Learning from Their Own Learning: How Metacognitive and Meta-affective Reflections Enhance Learning in Race-Related Courses

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Abstract

This interdisciplinary project examined how students think and feel about their learning in race-related diversity courses. Students in four classes (literature, psychology, geography) reflected on cognitive and affective dimensions of their own and their classmates' learning. The Color Blind Racial Attitudes Scales (CoBRAS) confirmed qualitative analyses of learning patterns in three of the classes that resulted in moving from lack of awareness about racism to increased understanding and in the fourth class that lacked this movement. Findings include what helped students learn, cognitive and affective obstacles to learning, and the benefit of exposing students to multiple perspectives, empathy-enhancing activities, and emotional regulation skills.

Keywords: diversity, race, metacognition, affective, obstacles

Introduction

Increasing diversity has long been a goal of higher education, both in terms of diversifying the student body and faculty and expanding the curriculum to raise representation and awareness of the country's demographic diversity. Indeed, the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) identifies diversity as a learning goal for all students. Their 2007 report *College Learning for the New Global Century* lists "Personal and Social Responsibility, including … Intercultural knowledge and competence" as one of four "Essential Learning Outcomes" emerging from campuses, employers, and accreditation requirements (National Leadership Council, p. 5). Similar sentiments can be found in the mission statements of specific universities and colleges. For example, according to the 18th edition of the *University of Wisconsin-River Falls Faculty Handbook*, "It is a major goal of the University of Wisconsin System and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls to prepare students for lives in a society characterized by racial and ethnic diversity." Toward this end, the handbook explains the requirement of every student to take a course that "deals primarily with issues of race and ethnicity." The purpose of these goals is to effect significant learning that creates empathetic citizens who are prepared to interact with people across the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic categories. Similarly, one of the six

dimensions in Fink's (2003) concept of "significant learning" points directly to such outcomes: learning engages the "human dimension" when students learn something about themselves and others that improves their interactions. Clearly, the stakes are high for diversity education, the instructors who teach such courses, and the students who take them.

Given these high expectations from institutions of higher education, the business world, and society at large, it's important to examine how these courses influence students and how instructors might teach such courses most effectively. In addition to examining how diversity courses have affected students' racial attitudes (e.g., Fallon, 2006; Kernahan & Davis, 2007; Probst, 2003; Rudman, Ashmore, & Gary, 2001), scholars have addressed both pedagogy and content through books (e.g., Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997), research articles (e.g., Pascarella, Palmer, Moye, & Piersen, 2001; Tatum, 1992; Tatum, 1994), and magazine articles (e.g., Nicholson, 2003) about what might work best. These venues, as well as conferences, presentations, seminars, and workshops, assist instructors across disciplines in teaching diversity content most effectively.

The current work will add to this literature using evidence based in the metacognitive and meta-affective reflections of the students themselves. Unlike most work in this area, this study focused on how students in various diversity courses felt about their own learning and how they conceptualized their own and their classmates' learning. In addition, this collaboration across disciplines (psychology, literature, and geography) called attention to how differences in content, course assignments, and teaching styles might lead to differences in outcome. By better understanding how students think and feel about their own learning in diversity courses, instructors of diversity content can improve their teaching and their students' learning.

Method

The project's interdisciplinary approach to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) led to both qualitative and quantitative collecting of students' perceptions of their classmates' and their own race-related learning, emotions, and development in different diversity courses. Grounded in several well-established conceptual frameworks, the project began with a "what is" question (using Hutchings's [2000] taxonomy of SoTL questions) that asks what learning about race "*looks like*, what its constituent features might be" (emphasis in original; p. 4). However, as we observed the patterns emerging in our data analysis, it ultimately evolved into Hutchings's fourth type of SoTL project by offering a "new conceptual framework for shaping thought about practice," part of the "theory building" that contributes "'some useful theoretical distinctions both to the concept of learning with understanding and also to teaching for understanding," including "how important it is to understand why some things are hard for students to learn'" (Cerbin qtd. in Hutchings, p. 5). McKinney (2007) further defines this type of SoTL work as answering questions that "lead to new models and ways of understanding practice," such as "what themes or what typology emerge when I analyze student responses about what helps them to learn in this class" (p. 28).

As the project began with the inductive SoTL question of "what is?"—or more precisely, "what is happening in diversity courses?"—the project researchers acknowledged that a rich variety of answers was possible, given that a lot happens in diversity courses. However, four specific conceptual frameworks informed how we approached the data and may help

to explain different aspects of our findings: current learning theories, racial identity theory, affective dimensions of learning, and metacognition.

Learning Theory
Theories about learning are central to this study, including the path from a novice's naïve beliefs to an expert's sophisticated understanding and how such development might be applied to learning about race and ethnicity. In *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000), the comprehensive synthesis of research on learning, the first chapter is devoted to "How Experts Differ from Novices": "People who have developed expertise in particular areas are, by definition, able to think effectively about problems in those areas. Understanding expertise is important because it provides insights into the nature of thinking and problem solving" (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000, p. 31). The theories of cognitive and affective development (Perry, 1968/1970/1999; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986; Baxter Magolda, 2001) were also useful in making sense of the student responses in this study. Specifically, in diversity learning, novices or those in earlier developmental positions—or earlier in their "journeys," to borrow Baxter Magolda's metaphor—are those who are unaware of and may even hold misconceptions about key issues of diversity, such as difference, white privilege, racism, institutional disparities and discrimination, multicultural history, and non-canonical aesthetics. These students may prefer what Perkins, Allen, and Hafner (1983) call a "makes sense epistemology" in which whatever "makes intuitive sense, sounds right, rings true" (p. 186) is more trustworthy and truthful than empirical evidence, expert testimony, logical reasoning, or concern for the common good. For this reason, simply offering evidence about the ongoing reality of racial disparities in education, wealth, employment, health, nd other areas may not be enough (Lakoff, 2004): students may ultimately maintain a disconnect between their knowledge of the facts and their own beliefs, attitudes, and intentions. This project explores some obstacles in novice thinking about race, as well as what may help them progress toward more sophisticated or advanced thinking and problem-solving as they encounter diversity content.

