therefore, content-based learning encouraged students to use course concepts outside of class, which in turn deepened their thinking about social relations and role of history in explaining current social arrangements. Active learning does the same for thinking about social relations but not for the role of history. In contrast, however, the results show no such effect of engaged learning on structural thinking.

Turning to the hypothetical conflict situation the students judged, engaged learning had minimal effects on preferred action strategies to address the conflict with the exception of one direct effect and one mediated effect. Engaged learning had a direct effect on students' endorsing a need for change in the university's climate to deal with this conflict ($\beta_{el} = 156$, $p < 0.05$). The mediation effect of engaged learning was evident in the effect of active learning on a commitment to tolerance as a solution to intergroup conflict; the effect of active learning in Step 2 ($\beta_{al} = 0.188$, $p < 0.01$) was non-significant in Step 3 ($\beta_{al} = 0.117$, $p > 0.05$) with the inclusion of engaged learning ($\beta_{el} = 0.153$, $p < 0.05$).

Students' Self-reports of Learning Outcomes

The results in Table III show no evidence that perspective taking (as measured by a shortened version of Davis's empathy scale) was influenced by content, active learning, or engaged learning. Results in Table IV, however, do lend support for the evidence for the importance of students' self-reports about how much they had learned about understanding others. Students who were most involved in content-based learning and active learning also reported at the end of the course that they had learned most about understanding other people. Moreover, applying the course concepts out of class was significantly related to understanding others, and mediated the effect of content-based learning on this indicator of perspective taking.

Finally, Table IV shows results that give further supportive evidence of the impact of content-based learning and active learning on the students' self-assessments of how much they had learned about sociocultural issues and about conflict. Both content and active learning were influential, as was engaged learning. Engaged learning was a significant predictor of both of these outcomes, and also mediated the impact of content and active learning. We see this because the effects of content and active learning on social structural understanding were much smaller, and their effects on learning about conflict were no longer statistically reliable when engaged learning was included in the regressions.

Discussion

The main purpose of our study has been to look at the impact of different teaching–learning methods in a multicultural classroom on preparing student learning for democracy and social justice. The import and urgency of such research was underscored by Ernest Boyer (1990) in *Scholarship Reconsidered*. He made an appeal to reflect on and revise the role of the university for the public good. Seeing scientific

TABLE IV. Impact of content, pedagogy and engaged learning: Self-reported outcomes[a]

Dependent variable and predictors	*B*	SE *B*	*β*
Step 1: Socio-structural understanding (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.300$)			
Content	0.225	0.057	0.259***
Active learning	0.426	0.073	0.385***
Step 2: Socio-structural understanding (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.479$)			
Content	0.104	0.052	0.119*
Active learning	0.160	0.072	0.145*
Engaged learning	0.351	0.045	0.525***
Step 1: Understanding others (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.203$)			
Content	0.145	0.061	0.167**
Active learning	0.335	0.078	0.303***
Step 2: Understanding others (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.299$)			
Content	0.057	0.060	0.065
Active learning	0.141	0.083	0.127*
Engaged learning	0.256	0.052	0.384***
Step 1: Learning about conflict (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.164$)			
Content	0.173	0.066	0.188**
Active learning	0.334	0.085	0.284***
Step 2: Learning about conflict (post-test) ($R^2 = 0.249$)			
Content	0.085	0.066	0.092
Active learning	0.140	0.092	0.119
Engaged learning	0.256	0.057	0.361***

[a]Hierarchical regression analyses (race and gender as controls).
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$ (one-tailed).

discovery as having been a preoccupation of universities in the years since the Second World War, he called for broadening scholarship to include that of integration, application, and pedagogy. He especially emphasized a scholarship of understanding ways of teaching and knowing as the bedrock for integration, application, and discovery—not to develop knowledge for knowledge's sake, but to use knowledge effectively in a rapidly changing society.

The particular subject of our study, a course on 'Intergroup Relations and Conflict,' was innovative in the domains of teaching–learning and the outcomes considered under the umbrella of democratic competencies. Not only were teaching and student involvement strategies combined creatively, but they were explicitly designed to prepare students for an active, democratic, and just citizenry. We postulated that students' learning would be enhanced by a combination of didactic, content-based, and active learning methods. Furthermore, we hypothesized that both these avenues of teaching–learning could potentially motivate students for engaging with the course materials outside of the classroom—by continuing to think about concepts covered in the course, by applying them to real life situations, and by discussing class materials with others.

Two main trends are observable in the results. First, in thinking or cognitive understanding and competencies, engaged learning mediated the impact of content

and/or active pedagogy on four out of seven dimensions. When engaged learning was not a mediator, both content and active learning had direct effects on such outcomes at the end of the course after controlling for dispositions at the beginning. Second, active learning was especially influential among the Commitment to Action dimensions, and engaged learning was a mediator of the effect of active learning in only two out of eight equations. Content-based learning had no effects on any of the action items. Therefore, if we want students to envision actions, it is important to use active teaching methods in the classroom.

