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The Practice of Intergroup Dialogue Across Educational Settings

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Abstract

The Practice of Intergroup Dialogue Across Educational Settings

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Consciousness-raising educational efforts, that help learners critically examine the sociopolitical structures that create and sustain discrimination and disadvantage (Larson, 2014) are needed. Friere (1979) suggests that the most promising approaches to educating for critical consciousness reflect three interconnected components; an in-depth understanding of the world, reflection on social and political contradictions, and taking action against oppressive elements in one's own life (Friere, 1979). Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) is one evidence-based approach that uses critical pedagogy and experiential learning to help students develop a structural analysis of how power and privilege are related to various types of inequalities (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, 2013). Evidence suggests that IGD is an effective approach to reducing prejudice and increasing intergroup understanding, collaboration and action among learners (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Lopez & Zuniga, 2010; Maxwell, Nagda, & Thompson, 2011; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001; Zuniga et al., 2007). While the majority of research on IGD tends to examine outcomes, less is known about how students experience and navigate the cognitive and affective processes that facilitate the aforementioned outcomes. This dissertation seeks to understand the ways in which IGD fostered critical consciousness among students. Across these three studies,

IGD served as a promising approach that enabled high school and undergraduate students to increase their understanding of the world around them, to engage in critical (self) reflection, and the findings across these studies also demonstrated students' ability to take action to incorporate their new learnings into their everyday lives. Although the experiential nature of the course proved challenging at times, the vast majority of students reported that the dialogic challenges supported their ability to apply critical dialogue skills across both contexts. Analyses also revealed that IGD was instrumental in the development of students' listening skills. In particular analyses revealed that students' may have developed a more integrated form of listening, or conscious listening which involves the integration of multiple senses (e.g. eyes, heart, mind, ears) that promoted their ability to awareness across all three domains (context, content and intrapersonal). Analyses from the high school study, revealed that IGD supported students' sociopolitical development. While, there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that a school-wide approach is feasible, evaluation of the pilot program was appropriate and conducive to high school students, in the third study, there More trials are needed to further develop a programming model that addresses the unique contingencies embedded in the school environment; which include, the duration of each meeting was limited to 40 minutes and inconsistent access to physical space within the school.

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INTRODUCTION

While the U.S. population has become more racially and ethnically diverse (Census, 2019), the majority of Americans, across all racial groups, believe that race relations have worsened since 2017 (PEW Research Center, 2019). According to national statistics on hate crimes, racially-motivated incidents represented about 58% of all ‘single-bias’ incidents that were reported in 2019 (U.S Department of Justice, 2019). Increasing public consciousness surrounding anti-Black and anti-Asian racism have also contributed to a renewed sense of urgency to address issues of race and racism in our homes, communities, schools and workplaces.

Educational institutions have been eager to devise effective strategies that reduce bias, repair intergroup relations, and increase awareness about the structural nature of oppression. Many institutions have begun offering educational programs that help people gain a better understanding about social inequities and systems of oppression based on race, class, ability, ethnicity, gender, religious oppression etc. There are widespread differences in the terminology used to describe consciousness raising educational efforts across institutions, disciplines, and professional training programs. These terms include, but are not limited to social justice education, anti-oppressive education, anti-bias curriculum, multicultural education, diversity education, cultural competency. Although such educational efforts vary widely in their approach, target audience, setting and to some degree in substantive content, many efforts reflect an attempt to promote critical consciousness. Consciousness raising educational efforts are any attempt to engage in the examination of the sociopolitical structures that create and sustain discrimination and disadvantage (Larson, 2014). Education for critical consciousness typically

includes at least three interconnected components; an in-depth understanding of the world, reflection on social and political contradictions, and taking action against oppressive elements in one's own life (Friere, 2000).

However, in order to expose social and political contradictions in order to transform unjust conditions, there is a need to understand the ways in which students learn to navigate the most challenging aspects that arise throughout their learning process. One of the major challenges occurs when individuals are presented with new knowledge about social and political contradictions that are in conflict with individuals' existing worldview or understanding of their socio-political environment. There is also a growing body of literature that suggests that people have biased perceptions of the nature and extent of inequality (Slemrod, 2006; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006; Norton & Ariely, 2011; Kuhn, 2011; Gimpelson & Treisman, 2015). Knell & Stixx (2021) offer a framework that illustrates the tendency of individual biases about the extent of inequalities to be based on heterogeneous reference groups. The lack of understanding about the nature, extent and experiences of social inequities across members of different social groups may reinforce intergroup conflict or disagreements among members from diverse backgrounds is a persistent challenge.

Some research has explored how people's perceptions, interpretations, and emotions may be influenced by conflict (Allport, et. al, 1954). Other scholars have highlighted the importance of understanding the role of individuals' psychological and sociological needs and motivations as they tend to underlie group dynamics in which conflict arises (Cassidy et al., 2008). Although there is research about effective strategies to reduce and resolve conflict (Stephan & Finlay, 1999; Bar-Tal,2000),the inevitability of intergroup conflict around issues such as racism, classism, sexism, and other social identities substantiate the need to ensure that individuals are

prepared to navigate conflict and take action against oppressive elements in one's own life (school, work, career etc.). In light of these challenges, it becomes ever so necessary to ensure that consciousness raising educational programs not only confer knowledge that increases awareness of systems of oppression but also to help individuals develop the skills necessary to take action against oppression. In order to understand how to effectively prepare individuals to engage across differences. This dissertation examines the nuances of skill-development that necessitate individual's capacity to effectively engage in dialogue across difference.

Theoretical Background

This dissertation is built upon the theory and practice of Intergroup Dialogue. Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) is an evidence-based practice model that has been used as an educational method in various settings to help students understand privilege, oppression, conflict and the role of dialogue. IGD courses help students develop a structural analysis of how power and privilege are related to various types of inequalities (Gurin et al., 2013), by using critical pedagogy and experiential learning to explore issues of diversity and inequality and their personal and social responsibility for building a more just society (Zúñiga et al. 2007). This is enabled by providing students with a safe and structured opportunity to dialogue about difficult topics by encouraging open and reflective communication among participants.

Drawing on the work of Paulo Freire (2000), the critical-dialogic model of intergroup dialogue explains the role of three major components (pedagogical features, communication processes and psychological processes) that promote dialogues across race and other group boundaries (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, 2013). Whereas dialogic communication focuses on how we speak with and listen to each other (appreciating difference and engaging self) the critical communication processes (critical reflection and alliance building) focus on understanding the

role of power and privilege and the influence it has on the lives of people from varying social groups. The psychological processes include two latent constructs, affective positivity and cognitive involvement. Affective positivity includes three concepts, positive intergroup interactions, positive emotions during intergroup interaction and comfort in intergroup interaction. Cognitive involvement includes four concepts, complex thinking, analytical thinking about society, consideration of multiple perspectives and identity engagement. The pedagogical features, described below, foster the communication and psychological processes described above (2013).

The pedagogical features of the critical-dialogic practice model (content learning, structured interactions and facilitation) aim to address the aforementioned differences that characterize the tension between critical and traditional philosophies of education. First, the content of IGD courses use readings, and written reflections that help illuminate the interpersonal and sociopolitical dynamics that create and maintain systems of oppression and inequality. Second, structured interactions, describe the intentional design of dialogue sessions, from the demographic backgrounds of group membership, to the sequence of the activities. Structured interactions also include constructing dialogues in ways that equalize status among members. Lastly, trained facilitators are used to model dialogic communication skills while also guiding participants through the learning process.

The critical-dialogic framework diverges from traditional approaches to learning in that it adopts a critical philosophy of education that centers critical consciousness and dialogue in the learning process. Whereas, traditional pedagogical approaches tend to focus on depositing content or information critical pedagogy focuses on the development of critical consciousness. Freire (2000) further argues that this “banking” model of education fails to create spaces and

opportunities for empowerment and enlightenment to take place. Additionally, traditional pedagogical approaches tend to reflect passive learning environments. Whereas, critical pedagogical approaches emphasize learning as a dialectical process of integrating experiences and concepts, observations and action (Dewey, 1938), which promotes active learning environments that are also experiential in nature. Together the processes described in this framework are essential in understanding how IGD fosters intergroup understanding, intergroup relationships and intergroup collaboration and action.

Empirical and theoretical work has suggested that IGD is an effective approach reducing prejudice (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Lopez & Zuniga, 2010; Maxwell, Nagda, & Thompson, 2011; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001; Zuniga et al., 2007). Research has assessed and demonstrated the effectiveness of intergroup dialogue in producing the aforementioned outcome (Lopez, Gurin & Nagda, 1998; Nagda & Zuniga, 2003; Spencer, Brown, Griffin, & Abdullah, 2008). Current evidence from a multi-university study on intergroup dialogues found that participants increased motivation to be actively engaged in their post-college communities by “influencing social policy,” “influencing the political structure through voting and educational campaigns,” and “working to correct social and economic inequalities.” Dialogues also increased students’ confidence in taking action and their actual behaviors. After completing the dialogues, students indicated greater personal responsibility for educating themselves about “biases that affect their own thinking” and about “other groups.” They also showed greater responsibility for “challenging others on derogatory comments made about groups” and for participating in coalitions to address discrimination and social issues (Nagada, 2010).

Intergroup Dialogue in Social Work Education

As a practice-based profession, social workers are all too aware of the experiences of individuals who are disproportionately impacted by social problems. The social work profession further establishes the ethical responsibility of social workers to promote social and economic justice (NASW Code of Ethics, 2008). At the same time, the vast majority of coursework in social work education programs is not grounded in a critical perspective, especially with regard to critiques of the profession itself. While many programs do in fact recognize the radical roots of the social work profession, courses are rarely designed with the development of critical consciousness in mind. Nearly twenty years ago, Gil (1998) discussed the essential need for social work practitioners to develop concepts and strategies to confront injustice and oppression and would necessarily enhance social workers' ability to advocate on behalf of clients who are negatively affected by systemic oppression.

In order to prepare social workers to confront oppression and injustices, social work programs must consider educational and field opportunities that promote consciousness-raising. While many programs focus on developing cultural competencies which may prepare social workers to work effectively with clients from different backgrounds, social workers must also be prepared from the 'structural transformation' dimension of social work practice (Gil, 1998). This dimension of social work practice calls for social workers to spread "critical consciousness concerning societal realities, and facilitating involvement of social workers and people they serve, in social movements to overcome the root causes of injustice and oppression" (p. 69). In order to prepare social workers for this type of work more dialogic models, such as IGD, are needed. IGD is one opportunity that can prepare social workers for both culturally competent practice and social justice-oriented practice. (Nagda, B., et al., 1999).

It is for these reasons that social work education programs offer opportunities for students to learn how to facilitate dialogues as well. However, much attention is needed to understand how to prepare students as facilitators of critical dialogs. While social workers do learn a variety of practice skills that support group processes, these skills do not integrate an understanding of intergroup differences and power dynamics. In particular, social workers must be able to ensure that these conversations do not go awry or catalyze further harm to oppressed groups throughout the dialogic process. One of the major gaps, however, is that few scholars focus on the complexities of the IGD facilitation process (Gurin, Sorensen, Lopez, & Nagda, 2015; Nagda & Maxwell, 2012; Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, 2014).

Intergroup Dialogue & Secondary Education

While practice-based research on IGD has predominantly occurred among educators and students within postsecondary institutions, community organizers, social workers, and counselors have also utilized IGD within community settings such as workplaces, homes, international disputes, and high schools (Moss, Pennamon, Springer, & Singh, 2017). However, still little is known about the appropriateness and feasibility of integrating IGD programs outside of post-secondary educational programs, despite the overwhelming evidence of its effectiveness. In order to support the expansion of IGD to different contexts, more research on IGD across contexts is necessary. Research on IGD as an educational approach used within public high schools could be promising. For young people, consciousness education in primary and secondary public schools rarely occurs outside of specific ethnic studies courses, or the extraordinary efforts of individual teachers. Outside of the school setting however, opportunities to expose young people to consciousness-raising education are offered as enrichment learning, clubs, or after school programs. In order to understand whether IGD is an appropriate

educational approach that promotes critical consciousness among young people within a high school setting more studies involving the processes of implementation are needed.

Implementation studies and process evaluations, if disseminated broadly may promote support among school leaders seeking educational approaches that promote racial equity. could be valuable to other High Schools considering whether to start an IGD program.