Racial Identity Theory
This project was also guided by Racial Identity Theory, drawing from the work of Tatum (1997), Helms (1990; 1995), and others (e.g., Cross, 1991; Phinney, 1990), and by theories focused on the relationship between systems of privilege and oppression and individual identities (e.g., Bonilla-Silva, 2003; California Newsreel, 2003; Collins, 2000; McIntosh, 1992; Rothenberg, 2002). Tatum (1992; 1994), for example, has found a predictable unfolding of identity development among her students as they learn about the psychology of racism. Their racial "identities" differ as a result of a variety of factors (e.g., their own racial grouping, their previous understandings of race and racism), but in general most students tend to move along a familiar continuum from colorblindness or relative obliviousness about race towards an understanding of race and racism that includes an awareness of their own identities in relation to others who are racially the same or different. These racial identities are also mediated by social class, gender, and other categories of difference, and understanding the dynamic relationship between the self and the institutions and structures created by the stratification of difference can help students make sense of how privilege and oppression shift in different situations and relationships (Collins, 2000; Muller, 2007). This project further examines the role of identity development in students' learning about race as they share a general awareness of these processes, preparing them for their learning journey.

Affective Dimensions of Learning

Conversations about diversity add extra layers of emotion that are challenging for everyone (Winans, 2005). Especially during the college years, students encounter and ideally learn to regulate feelings of "anger, fear and anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, and dysfunctional sexual or romantic attraction," emotions that aren't simply divorced from the classroom and what and how students learn (Reisser, 1995, p. 506). Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964) pioneered the focus on the role of emotions in learning when they mapped an affective domain within their larger taxonomy of learning objectives. Many researchers have built on, expanded, or revised this original model (Berlak, 1999; Davis, 1992; Fallon, 2006) and others have further noted the incomplete nature of learning without affective components (Ciompi, 2003; Hall, 2005; Lehman, 2006). The later positions in this affective taxonomy are needed for Commitment and Constructed Knowing, the more sophisticated positions in the cognitive development models of Perry (1968/1970/1999) and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), respectively (Richlin, 2006, p. 48). Emotional engagement also leads to stronger memory, learning, and even service for others (Stewart, 2007). Thus, pedagogies focused on the cognitive domain without engaging the affective may result in relatively incomplete, temporary, and unsophisticated learning.

Diversity courses often engage students' emotions more than other courses, even to the point that both students of color and white students experience them as "traumas" (Berlak, 1999, p.116). Because emotions "can either impede or motivate learning" (Dirkx, 2001, p. 63) even in courses without racial content, most race-related diversity courses have learning goals that may be difficult to achieve. As a result, scholars who investigate the affective domain in these courses can help instructors "understand student responses to diversity issues rather than … [simply] characterizing the students as problematic" (Fallon, 2006, p. 416).

Metacognition

Metacognition is the process of thinking about one's own thinking or learning. While cognition is thinking or learning, the prefix "meta-" adds the layers of "at a later or higher stage of development" and "more comprehensive," so metacognition refers to active, higher-order processing through reflecting on, monitoring, self-regulating, evaluating, and directing the thinking and learning processes. Considerable research has demonstrated that metacognition enhances students' learning because such self-awareness allows them to develop effective learning strategies and be more intentional about learning (e.g., Askell-Williams, Lawson, & Murray-Harvey, 2007; Borkowski, Carr, & Pressley, 1987; Butler & Winne, 1995; Elen & Lowyck, 1998; Elen & Lowyck, 2000; Isaacson & Fujita, 2006; Nelson & Dunlosky, 1991; Paris & Winograd, 1990; Pintrich, Walters, & Baxter, 2000; Pressley, Van Etten, Yokoi, Freebern, & Van Meter, 1998; Sternberg, 1984, 1986; Taylor, 1999; Tobias & Everson, 2000; Tobias & Everson, 2002; Winne & Hadwin, 1998). Because expert learners better understand problems, questions, and situations, they typically have better metacognition skills than novices (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Huber & Hutchings, 2005; Livingston, 2007; Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2001; Wiggins & McTighe, 2006). Wiggins and McTighe's (2006) concept of self-knowledge, or acknowledging "one's ignorance and how one's patterns of thought and action inform as well as prejudice understanding" (p. 100), is especially relevant in race-related courses since a lack of such metacognitive awareness will interfere with learning.

From these theoretical underpinnings, this project examined how students think and feel about their learning in race-related diversity courses. As metacognition increases the

ability to monitor and regulate one's thinking and learning, a meta-affective dimension for monitoring and regulating emotional responses was particularly useful for gleaning important insights to help instructors develop effective diversity courses across disciplines.

Participants

Both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained from students in four different courses (a humanities African American Literature course [female n = 5; male n = 5] and three social science courses: the Psychology of Prejudice and Racism [female n = 17; male n = 8], Roots and Diversity Geography [female n = 24; male n = 20], and Cultural Competence in Family Therapy [female n = 8; male n = 4]; total female n = 54; total male n = 37; total participants = 91) on four different campuses. The first three courses are primarily designed for lower division non-majors, while the last course is designed for graduate students in marriage and family therapy. The three undergraduate courses carried the Ethnic Studies degree designation indicating approval as a course designed to help students navigate the increasing diversity of their world. Though each course may have different disciplinary goals (specific to psychology, literature, or geography), each is also focused on increasing awareness about diversity issues and helping students develop the skills to interact more effectively with those who differ in terms of race and ethnicity. The graduate course doesn't carry the Ethnic Studies designation but shares the same diversity learning goals.

Qualitative Procedures

Through a series of individual and small-group metacognitive, meta-affective activities, students articulated and then processed their own responses to their learning, as well as those of their classmates. First, all students were given basic information about how people develop in terms of learning about race and racism, based in Racial Identity Theory (as outlined by Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; see Appendix A, developed by Kernahan and Karis). During the course of a semester, students in all four classes then completed an anonymous journal assignment that formed one of the primary sources of data for this project. Specifically, participants responded to five questions: 1) Describe 2 experiences in this semester's class discussion, reading, assignments, and/or everyday life that caused you to learn something significant about race or about yourself related to race. 2) How did you initially feel about these experiences? How do you feel now? How and why have your feelings changed or not changed? 3) What are you learning from class that helps you make sense of these experiences? 4) How will this experience and your reflections on this experience cause you to behave differently in the future? 5) What questions do you still have about these experiences or reflections? What do you not understand?

Students posted their anonymous journals online, where everyone in the class read them and completed another layer of reflection by analyzing how the class was learning about race and how they were responding emotionally. Then, in online small-group discussions, students shared their analyses and observed patterns, differences, and similarities in how the class is learning about race, as well as the specific patterns in emotional responses. Then, they generated recommendations for the class to aid in learning. Group reporters recorded these observations and posted them online for the class to read. These group reports formed the other main source of qualitative data for this project. This series of activities (journals, analysis of journals, small-group discussions, group reports) occurred early in the course and again at the end of the course. All procedures and measures were IRB-approved at our respective universities, and all students gave their informed consent to participate.

