

Using Scenarios to Assess Student Perspectives on Diversity and Understand Social Desirability



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For:
AIR Forum, Seattle
May 2008

Overview

- ❑ Measuring perspectives on diversity
- ❑ Institutional context
- ❑ Scenario development
- ❑ Social desirability experiment
- ❑ Key data and outcomes

Approaches to Measuring Perspectives on Diversity

- ❑ Bogardus's social distance scale (1959)

- ❑ NORC's general social survey (1972)
 - Social networks
 - Intergroup relations
 - Multiculturalism
 - Prejudice

- ❑ University of Arizona, Rethinking diversity: The millennial student project
<http://mass.arizona.edu/millennial/aboutstudy.html>
 - Dynamic Diversity Paradigm

- ❑ CIRP, YFCY, CSS, NSSE

Commonly Used Diversity Items - Behaviors

- ❑ CIRP (2006) – 1.5 items such as best guess that will “socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group”
- ❑ NSSE (2007)– 4 items such as frequency of “had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own”

Commonly Used Diversity Items - Opinions

- ❑ CIRP (2006) – 6.5 items such as agreement with the statement that “same sex couples should have the right to legal marital status”

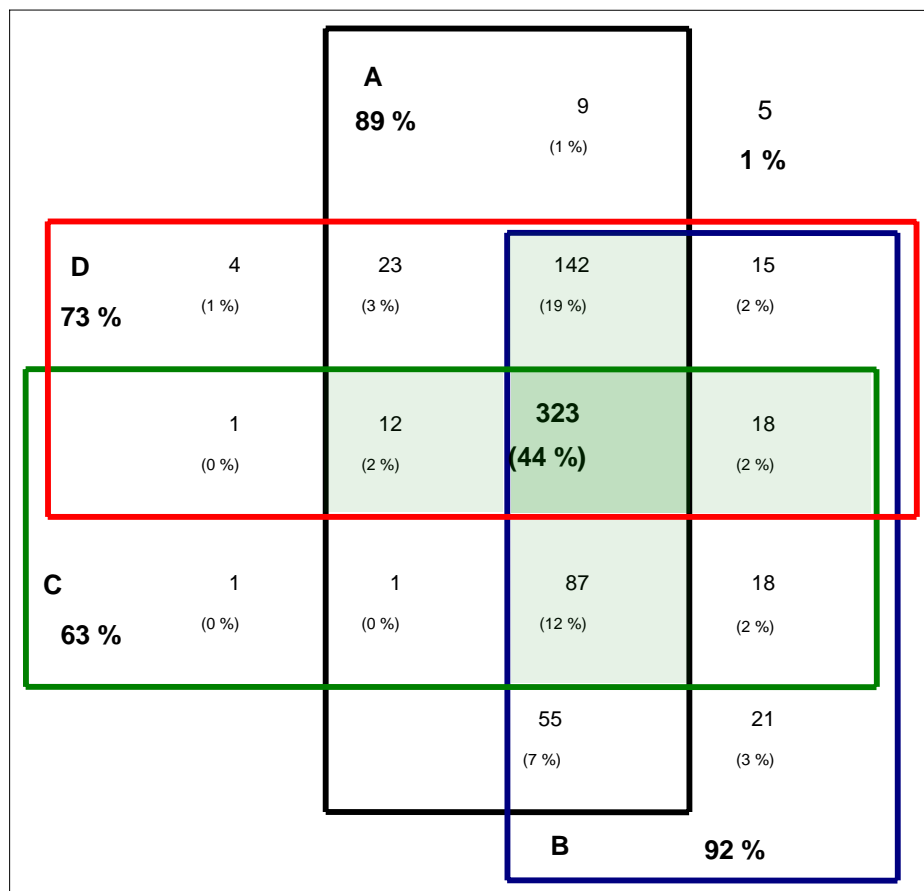
- ❑ NSSE (2007)– 0 items

Examples of Previously Collected Data on Diversity Issues

- ❑ 59% reported “frequently” socializing with someone of a different race/ethnicity before coming to college
- ❑ 60% said there was a “very good chance” they would socialize with someone of a different race/ethnicity while in college
- ❑ 74% said there was a “very good chance” they would socialize with someone of a different socioeconomic status while in college

Source: 2006 CIRP
(third bullet is from an institutional specific item in 2005)

Where is the Diversity?