Sample

Data for this dissertation were collected from two distinct populations. The first two studies use qualitative data collected from 22 Bachelors of Social Work (BASW) alumni that were enrolled in a Social Work IGD Facilitator Training Program between the years of 2014-2019. The third study uses qualitative data that were collected from semi-structured interviews with three 10th grade high school students that participated in an Intergroup Dialogue pilot project. Data for this also included field notes, reflective memos and documentation provided by school personnel.

Goals and Analyses

Drawing on the foundations of critical theorists and radical social work perspectives, this three-paper dissertation explores the ways in which IGD facilitates critical consciousness by examining students' experiences participating in Intergroup Dialogues (IGD), across two educational settings. This dissertation aims to advance knowledge within the practice of Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) in social work education and secondary education. The studies aim to increase our understanding of the contextual factors related to the practice of intergroup dialogue and to consider whether IGD programs are feasible opportunities to increase exposure to consciousness raising education among participants. Specifically, The first paper investigated the

extent to which IGD supported the development of students' critical consciousness (CC) by examining specific skills students report learning from their IGD experience, resources necessary to better support student experiences in IGD and ways IGD programs better support the development of key skills. Using Huang Nissen's (1999) framework for defining dialogue principles, the second paper investigates listening as a key skill for dialogue and asks what listening looks like, how silence relates to listening, and whether students distinguish between the type of listening that occurs during the dialogue in relation to past understandings of what it means to listen. The third paper explores the theoretical foundations of critical consciousness and sociopolitical development as it pertains to adolescent development. Additionally, this paper describes a pilot project that was implemented within a public high school setting in 2017. Finally, this paper examines the benefits of participation for students and assesses the appropriateness and feasibility of a school-wide approach.

Relevance for Social Work & Social Justice

This dissertation is relevant to social work's mission to enhance social justice. The NASW Code of Ethic outlines, in general, the values and principles for the social work profession. The ethical value of social justice calls for social workers to challenge social injustice and pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2021). IGD is an educational strategy for which students learn about oppression and inequality and develop the skills to engage in practice that is aligned with the values and ethical principles of our profession. As such, this dissertation seeks to illuminate an educational training opportunity that can prepare social work students to engage in justice-oriented practice across settings.

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PAPER 1: “I AM MORE CONSCIOUS OF WHERE MY MIND TAKES ME”:
FACILITATING CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Promoting social justice is commonplace globally among social work programs. Despite the ongoing efforts of many social work programs to infuse social justice concepts and theories into coursework and curriculum (e.g., multicultural practice and cultural competencies), many social work professionals lack knowledge and skills necessary to combat systemic oppression. Recent studies have demonstrated that social justice ideals are often communicated through the implicit curriculum (Deepak et al., 2015), which suggests that there is a need to explicate the field’s commitment to social justice by preparing students to engage in justice-oriented social work practice. *Justice-oriented practice* or *anti-oppressive practice* reflects a philosophy toward practice in which social workers “try to provide service to people seeking it, but also they help clients, communities, and themselves to understand that their problems are linked to social inequality—to understand why they are oppressed and how to fight for change” (Baines, 2011, p. 4). This orientation toward social work practice can enhance social workers’ ability to advocate on behalf of clients who are negatively affected by systemic oppression. Currently, however, social work education and training programs tend to lack opportunities for students to learn anti-oppressive practice, develop skills to confront oppression, and apply social justice theories across practice settings (Bhuyan et al., 2017; Dudziak & Profitt, 2012).

The development of social justice–based or feminist therapies, First Nations intervention, and community organizing have demonstrated progress toward anti-oppressive practice within the profession (Baines, 2011; Gil, 2013); however, the evolution of consciousness-raising educational approaches across social work curriculum has been somewhat timid. According to Spencer and colleagues (2011), “across schools of social work, few courses are dedicated to

rigorous learning and application of diversity and social justice, critical consciousness and transformation, and the development of skilled facilitators of multicultural dialogue” (p.148).

Even programs that have adopted a justice-oriented perspective struggle to implement educational strategies that aid in the development of critical consciousness, addressing the issue implicitly or tangentially in the core curriculum. This materializes in the ways in which students are taught about the consequences of social injustices and oppression without learning the skills necessary to effectively combat systems of oppression. At the same time, programs tend to offer justice-oriented coursework such as community organizing, radical casework, community change, and activism as electives (Liddell & Lass, 2019). As the profession adopts a renewed interest in antiracism and anti-oppressive practice (Ladhani and Sitter, 2020), programs must consider the requisite role of consciousness-raising education and devise a course of study that explicitly institutes opportunities to learn and engage in justice-oriented practice.

It is important to acknowledge that, since the reemergence of the radical social work movement in the 1960s, social workers have long recognized the need for critical social work education (Bussey et al., 2021). Despite a growing body of literature, critical social work perspectives are often marginalized by the profession, which has contributed to the current state of social work practice, whereby traditional perspectives are widespread. Such conventional perspectives have effectively operated to maintain the status quo and have limited the overall scope of professional social work practice (Gil, 2013). In order to overcome these professional challenges, the social work profession must move towards resisting oppression, which “depends on the consistent efforts ... to support the emergence of critical consciousness” (Gil, 2013, p. 44). If we are to develop a workforce that understands the role of social work in confronting injustice

and resisting oppression, it is essential that social work programs adopt educational approaches that foster the development of critical consciousness.

Developing Critical Consciousness Among Social Workers

Facilitating critical consciousness among social workers is fundamental to anti-oppressive practice. According to Pitner and Sakamoto (2005), *critical consciousness* is “the process of continuously reflecting on and examining how our own biases, assumptions, and cultural worldviews affect the ways we perceive diversity and power dynamics,” and it “encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioral components, which are manifested at personal and structural levels” (p. 685). As demonstrated in Figure 1, the authors pull together an interdisciplinary framework that consists of social identities, positionalities, and standpoints, to understand critical consciousness development on the personal level. Pitner and Sakamoto outline that building critical consciousness relies upon understanding what one’s identities are (what social groups they are a part of), how those identities “are shaped by contextual factors ...[and] begin[ing] to examine critically how they *locate* (or *position*) themselves within these contexts,” as well as how one’s understanding of their privileged/oppressed positions shape their standpoint or worldviews (p. 686). In breaking down identities, positionalities, and standpoints (IPS), this framework helps to root an understanding of critical consciousness in distinct but related components.

In general, attempts to raise consciousness within some social work training programs have resulted in the implementation of various pedagogical practices designed to teach cultural diversity and power differentials (Anderson & Carter, 2003; Diller, 2004; Latting, 1990; Lewis, 1993; Nakanishi and Ritter, 1992; Reed et al., 1997). For example, Knipe (2020) described the ways in which problem-posing education facilitates critical conversations whereby students are

prompted to unpack their own biases and experiences around injustice and oppression. The utility of these pedagogical practices in fostering the development of critical consciousness among students must not be understated. However, unpacking one's own biases and experiences around injustice and oppression is a deeply personal exercise that often evokes a range of thoughts, feelings, and emotions within each individual, which can be both an impetus toward and a roadblock to building critical consciousness among helping professionals (Pitner & Sakamoto, 2005). These cognitive and affective processes could, for example, make students feel overwhelmed by their increased anxiety, leading them to cling more firmly to stereotypes rather than unpack them (Pitner & Sakamoto, 2005). Figure 1.1 (Sakamoto & Pitner, 2005) illustrates, in a cyclical fashion, the ways in which cognitive and affective processes occur at both the personal and structural levels throughout the process of developing critical consciousness.

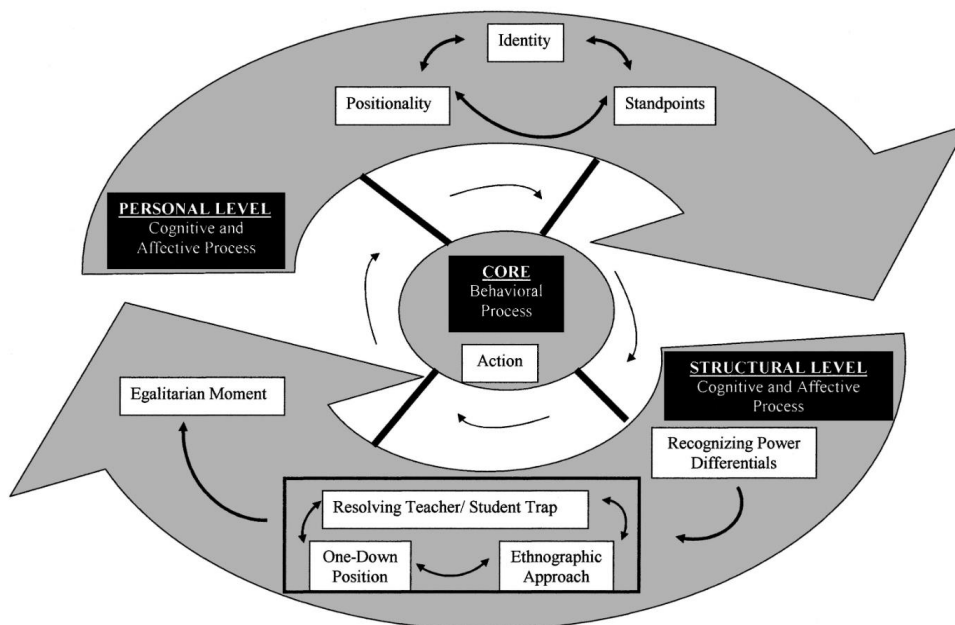


Figure 1.1. Framework for understanding the process of developing critical consciousness.

Note. From “Use of Critical Consciousness in Anti-Opressive Social Work Practice: Disentangling Power Dynamics at Personal and Structural Levels,” by I. Sakamoto & R. O. Pitner, 2005, *British Journal of Social Work*, 35(4), pp. 435–452.

Intergroup Dialogue

IGDs offers a promising dialogue-based approach to ensure that social workers are prepared to challenge injustices within communities, organizations, and policy areas (Gurin et al., 2015; Zúñiga et al., 2014). IGDs are structured learning opportunities for individuals with differing social identities to convene within a single small group to engage in critical dialogue. Dialogue groups meet weekly for two and a half hours over the course of 12–14 weeks. Dialogues are typically facilitated by two facilitators who have been trained in IGD pedagogy. The theoretical foundations of IGD integrate knowledge from multicultural education, critical pedagogy, and experiential learning. The practice of IGD is informed by the aforementioned theoretical foundations. Through sustained communication, consciousness-

raising, and bridging of differences, IGD courses aim to help students understand how power and privilege are related to various types of inequalities. The overall importance of IGD as a means of reducing prejudice has been widely discussed across academic disciplines (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Lopez & Zúñiga, 2010; Maxwell, Nagda, & Thompson, 2011; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001; Zúñiga et al., 2007). Several empirical studies have found that IGDs are an effective tool for promoting positive change processes (Yeakley, 1998) and fostering necessary skills for constructive intergroup relations (Nagda and Zúñiga, 2003). Evidence from a multiuniversity study on IGD suggested that participating in IGD promoted students' awareness and understanding of racial and gender inequality across interpersonal and structural domains (Sorensen et al., 2009). A related finding is that students reported feeling more empathetic and more motivated to bridge differences (Sorensen et al., 2009). Furthermore, research has assessed and demonstrated the effectiveness of IGD in increasing personal responsibility for unpacking an individual's own biases and self-education about the experiences of others from different social identity groups. Evidence on IGD also suggests that after completing IGDs students are more confident in challenging discrimination and participating in coalition-building that seeks to address a range of social issues (Lopez, Gurin, & Nagda, 1998; Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003; Spencer, Brown, Griffin, & Abdullah, 2008; Nagda et al., 2009). This literature demonstrates that IGD is an effective educational approach that provides opportunities for students to engage in critical dialogues, raise their consciousness on personal and structural levels, and develop a skill set to effect change after completing their degree.

Although there is more research needed in this area in order to disentangle how IGD works and what contributes to its success across disciplines, one major contribution to IGD's success lies in the critical-dialogic approach, a theoretical framework that explains the role of

three major components (pedagogical features, communication processes, and psychological processes) that promote dialogues across race and other group boundaries (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013). Together, these major components aid in the development of intergroup understanding, intergroup relationships, and intergroup action and collaboration.

