Creating Space for Mixed-Race Students

Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning
Washburn University

Sandra Winn Tutwiler

November 15, 2016
Mixed-Race Students are a Highly Diverse Group
Unique Group of Students

Mixed-race students are a Fifth Minority

- All are a mixture of races
- Racial identity process differs from monoracial students
- Experiences different from White & minority students
Influences on Increased Interest in Mixed-Race People

Check all that apply - Census 2000

- Inclusion of two or more races category in new guidelines for collecting, aggregating, and reporting student race and ethnicity data (DOE)

- Parents right to designate children’s race on P-12 school forms

- Increase in the number and acceptance of interracial marriages and bonds

- Increased tendency of mixed-race individuals to embrace their mixed heritage
Intersectionality and Mixedness

Intersectionality refers to the social characteristics of an individual (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation) that create overlapping and interdependent systems that lead to discrimination or disadvantage.

For mixed-race people intersectionality must also include the mixed race heritage of the individual (e.g., white-African American, Asian American – white, Latino-African American).
The one drop rule or hypodecent is the automatic assignment of mixed-race people to the socially subordinate group of their mixed-race heritage.

Even though hypodecent is no longer based in law, it remains a social practice.
Complexities of Race
One-Drop
Rule/Hypodecent

...people expect you to be one or the other, you can’t be both... They don’t understand the whole mixed thing... they expect me to be Black... the stereotypical Black girl... I can’t do that, I’d feel like... I’m posing almost... going to school, people teased me... ‘oh you should be Black, have a Black girl attitude, ha, ha’... and I go wow, I don’t’ know how...I’m just as White as your are... not a day goes by that I’m not reminded about my race. (OhKeiSyd 2013)

Racial Identity Based on Physical Appearance

- Leads to questions of “what are you?”
- Racial ambiguity leads to minority race designation by observers.
- People make assumptions that mixed-race persons has the same background and experiences as monoracial peers of color
I would say I identify strongly [as black] only because I think part of how you define yourself is the category that society puts you into . . . when people look at me they are not going to see a white person. (Khanna, 2011, p. 49).

Complexities of Race
Mixed-race in a Monoracial World

Social institutions tend to be predominantly monoracial.

Family
Communities
Schools
University Campuses
Complexities of Race

...I met another Blatina... We were very close friends and that was really good for me because finally there was someone who completely understood. When I was with her, it was totally okay to be these two things. (Diaz, 1999, p. 53)

Minorities place expectations of minority-minority mixed-race people that may not fit the mixed-race persons sense of self.

Racial Identity Development

What is racial identity development?

Identity development is the process of self-discovery that begins in young children and continues through adulthood.

Racial identity development relates to decisions made about self-identity and racial group affiliation.
Racial Identity and Mixed-Race Youth

Racial identity – how mixed-race people understand themselves

Racial categories - available and chosen racial identity in a given context

Racial identification - how mixed-race people are categorized by others

Influences on Racial Identity Development

Intersection of:

- Generation
- Region and Geographical History of Race
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender
- Class
- Family And Community Influences
- Individual Influences
- Mixed-race makeup

Racial Identity Pathways

For mixed-race youth the identity construction process is neither linear nor static.

Racial identity development for mixed-race youth is fluid, and changes over time.
When I was in fourth grade I found familiarity with other Mexican kids. And I wanted to hang out with them. I was like, “I’m Mexican!” And I identified as Mexican even though I lived with my White mother. And so it was really hard for me because I wasn’t accepted by kids... And so slowly I began to transition into, I guess I identified more as White... (Bettez, 2012, pp 49-50)

Racial Identity Pathways – Influence of Race Acting

...I would study the music of black hip-hop culture and learn the dance, I learned the dialect too, I would wear the bigger clothes and jeans under my butt and all that kind of stuff... (Butler-Sweet, 2011, p. 204).

Racial Identity Pathways

Consolidation
Youth consolidate their identity by removing racial categories from their identity claims.

Example
White-Asian youth consolidates his/her racial categorization to solely White over time

Divergence
Youth engage in divergence by adding racial categories to their identity claims.

Example
White youth with Indian ancestry diversify to claim a White-Indian identity

Renn’s Racial Identity Patterns

Multiple Patterns of Identity

- Multiple Monoracial Identities (e.g., African American or White)
- Monoracial Identity (i.e., biracial, mixed-race)
- Extraracial Identity (e.g., refusing to identity as any race)
- Situational Identity (e.g., identities that shift depending on the situation)
- Multiracial Identity (e.g., half White, half Chinese)

Population by Race, 2014
Mixed-race peoples are counted in the census

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>% US</th>
<th>% KS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<td>Black or African American</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races,</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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</table>

From United States Census, State and County Quick Facts, [http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/20000.html](http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/20000.html)
State Graduation Rates by Ethnicity
Kansas State Department of Education Report Card 2012-2013
Mixed-race youth education rates are now tracked.

- Asian – 90.8%
- White – 87.3%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander - 82.1%
- Multiracial - 82.1%
- Hispanic - 75.2%
- African American - 74.6%
- American Indian/Alaska Native - 74%

From Kansas State Department of Education Report Card 2012-2013
https://online.ksde.org/rcard/summary/state.pdf
Bachelors or Higher Degree by Race 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
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<td>15.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Creating Space for Mixed-race Students

Campus-wide areas for inclusion

- Organizations
- Support Services (Counseling)

Support for Racial Identity Development

- Visibility in campus literature
- University forms that allow choice
- Connection with other mixed race students (residence hall)
Creating Space for Mixed-race Students

Classrooms – Faculty

- Discussions of race and race-related topics
  - Pedagogy of vulnerability
  - Deep Learning
  - Contemplative practices that are transformative
- Deliberate Race-Informed Relationships with students
- Race-Conscious Classroom Environments
  - Intersection of content and classroom experiences
Creating Space for Mixed-race Students

Classrooms-Content/Curriculum

Multicultural/Multiracial Cultural

Course content that recognizes presence and influence of mixed race people and mixedness in U.S.

W.E.B. DuBois
Rosa Parks
Frederick Douglas
Bibliography


Sechrest-Ehrhardt, L. (2012). *Understanding the racial identity development of multiracial young adults through their family, social, and environment experiences.* From *SechrestEhrhardt_cua_0043A_10339display.pdf*


**HELPFUL WEBSITES**

MAVIN: Mixed Heritage Experiences  
http://www.mavinfoundation.org/

Mixed Race Studies: Scholarly Perspectives on the Mixed Race Experience  
http://www.mixedracestudies.org/

National Association of Mixed Student Organizations (NAMSO)  
https://www.facebook.com/mixedstudentorgs/timeline