Data analysis of these documents involved two different coders inductively and iteratively analyzing the student writings from each class, looking for patterns and themes. Results were then compared, and the themes identified, although sometimes differently named, were found to be virtually identical. As learning is an interplay of prior knowledge and new knowledge in a process that sometimes malfunctions (Shulman, 1999), particular attention was paid to student reflections that included these breakdowns in understanding that often indicate novice learners, or in contrast, those that appeared to be most skillful or expert in their learning process. Once identified, Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive learning (2001), the subsequent taxonomies of affective learning, and Racial Identity Theory were used to interpret and understand the emerging themes and to answer the question, what is going on here? Using these approaches, as well as Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory of metaphor as a conceptual lens for looking at students' language as they reflected on their learning, we focused on qualitative interpretation of cases, unpacking them and "putting them back together in more meaningful ways" (Creswell, 2007, p. 163), rather than just on categorical aggregations of a collection of instances.

Quantitative Procedure and Measure
To assess awareness of racism more generally, this study used the Color Blind Racial Attitudes Scales (CoBRAS) scales developed by Neville and her colleagues (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000; see this article for more information on the reliability and validity of this instrument). These scales focus less on measuring attitudes or stereotypes toward specific groups and more on measuring denial of racism as well as participants' lack of awareness about white racial privilege and have been successfully used in previous work of this kind (e.g., Kernahan & Davis, 2007; Probst, 2003). These scales measure attitudes with 5-point Likert-type scales (1-*Disagree Strongly* to 5-*Agree Strongly*) that participants use to respond to 20 separate statements about race in the United States (e.g., "Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations"). This quantitative measure was used to confirm or disconfirm this project's qualitative data and to examine how students' attitudes might shift as they learned about and reflected on course concepts. As with the qualitative data collection process, this instrument was administered once in the beginning of the semester and again at the end of the semester. Data analyses involved using repeated-measures, planned comparisons of students' scores on the pre-course CoBRAS scales with their scores on the post-course CoBRAS scales.

Findings: Themes Uncovered and Their Relation to Previous Theory

What Students Said Helped Them Learn
When students were asked to reflect on "experiences in this semester's class discussion, reading, assignments, or everyday life" that caused them to "learn something significant about race or about themselves related to race" (according to the journal instructions), they most often identified specific readings or topics from class discussion, followed by particular assignments (see Table 1). Experiences from everyday life, while sometimes named, were much less common, suggesting that requiring courses about diversity rather than expecting students to figure it out on their own is an appropriate goal of higher education. Logically, the exact content varied between the four classes, with the most overlap between the two psychology courses. The concept of whiteness as a racialized identity was the most common response (about 25%) in each of these classes focused on whiteness or white racial identity. As an example, one student wrote, "I realized that 1) I actually do have a racial identity, and 2) the way I was raised and White culture has influenced the way I think about race today."

In the Psychology of Prejudice and Racism class, specific types of racism were frequently mentioned as well. Multiple comments revolved around the less familiar concepts of institutional racism (19% of responses) and aversive racism (14% of responses). One student "never before realized the extent of institutional racism in our society" because "I had the idea that racist acts were limited to personal experiences of mean people." Another had never considered "colorblindness [as] a bad concept. But . . . I learned that, obviously it will not end racism, but even worse, it is another form of racism." Other common reflections included explorations of how to create change (12% of responses), such as the student who noted that class discussions were "really digging into HOW we can talk to people (strangers, family, etc) and how we can make little differences in people around us."

In the Cultural Competence in Family Therapy course, an assignment that asked students to explore how their families had been shaped by different types of oppression and privilege was cited after whiteness as the content that most helped them learn (21% of responses). Reflections focused on the importance of seeing "how others learn about and view racial issues [and] ... intergenerational family patterns regarding oppression and privilege, racial issues and other family expectations," as one student wrote. Other helpful learning concepts that students mentioned included new information that challenged previous views (15% of responses), such as well-known, well-respected theories that "are actually flawed because they do not take into account the experiences of people of color," and new ways of thinking about the experiences of immigrants (12% of responses), such as the insight that "the melting pot of this great country, so to speak, did not include people of color."

In the African American Literature class, new perspectives about slavery were most frequently identified by students as helpful in learning about race (22% of responses). One student realized for the first time that "blacks weren't even considered real humans when they were enslaved," and another noted learning "more about African Americans as individuals." Learning about African American literature in general (17% of responses), the specific experiences of racism and sexism faced by black women (15% of responses), and the concept of light-skinned blacks passing as whites (12% of responses) were other course topics that students cited as contributing to their learning.

In the Roots and Diversity geography course, learning that all humans descend from common ancestors in Africa and are therefore related was most often named by students as significant (17% of responses), followed by institutional processes of categorizing racial and ethnic groups (15% of responses), the study of local census data (11% of responses), and specific information on institutional discrimination (housing laws, poverty level, healthcare programs, and education systems) against African Americans (11% of responses) and Native Americans (11% of responses).

What Helped Students "Make Sense" of Their Learning
After describing their race-related learning experiences and their feelings and how and why these may have changed, students were asked what they were learning from class that helped them "make sense" of these experiences. Students identified the same content themes summarized above (an indicator of reliability), as well as the extent of the continuing problem of racism; information on dominance, power, and race as a social construction; and the benefit of learning historical information that helped contextualize and deepen understanding of course concepts. However, in the literature and psychology courses, the most common responses to these metacognitive and meta-affective questions

focused on process rather than on content, with 60% of responses including one or more process comments. Students claimed that their learning was most supported and advanced through the class discussions (in-person or online) in which a variety of views were expressed because, as one student (PPR)[1] explained, "Hearing about the different experiences that other people have had with racism and how they handled the situation helped me decide how I would handle it … when I do encounter a similar situation." Students who had identified uncomfortable feelings triggered by course content (or, as one student [CCFT] said, "the struggles that all of us are having with becoming more aware and mindful") said they valued discussions that helped them work with these difficult emotions and benefited from hearing about other students' processes. Another student (AAL) claimed, "By seeing different perspectives of different people . . . . I am better able to open my eyes and make sense of the deeply challenging material." Many reflected on how discussions impacted their own learning: "Seeing other students with similar struggles and how they overcome their anxieties with the issues is reassuring that I too can overcome my own anxieties" (PPR), and "the first step towards racial-awareness is self-awareness and I need to be comfortable with being uncomfortable so I don't run from the discomfort" (CCFT). Students also articulated the connections between their affective and cognitive moves, such as the student (CCFT) who acknowledged, "This learning process really has helped me in not judging my own thoughts and behaviors during these types of experiences, which allows me to actually spend more time on learning from the experiences."