The critical-dialogic framework diverges from traditional approaches to learning in that it adopts a critical philosophy of education that centers critical consciousness and dialogue in the learning process. Whereas traditional pedagogical approaches tend to focus on depositing content or information, critical pedagogy focuses on the development of critical consciousness. Freire (2000) further argues that this “banking” model of education fails to create spaces and opportunities for empowerment and enlightenment to take place. In addition, traditional pedagogical approaches tend to reflect passive learning environments, whereas critical pedagogical approaches emphasize learning as a dialectical process of integrating experiences and concepts, observations, and action (Dewey, 1938/1986), which promotes active learning environments that are also experiential in nature.

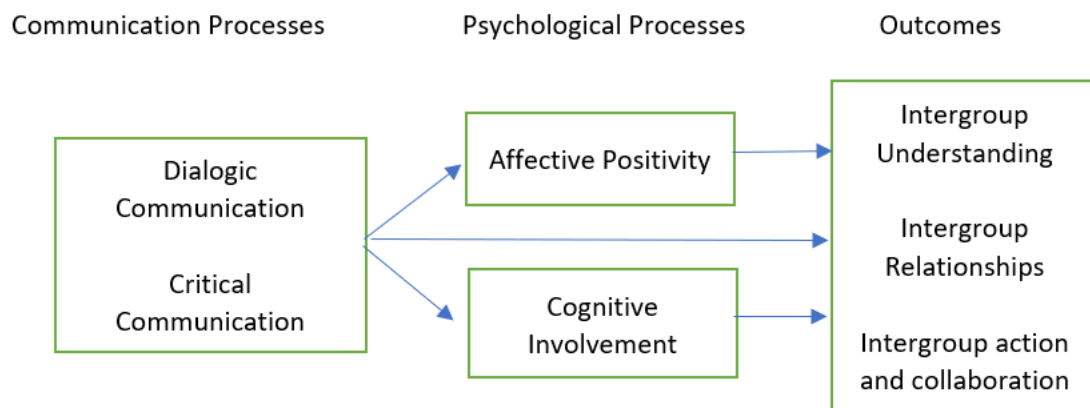


Figure 1.2. A critical dialogic theoretical framework of intergroup dialogue.

The critical-dialogic model of intergroup dialogue (see Figure 2) places great emphasis on dialogic processes, which focus on how we speak with and listen to each other (Gruin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013). Bohm (2013) identified four elements that constitute effective dialogue practice; suspending judgement, deep listening, identifying assumptions, and reflecting with inquiry. Drawing on the work of Paulo Freire (1970), the critical processes of the IGD practice model encourages students to take into account the role power and privilege play in the lives of people from varying social groups. Relevant findings from research on communication processes in IGDs demonstrated that four major communication processes (i.e., appreciating difference, engaging self, critical reflection, and alliance building) mediated the resulting effects of participation in IGDs, specifically on the underlying motivation to bridge differences (Nagda, 2006). These communication processes foster the psychological processes further described in the framework, as seen in Figure 3.

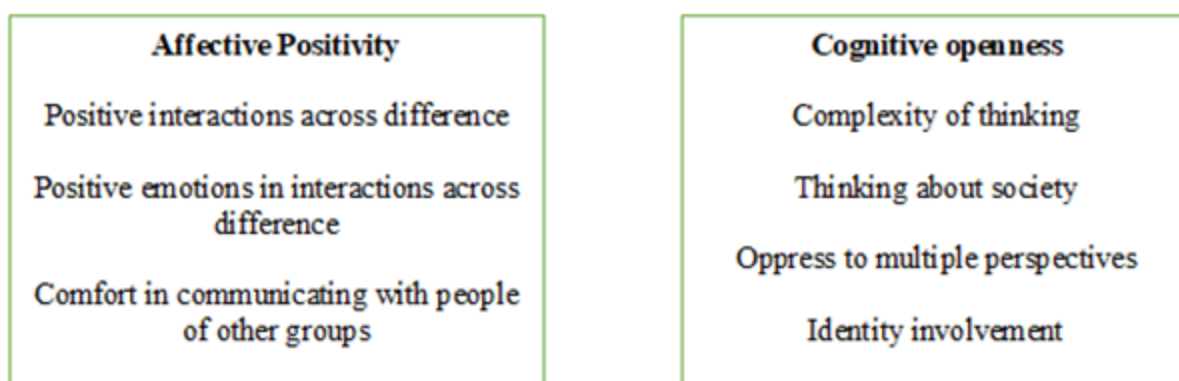


Figure 3. Psychological processes. Note. Authors' compilation of psychological processes adapted from *Dialogue Across Difference: Practice, Theory, and Research on Intergroup Dialogue* by P. Gurin, B. A. Nagda, & X. Zúñiga, Russell Sage Foundation, 2012.

An important and often overlooked assumption of the critical dialogic model of IGD is a focus on positivity in interactions and emotions and comfort in communicating across

differences (as outlined in the core affective elements of Figure 3). Whereas it is important to better understand how to achieve these aspects of affective positivity, little is known about the ways in which negative interactions, emotions, and discomfort across differences arise during dialogue and how they affect students' capacity to navigate these psychological processes. As such, two major gaps emerge. First, though highly efficacious among college students in standard social science courses, there is a need to understand the role of IGD in raising consciousness among social work students in particular. Second, it remains unclear whether IGD is an effective strategy to remediate the cognitive and affective challenges that arise throughout the consciousness-raising processes. By investigating IGD as an educational approach we can better understand the ways in which it promotes the development of critical consciousness among social work students. Through this we can draw attention to the strategies that students use to navigate the cognitive and affective challenges that arise during their IGD experiences.

This study, therefore, explores the following research questions: (a) How does participation in an IGD program/intervention influence BASW students' knowledge and awareness of their ISP; and (b) What are the elements of the IGD program that support BASW students with addressing cognitive and affective challenges?

Methods

Study Objective and Research Design

The primary objective of this study was to understand the ways in which IGDs promote the development of critical consciousness among social work students. Secondly, this study sought to identify strategies that helped students mitigate cognitive and affective challenges that emerged during their IGD experiences. This study uses a qualitative case study research design to explore the complexity of individuals' experiences by centering their voices and developing

emerging themes (Creswell, 2013). Case studies are used when exploring a phenomenon in context, using one or more data collection methods (Yin, 2014). Case studies are useful when the researcher seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of a case or cases of the phenomenon under investigation.

Creswell (2013) noted that case study research “explores a real-life, contemporary bounded [by time and place] system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (p. 97).

Qualitative methods are the best approach for this particular study because the nature of understanding the variation among individual perspectives about collective experiences requires a subjective method. An exploratory case study design was used to garner an in-depth examination of student experiences in IGD. Other types of case studies, such as explanatory or comparative methods were not selected because the purpose of this study was not to explain presumed causal links or to compare multiple cases (Yin, 2014). Thus, qualitative methods of scientific inquiry were chosen because these methods support the specific aims of this study. First, this study aims to investigate how IGD promotes students’ knowledge and awareness of their own IPS. Second, this study seeks to identify the elements of the IGD program that support BASW students with addressing cognitive and affective challenges.

Within this study, we examine the process of developing critical consciousness within the case of one school of social work’s IDG training program, through the perspectives of students who participated in that program from 2014–2019. An in-depth exploration of students’ learning experiences is a useful approach for multiple reasons. First, by recalling their learning experiences students are simultaneously engaged in the practice of reflection, which remains a cornerstone of professional practice across many helping professions. Second, by exploring

students' perceptions of their own learning within the context of IGDs, we may be better able to understand the ways that IGD fosters critical consciousness on the individual level as it relates to their IPS. Moreover, given the interrelated nature of individual and structural aspects of critical consciousness development, students' critical consciousness on the structural level is informed by their awareness of their IPS. In addition, these methods further support the goal of understanding the quality and depth of students' experience and development of critical dialogue skills by identifying the IGD mechanism that supports the development of skills, strategies, and techniques to address cognitive and affective challenges that arise during critical dialogues.

Given that triangulation is a key component of case study research, documentation gathered from annual BASW feedback sessions from 2017–2019 were used as secondary data sources for this study. The purpose of these feedback sessions was to offer an opportunity for all BASW students to share more broadly about their experience with the BASW coursework. Finally, to further triangulate the findings of this study, it utilized student feedback regarding IGD courses (e.g., structure, content, challenges) that gathered between the years of 2017 and 2019 at the midterm and the end of term.

Study Setting

The University of Washington (UW) School of Social Work offers BASW, Masters of Social Work (MSW), and PhD in Social Welfare programs. According to the admissions website, the UW's BASW program offers generalist professional training to cohorts of approximately 45 students ("Admissions," n.d.). The MSW program builds specialized skills for about 270 students each year through three degree paths: the Day, Extended Degree, and Advanced Standing programs. Graduates who have completed their BASW (either at UW or elsewhere in the United States or Canada) within the previous 5 years are welcome to apply to

the Advanced Standing MSW program, an accelerated program that allows students to specialize in a concentration. The PhD program prepares a handful of students for research, teaching, and public service.

The Intergroup Dialogue, Education, and Action (IDEA) Center at UW has integrated the practice and pedagogy of IGD with social work practitioner education for BASW and MSW students. IGD courses are designed to help students and social work practitioners develop the knowledge, values, passion, commitment, and skills they need to work in diverse settings.

Nagda and colleagues (1999) developed the Cultural Diversity and Justice course for the BASW program, combining conceptual lectures and IGD to “enable students to develop awareness of self and others in relation to social group memberships and status in society” (p. 437). At the time of this study, the Cultural Diversity and Justice course (SOC WF 404) was embedded in the winter of the first year of the BASW program. The required course included weekly lectures to establish a theoretical framework and concurrent IGD sessions for personal reflection and engagement with peers.

After completing this course, students had the opportunity to pursue the 10-credit-hour IGD Facilitator Training Program certificate in their second year in the BASW program. In the first 5-credit-hour autumn course, Building Competencies to Facilitate Intergroup Dialogues (SOC WF 442), students developed knowledge and skills required to become peer facilitators for IGDs. In the winter quarter, students enrolled in Facilitating Intergroup Dialogue (SOC WF 443), where they cofacilitated IGDs among the first-year BASW students in the Cultural Diversity and Justice course. Students also received consultation and supervision from their peers and faculty. Though these courses were designed for BASW students, students from other schools were welcome to participate during 2017–2019. Just like the BASW students, students from other

departments were required to have some type of diversity coursework prior to enrolling in the IGD Facilitator Training Program.

Within UW's MSW program, students in the Community Centered Integrative Practice (CCIP) specialization were required to take SOCW 534, Praxis of Intergroup Dialogue, through which students designed, planned, implemented, and evaluated IGD sessions as peer facilitators. This course was not open to any MSW students outside of the CCIP concentration.

Role of Researcher

A challenge to any research design is the issue of bias or the potential distortion of research outcomes due to unintended influences from the researcher as well as research participants. This is a particularly critical issue in qualitative research where researchers take extraordinary efforts to establish strong relationships with their participants and research sites in order to delve deeply into the subject matter. Reflexivity (Maxwell, 2013) is an interactive practice that addresses the distortions or preconceptions researchers may unwittingly introduce in their qualitative designs and processes. The act of reflection enables the researcher to thoughtfully consider their identity, worldview, and values and speculate about the ways in which the ways the researcher-participant interaction may have been influenced by presumptions arising from obvious sources, such as certain demographics (e.g., age, gender, and race) or more subtle cues such as socioeconomic status, cultural background, or political orientation. With personal beliefs and assumptions as well as power dynamics and tensions playing an influential role on the research process, I discuss my positionality below (Merriam, 2009).

The first author is a Black woman, whose philosophy toward research is grounded in the understanding that knowledge is constructed through the unification of multiple worldviews and perspectives to bring about novel conceptions of the phenomenon under investigation. Her

research adopts a race-conscious lens that informs every stage of the research process from conception to dissemination. In reflecting on her relationship to the participants in this study, it must be noted that she served as a teaching assistant for the first course (Building Competencies for Intergroup Dialogue Facilitation) within the IGD facilitation training program in 2016. Thereafter she was a co-instructor for both IGD facilitation training courses from 2017–2019. In addition, the first author was a PhD student at UW from 2015–2021. This author was the primary researcher involved in data collection and analysis.