Where did we not find effects? Neither the course overall, nor the regressions with content, active learning or engaged learning showed any influence on perspective taking as measured by a subscale of Davis's empathy measure. However, there was evidence that all three types of learning were associated with the students' own assessments of how much they had learned about others. These mixed results suggest that the measures need to be strengthened before strong conclusions can be drawn.

The Process of Teaching and Learning

Although research[1] has shown a number of positive benefits of students' exposure to and engagement in multicultural aspects of the campus environment, very few studies speak to the actual processes by which these benefits take place. Within the small body of research that is beginning to investigate different classroom processes and their impact on student outcomes, this study builds on Lopez *et al.* (1998), who showed that both content and active learning methods in an introductory multicultural class are positively related to an increase in students' structural attributions for racial inequalities, heterosexism, and ethnocentrism. Furthermore, in that study active learning predicted students' application of this understanding to endorsing actions to address incidents of ethnocentrism and heterosexism. Nagda and Zúñiga (2003) looked at the process of students' engagement in intergroup dialogues. Intergroup dialogues are small group meetings in which students from different social identity groups (such as people of Color and White people, women and men) discuss their differing and common perspectives on group-relevant topics (Zúñiga *et al.*, 2002). The dialogue process involves sharing experiences and perspectives, listening to others' viewpoints, working through disagreements and conflicts, and talking about ways to address injustices. While the students appear to be entering the intergroup dialogues with relatively high attributes, the degree of their engagement predicts increased centrality of race, perspective taking, comfort in communicating across differences, positive beliefs about conflict, and bridging differences across race/ethnic lines.

The Importance of Content, Pedagogy, and Engagement

Multicultural education and critical pedagogy scholars and practitioners may sometimes lean toward content *or* active pedagogy methods. Content and pedagogy have some similar and some unique effects. Content specifically had an effect (direct or mediated through engaged learning) on our measures of motivated cognition as well

as on our measures of understanding structural causation. Noteworthy, however, is its absolute lack of impact on the action outcomes. In contrast, active learning was associated with action preferences as well as the cognitive measures. If we want to foster democratic sentiments and envisioning various ways of taking action among students, educators need to include both methods of teaching and learning.

The results indicate that active forms of learning in which students actually practice what they are learning are especially influential in fostering understanding of action in solving intergroup conflicts. Both active learning in the classroom and engaged learning outside enhances students' learning. While content is important, it has to be actively processed by the students. This extends the dialogue beyond just content *or* pedagogy, and raises the question: content *and* pedagogy *to what effect*? Active engagement in the world-as-is is critical; both content and pedagogy can encourage students to participate more actively in the world around them—thinking more, engaging with others, and applying concepts to real-life issues. The import of Freire's notion of *praxis*—joint reflection and action—is clear:

> Emancipatory content presented in a nonliberatory way reduces critical insights to empty words that cannot challenge students' taken for granted reality and cannot inspire commitment to radical change' (Frankenstein, 1983, p. 318). Likewise, although humanistic methods without critical content may make students 'feel good,' the methods alone cannot help students become subjects capable of using critical knowledge to transform the world. (Frankenstein, 1983 cited in Stage *et al.*, 1998, pp. 53–54)

The Distinction between Active Learning and Engaged Learning

While both active learning and engaged learning are effective contributors to student outcomes, this study also raises the question: how are they distinct? While the distinction is speculative at this time, given the limitations in measurement of the two learning methods, we propose that the distinction may have to do with the level of abstraction and application of class materials. Following Kolb's model, active learning may facilitate progress from concrete experiences to theoretical and conceptual abstraction (such as structural thinking). Engaged learning, and its effects, seem to suggest an application of classroom reflections to everyday phenomena and immediate social environments (such as in active thinking and socio-historical understanding that have to do with understanding people's behaviors—own and others'—and their causes).

This distinction holds when looking at the different impact on action of engaged learning and active learning in our study. In the Oscar scenario, active learning supported the victim's own agency to *address the issue* with both the perpetrator and university authority as well as see the need for societal change. The effects of engaged learning appeared to deal with the mezzo-level in affecting *change in attitude* of the perpetrator or the university (more immediate environment) climate. In essence, active learning may involve structural sense-making of individual and group reflections and possible actions to intervene to interrupt unjust situations. Engaged learning, meanwhile, appears to use individual and group reflections and applies

generalized understanding to make sense of daily, proximal environment attributes. Both have the potential for generalizing the specific in-class learning to real-world situations and across different situations, and as in Freire's (1970) dialogic education process, for encouraging conscientization, that is, a structural understanding of social inequalities that helps people situate themselves in their own immediate social contexts.