A second helpful process identified by students in these three classes was learning to empathize or understand perspectives and life experiences different than their own. This move was practiced through their exposure to multiple perspectives, both from the variety of views presented in readings and from classmates. Empathy was achieved through support for learning how to work with emotions that could otherwise result in a lack of receptivity to others' realities. One student (CCFT) acknowledged how discussions as described above led to appreciating "those whose viewpoints I find extreme or even misguided" and explained that "by getting beyond canned rhetoric, I feel like the underlying concerns we have are in the main quite similar. By realizing that the differences lay more in practical implementation questions and less in ultimate motives, I am able to more easily empathize with and enter into productive dialogue with those whose views differ from mine in this area." For a significant number of students, empathy led to statements about a commitment to action or questions about what action would be beneficial, as with the student (PPR) who wrote, "I am learning that I have a lot of power as a white person, because it comes with special privileges, like the privilege of being listened to and taken seriously most of the time. I can use that privilege to fight for social justice for those who are not privileged."

While a couple of journal entries from the geography class included some expressions of empathy and understanding of others ("Learning about the hardships that the different races endured helps to better gauge what it is that they have been through."), students generally did not name exposure to multiple perspectives, practicing empathy, or engaging in discussions as part of what helped them make sense of their experiences; instead, they tended to reference content information from the textbook or lecture. Students in this class reported having the same challenging feelings as students in the other classes, but in contrast to the other classes, the geography students did not name the processes above or learning how to work with their feelings as having been a part of their learning experience.

Interpretive Findings

The Learning Journey
Looking at the student work through the lens of metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) highlights the students' patterns of explicitly or implicitly using the journey metaphor to describe their learning experiences and their developing cognitive and affective responses to race-related issues, with many naming movement from unexamined racial assumptions and lack of awareness about race to increased racial awareness, new racial knowledge, and even plans to effect change. As with any journey, provisions, assistance, or other guides can contribute to ongoing movement and a smooth journey, while obstacles can impede movement and make it prohibitively difficult.

The following section highlights an analysis of malfunctions in understanding, which seemed to result in learning journeys that were truncated by a variety of obstacles that foreclosed or shut down learning processes (see Table 2). These included the cognitive strategies of dualist thinking and oversimplification and the emotional habits of defensiveness and organizing around comfort, all of which limited students' abilities to take in new information and to demonstrate understanding and application. While there were students in each class who demonstrated malfunctions of understanding, these learning obstacles were the most evident in the geography course.

Cognitive Obstacles: Oversimplification and Dualistic Thinking
A number of the observed failures of understanding were characterized by oversimplification and dualistic thinking. Both are cognitive practices that have been recognized as typical of novices, or learners in early developmental positions (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Perry, 1968/1970/1999). In regards to racial content, these two processes led to misunderstanding and misapplication of racial content and also appeared to help students avoid uncomfortable feelings. A common practice in the reflections that included these cognitive obstacles was to jump to an oversimplified, conclusive position about oneself, racial others, or people in general. A resulting self-confidence or self-satisfaction that prevented further reflections was one obstacle, such as in the following response to the journal prompt "How will this experience and your reflections on this experience cause you to behave differently in the future?": "They won't. I am the way I am and I am quite familiar with dealing with people of other ethnicities…. Treat people the same, that's just how it should be" (RDG). The apparent conclusion that one can never understand the experiences of another was a second obstacle demonstrated by some students who appeared to struggle with empathizing beyond themselves: "I feel like I cannot relate to anything that someone . . . who is not white is going through" (RDG). The implication here is that anyone who isn't white is so radically different that there is no common ground, no entry point for learning or understanding. Others expressed hopelessness or resignation, such as the student who wrote, "There's nothing to make sense of. People are selfish and will always have superiority issues. People (hopefully) learn as time goes on and things very slowly change" (RDG). As these examples illustrate, such responses in effect closed down further reflection that might have led to empathy, emotional engagement, metacognitive and meta-affective awareness that would encourage self-regulation of such disengagement, and the motivation for action or a change in behavior.

Among the reflections that included oversimplified thinking strategies, one that was commonly used was collapsing sameness and difference. For example, when students learned that there is no genetic basis for current racial categories or that stereotypical generalizations about racial groups are not accurate, they frequently made an all-or-nothing

move from the prior assumption that racial differences are "real" to the opposite position that race does not matter. The salience of equality and individualism as American cultural values also seemed to lead to erroneous assumptions that because racial differences should not matter, they do not matter, and that race is simply an interpersonal event. Examples include statements such as "there really is no race except human" (RDG) and "they are no different than us at all" (RDG). The oversimplified collapsing of all differences was poignantly clear in the observation of a white student who, after befriending some Hmong students, concluded that "race or ethnicity is of little bearing on personal relations" (PPR). Another oversimplification demonstrated particularly by white learners was to view race as being about non-whites without seeing how living in a racially stratified culture shapes the lives of all people, albeit in different ways. In the responses just above, as well as the comments that blacks "are more likely to have had experiences that could have been related to their race" (PPR) and the epiphany of "just how much [of a role] race does play in a person's life if they are a person of color" (PPR), students demonstrated growing awareness of how race matters in the life of a person of color but didn't yet see how racial constructions have contributed to their taken-for-granted experience of not paying attention to race.

Another way that novice racial learners oversimplified was by reducing the complexity of a racially stratified social system to the physical characteristics associated with particular racial groups. These learners typically then assumed that because physical features such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape aren't meaningful differences, race isn't significant. One student expressed "disgust" about those who think "a human being is better than another based on trivial factors like skin color" (AAL). More skillful learners were able to understand how physical characteristics in and of themselves may not be an important difference, yet because they've been used as a basis for racial categorization, they are associated with real life consequences.

Some students also relied on oversimplification to relegate racial issues to a distant, depersonalized past, a move that at best allows students to safely empathize with how bad things were without having to grapple with current racial realities, especially their own relationships to these realities. Such responses ranged from the relative self-absolution of "I am learning that while there still may exist in me some prejudiced attitudes, these are nothing compared to widespread racist attitudes in the past" (RDG), to the decisiveness of "it's in the past and there's nothing to be done now anyway" (RDG), to the defensiveness of "I don't feel guilty as I shouldn't. I think that history is just that and should be recognized but not reborn. I feel we have done what we can with it and we don't need to go any further" (RDG).

At the other end of the spectrum is the oversimplification of thinking of race as related only to one's own personal values and interpersonal interactions. From this "if it's not true for me, it's not true" perspective, if students don't regard themselves as racially prejudiced, there is nothing else to consider, as articulated by this student: "I will know that blacks have worked hard and still are being treated unfairly. I will make sure they understand I had nothing to do with it" (AAL). Although self-awareness of one's own race-related thoughts, feelings, and values was an important element in the most expert racial journeys, more skillful racial learners went beyond what they perceived in their own lives to reflect on how race structures institutions, policies, and social practices.