Study Population and Sampling

Data were collected from a total of 22 study respondents; their demographics are included in Table 1. Nearly all of the students (19) participated in the Cultural Diversity and Justice course (SOC WF 404) within the BASW program. Four of these students participated in the Cultural Diversity and Justice course only. A majority of the students (16) began with that required course and continued on to the IGD Facilitator Training Program. Most of these students (14) were in the BASW program, although two were not. Almost all of those who started the training program (15) completed the two-course series of SOC WF 442 and 443 and cofacilitated IGDs for the Cultural Diversity and Justice course. Two of the students who completed the certificate program went on to apply to UW's MSW Advanced Standing program, and one was enrolled at the time of the interview. One student attended a different institution for their BASW and was enrolled in UW's Advanced Standing program. All students were enrolled in IGD coursework between 2014 and 2019.

Table 1.1*IGD Participation by Role and Program*

Respondent role and program	Number of participants
Total number of participants involved in IGD	N = 22
BASW Program	21
IGD participant (SOC WF 404)	4
IGD facilitators program trainee (SOC 442 and 443)	16
SOC WF 442 (Only)	1
MSW Program	1
Graduate IGD facilitators trainee (SOCW 534)	1

Table 1.2*BASW Facilitators Program Trainees by Year*

Academic school year	Number of students enrolled
All years	N = 17
pre-2016	1
2016–2017	6
2017–2018	3
2018–2019*	7

*1 student enrolled in a single IGD course.

Nonrandom purposeful sampling was employed to identify and recruit students who had taken at least one IGD course (Creswell, 2013). To recruit for this study, we created flyers advertising for the study and posted them within the UW School of Social Work, including on bulletin boards and faculty doors. Students were told to directly contact the primary researcher to participate. We also sent the flyer out to the current students using the BASW email list. Students then posted the flyer onto their private BASW current and former student Facebook group. We also directly asked students who had participated in the SOC WF 442 course in the previous quarter to volunteer to be a part of the study. Students also distributed the information by word of mouth. Accessing this sample was fairly simple, because we had access to the department facilities, listservs, and students. Accessing alumni, however, primarily occurred through snowball sampling. Students were offered \$25 gift cards for their participation. Interviews and focus groups continued until saturation was reached.

The institutional review board was contacted and determined that this study did not meet their definition of research; therefore, they did not require approval or a formal informed consent process. However, researchers did make students aware that the information they provided would be deidentified prior to dissemination, that their participation was voluntary, and that they could leave at any time.

Data Collection

To minimize intrusion, data were collected through semistructured interviews and focus groups. We conducted five focus groups, two with two participants and two with three participants. We also conducted 11 individual interviews. To facilitate each group discussion, we developed a semistructured guide that explored students' experiences (what IGD was like, what resonated or stood out), learning (skills and knowledge), application (using learning and

challenges in doing so), and ideas about how the IGD program can be improved in the future. The focus group protocol can be seen in the Appendix. Each discussion lasted between 30 and 75 min. Two interviews were conducted over the phone, and the remainder were conducted in-person in a private room at the school. This approach was useful because it allowed the research team to examine conversational patterns within each group discussion, which illuminated the participants' perspectives of IGD experiences among students and alumni. All interviews and focus groups were audio recorded with participants' permission. Field notes were collected during the interviews and focus groups to track participants' body language and facial expressions. Researchers also engaged in reflective memoing afterwards to track emerging understandings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis techniques used for this study followed a six-step framework for qualitative analysis established by Braun and Clark (2006). First, to increase familiarization with the data, the first author listened to the audio files of the semistructured interviews and focus groups and took detailed notes of key ideas that were expressed. The audio recording from each interview and focus group session was professionally transcribed. Once transcribed, the research team reviewed the transcripts to make any changes (considering dialect) that were missed or reported incorrectly. This process was important to capturing the participants' experiences and perspectives accurately. The focus group transcripts were then uploaded into Dedoose, a web-based software program for qualitative data analysis. Once transcripts were uploaded, each researcher independently coded the same three transcripts. Thereafter, both researchers met to discuss the coding process and reconcile discrepancies in codes. The primary researcher employed a variety of inductive analytic techniques (i.e., coding, constant comparisons,

and memoing) during this stage of the process. Once all codes were reconciled, they were compiled into the initial codebook that was used for the remaining transcripts.

The rest of the transcripts were then coded independently by both researchers. Once all transcripts were coded, the researchers reconvened. Discrepancies were discussed and reconciled, until the codebook was finalized. Thereafter, the primary researchers established a list of emergent themes; these were assessed based on the extent to which they addressed (directly or indirectly) the research questions. The researchers organized relevant codes into the most appropriate theme. Codes that did not fit into a theme were left out of the analysis. Themes were initially reviewed by the primary researchers and subsequently reviewed by the third author. Finally, the research team was convened to ensure accuracy in naming and defining each theme.

Credibility and biases were addressed in several ways. First, researchers engaged in reflective memoing. Second, data were coded independently, then codebooks were created and shared. Finally, all procedures were documented and detailed records were kept from each data source. The confidentiality of study participants has been protected by discussing themes in the aggregate, and relevant quotes have been used only when it is clear that they cannot be traced back to an individual student.

Results

Findings from this exploratory case study point to the important role IGDs play in the professional development of BASW social work students. Specifically, participation in IGD helped to raise participants' knowledge and awareness of issues of race and racism and helped them to learn how to maintain internal emotional balance when engaging in difficult

conversations. In addition, our findings identify the skills that students gained while they participated in IGDs, starting with critical dialogic skills, which include recognizing and challenging bias, discrimination, and microaggressions; dealing with conflict and discomfort; asking questions; and engaging in critical reflection. Then, these findings illustrate the conscious facilitation skills that students developed during their participation in the IGD Facilitator Training Program; these include reading the room, holding space, and planting seeds of consciousness. Finally, this section concludes with a brief summary of students' overall perception of the IGD Facilitator Training Program.

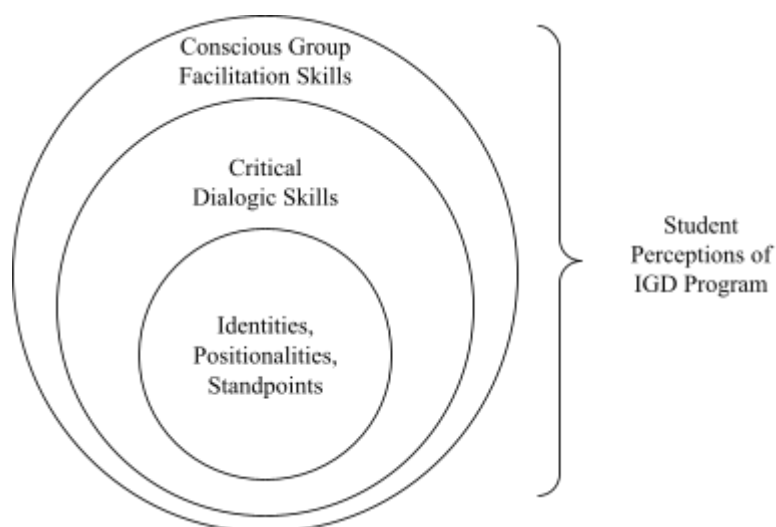


Figure 1.4. Depiction of study findings.

Fostering Critical Consciousness Through ISPs

The overwhelming majority of students who were interviewed indicated that their experience in IGD was highly conducive to increasing their awareness and cognizance of their ISPs. Demonstrating an awareness of increased critical consciousness, one student expressed: “I feel like a lot of the experiential learning or experiential self-development for me happened in IGD.” In many instances, identities and positionalities were discussed concurrently. For example, students reported that their IGD experience prompted them to recognize themselves

and others as members of a social group while also seeing their own social location or position within the societal structure. One student remarked, “I think a lot of people start realizing things about themselves or about their history that is shocking and sad, or angering.” In addition to demonstrating growing awareness about identity, this example also reflects an understanding of positionality, in that the student indicated that learning about oneself in a sociohistorical context prompted emotional responses among students.

Standpoints, on the other hand, tended to be described in separate instances in which students drew attention to the ways that their privileged and/or marginalized identities (historically or presently) influenced their worldview. In particular, students’ reflections were especially illustrative when juxtaposed with divergent standpoints (e.g., reflection on racism from students of color versus reflections on racism from white students). For example, during the facilitators training course, students were asked to complete an activity designed to help them further understand their IPS. Recalling this activity, one student remarked:

We drew a timeline of when we first identified race and racism ... it was just really interesting looking at where my life went and also first identifying race. That was so—I don’t know. I grew up in a bubble, and it was just really interesting hearing everyone’s different experience, and then now[.]

In this example, a curricular activity prompted this student to reflect on the insular nature of their childhood experiences, how that affected their way of thinking, and ways that their worldview differs from that of others. Whereas many students spoke to the ways in which IGD fostered an increasing awareness of their identities, both privileged and oppressed, fewer students articulated an understanding that demonstrated the interconnected nature of IPSs. For example, one student stated:

I felt like confronting my identities and kind of looking at privilege, and what you have, and kind of how that applies in your work. I felt like that was very helpful to kind of understand where I'm coming from and then also to have other participants who come from different backgrounds be able to kinda reflect on maybe what privileges they have.

This example exemplifies a more complex understanding that illustrates how their identities and their positionalities directly impact their worldview and work.

Racial identity and standpoint. Most of the structured learning content across IGD groups focused on topics related to race and racism. Through this lens, white students and students of color both gained a more race-conscious understanding of their IPS. One student described their experience learning about race during IGD in this way:

As a white person [race is] something that I feel like—I mean, I'm always trying to do work on and understand more. And I felt ... I was able to learn a lot more skills to understand my privilege and where I'm coming from and how to address those issues and how to handle it in a group setting.

Here, they note their own racial identity (“white”), their positionality (“privilege”), and their standpoint (where they are “coming from”). They also note being able to move into action—to bring up and navigate their IPS within the group. A student of color, similarly, reflected on how their understanding developed over time, while being enrolled in the BASW program:

As a junior, we didn't know as much about privilege and—for myself at least, a lot of times it's about, “I'm a minority,” and talking about these experiences that keep me down. I don't think about me compared to someone who has less privileges. It was nice to be able to hear all that, but at the same time, I don't want to make it feel like—or I didn't want to make it feel like they needed to teach me everything when I should've looked up every—that's our research.

Not only are they recognizing their identity (“minority”), and position (“keep me down”), but also the complex way that multiple identities and positionalities interact. Moreover, they are able to integrate a worldview that arose out of this understanding—that those with less privilege

should not have to teach those with more privilege about their experiences, thus catalyzing their understanding and acknowledgment of their standpoints in actionable ways (e.g., educating oneself).

Internal emotional balance. The value “inner work” was described by students as a major learning that allowed students to process new learnings about their IPS and continue to engage in the process of critical consciousness. Some of the strategies that students used as a means of maintaining internal emotional balance included not taking things personally, being compassionate towards others, and engaging in self-reflection outside of IGD. One student remarked that one of their major learnings in IGD was not to internalize conflict: “not taking everything so personal. I feel like that’s a big one.” Another student drew attention to their growing ability to mitigate their own emotional response to others’ opinions, saying, “I think that’s what IGD brought to me. A willingness to not be angry and upset when someone—I feel—is completely wrong in the way that they view an issue.” This ability to hear what others have to say and to maintain emotional equilibrium was one of the most significant skills that many students developed, which coincided with their ability to extend kindness and grace towards others. One student described their experience in IGD as an opportunity to “flex my compassion skill.” This student recognized the emotional impact of “people who would deny me my humanity,” saying, “it’s exhausting and makes me really angry,” and was able to discern their own willingness to give people “the benefit of the doubt” while supporting their own needs.

The development of the aforementioned skills, among others, extended beyond the classroom. Many students expressed a need to process IGD content individually. One student recognized that there simply was not enough time within class to come to a place of resolution, indicating that they “had to do a lot of that reflection and therapy on [their] own time.” This

inner work, which included written and verbal journaling and talking with friends and family, allowed students to cultivate equanimity, allowing them to come to a different understanding of themselves when facing their own challenging emotions. One student described their growth in identifying the roots of their emotions and thoughts:

I think that I'm much more conscious of where my mind takes me. And I think that, that also kind of—I mean—just generally—I'm much more conscious of when I feel a certain way of stopping, and stepping back, and trying to figure out where that's coming from.

Becoming more aware of their mental patterns and emotional responses allowed this student to establish some distance from them, to see them more clearly, and to investigate the ways in which their thoughts influenced their emotional responses.