% of total (% in area of total)

N = 735

A white

B not first-generation college going

C parent's income is \$100k+

D Catholic

- ~85% went to a "mostly" or "completely white" high school
- ~87% grew up in a "mostly" or "completely white" neighborhood

Source: 2006 CIRP

Institutional Context

- Medium sized comprehensive institution
 - ~ 3,500 undergraduates
 - ~ 2,500 graduate students

- Undergraduates:
 - ~ 11% are students of color
 - ~ 9% are on Pell grants
 - ~ 1% are gay, lesbian, or bisexual
 - ~ 66% come from the Bos-Wash corridor

Why a New Approach was Needed

- Diversity is important part of College's educational mission
 - “. . . the College will inspire students to learn, lead and serve in a diverse and changing world.” (Mission)
 - “. . . prepare students to dedicate themselves to diversity that values the richness of human society . . .” (Core Values)
 - “. . . awareness of and sensitivity toward differences among people and cultures.” (Learning Aims)

- Data being collected lacked consequential or pedagogical validity

New Approach to Investigating Perspectives on Diversity

- ❑ CIRP survey with follow-ups on YFCY and CSS (planned)

- ❑ CIRP survey administered on paper during fall orientation
 - 2006 N=859 (91% of the incoming class)

- ❑ 12 diversity scenarios included in the institution specific items

Scenario Development

- ❑ Collaboration with student development professionals - 12 scenarios, 2 versions
- ❑ Scenarios covering issues of:
 - race/ethnicity (6),
 - class (1),
 - gender (1),
 - disability (1),
 - sexual orientation (1),
 - and image (2)
- ❑ No “right” or “wrong” answer

Scenario Example

Student A says that white students should try to learn about the challenges that students of color face. Student B disagrees and says if you got into _____ you're pretty much the same and that students of color and white students don't really face different kinds of challenges. Which student do you agree with more?

- a. Completely agree with Student A*
 - b. Generally agree with Student A*
 - c. Mixed – somewhat agree with both*
 - d. Generally agree with Student B*
 - e. Completely agree with Student B*
- Or* *a. Student A*
b. Student B