Affective Obstacles: The Absence of Meta-Affective Tools
One of the most common obstacles to moving forward on the learning journey was experiencing feelings of discomfort triggered by new racial information. Feelings of defensiveness, shock, guilt, anger, and sadness were commonly expressed in the journals from all four classes, but students' abilities to work with these feelings, rather than just react to them, seemed to shape the movement in their learning journeys: those who knew what to expect emotionally and those who learned that classmates were having similar emotional experiences were more likely to stay with the learning process and grapple with new information, even when it generated uncomfortable feelings. In the examples below, both students demonstrate metacognitive and meta-affective awareness of their learning processes, but the first one does not have tools for working with her feelings and did not seem to know that classmates were likely having similar feelings:

> I remember sitting in class and feeling like squirming in my seat. I felt like looking around to see if there were . . . [any] Native Americans in class. I did not want them to witness us talking about such atrocities, or what I see as atrocities. I felt uncomfortable and embarrassed to be a descendant of someone who could have treated other living, breathing people so callously. I also remember feeling a little stupid for not seeing the rise in our population of ethnic peoples as significant and real as it is. I still felt white and dominant in culture and numbers. . . . Of course, I still feel uncomfortable about the "Indian problem." I feel confused and helpless in fixing anything of such magnitude. I feel like we cannot do anything about it either, so, in turn, I feel like I should turn off my emotions and harden myself to the reality of Indian reservations and any other ethnic minority problems in the U.S. I feel like I cannot relate to anything that someone here who is not white is going through (RDG).

As this example illustrates, metacognitive and meta-affective awareness needs to be supported so that students can sort through the complex mix of feelings triggered when new information collides with unexamined prior knowledge. In this case, the process was so unnerving that the focus and destination of the student's learning journey became simply feeling more comfortable.

In contrast to the shortened learning journeys already discussed, many students demonstrated the ability to stay with the learning process, even as they experienced uncomfortable emotions. Students who were able to continue in their development despite discomfort demonstrated the use of multiple meta-affective skills. In the following example, these skills are named in **bold**, and relevant text is highlighted in *italics*.

> Through our class discussions *I realized that I wasn't as racially aware as I thought I was* **[honest self-awareness and articulation of flawed self-assessments]**. I reflected on my own childhood and upbringing and found that my socialization process growing up in a small-town kept me somewhat blind to the similarities that exist between different groups . . . . *I guess I was never fully aware of subtle [within group] differences* [**ability to see and name what one didn't previously know**] because *I often found myself thinking in general categories and assumptions* **[meta-cognitive awareness, or self-knowledge]***.* In essence, I learned that I cannot generalize or see one group (ex: African-Americans) as one large equal group. At first *I felt somewhat guilty and uncomfortable* **[self-awareness of feelings]** with/about the generalizations and assumptions I had made and also for not having a stronger cultural awareness. In addition, since *I thought I was more culturally*

> *aware than I actually was*, **[honest self-awareness and articulation of flawed self-assessments]** I *felt frustrated* **[self-awareness of feelings]** because what I thought I knew was wrong and I was eager to learn what is right. *Now I have moved beyond guilt because I realized this isn't a productive emotion* **[setting aside self-judgment so it won't derail the learning process]** and also because *my socialization and environment growing up was out of my control and there was nothing I could do to fix/change my past* [**ability to contextualize information and see it from a larger perspective**]. Because I am still becoming aware of the blinding power of my socialization, I am still eager to learn and to take a step towards understanding how to be more culturally competent . . . . I have come to the understanding that the first step towards racial-awareness is self-awareness and *I need to be comfortable with being uncomfortable* **[ability to tolerate discomfort in order to learn]** so I don't run from the discomfort, but rather embrace it and try to acknowledge and understand what triggers certain emotions/thoughts (CCFT).

The student above was able to continue forward in the learning process, despite feeling "guilty and uncomfortable." Several skills seemed to support continued movement toward deeper understanding, including articulating flawed self-assessments, seeing and naming what one didn't previously know, self-knowledge, self-awareness of feelings, setting aside self-judgment, contextualizing information within a larger perspective, and tolerating discomfort. Students who expressed similar processes were able to continue forward in their journey or development in learning about diversity, despite difficult emotions. Cognitive and affective obstacles in the learning journey were most prevalent and most explicitly articulated by the geography students, paralleling the lack of change in racial attitudes measured by the CoBRAS.

Quantitative Results
Finally, the quantitative results also show patterns similar to those found in the qualitative data analysis (see Table 3). Generally, most students moved from a relative lack of awareness about racism and racial privilege to a place of greater understanding, as measured by the Color Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS). Specifically, changes were shown for those in the undergraduate psychology course (Pre $M = 2.65$, Post $M = 1.91$, $t = 6.00$, $p < .01$), the undergraduate literature course (Pre $M = 2.84$, Post $M = 2.40$, $t = 3.48$, $p < .01$), and the graduate psychology course (Pre $M = 2.33$, Post $M = 1.95$, $t = 5.59$, $p < .01$). In all of these courses, scores dropped significantly, indicating increased understanding and awareness of racism and racial privilege. In contrast, students in the undergraduate geography course (Pre $M = 2.61$, Post $M = 2.59$, $t = 0.18$, $p > .80$) showed no change in scores. Its important to note that students in all of the courses showed similar pre-course scores on this scale (Means range from 2.33 to 2.84), indicating a similar level of awareness among the students prior to taking each course.

Discussion

Analysis of students' reflections, combined with the CoBRAS data, reveals significant differences in students' cognitive and affective learning journeys. The similarity in initial CoBRAS mean scores across classes supports the idea that students likely began their courses in a comparable place, what Helms (1995) has referred to as the "contact" stage for whites or the "pre-encounter" stage for people of color. Racial identity theorists have argued that all people (both whites and people of color) generally begin from a place of status quo acceptance, that is, internalizing the racial stereotypes and beliefs that are

communicated through socialization (parents, peers, media, etc). Privileges of the dominant group are generally unrecognized, and most white people are unaware of the ways in which racism affects them. From this perspective, racism is often viewed as relatively rare or isolated and as something separate from oneself, especially for those who don't experience discrimination and don't behave in openly racist or prejudiced ways. Such a stage may also be referred to as novice in terms of thinking about issues of race, racism, and discrimination.

Some generalizations can be made about novice ways of thinking about race, which distinguish novice learners from those further along the path towards expertise, even though learning journeys are rarely simple or linear and could include novice ways of knowing even in the midst of demonstrating expertise. Based on students' metacognitive reflections, one characteristic of novice learning journeys was that they were truncated by a variety of cognitive and affective obstacles that foreclosed or shut down learning processes. These obstacles, particularly the cognitive strategies of dualistic thinking and oversimplification, are characteristic of what McLaren (1995) calls "liberal multiculturalism" in which seemingly all-inclusive, all-accepting assertions of colorblindness and everyone's common humanity mask assumptions that "everyone should be just like me" (p. 51). More experienced racial thinkers and learners demonstrate the ability to hold more complex perspectives that can include both sameness and difference, including those "between and among groups," or what McLaren calls "critical multiculturalism" (p. 53).