Critical Dialogue Skills

The most salient critical dialogue skills and strategies that students described learning during their participation in IGD were (a) recognizing and challenging bias, discrimination, and microaggressions, (b) dealing with discomfort, (c) asking questions, and (d) critical reflection. Results indicated that these skills were closely connected: Once students recognized bias, they asked questions to challenge that bias. In turn, asking questions helped facilitate critical reflection among members of the dialogue. As a result of students recognizing and challenging others, it became necessary for them to learn and put into practice strategies to deal with the discomfort (e.g., difficult feelings or emotions) that was evoked by challenging bias and discrimination.

Recognizing and challenging bias, discrimination, and microaggressions. Through IGD, students were better able to identify instances of bias, discrimination, and microaggression,

including within themselves. Drawing attention to the fact that there is a great deal of variation in the ways that discrimination and bias can arise, one student expressed:

Being a participant as well in that class, I guess a lot more just nuance about the ways that biases and discrimination, all those things can look ... [I had to] recognize my own biases and [develop] skills to address that, acknowledge it ... So, if I committed a microaggression against someone, ... being able to address that with that person in a way that is more constructive rather than [reactive].

Furthermore, the student explained that their ability to recognize bias, especially in more nuanced situations, played a role in allowing them to move toward a productive response. Students' recognition of subtle differences in ways that unconscious bias functioned compared to that of willful ignorance was understood as a tool for empowerment. First, students gained the capacity to discern whether or not a conversation reflected an openness to deeper dialogue. Second, students' ability to gauge others' readiness for dialogue empowered them to consciously decide whether and to what extent they would apply facilitative strategies to engage further or opt out of everyday conversations about racism, privilege, and inequity.

In addition to being able to see examples of their own bias and discrimination, students were better able to recognize and disrupt bias and discrimination. One student described a discussion they overheard among their roommates, wherein transphobic remarks were expressed. Initially the student "didn't know what to do or say" but then decided to intervene by expressing "something [to try] to make them think more." Another student described their recognition and intervention in similar situations: "I definitely see it in my personal life every time I hear something that I'm just like that's not really okay for you to be saying, I definitely call it out with my friends, family." As is clear in both of these examples, these skills were not limited to formal classroom dialogues but extended into their homes, friendships, and family life.

Dealing with conflict and discomfort. Results indicated that students adopted a range of strategies to deal with discomfort. It is important to note that such strategies often emerged in a spontaneous fashion, when feelings of discomfort or conflict emerged (in the moment) during or directly after the dialogues. One student described addressing conflict directly rather than through an overly apologetic approach. Explicating their approach, the student expressed that when a person causes someone else harm, they should avoid statements such as “oh my god, I’m sorry, what can I do to help you,” but rather focus on “a more constructive solution to talking with folks around social identities and social justice issues. I guess part of that was conflict, not resolution, but sitting in conflict, dealing with conflict.” This example further highlights the fact that dealing with discomfort may not settle the conflict that prompted discomfort. Rather, the strategy is to sit with the conflict, to collectively process the issues that underly the conflict.

Many students brought up the discomfort that they experienced during silence and noted that their experiences in IGD made them feel more comfortable with silence. One student remarked, “I remember we were all talking about silence and how we move through it. So, now with silence, I think I’ve become more comfortable with it, and also trying to analyze what’s going on through silence.” Not only did they increase their tolerance for silence, they also were able to better understand what may have prompted the silence. Another student noted the importance of being able to sit in silence with patients, saying, “Silence has always been hard for me, but it’s really helped me develop a lot more. Especially, it’s going to be important career-wise.” They recognize that whereas they previously experienced challenges with silence, experiencing silence in dialogue helped foster a valuable professional skill.

Another student described a range of strategies that they used to facilitate when uncomfortable emotions arose during dialogues. The student remarked, “you can either sit on

[the emotional statement] or just let them sit with their emotions, or you could kind of reiterate what they said. ‘Oh, you’re having a rough day,’ kind of that retelling.” In this example, both silence and reflective listening were described as viable strategies when discomfort arose during dialogues. Combined, these strategies helped students maintain awareness in the present moment, rather than disassociating for the sake of comfort. Similarly, one student explained how important it was for them to be uncomfortable during IGD: “And, sometimes when I think about IGD, I have a feeling of discomfort, but I think that’s so important. I grew in ways that I didn’t necessarily want to grow.” Moving through discomfort, for this student, was fundamental to their learning.

Asking questions. Students also described the importance of learning to ask questions. The facilitators training course placed great emphasis on affirming inquiry. This type of inquiry was used to help students distinguish between asking questions that are judgmental or biased and asking questions that affirm another person’s experience. This distinction was a crucial learning for many students; for example, one student remarked, “I just don’t understand because it’s like what does it matter if you know how to ask open-ended questions and write case notes if you’re not aware of their bias in them?” Another student recalled the utility of asking open-ended questions:

So, I have to ask a lot open-ended questions, a lot of listening. And sometimes people just want to be heard, so you just have to kind of take it as it is and just kind of listen. I’ve learned that, too. But I think I learned that through IGD, it’s just to sit on people’s feelings and everything.

In both of these examples, students point out the importance of a nonjudgmental approach toward inquiry.

Critical reflection. Critical reflection, a core construct inherent in critical consciousness, emerged as a major strategy that students learned to utilize as they engaged in IGD. Whereas some students highlighted cognitive aspect of reflection (e.g., “I think my biggest takeaway is ... the critical thinking skills it gave me”), other students described the role of active listening as a strategy that helped them be critically reflective. For example, one student expanded on this idea by outlining critical reflection as a combination of the two complementary skills: “I think my IGD experience helped me have that, I think it’s double consciousness, where it’s like I’m listening to what they’re saying, but also thinking about where it comes from, or intention.” In this example, “double consciousness” is used to describe the student’s capacity to listen to the content of a person’s words while simultaneously thinking critically about the person’s perspective or positionality. This “skill of active listening in a group” allowed students to think more deeply and “to pull out the root of what someone is talking about.”

Conscious Group Facilitation Skills

Reading the room, holding space, and planting seeds of consciousness emerged as the most salient group facilitation skills that fostered critical consciousness among students who participated in the IGD Facilitator Training Program.

Reading the room. Students described learning to be more aware of body language, group dynamics, comfort levels, and the nuances of speaking engagement. Participants in the dialogues noted that being aware of body language played an essential role in reading and shifting group dynamics. One student remarked, “The skills were really to be more observant. I remember being able to identify some of the body languages.” Once they observed and identified different body languages, facilitators were able to take note of the various ways that they were tied to the content of the dialogue. For example, “I feel like I paid a lot of attention to body

language. Especially like, yeah, just in terms of how people would react.” With increased levels of awareness, students were able to make facilitative decisions about how to guide the group more effectively. For example, another student stated:

As a facilitator, you have to work with those attitudes. Like, “I see you, with your arms crossed, and your [facial expression]. Okay, tell me about why your arms are crossed the whole time?” Let’s pick up body language, if you don’t want to say anything verbally.

Students discussed how their own awareness of and ability to surface nonverbal cues within the dialogue helped deepen participants’ awareness of themselves and the ways in which their nonverbal expressions demonstrate an unconscious response to dynamics that are present within the group.

Beyond being aware of body language, facilitators noted that they learned to pay attention to group dynamics, including the diversity of and interaction among IPS. Students discussed this as an essential strategy that they used to encourage participants to notice how individual and interpersonal experiences reflected the ways in which power and privilege operated on a structural or institutional level. One student described it in this way: “And like being able to read group dynamics and systems understanding goes especially [with] the model IGD from intrapersonal to interpersonal to the systems level.” This example further demonstrates how reading group dynamics not only assisted with their ability to effectively facilitate dialogues but also helped to foster the structural dimensions of critical consciousness.

Holding space and planting seeds of consciousness. Holding space for collective reflection was another way that facilitators helped foster critical consciousness within dialogue groups. *Holding space* emerged as a term used to describe the subtle ways in which listening skills and presence functioned within a group setting. One student described listening as a key

skill they learned during IGD. Moreover, they described how the implicit aspects of listening, such as pausing for processing, often created space for dialogue groups to engage in deeper contemplation about or reflection on the underlying messages that are being communicated. This student said, “I think actually listening, because you aren’t supposed to interrupt. And I think we were trying to be really good about listening and then pausing, like, holding some space and actually processing and then having a conversation instead of jumping right [in].” This strategy of listening then pausing functioned as a way to either slow the pace of a conversation or to maintain a pace of dialogue that was conducive to collective reflection and thus critical consciousness.

The role that student facilitators played in fostering critical consciousness among dialogue participants was described by one student as *planting seeds*. Evoking the parable of the sower, the student talked about being intentional about how they engage with others by asking themselves, “Will this plant the seed or will it just be like not even hitting the ground, you know?” The following quote describes how this student understood their role as a facilitator and the potential influence that their guidance can have on dialogue participants:

But, as a facilitator, this is a space that you’re guiding folks through. And so, if someone is having a more difficult time, for example, trying to figure out how to ease that for them or how to challenge that for them ... wanting to guide folks in a way that’s impactful for them [and] to make sure that whatever it is that sticks with them is something that will stick with them in a way that’s going to feed them in the future.

By relating the development of critical consciousness to the act of planting seeds, consciousness is embodied into a living process that, when nurtured, brings about growth, transformation, and sustenance.

Student Perceptions of IGD Program

Facilitating IGD was a wildly impactful experience for many students, so much so that the overwhelming majority of students who were interviewed for this study suggested that the IGD Facilitator Training Program be a required course for all social work students. One student, described the ways in which the IGD facilitator training program would be a vastly beneficial educational strategy for all social work students:

Yeah, and then it's like making, I don't want to say forcing, but providing students the opportunity to be on the side where they have to facilitate a conversation that is open, where they may encounter like other people's biases or blind spots or things like that so that they have the experience of trying to make a space for someone who may be willfully ignorant.

This demonstrates that the student very much valued their facilitation experience and recognized that it prepared them for conversations where they might encounter bias outside of IGD. Another student echoed this, expressing that “the times when I felt most alive in the classroom, was when I was facilitating IGD.” This example suggests that the experience of facilitating IGD allowed the student to embody themselves more fully within an educational setting.

Students did, however, have constructive feedback and recommendations for the IGD program overall. They suggested more preparation and transparency for participants in the dialogues and more debrief and feedback opportunities for both participants and facilitators. Facilitators also requested fewer readings and more time to facilitate. Overall, students indicated a desire for an expanded IGD program and administrative support that would prioritize the emotional safety of students.

Suggestions to better support dialogue participants. Most of the feedback about support for students participating in IGD through SOC WF 404 centered on better preparing

students with an understanding of what to expect from the course. Students asked for pre-dialogue supports, including clear and consistent communication about student expectations and facilitator roles. One student discussed that they had an expectation that their facilitators should show no emotion during dialogues, but rather be neutral guides. They indicated that “more transparency ... would be helpful just to like give some background knowledge of more of what IGD is and just what we would learn from it.” Students were interested in having a better understanding of what dialogue is and looks like before the course began, including an understanding of how the course would be different from other classes. They suggested implementing skits or videos to demonstrate this. Along with encouraging more conversation about what dialogue is, students also indicated the importance of communicating the value of IGD to incoming students. One student described the need to encourage students who might be nervous about the course, saying, “Adding more—yeah. Reassurance. That’s the word. And, just adding in a little more reassurance just because it does sound really scary, but honestly, it was one of the most amazing experiences that I had of my undergrad education.”

Students also had feedback about adding structures outside of class to support students. They indicated that their reflective journals (which were an assignment for the course) should not be graded. Students also noted that it would be helpful to have space to debrief after IGD, with one student asking that office hours could be “a space that, hey, we can talk about things that maybe we said, or that person said that make you uncomfortable and you don’t know how to deal with it ... Or have a time when we can talk and reflect about what just happened.” Another suggested an instructor, advisor, or graduate student could support IGD students, “somebody to kind of talk through stuff in a program that triggers as many emotions as this program does.”

These kinds of supports could allow for students to better confront the affective challenges that IGD poses.