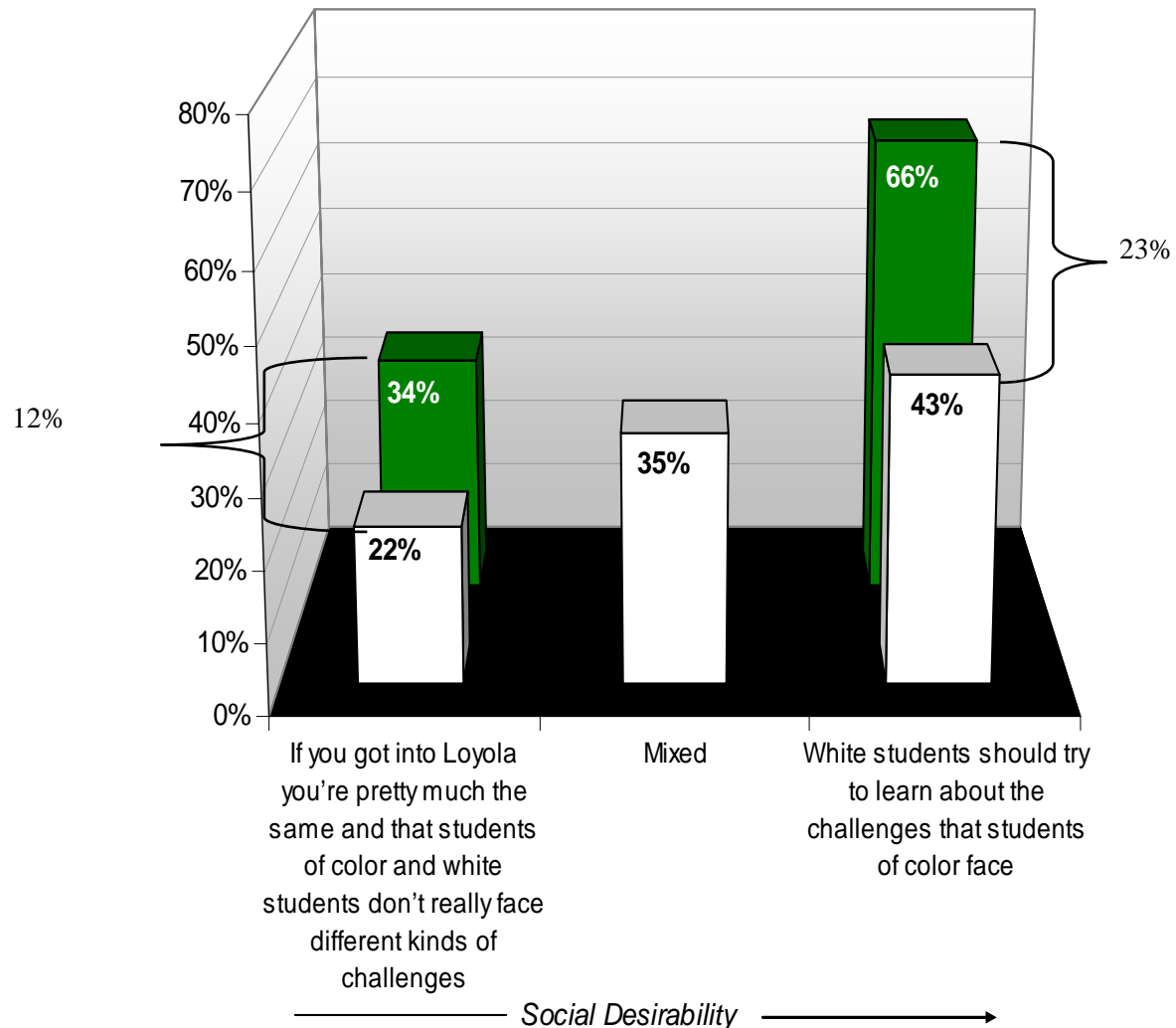
Social Desirability Experiment

- ❑ “They’re just telling you what they think you want to hear”

- ❑ Split-half experiment
 - 48% had the two response option format
 - 52% had the five-point scale response option

- ❑ Comparing the data from the two formats allows us to identify topics where we can expect students to respond in a socially desirable manner

The Movement Toward the Middle



What Did The Experiment Tell Us?

- Knowing that students tend to respond in socially desirable ways when asked about certain issues provides a context for understanding students' expressed opinions on diversity issues

	SD	No SD
Race	1	3
Ethnicity	1	1
Class	1	0
Gender	1	0
Disability	1	0
Sexual orientation	0	1
Image	2	0

<http://www.loyola.edu/IR/Students/Students>
"Views on Diversity Class of 2010"

Data Reduction?

□ Factor Analysis?

- Not conducted for conceptual and practical reasons
 - Conceptual – Scenarios were purposefully designed to have no clear “right” or “wrong” answer
 - Practical – CIRP items do not meet the level of measurement assumptions of factor analysis

□ Cluster Analysis?