Most of the content themes that students named as important to their learning challenged, revised, or rendered more complex what students had previously assumed. The racialized concepts of whiteness and privilege confronted assumptions of invisibility, normalcy, and one right way of doing things by making visible that each is constructed and not necessarily what is natural, correct, or best. New and individual perspectives about slavery—narratives from the slaves themselves—challenged the broad brushstrokes about the time period students might remember from history courses. The subtleties of institutional and aversive racism expanded comfortable assumptions that one's loved ones—including one's government, one's family, and oneself—have no part in the evils of racism. The idea that everyone has a common African ancestor certainly challenged ideas about difference and distinct racial categories.

As a result of such learning experiences, people sometimes experience a dramatic change in perspective. They question earlier beliefs and ideas about race and may begin to feel more personally aware of or responsible for racism. As a result, feelings of anger (at oneself, at the larger society, at friends or family) can arise, and some may feel isolated from others (friends, family, classmates) who don't share their new racial awareness. Helms (1995) has termed this stage "encounter" for people of color and "disintegration" for whites, who may especially feel guilty or overwhelmed. It can be difficult for students to manage all of these uncomfortable feelings, especially if those around them do not share their new awareness or are not comfortable with this new perspective.

While all students had at least some initial trouble getting beyond their discomfort or dissonance, accepting the information they were learning, and, as a result, understanding the realities of racism and race in America, these learning obstacles were the most pronounced in the geography course; in contrast, the psychology and literature students' recognition that they were not alone in experiencing such uncomfortable emotions seemed to support their ability to hold and sustain multiple perspectives and provided ideas for how to effect some change, rather than get stuck in hopelessness. The geography students

reported experiencing the same challenging feelings as students in the other classes but demonstrated fewer metacognitive and meta-affective tools to understand and self-regulate their emotions and to continue developing as diversity learners. This could be for a number of reasons. Though the largest class in this study, it had the fewest responses to the specific question about what helped them make sense of their learning experiences, suggesting less investment in the reflective processes. Also, it was organized more around lecture and less around discussion than the other three classes. In fact, students in the geography class appeared to lack access to multiple perspectives, empathy-oriented activities, class discussions, and explicit processing of thoughts and feelings about racial content as a part of their learning process. These factors may have contributed to their halted journeys toward greater, more expert understandings about the patterns and problems associated with race, racism, and difference.

On the other hand, in the three courses that documented change on the CoBRAS, students appear to have been more effectively equipped with the metacognitive and meta-affective skills to clear the obstacles and move away from their opening position of acceptance and a belief in colorblindness to places of greater questioning, acknowledging the complexities of identity, and redefining the world in racial terms.

Recommendations

The differences between the three classes that documented movement in their diversity learning journeys and the one that didn't, coupled with the students' own recommendations as they reflected on their learning, offer insight on how to help novice learners in diversity courses progress toward more expert processes. While the sample sizes for the individual classes are too small to generalize to discipline-specific conclusions, the comprehensive analyses reveal significant findings to make broad recommendations about effective diversity teaching and learning.

Class Discussions
While the pedagogical benefits of discussion are well known, project findings pointed to a very specific type of discussion that would support diversity learning. As our findings revealed patterns of race-related cognitive and affective obstacles to learning, class discussions in which students hear both multiple perspectives and classmates' cognitive and affective processes offer the opportunity for students and instructors to anticipate, observe, name, and monitor these patterns, which supports emotional self-regulation and thus support more complex thinking about race in diversity courses. When Berlak (1999) noted that her "'difficult' class," which was troubled by emotional and volatile discussions, generated greater understanding about racial issues than her calmer, "'easier' class," the key was that the students in the first class expressed and processed their emotional responses to the course content in class discussion (p. 100). Through these kinds of discussions, even when heated, students hear multiple ways of responding and struggling with difficult content and difficult emotions, thereby encouraging them to check their responses with others and within a larger context of growth. Berlak concluded that failing to elicit and engage students with their emotional responses interferes with learning. Students may also gain a sense of camaraderie, even among those who disagree or are at different points in the journey. In these ways, the group serves to help them learn more than they might otherwise learn alone. They can see the struggles and successes of others and feel validated in the struggles they might be having themselves.

Empathy Activities
Activities that engage students' empathy for other perspectives, including but not limited to the class discussions described above, emerged as another important activity in the three classes that demonstrated development in diversity learning. Empathy is clearly an important factor when it comes to issues of race and racism. Within the context of class activities, cultivating empathy for the variety of perspectives among classmates is essential. Burgoyne et al (2005) documents how students' "justifying their own position and blaming their opponents," their "inability to hear opposing viewpoints, and their lack of respect for those who held different opinions" can decline to the point of open hostility and withdrawal from learning activities. In experimental social psychology, Batson et al (1997) has shown that inducing empathy for a stigmatized outgroup member (e.g., taking the perspective of someone in that group and, as a result, experiencing their problems) can lead to improved attitudes toward the group overall, even up to two weeks later. In examining this with stereotyped racial groups, Kernahan and her students (Kernahan & Stephens, 2004; Kernahan & Bengtsson, 2006) have shown somewhat similar results. White participants, when given information about the effects of racism on African Americans, were less likely to deny that information when presented in narrative format (the story of a specific person) as compared to a listing of statistics and facts (referring to the group as a whole). This was especially true if they had been instructed to take the perspective of those affected by the examples listed in the information (i.e., inducing empathy). Even without this induction, however, participants appeared to spontaneously generate empathy in response to the story about racism, but not to the listing of facts. In similar research applied to the use of literature in social science courses, Boyatzis (1994) concluded that not using narrative literature to "vivify theories" and "humanize the stark quantitative findings" of social science research "may hinder many students' understanding of course content" (p. 33). Williams (1994) calls literature a "secret weapon" (p. 175) against racism, while Boyatzis cited literature's unique ability to represent "complexity and interconnectedness," giving students an "even deeper appreciation of the personal and contextual influences of race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class" (p. 34). Even smaller stories and anecdotes can provide similar benefits for instructors concerned with covering specific disciplinary material.

Metacognitive and Meta-affective Activities
The findings also suggest that engaging students in metacognitive and meta-affective activities supports learning about race. Although it isn't possible to claim that how students worked with feelings alone explains the differences between geography students and those in other classes, it seems plausible that the other students' emotional regulation skills shaped learning in ways that resulted in more change in attitudes, more complex thinking, and greater movement in the learning journey than for geography students.