Suggestions to better support dialogue facilitators. Many students appreciated the consulting sessions, in which they were able to talk with instructors and come together as a class to discuss what went well and what was challenging with their professor and their peers. However, some students who facilitated would have appreciated more involvement from instructors, both during dialogue and through one-on-one check-ins. One student asked for instructors to sit in on the IGD courses a couple of times throughout the quarter “to help track progress,” whereas another suggested that IGD could be taped and reviewed with the instructor so that instructors could provide more feedback. In addition to requesting feedback around facilitation, some students said that they would appreciate more individual conversations with instructors about their own emotional processing of dialogues, because “so much is brought up for everyone.”

Students also asked for shifts in the curriculum, looking for fewer readings, both for themselves and for the participants. They mentioned that students felt overwhelmed by the number of readings they were being asked to do, and many did not complete them. Facilitators also requested that the SOC WF 404 course be longer, so that they had more time to facilitate each dialogue and to ensure that they were able to close well, without leaving students feeling too unresolved.

Overall programmatic shifts. Students had many suggestions for programmatic shifts, many of which involved expanding the program. Students suggested that the SOC WF 404 course be extended into two quarters or into a yearlong course, so that students could both participate and facilitate for a longer period. Some pointed to the IGDs building rapport with

each other and indicated that an additional quarter would allow them to build on that and deepen their relationships. Others also discussed that by the end of the course, facilitators have built their skills enough to feel confident and that it would be ideal to continue to facilitate with that confidence. One student said, “I think as soon as you start to get—feel like you’re getting adjusted and really feeling like you’re understanding, how to operate in those group settings and those roles, then it’s over. Which is good, but it feels like you start to get to that place.” Yet another student suggested a summer IGD intensive course, through which students could spend more time honing their skills. In alignment with this expansion, some students believed that it should be mandatory for all students to facilitate IGD as part of their education, and others even suggested offering IGDs for the entire campus or for community groups.

Finally, students indicated the importance of some logistical and administrative supports. Some students recalled that it was difficult to find space for IGDs and that a professor would come into their classroom to prepare for his class, which was next. Another mentioned that the space they were in felt awkward, saying, “We were in the basement. And it was dark, because there are no windows. And the logistics of not having a space that’s comfortable makes it difficult to get to that emotional level of comfort.” Interruptions and uncomfortable space hindered their ability to establish emotional safety within their IGDs and could likely be easily resolved.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand the extent to which IGD supported the development of students’ critical consciousness. Specifically, this study sought to understand whether IGD promoted students’ knowledge and awareness of their own social identities, positionalities, and standpoints. In addition, this study sought to identify the skills, strategies, and

techniques did students develop during IGD that increased their preparedness to engage in justice-oriented practice, including their ability to address cognitive and affective challenges.

In summary, the findings suggested that IGD operated in an experiential fashion to aid in the development of critical consciousness by first increasing students' capacity to be critically aware and reflective of the ways in which their own identities, positionalities and standpoints. Concurrently, students described the ways that learning about their ISPs prompted the development of strategies that supported their "inner work." The ways that students were able to maintain internal emotional balance helped to mitigate some of the initial emotional responses that accompanied their reflections on the ways that their identities, experiences, and histories influenced their existing worldview. It is important to note that students talked about IPS as individual constructs but also described them at times as one and the same. However, when describing the application of these skills, students were better able to understand the distinction between the three conjoining terms.

IGD facilitated the development of a range of dialogue skills that supported their ability to relate to themselves and others within their dialogue groups. Conscious dialogue skills included recognizing and challenging bias, discrimination, and microaggressions; dealing with discomfort; asking questions; and critical reflection. The results revealed how students' capacity to integrate these skills presented opportunities to interrupt privilege and confront bias and discrimination. Not only did alumni find applications to their current professional practice, during their time in IGD they also described the ways that they were able to put these skills into practice in their personal lives. This suggests that IGD increased students' preparedness to apply these skills across social work practice settings and in everyday conversations.

However, students experienced many challenges during their experience in the IGD Facilitator Training Program. It is important to point out that the challenges that students experienced were not necessarily barriers to learning. In fact, the challenges that were identified can be better understood as opportunities to grow. For example, in learning to deal with conflict and discomfort, many students initially felt that the presence of discomfort itself was a cognitive and affective challenge. Implied exposure and practice of dealing with comfort can be framed in terms of the ways in which students overcome those challenges. Instead, students came to understand that the objective of dealing with conflict and discomfort is not to eliminate the discomfort but to be present within it. In this way, students' capacity to mitigate the experience of discomfort operated in an experiential fashion and was seemingly enhanced by students' ability to maintain internal emotional balance. In some way, this exemplifies praxis.

Another aspect of students' skill development and subsequent application of facilitation skills is that they involve performing two skills at once. For example, managing the need to process while also staying present is very challenging because it requires the integration of many of the skills, including self-awareness and conscious dialogue skills. By reframing the experience of conflict, not only did students increase their capacity to sit with conflict that arose within dialogue settings, they were able to transform conflict into learning opportunities for both themselves and other participants within the group. Many dialogue participants noted that facilitators played a critical role in supporting their ability to endure conflict by encouraging them to continuously engage in dialogue, despite feelings of discomfort. However, student participants noted that they were better able to maintain engagement beyond discomfort when their dialogue groups had effectively fostered trust and safety.

Finally, this study described students' perceptions of the IGD program and suggestions for improving the IGD Facilitator Training program. First, students suggested that the IGD facilitators courses should be implemented school-wide and become a core part of the foundation curriculum across BASW and MSW social work programs. Students' ideas and suggestions on ways to better support participants and facilitators throughout the learning process are described in more detail within the following section, Implications for Social Work Education and Practice. Among the most relevant suggestions, however, are those that support students in mitigating the cognitive and affective challenges they experienced. For example, one student noted, "so much is brought up for everyone." In particular, they felt that individual conversations with instructors, advisors, or graduate assistants would provide an opportunity for them to engage in their own emotional procession around the feelings that not only come up for those students participating in the group but also for themselves.

Limitations

First, students' ISPs were not always explicitly associated with their quotes. Second, the results demonstrating the knowledge skills and interventions that students learned and developed did not specifically pair with the courses in which they learned or developed those skills. Future research should adopt a more rigorous research design to understand which practice skills were developed within each course. This would provide more tangible implications that could lead to more intentional course design in the future development of consciousness-raising educational approaches in social work programs. Furthermore, this would help in establishing more clear indicators or outcomes to help educators and administrators assess students' competencies of specific practice behaviors, knowledge, and skills.

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PAPER 2: FROM LISTENING TO HOLDING SPACE: DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY TO LISTEN AMONG SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

There is an urgent need for social work practitioners to support nationwide efforts in racial equity and social justice. Over the past decade, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives have gained traction among universities and other public educational settings. DEI initiatives have also permeated the public and private sectors of our society, including but not limited to many human service organizations. Social work has a unique opportunity to support this effort by providing transformative educational opportunities that train practitioners to effectively engage in dialogue about social injustice. Widespread efforts to raise public consciousness about inequities and their negative impact on marginalized populations is a pressing task among many professions including social work. The Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare Research's newest grand challenge is to eliminate racism. This grand challenge urges the social work community to engage in transformative research, action, and policy efforts to eliminate racism (Grand Challenges for Social Work, 2020).

Of critical relevance to this study is the newest grand challenge seeks to foster the development of an antiracist social work workforce and to promote teaching and learning within social work education programs. Educational approaches that examine structural inequalities and white privilege as well as their impact on individual and group outcomes are needed. This study explores an existing educational program, Intergroup Dialogue, as a site of this type of teaching

and learning among social work students. More specifically, however, this study investigates the act of listening among students engaged in dialogue about structural inequities. As such, this study responds to the following research questions: What does the act of listening look like? How is silence related to listening? How do students distinguish/compare the type of listening that occurs during the dialogue in relation to past understandings of what it means to listen?

Social work research and practice has placed great emphasis on the role of listening in social work practice. Although social workers learn a myriad of direct practice skills that are translatable to dialogues about diversity and equity, less is understood about challenges practitioners face in the context of dialogues about social inequities with people from different backgrounds. Among these challenges is intergroup conflict, which often occurs when differing perspectives converge during discussions about racism and other forms of oppression. It is incumbent upon the social work profession to understand the ways in which social workers can develop a more critical skill set, one that encompasses the nuances of listening within the context of challenging intergroup dialogues about privilege and oppression.

Background

Listening is well studied across a range of disciplines within educational settings and in the private sector as well (Kincheloe et al., 1995; Tobin, 2009; Zampella, 2020). Critical education studies have noted the centrality of listening as it pertains engaging in difficult dialogues about content that challenges students to think more critically about the social structures embedded in our society (Kincheloe et al., 1995; Tobin, 2009). Although the practice of listening seems simple, this body of literature offers relevant ideas that illuminate the complexity of listening and the aspects of listening that are less understood when learners are

faced with content that challenges their existing perceptions of the world. Kincheloe (1995) coined the term *radical listening* to more accurately encompass the underlying intentions and approach to listening in the context of critical education. Radical listening is listening with the intention to be a vessel for your partner, to be a sympathetic witness so that unspoken meaning may have room to find words. Radical listening encourages both speaker and listener to reside in the moment nonjudgmentally (Kincheloe et al., 1995; Tobin, 2009).

In recent years, many professions across public and private sectors have been increasingly concerned with navigating issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In doing so, researchers and practitioners have begun to recognize that our existing understandings about what listening is and how one listens are insufficient when it comes to discussing diversity issues. As a result, numerous professional coaching and training experts have developed training and certification programs designed to help organizational leaders become more effective listeners (Zampella, 2020). For example, The Bhavana Group, a leading professional coaching firm, recently launched a series of publications concerned listening: “Listening for Context,” “Listening for Understanding,” and “Authentic Listening,” to name a few. Together, these publications and training programs demonstrate the ways in which listening shapes our view of DEI.

Social workers need to be good listeners, because our role as practitioners requires that we learn about our client’s experiences so that we may provide an adequate assessment and recommend proper interventions to address the challenges presented. Listening is an essential direct practice skill that is currently being taught in many social work education programs across the world. Social work students often learn active listening through courses that offer content on a wide range of direct practice skills. Students may also learn about the role of listening while

taking courses that focus on variety of well-known counseling approaches. For example, some social work education programs offer elective coursework or training programs in specialized counseling approaches such as motivational interviewing. Motivational interviewing is an approach to counseling that is designed to promote changes in clients' behaviors (Miller & Rollnick, 2012, 2013). A key motivational intervening technique of relevance to this study is reflective listening.

However, one drawback of the long-standing and current approaches to teaching listening skills through training modules is that instruction methods often use standardized clients to simulate experiences. For example, Rogers and Welch (2009) studied whether the use of standardized clients in the classroom was an effective modality to teach active listening skills to social work students. Whereas the use of standardized clients may be useful to teach listening skills, social work students may benefit from more experiential approaches. Another study found that training social work students through field experiences to implement an evidence-based screening tool for alcohol misuse helped students increase their proficiency at motivational interviewing (Tajima et al., 2019). Findings suggested that although field opportunities were useful, students needed to increase their understanding of chemical dependency to implement screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment among clients who may struggle with addiction. In the same way, it may be beneficial for social work programs to consider using similar program models that include both didactic content and experiential opportunities for social work students to engage in anti-oppressive social work practice.

Intergroup dialogue (IGD) is an educational approach that may bridge this gap in social work education. IGD coursework not only involves content learning related to privilege and oppression, it is coupled with opportunities for students in dialogue with other students across

social identity groups who experience privilege and oppression differently. By integrating consciousness-raising education into social work education, students are challenged to contend with what they know about social inequities and the ways that inequities are perpetuated in our everyday lives and subsequently in our practice. Relevant research on IGD in social work programs suggests that IGD can prepare social workers for culturally competent practice with diverse groups (Brady et al., 2016; Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001). Research on the role of listening in IGD demonstrates the centrality of listening engagement essential to effective dialogue practice (Bohm, 2013; Nagda, 2006; Rodríguez et al., 2018; Zúñiga et al., 2012) As social workers embark on the journey to become antiracist practitioners, we are charged with the task of further developing our listening skills while also developing our capacity to facilitate consciousness processes among those we work with. Doing so involves facilitative skills that go beyond traditional social work practice skills. Facilitators of critical dialogues must have the ability to have productive and generative conversations with individuals, communities, and organizations about the nature of oppressive systems and their impact on marginalized populations. Facilitators of critical dialogues must be able to ensure that these conversations do not go awry or cause further harm to vulnerable populations in the process. There is a need for the social work profession to understand the ways in which social workers can develop a more critical skill set that encompasses the nuances of listening within the context of intergroup dialogues, especially amid dialogues about privilege and oppression.