Implications for Future Research and Practice

This research shows the importance of measuring classroom processes because they help identify the particularities of *what has an impact*. Multicultural courses do not always specify what methodologies should be employed toward what ends. Research that attempts to distinguish the learning process in these courses is very much needed for effective course design. For example, our study showed that the course as a whole did not affect active thinking or perspective taking. Furthermore, students with high motivation for considering multiple perspectives and thinking about issues in a social and historical context may be predisposed to engaged learning: thinking, talking, and applying class concepts outside of class. Nonetheless, the regression analyses showed that content and engagement had direct effects, and that the pedagogy acted through student engagement. Thus, students who can be reached by content and active learning methods demonstrated significant effects in accord with the educational goals of the course. For the course to have an overall aggregate effect in all dimensions, its designers need to determine how to reach more students with its content and active learning methods.

The practical implication of this study for multicultural education is the conjoining of content and active learning pedagogy to foster engaged learning for active democratic participation. Future process-oriented studies will illuminate *how* such courses have educational effects and *how* they should be designed for maximal impact.

The mixed results that this study revealed for perspective taking and understanding others also has implications for future research and practice. These mixed results indicate a need for additional and refined measures of perspective taking in future studies. It is certainly possible that significant results would have been demonstrated had this study included the entire Davis (1983) measure of empathy. The fact that we did see an impact of content, pedagogy, and engaged learning on the students' own self-assessment of how much they had learned to understand others also suggests that expanded self-assessments would be useful in future research. Of course, it is also possible that the course content and active learning methods genuinely had only a marginal effect on this important democracy goal of the course, and that the course needs more frequent and more effective perspective-taking activities and exercises.

Limitations of the Study

This study contributes to an understanding of processes of multicultural, democracy education. Still, it is after all only one study of one sample in one course. Moreover, while its longitudinal design allowed us to study the effect of the course by

controlling for baseline measures taken at the beginning of the course, this is only one way of assessing effect. Another way, comparing the post-scores of these students with those of a control group, would strengthen our conclusions. In this instance, it was not possible to define and collect data from an appropriate control group. Another limitation comes from depending on the students' self-assessments of their involvement in content, active learning, and engaged learning. These self-assessments clearly are one way of studying educational process but we would be more assured if the study had used observations or other means of determining content and active learning methods. In the same vein, the study would be strengthened if behavioral measures could have been taken of engaged learning.

The study also raises questions about the power inequality that is inevitably involved in teacher–student roles. Teaching in a class aimed at democracy and social justice necessarily raises questions about the role of the instructor. The instructor's role, situated in the power dynamics of educational systems that privilege teachers over students, requires an ethical consciousness on the part of instructors. By ethical consciousness, we mean a critical, reflexive concern for how the instructor's own values, ideologies, and position of power play a part in the teaching process. Of course, instructors in all courses should be conscious of these factors, but instructors in a course whose goal is to challenge students to become aware of power inequalities in society should take this responsibility especially seriously. Given the situated power nature of teacher–student roles, instructors should ask: is their power coercive and dominating, or do they use their power in a facilitative, guiding, and student-centered manner? Instructors must also be willing to learn from students, to be teachers–students as Freire (1970) termed it.

The inequality in student/teacher roles has implications for the research reported here. Since the course that was evaluated in this research was graded, the students could have tried to please the instructors by giving socially or politically correct responses on the survey instrument. The instruments were not collected by the course instructors, however, and the students were assured that the instruments would be filed only by a student identification number that the researchers assigned, and not by their names or university identification numbers. Students were also informed that participation was completely voluntary without any impact on their course grade, and that their participation would help contribute toward understanding of educational innovations such as the one described here. They were urged to be as honest as possible, and told that there were no right answers for any of the questions.

These limitations notwithstanding, this study has addressed an important and understudied question in multicultural education: by what processes does multicultural learning take place? It does so, moreover, with a longitudinal design that assures us that the 'effects' we have demonstrated are genuine, and not merely the result of certain kinds of students—those more democratically oriented—selecting the 'Intergroup Relations and Conflict' course. In essence, this study adds theoretical, empirical, and practical knowledge about how to deepen student learning in the classroom, and how to expand it outside of the classroom.

Notes

[1] Students who attend extra-curricular events such as racial awareness workshops or multicultural events report more openness to diversity (Pascarella *et al.*, 1996). Diversity and multicultural courses show positive impact on complex thinking (Adams & Zhou-McGovern, 1994; MacPhee *et al.*, 1994; Lopez *et al.*, 1998; Gurin *et al.*, 1999), and an increased cultural awareness and desire to promote racial understanding (Astin, 1993). Students on campuses where a high proportion of faculty incorporated materials from different racial/ethnic groups and women into their courses were found to be more likely to vote in national elections (Astin, 1993).

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