Students seem to benefit from cultivating interest in and curiosity about their own cognitive and affective responses by first simply noticing their thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. This awareness engages the neocortex and helps mediate emotionally driven responses (Siegel & Hartzell, 2003). A related awareness is recognizing emotions as a flag, drawing attention to the fact that there is more to explore. Feelings often indicate that a new idea is challenging a prior, perhaps unexamined belief. With this information, students can become curious about what they haven't yet discovered about their own thinking habits.

It can be helpful at the beginning of a course to frame the learning process as a journey, preparing students for the commonly experienced or "normal" emotional responses, as well as the learning obstacles they may encounter. (Appendix A, developed by Kernahan and

Karis as students' brief introduction to components of Racial Identity Theory, is one way to achieve this framing.) This preparation better equips them to process racial content and to monitor and understand the affective dimensions of their learning, allowing them to think in more nuanced and complex ways. As Tatum (1994) describes, students benefit by knowing what they might expect as they learn about race; without this information, they may ignore, repress, or too harshly judge their responses and then feel isolated and unable to continue. If they contextualize these moments of discomfort, they can self-regulate and cultivate new habits and responses with discomfort, difference, and difficulty. Students can be invited to notice and reflect upon their own patterned responses, to see, for example, how quickly they jump to hopelessness or overwhelm in response to new racial information. With assistance, students can learn that running into a cognitive habit such as oversimplification or an emotional habit such as defensiveness does not have to be the end of the learning journey. Once acknowledged, these habitual responses often lose their intensity and can become a part of the learning process, rather than an obstacle that totally shuts it down. Many students become intrigued with the meta-level challenge of learning how to "be comfortable with being uncomfortable," and with ongoing support and reassurance they can learn to be open to new information, even when it triggers discomfort. Since a major distinction between novices and experts is the ability to recognize what patterns are meaningful or relevant in a given situation (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000), helping novices recognize and understand these patterns of response to racial issues—both helpful and hindering—is helping them learn.

Ultimately, with this awareness of common responses and obstacles to diversity learning, students can develop patience or self-empathy by letting go of self-judgments that may become immobilizing and short-change the learning process. Part of normalizing students' emotional processes is to help them see how everyone has been shaped in different but predictable ways by living in a racially stratified culture. Offering empathy to oneself and others allows one to face the painful realities of racism while challenging this socialization.

All of the above ideas can be incorporated in small ways throughout a course, without taking the form of extensive lecture or discussion. The difference in outcome between the geography course and the other three courses suggests that ongoing integration of metacognitive and meta-affective reflections, as well as emotional skill-building and support, benefits students' race-related learning. The reflective process can be built into simple journal assignment two or three times during a semester or woven into the course with comments, questions, or examples that encourage students to consider how they are learning. For instance, students can be invited to notice whether they're open or resistant to new information, how effectively they're holding in awareness multiple or contradictory perspectives, or what leads them to feel overwhelmed or discouraged. They can be asked to consider both sameness and difference, or to think about how interpersonal racial interactions are related to the larger social or structural context. They can be challenged to imagine how racial disparities might be addressed, or what they could do to apply the information learned in class.

Having students share their reflective processes in class or online discussions, perhaps anonymously, offers multiple benefits. It gives students the opportunity to see that they're not alone in struggling with course material yet offers them new ideas and multiple perspectives. They begin to see that not everyone has the same mental habits; while some might have patterns of oversimplification, others might have found ways to grapple with feeling angry or guilty. Someone who faces a different obstacle can be a valuable resource by offering alternate perspectives.

In addition to offering students information about some of the common pathways on the learning journey, it can be beneficial to offer them ideas about a clear destination. Is the desired destination increased empathy? Greater self-awareness of implicit bias? Social action? Increased ability to analyze public policy? As students progress on their learning journeys, those without a destination to guide them often move in the direction of comfort. While destinations will vary depending on course content, course goals and instructor clarity about outcomes can help students organize and support their development as diversity learners.

Further Study
Although this study has yielded multiple important findings, there are also a number of limitations that cause us to ask new questions for further work. First, although the qualitative and quantitative measures suggest the geography students' disengagement from the diversity issues and goals, it was a limited sample, so further work is needed for a full understanding of what disengagement looks like and how to prevent it. Similarly, future research should continue to investigate how the types of courses offered for diversity credit influence student learning. Given the broader societal significance of diversity courses, it would be important to know more fully how the content and teaching methods of particular courses lead to different types of emotional engagement and learning. One question to ask might be how these courses lead to different qualities of understanding. Does, for example, a course about the sociology of racism lead to the same kinds of change as one on the history of Mexican Americans? Does the course content or the way the course is taught make a greater difference? How do these different types of learning and impact correspond to the institutional and social goals of diversity education? This initial study offers some indication of the differences, but clearly more work is needed before any firm conclusions can be drawn.

In addition, the students in this study weren't explicitly taught metacognition skills, so future studies may also directly instruct students in these skills to assess students' abilities to monitor their responses more effectively. Finally, this work was primarily focused on students' in-class experiences. It might be helpful to further investigate the effects of diversity courses on out-of-class experiences as well. In the journal responses about what helped students learn, few offered experiences from their everyday lives. While this response may mean they simply felt it was important to focus on the course, the journal prompt clearly offered out-of-class experiences as one possibility for reflection. Future work might exclusively focus on students' everyday experiences, apart from their courses, in order to show how diversity courses might facilitate and accelerate learning about race. Such findings would clearly be welcomed by institutions of higher education and might be useful for future policy decisions about diversity courses.

Conclusion

The recommendations emerging from this study don't have to take a lot of class time or threaten concerns about content coverage, and the potential impact on learning is too significant to ignore. As many of our findings are supported by other research about the effectiveness of particular approaches to learning in general and diversity learning in particular, an ethical dilemma emerges. In *Ethics of Inquiry* (2002), Hutchings raises an important question: if there is evidence that an intervention improves learning, is it unethical not to use it? By extension, then, if there is evidence that specific

recommendations, such as the ones in this article, improve students' ability to learn about race, then don't instructors—regardless of course content, or perhaps because of course content that claims to be objective and fact-based—have a responsibility to use them? More evidence is needed before such an assertion can be made, but clearly there are some methods that appear, at least at this point, to move diversity courses more toward the goal of "prepar[ing] students for lives in a society characterized by racial and ethnic diversity." If instructors want students to be cognitively and affectively prepared citizens in an increasingly diverse world, they owe it to them to help them learn most effectively.