Methods

Study Objective and Research Design

The primary objective of this study was to explore the act of listening during IGD's. Secondly, this study explores the techniques and strategies that helped social work students

develop techniques that fostered their capacity to listen within the context of challenging intergroup dialogues about privilege and oppression. This study uses a qualitative case study research design to explore the complexity of individuals' experiences by centering their voices and developing emerging themes (Creswell, 2013). Case studies are used when exploring a phenomenon in context, using one or more data collection methods (Yin, 2014). Case studies are useful when the researcher seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of a case or cases of the phenomenon under investigation.

Creswell (2013) noted that case study research "explores a real-life, contemporary bounded [by time and place] system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (p. 97).

Qualitative methods are the best approach for this particular study because the nature of understanding the variation among individual perspectives about collective experiences requires a subjective method. An exploratory case study design was used to garner an in-depth examination of student experiences in IGD. Other types of case studies, such as explanatory or comparative methods were not selected because the purpose of this study was not to explain presumed causal links or to compare multiple cases (Yin, 2014). Thus, qualitative methods of scientific inquiry were chosen because these methods support the specific aims of this study. First, this study aims to explore the act of listening among social work students during IGD's. Second, this study seeks to identify techniques that helped students increase their capacity to listen during dialogues, especially when dialogues presented cognitive and affective challenges that made listening more challenging.

Within this study, I examine act of listening in dialogues. In particular this study offers an examination of how students engaged in listening amid silence, especially during dialogues that

felt uncomfortable to them. These study aims were investigated within the case of one school of social work's IDG training program, through the perspectives of students who participated in that program from 2014–2019. An in-depth exploration of students' learning experiences is a useful approach for multiple reasons. First, by recalling their learning experiences students are simultaneously engaged in the practice of reflection, which remains a cornerstone of professional practice across many helping professions. Second, by exploring students' perceptions of their own learning within the context of IGDs, we may be better able to understand the ways that IGD increased students' capacity to listen. Moreover, these methods further support the goal of understanding the quality and depth of students' experience and development of critical dialogue skills by identifying the IGD mechanism that supports the development of skills, strategies, and techniques to address cognitive and affective challenges that arise during critical dialogues.

Given that triangulation is a key component of case study research, documentation gathered from annual BASW feedback sessions from 2017–2019 were used as secondary data sources for this study. The purpose of these feedback sessions was to offer an opportunity for all BASW students to share more broadly about their experience with the BASW coursework. Finally, to further triangulate the findings of this study, it utilized student feedback regarding IGD courses (e.g., structure, content, challenges) that gathered between the years of 2017 and 2019 at the midterm and the end of term.

Study Setting

The University of Washington (UW) School of Social Work offers BASW, Masters of Social Work (MSW), and PhD in Social Welfare programs. According to the admissions website, the UW's BASW program offers generalist professional training to cohorts of approximately 45 students ("Admissions," n.d.). The MSW program builds specialized skills for

about 270 students each year through three degree paths: the Day, Extended Degree, and Advanced Standing programs. Graduates who have completed their BASW (either at UW or elsewhere in the United States or Canada) within the previous 5 years are welcome to apply to the Advanced Standing MSW program, an accelerated program that allows students to specialize in a concentration. The PhD program prepares a handful of students for research, teaching, and public service.

The Intergroup Dialogue, Education, and Action (IDEA) Center at UW has integrated the practice and pedagogy of IGD with social work practitioner education for BASW and MSW students. IGD courses are designed to help students and social work practitioners develop the knowledge, values, passion, commitment, and skills they need to work in diverse settings.

Nagda and colleagues (1999) developed the Cultural Diversity and Justice course for the BASW program, combining conceptual lectures and IGD to “enable students to develop awareness of self and others in relation to social group memberships and status in society” (p. 437). At the time of this study, the Cultural Diversity and Justice course (SOC WF 404) was embedded in the winter of the first year of the BASW program. The required course included weekly lectures to establish a theoretical framework and concurrent IGD sessions for personal reflection and engagement with peers.

After completing this course, students had the opportunity to pursue the 10-credit-hour IGD Facilitator Training Program certificate in their second year in the BASW program. In the first 5-credit-hour autumn course, Building Competencies to Facilitate Intergroup Dialogues (SOC WF 442), students developed knowledge and skills required to become peer facilitators for IGDs. In the winter quarter, students enrolled in Facilitating Intergroup Dialogue (SOC WF 443), where they cofacilitated IGDs among the first-year BASW students in the Cultural Diversity and

Justice course. Students also received consultation and supervision from their peers and faculty. Though these courses were designed for BASW students, students from other schools were welcome to participate during 2017–2019. Just like the BASW students, students from other departments were required to have some type of diversity coursework prior to enrolling in the IGD Facilitator Training Program.

Within UW's MSW program, students in the Community Centered Integrative Practice (CCIP) specialization were required to take SOCW 534, Praxis of Intergroup Dialogue, through which students designed, planned, implemented, and evaluated IGD sessions as peer facilitators. This course was not open to any MSW students outside of the CCIP concentration.

Role of Researcher

A challenge to any research design is the issue of bias or the potential distortion of research outcomes due to unintended influences from the researcher as well as research participants. This is a particularly critical issue in qualitative research where researchers take extraordinary efforts to establish strong relationships with their participants and research sites in order to delve deeply into the subject matter. Reflexivity (Maxwell, 2013) is an interactive practice that addresses the distortions or preconceptions researchers may unwittingly introduce in their qualitative designs and processes. The act of reflection enables the researcher to thoughtfully consider their identity, worldview, and values and speculate about the ways in which the ways the researcher-participant interaction may have been influenced by presumptions arising from obvious sources, such as certain demographics (e.g., age, gender, and race) or more subtle cues such as socioeconomic status, cultural background, or political orientation. With personal beliefs and assumptions as well as power dynamics and tensions playing an influential role on the research process, I discuss my positionality below (Merriam, 2009).

The author and primary researcher is a Black woman, whose philosophy toward research is grounded in the understanding that knowledge is constructed through the unification of multiple worldviews and perspectives to bring about novel conceptions of the phenomenon under investigation. Her research adopts a race-conscious lens that informs every stage of the research process from conception to dissemination. In reflecting on her relationship to the participants in this study, it must be noted that she served as a teaching assistant for the first course (Building Competencies for Intergroup Dialogue Facilitation) within the IGD facilitation training program in 2016. Thereafter she was a co-instructor for both IGD facilitation training courses from 2017–2019. In addition, the first author was a PhD student at UW from 2015–2021. This author was the primary researcher involved in data collection and analysis.

Study Population and Sampling

Data were collected from a total of 22 study respondents; their demographics are included in Table 1. Nearly all of the students (19) participated in the Cultural Diversity and Justice course (SOC WF 404) within the BASW program. Four of these students participated in the Cultural Diversity and Justice course only. A majority of the students (16) began with that required course and continued on to the IGD Facilitator Training Program. Most of these students (14) were in the BASW program, although two were not. Almost all of those who started the training program (15) completed the two-course series of SOC WF 442 and 443 and cofacilitated IGDs for the Cultural Diversity and Justice course. Two of the students who completed the certificate program went on to apply to UW's MSW Advanced Standing program, and one was enrolled at the time of the interview. One student attended a different institution for their BASW and was enrolled in UW's Advanced Standing program. All students were enrolled in IGD coursework between 2014 and 2019.

Table 2.1*IGD Participation by Role and Program*

Respondent role and program	Number of participants
Total number of participants involved in IGD	N = 22
BASW Program	21
IGD participant (SOC WF 404)	4
IGD facilitators program trainee (SOC 442 and 443)	16
SOC WF 442 (Only)	1
MSW Program	1
Graduate IGD facilitators trainee (SOCW 534)	1

Table 2.2*BASW Facilitators Program Trainees by Year*

Academic school year	Number of students enrolled
All years	N = 17
pre-2016	1
2016–2017	6
2017–2018	3
2018–2019*	7

*1 student enrolled in a single IGD course.

Nonrandom purposeful sampling was employed to identify and recruit students who had taken at least one IGD course (Creswell, 2013). To recruit for this study, we created flyers advertising for the study and posted them within the UW School of Social Work, including on bulletin boards and faculty doors. Students were told to directly contact the primary researcher to

participate. We also sent the flyer out to the current students using the BASW email list. Students then posted the flyer onto their private BASW current and former student Facebook group. We also directly asked students who had participated in the SOC WF 442 course in the previous quarter to volunteer to be a part of the study. Students also distributed the information by word of mouth. Accessing this sample was fairly simple, because we had access to the department facilities, listservs, and students. Accessing alumni, however, primarily occurred through snowball sampling. Students were offered \$25 gift cards for their participation. Interviews and focus groups continued until saturation was reached.

The institutional review board was contacted and determined that this study did not meet their definition of research; therefore, they did not require approval or a formal informed consent process. However, researchers did make students aware that the information they provided would be deidentified prior to dissemination, that their participation was voluntary, and that they could leave at any time.

Data Collection

To minimize intrusion, data were collected through semistructured interviews and focus groups. We conducted five focus groups, two with two participants and two with three participants. We also conducted 11 individual interviews. To facilitate each group discussion, we developed a semistructured guide that explored students' experiences (what IGD was like, what resonated or stood out), learning (skills and knowledge), application (using learning and challenges in doing so), and ideas about how the IGD program can be improved in the future. The focus group protocol can be seen in the Appendix. Each discussion lasted between 30 and 75 min. Two interviews were conducted over the phone, and the remainder were conducted in-person in a private room at the school. This approach was useful because it allowed the research

team to examine conversational patterns within each group discussion, which illuminated the participants' perspectives of IGD experiences among students and alumni. All interviews and focus groups were audio recorded with participants' permission. Field notes were collected during the interviews and focus groups to track participants' body language and facial expressions. Researchers also engaged in reflective memoing afterwards to track emerging understandings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis techniques used for this study followed a six-step framework for qualitative analysis established by Braun and Clark (2006). First, to increase familiarization with the data, the first author listened to the audio files of the semistructured interviews and focus groups and took detailed notes of key ideas that were expressed. The audio recording from each interview and focus group session was professionally transcribed. Once transcribed, the research team reviewed the transcripts to make any changes (considering dialect) that were missed or reported incorrectly. This process was important to capturing the participants' experiences and perspectives accurately. The focus group transcripts were then uploaded into Dedoose, a web-based software program for qualitative data analysis. Once transcripts were uploaded, each researcher independently coded the same three transcripts. Thereafter, both researchers met to discuss the coding process and reconcile discrepancies in codes. The primary researcher employed a variety of inductive analytic techniques (i.e., coding, constant comparisons, and memoing) during this stage of the process. Once all codes were reconciled, they were compiled into the initial codebook that was used for the remaining transcripts.

The rest of the transcripts were then coded independently by both researchers. Once all transcripts were coded, the researchers reconvened. Discrepancies were discussed and

reconciled, until the codebook was finalized. Thereafter, the primary researchers established a list of emergent themes; these were assessed based on the extent to which they addressed (directly or indirectly) the research questions. The researchers organized relevant codes into the most appropriate theme. Codes that did not fit into a theme were left out of the analysis. Themes were initially reviewed by the primary researchers and subsequently reviewed by the third author. Finally, the research team was convened to ensure accuracy in naming and defining each theme.

Credibility and biases were addressed in several ways. First, researchers engaged in reflective memoing. Second, data were coded independently, then codebooks were created and shared. Finally, all procedures were documented and detailed records were kept from each data source. The confidentiality of study participants has been protected by discussing themes in the aggregate, and relevant quotes have been used only when it is clear that they cannot be traced back to an individual student.