- Not conducted for similar reasons above

Reliability Analysis

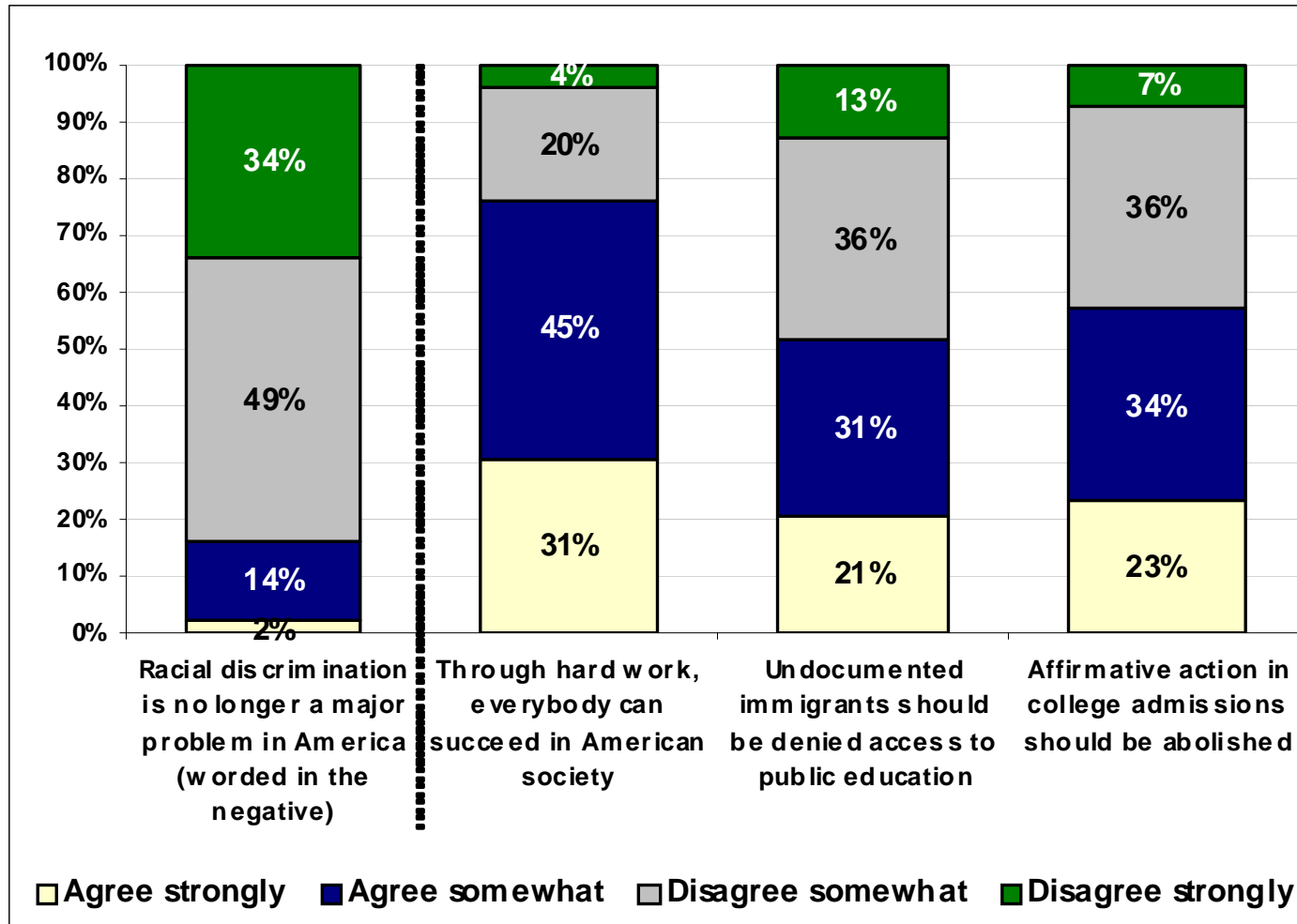
CIRP Items – Cronbach's Alpha = .41	Scenarios - Cronbach's Alpha = .57
Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America	Whites students have an easier time getting into their first-choice school (Pro-Affirmative Action)
Through hard work, everybody can succeed in American society	Slavery horrible time & still impacts today
Undocumented immigrants should be denied access to public education	White students should try to learn about challenges that students of color face
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished	Racial/Ethnic profiling is unfair
	If people feel more comfortable speaking in their native language they should be able to

Presenting the Data to the Campus

- Data collected on the standard CIRP items were displayed
 - Inconsistencies in student opinions were discussed
 - Data were disaggregated by key demographics

- Scenario items – displayed in the aggregate in a section on the social desirability experiment – were discussed in relation to the CIRP items
 - Data from the scenarios were disaggregated by key demographics