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Appendix A: The Process of Learning about Race

As part of this course, you will be learning more about race and racism. Generally, as people learn about race (an often sensitive and controversial topic), there is a typical process that unfolds. In this brief outline, some aspects of that process are explained, so you can identify them and reflect on the learning process within yourself and your classmates. Students usually find these ideas helpful because they can lead to better understanding of themselves, their classmates, and the process of group discussions.

What do students typically feel?

First, keep in mind that it is not always comfortable to learn about race and racism. You may experience feelings of anger, resentment, guilt, sadness, or helplessness. Indeed, you may get to a point in the semester where you feel like you simply do not want to learn any more about race or racism. The good news is that things get better. Students usually move beyond this point and begin to feel more positive and motivated about what they are learning.

Sometimes these feelings can lead students to question or feel hostile toward the class, the material, or the instructor. Again, these feelings and reactions are quite typical and can be used as opportunities to learn if they are openly discussed with the instructor or other students. Occasionally students may want to simply withdraw from the class (not speaking during discussion or not attending class), but generally these feelings are temporary, especially if the student discusses them with the instructor or with others in the class.

How (and why) do these feelings develop?

People of all races, whites as well as people of color, generally have a variety of reactions as they learn about race and racism. Obviously, this learning begins early in childhood, but as people develop and learn about race in a direct way (as part of a class, for example), they often experience new kinds of awareness. Listed below are some of the typical kinds of awareness:

Naïve/No Social Consciousness: Very small children often have little awareness of social groups, but this naïveté changes quickly. By about age 3 or so, we can recognize racial differences, and as we get older, we begin to learn the stereotypes and codes of behavior associated with social groups. This learning happens as a result of socialization by parents, peers, education, mass media, etc.

Acceptance/Colorblindness: As we grow into adults, we generally internalize the racial stereotypes and beliefs that are communicated to us through socialization (parents, peers, media, etc). Privileges of the dominant group are generally unrecognized, and most people are unaware of the ways in which racism negatively affects all of us—white people as well as people of color. From this perspective, racism is often viewed as relatively rare or isolated and as something we are not a part of, especially if we do not experience it and do not behave in openly racist or prejudiced ways.

Resistance/Seeing How Race Matters and Becoming Uncomfortable: As a result of learning more about race and previously unrecognized patterns of racism, people sometimes experience a dramatic change in perspective. Earlier beliefs and ideas about race

are questioned, and we may begin to feel more personally aware of or responsible for racism. As a result, feelings of anger (at ourselves, at the larger society, at friends or family) can arise, and some may feel isolated from others (friends, family, classmates) for pointing out or trying to confront issues of racism.

People may also feel guilty or overwhelmed, and some may even wish they could change their racial group. Again, it can be difficult to manage all of these feelings of anger or guilt, especially if those around us who do not share our new awareness are not comfortable with our perspective.

Redefinition: With continued learning, people generally become a bit more comfortable dealing with race and racism and may find it easier to discuss these issues with others— even those without the same level of awareness or understanding. Overwhelming feelings of anger and guilt seem to lessen.

For whites, this can also mean less of a focus on targeted groups (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans) and more of a focus on white people and their role (contributions to racism, losses from racism, etc.). That is, whites may become less concerned with "helping" other groups and more concerned with "helping" themselves. In addition, whites may now find it easier to see both the positive and negative qualities of their own racial group.

People of color may also seek out positive qualities of their racial group that are independent of racial stereotypes and beliefs (self-determined rather than determined by society), and they may explore their racial heritage and culture. During this time, it is not uncommon for people of color to spend time primarily with those of their own racial group, primarily for support in this self-determination, rather than with people from other racial groups. White people sometimes view this behavior negatively because they misunderstand it as "self-segregation."

Internalization/Staying with the Unfolding Process of Exploration: As learning continues, we may feel more comfortable incorporating our understanding of racism into everyday life. That is, it just becomes part of our "normal" or regular way of thinking and acting.

For those who are white, this usually means not having to consciously think as much about sounding "racist" or behaving "incorrectly." As a result, whites may feel more comfortable and less self-conscious around those of different racial groups. People of color may experience similar feelings of comfort and confidence, thus helping them to navigate outside their own supportive networks.

For everyone, the challenge is to maintain new perspectives and understanding in the face of opposition by those who do not share this perspective and those who do not understand as much about race and racism in our society. **As a result, the process is ongoing and is never really "finished." It is also important to understand that feelings of guilt, anger, helplessness, and frustration will naturally arise as one gains greater understanding of such complex issues, but experience with such discomfort can lead to increased confidence about being able to work with and move through it.**

Notes

[1] Student quotes are identified by their class. PPR - Psychology of Prejudice and Racism; AAL - African American Literature; CCFT - Cultural Competence in Family Therapy; RDG - Roots and Diversity Geography.

Table 1
What Students Said Helped Them Learn: Content and Assignments Named by Students in Each Course

Undergraduate Psychology	Graduate Psychology	Undergraduate Literature	Undergraduate Geography
• Whiteness as a racialized identity (25%) • Institutional racism (19%) • Aversive racism (14%) • How to create change (12%)	• Whiteness as a racialized identity (25%) • Privilege/oppression genogram assignment (21%) • A variety of new perspectives that challenged previous views (15%) • Information on immigrants (12%)	• Information about slavery (22%) • African American literature (17%) • Experiences of Black women (15%) • Passing (12%)	• Humans descend from common African ancestors (17%) • Racial/ethnic group categorization (15%) • Class project on census data (11%) • Information on African Americans (11%); and • Native Americans (11%)

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because there were a variety of other responses not included.

Table 2
Common Obstacles on the Learning Journey in Diversity Courses

Cognitive Obstacles	Oversimplification and Dualistic Thinking • "I can never understand the experiences of a racial Other" • Collapsing difference and sameness • Thinking race is only about non-whites • Reducing complexity of racially stratified social system to physical characteristics associated with race • Relegating racial issues to a distant depersonalized past • Believing race is related only to one's own personal values and interpersonal interactions
Affective Obstacles	Experiencing feelings of discomfort • Defensiveness • Shock • Guilt • Anger • Sadness • Organizing around feeling comfortable

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables from Time 1 to Time 2 by Course for the CoBRAS Racial Attitudes Scales

	Time 1	Time 2		
	M	*M*	*T*	*p <*
Undergraduate Psychology[a]	2.65	1.91	6.00	.01
Undergraduate Literature[b]	2.84	2.40	3.48	.01
Graduate Psychology[c]	2.33	1.95	5.59	.01
Undergraduate Geography[d]	3.83	5.29	0.18	8.00

[a]$t(24)$ [b]$t(9)$ [c]$t(11)$ [d]$t(43)$ Lower numbers indicate *greater* awareness of discrimination and racism.