Standard CIRP Items – Opinions About Race/Ethnicity



Standard CIRP Items – Opinions About Race/Ethnicity – Disaggregated

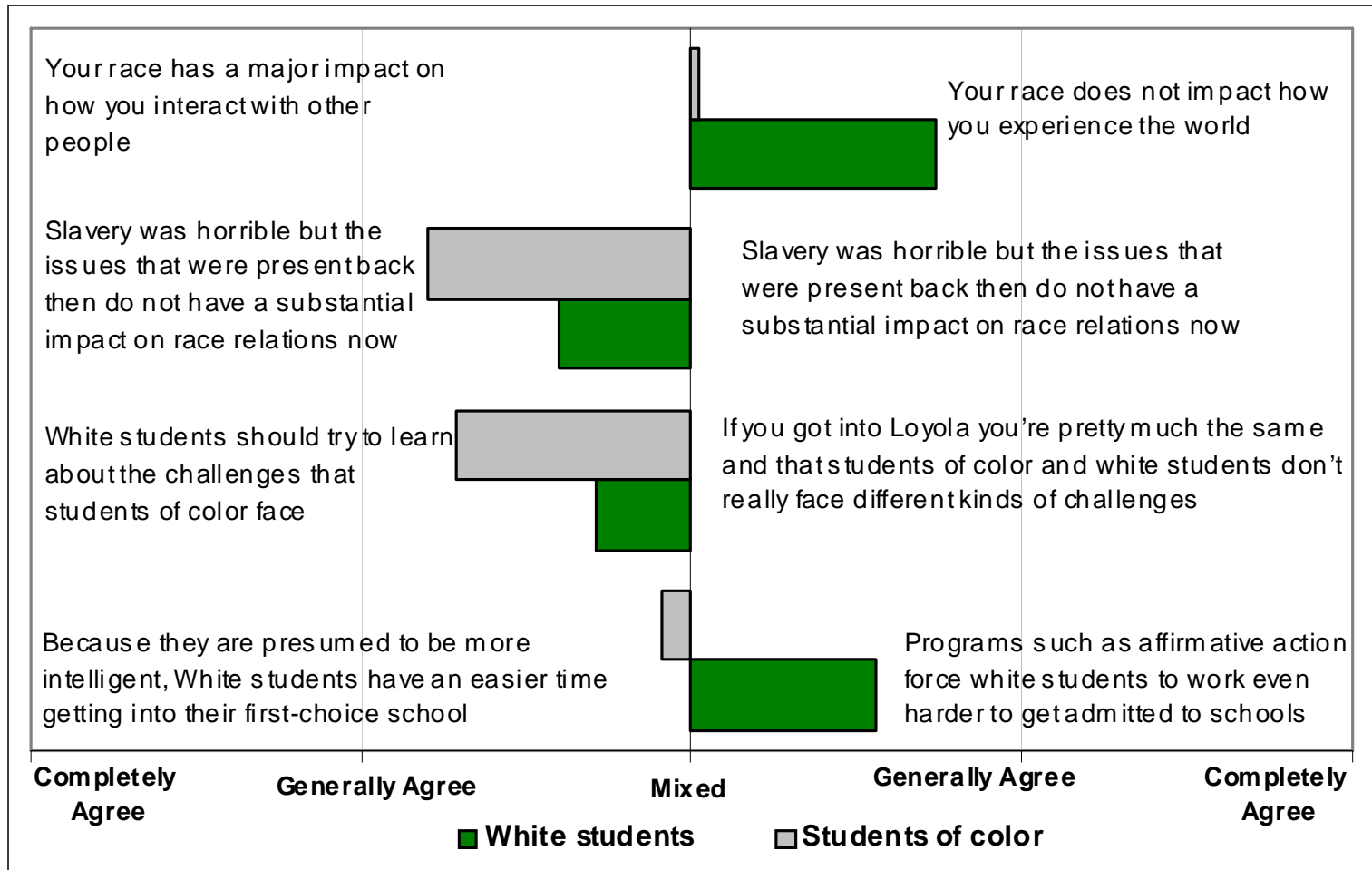
	Racial discrimination is a problem	Through hard work everybody can succeed	Undocumented immigrants should be denied public education	Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished
Gender				
Women	35%	28%	19%	19%
Men	33%	38% *	26% *	31% *
Ethnicity				
Students of color	51% *	25%	14%	7%
White	31%	32%	22% *	25% *
Family Income				
<\$100,000	40% *	33%	24%	20%
\$100,000-199,999	30%	31%	20%	25%
\$200,000+	30%	32%	21%	25%
Religion				
Catholic	33%	32%	22%	26% *
Non-Catholic	37%	30%	20%	16%
Political Leaning				
Conservative	25%	40% *	32% *	31% *
Middle of the road	31%	31%	19%	22%
Liberal	49% *	23%	12%	14%

Percents reflect the proportion of people in each group on the rows who indicated that they “strongly agree.” Because it was worded in the negative, in the case of “racial discrimination is a problem” the percent reflects those who “strongly disagreed” to the statement that it is “no longer a major problem . . .”

**Indicates a significant difference from other groups within a category.*

Scenario Items – Opinions About Race

– Disaggregated



Outcomes

- ❑ Much richer and more nuanced picture of student views on diversity
- ❑ Faculty and student development staff have engaged in discussions of the data
- ❑ Student GLBT group hosted an event called “that’s so gay, the impact of language on the community”
- ❑ Data will be used as one means of assessing impact of the diversity course requirement
- ❑ Data will be used in the comprehensive diversity assessment of the campus

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