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Results

Listening: Context, Content, and Self

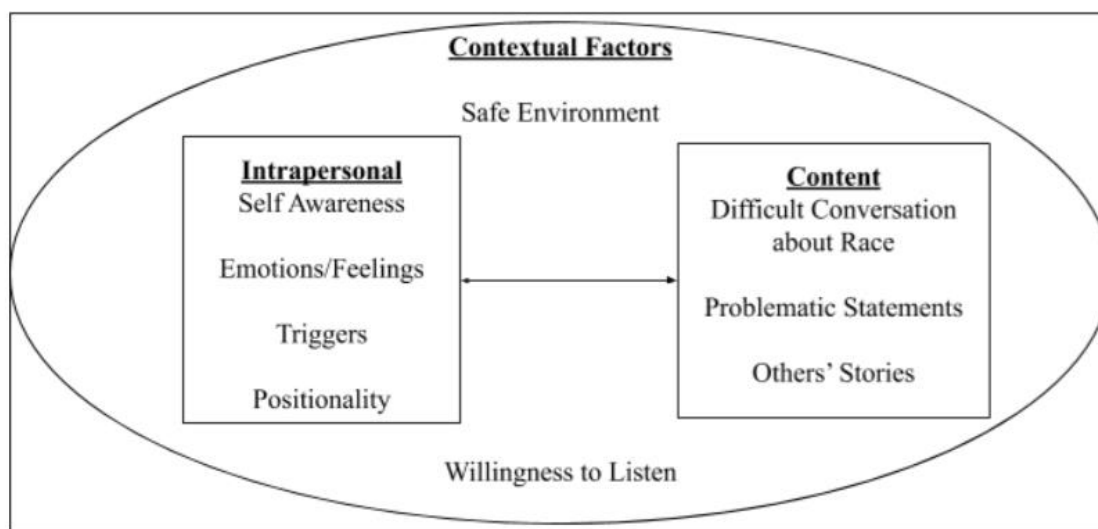


Figure 2.1. Listening in intergroup dialogue.

In response to the primary research question (What does the act of listening look like?), three major themes emerged: the context in which listening occurred, the content of dialogues where listening occurred, and the intrapersonal aspects that contributed to effective listening. *Context*, in this study, relates to the contextual factors of the dialogue environment that enabled listening and sharing among dialogue participants. Students described that listening was enabled

when the dialogue groups fostered a safe environment. Fostering a safe environment was influenced by facilitators ability to demonstrate vulnerability. For example, one student expressed, “Another thing that my facilitators did that made it feel really safe is that they were also very vulnerable. They shared things that made them tear up, and they were like...” By modeling vulnerability in the presence of dialogue participants, facilitators were able to communicate safety. The IGD participant explained further how they experienced this modeling to occur and the subsequent impact on their ability to engage more openly during dialogues: “I think my facilitators really helped to foster what we call ‘a safe space.’ And I think that’s what we needed—a time for us to speak and to grow and to just listen to each other.”

Willingness to listen was another contextual factor that enabled listening during dialogues. Although facilitators played a major role in creating a safe environment, one student described how their own willingness to listen fostered a safe environment:

and so, that was kind of nice, to have someone be there and kinda be open as well. I think there was just—I think it was the leaders but also I think my willingness to hear people. Because I think without that open-ended mindset, I guess, you don’t—you kind of form walls.

Dialogue participants’ willingness to listen was a cornerstone of many students’ experiences that also allowed them to be authentic as they shared vulnerable experiences within the group. Another student participating in dialogue expressed how the act of vulnerability fostered interpersonal connections among dialogue group members:

I think what really stood out with me ... was how vulnerable my group was able to get. And I think that we really made connections that way just because a lot of people were being authentic and speaking genuinely.

Conversely, students, particularly students of color, described instances where they were met with an unwillingness to listen. When there is an unwillingness to listen, apathy and ambivalence indicated a lack of emotional safety within the dialogue groups. One facilitator described an instance where they were met with an unwillingness to listen by a white participant in their dialogue group. This instance was coded as “not being listened to”:

I think I learned a lot about how to deal with white people and white fragility. I learned a lot about that actually firsthand when one of the participants was uneasy about some of the things that were being said from my end. And so, being able to kind of just deal with that was just a—it was a moment. It’s like, “Wow, okay.” At first, I was really frustrated but then I was just like, “Listen, it’s—” that was just my reaction. I was just like, “Okay, cool.”

This example illuminates two critical ideas about the consequences of not listening. First, the student uses the term *white fragility* to describe the participants dis-ease with hearing the comment shared by the facilitator. Second, this example demonstrates the facilitator’s ability to avoid expressing their own frustration as a means of maintaining focus on the group, rather than responding to their internal reaction to the student. Although experiences of not being listened to were not commonly discussed during the interviews, it is important to note the role of race in this interaction. Overall, most students perceived the dialogue groups to be a safe environment for difficult dialogues to occur. Students also described how the audience or group membership influenced the capacity to dialogue about difficult topics. Whereas dialogue groups inside of the social work program facilitated personal sharing, students anticipated ongoing challenges translating their dialogue skills outside of the program.

I feel like ... it’s about the audience. Because inside the School of Social Work, you’re more protected, and people listen because they feel like that’s the right thing to do, but when you leave the School of Social Work, you can’t make people listen to you. You can’t just sit them down and be like, “We’re gonna hash this out.” You can ask them, but they can choose not to. And so, I think that is

something that I've run into, is how do you have conversations with people who just don't wanna have those conversations, or who are just so in denial that they won't even respect what you're saying or any knowledge that you try to give them? They just don't wanna hear it. I think that's something.

Describing the challenging aspects of accounting for varying group membership or audiences, one student articulated how the experience in IGDs helped them become more comfortable with having difficult conversations with others outside of the social work context.

It's hard to try to filter our experiences, and the language that we learn around this, and all that outside of the School of Social Work, so I think that's gonna be a struggle—something that comes up pretty consistently. And, I feel more comfortable being uncomfortable in that. Before going through this experience, I probably wouldn't even go there. I'd recognize that "Oh, this person may not be receptive," and I recognize the same thing now, and now, I feel more confident in my ability to try, whereas before, I wouldn't try.

Listening to content. Students often described listening as it related to the content of the dialogues. Two content subthemes emerged from students' descriptions of listening. First, students described listening to problematic statements, and second, students described listening to others' stories, particularly stories that involved traumatic experiences. Responses indicated that students were tuned into or more actively engaged in the listening process when problematic statements were being made. Although there is no single definition of *problematic statements*, the examples below provide some context into what students meant by the term, and more specifically, from whom they heard such statements.

IGDs about race and racism were identified as the content in which students recalled hearing and listening to problematic statements. One student described how these conversations, although challenging at times, contributed to increased comfortability confronting problematic statements made by white people.

Sometimes, when I hear people that are white say something that's really out of place or not okay, then I feel okay with saying something to them and confronting it, and I think that before, I would not have felt okay with that, and I have knowledge to be able to sound like I know what I'm talking about, so I think that's one thing.

Another student described how she approaches conversations with People of Color whereby she suggests encouraging others to confront problematic statements as means of combating negative emotions associated with racially insensitive comments or actions.

And then, also, talking to other people of color and just—when I hear them in a really negative space, especially when it has to do with something that people that were white said or did to them just telling them that it's okay, you can talk to that person about it. You don't have to keep those feelings to yourself, and that's just hurting you. It's not going to help them become a different person or have a different perspective if you don't say anything. So, I think just being able to open up and talk to people about it is a way that I've been able to apply it.

One student described how they have integrated the practice of listening or tuning into problematic statements in their daily lives. Furthermore, this student described their ability to engage in further dialogue about the content of the conversation in which they recalled listening.

Yeah. I definitely see in my personal life every time I hear something that I'm just like that's not really okay for you to be saying. I definitely call it out with friends, family. Yeah. Because they be saying some interesting stuff. I'm just like, you know what, let me sprinkle some knowledge on you.

Dialogic content about race and racism in IGD helped students develop the capacity to listen more deeply in several ways. First, by navigating dialogues about race across racial groups, students described their experiences listening to problematic statements, which enabled them to develop strategies to listen to and challenge others' perspectives. Students also noted that their experiences participating in these dialogues helped them gain comfort and confidence

in their ability to resist problematic statements through empowerment and through sharing knowledge.

Listening to others' stories. Listening to others' stories emerged as a subtheme related to the content of dialogues in which students described their experience of listening. Within this subtheme students described how they were able to develop their ability to listen beyond the stories being told. Many students described their experience connecting with the emotional aspects of others' stories, particularly in instances in which students shared stories of oppression and trauma. In general, students reported that listening to others' stories fostered opportunities for them to connect on a more personal level with other dialogue participants. One student described their experience in this way: "And then you got to learn more about people's stories. I would hear stories and [be] like I didn't know that about you." To further illustrate how students developed their capacity to listen by hearing others' stories, one student facilitator described how they began to understand the value of "sitting with others" stories and the emotions they carry. In this particular example the student facilitator also described briefly how open inquiry played a role in their capacity to listen.

So, I have to ask a lot open-ended questions, a lot of listening. And sometimes people just wanna be heard, so you just have to kinda take it as it is and just kinda listen. I've learned that, too. But I think I learned that through IGD, it's just to sit on people's feelings and everything.

Students also described how the experience of listening to others' stories facilitated a process of self-reflection about their own lived experience. This was especially evident among white students who recalled listening to the stories of students of color. One student described, at length, how their experience listening to another students story helped recognize the comfort that is afforded through their privileged identity.

Okay, I think I gained a lot. And I think that some of those times it was from listening to people in my group who had experiences of very severe oppression. And they were sharing. And I was like, “That’s their reality.” You know? This revelation of, “I’ve been very sheltered. And I’ve been able to be safe and have these positions and feel comfortable.” And so, I think that—for me—that was a good thing. It made me grow. And I had a good experience in IGD ... those moments that were sort of transformative to me were almost at the expense of other people sharing and being vulnerable.

At the same time, this student also realized that such transformative experiences that afforded them a deeper understanding of oppression were made possible by the vulnerability and willingness of persons of color sharing their experiences. It is important to note that this student identified that their learning was at the expense of students of color, which may, at least in part, explain the differences in students’ experiences of IGD between white students and students of color.

This section demonstrated that the experience of listening to other students’ stories helped students develop more meaningful relationships and gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which trauma, emotions, and feelings are associated with experiences of oppression. Another key aspect of listening to others stories involved students’ capacity to empathize and discover the ways in which their emotional responses enabled them to tune into themselves.

Listening to ourselves. There were many intrapersonal aspects that students described related to listening, which included self awareness and critical self reflection. Self-awareness related to students’ awareness of their own emotions, triggers, and awareness of their own positionality and socialization within the larger sociopolitical context as it related to the topic of the dialogues. Students described the ways in which IGD enabled them to develop a deeper understanding of their emotions. For many students this development occurred experientially. This meant that students recalled particular conversations that elicited an emotional response. Through these experiences, students became more aware of their emotional responses.

Subsequently, through self-reflective processes, students described how they learned to interrogate their feelings and emotions. In many cases students identified these conversations that elicited emotional responses as “triggering.” One student described their experience in this way:

It was basically like, okay, if someone would say something to me, and I would be like—and, you know, I felt something from that. I felt some kind of way about that. I realized, “Okay. Cool.” And then, just navigating how does this impact me? How might this impact them? And, the whole idea about will this serve in the future if I bring it up? Because, it might serve in the moment, but we always talk about planting the seed. So, will this plant the seed or will it just be like not even hitting the ground, you know?

Awareness of Positionality

Many students described the role of IGD in helping them become more aware of their own positionalities. Notably, students recalled learning about socialization and the ways in conscious and unconscious forms of socialization influence everyday life.

By doing IGD, I think that’s something that I really got a new perspective on was the cycle of socialization. We talked about it a little bit in class, but when we were doing IGD in our actual groups, it really showed me—how do you say, going through IGD really helped me to unpack all of the ways that socialization played a part in our lives, just hearing from so many people and working with people and through people in their understanding of how socialization has an impact where they live. Because, I feel like for me in particular, I didn’t really know them before, and it was kind of a tender spot for me for a good little while there. And I was able to have my group members and my facilitators there in the process with me. And so, I didn’t feel as alone. So, that was really valuable to me in practice.

The student describes the process of unpacking the various ways socialization occurs as being a tender spot. This indicates, in part an affective response to the content of the dialogue, and to hearing others stories as well. Another student described their experience becoming aware of their positionality during IGD. The student described one activity that prompted them to reflect on their first experience with race and racism.

We drew a timeline of when we first identified race and racism, and times we ran into that in our lives, and I think that kind of naturally coincides with—not necessarily—it can coincide with what draws someone to social work. So, it was just really interesting looking at where my life went and also first identifying race. That was so—I don't know. I grew up in a bubble, and it was just really interesting hearing everyone's different experience ... I think that was a really good way to start.

This quote illustrates not only the role of content learning in prompting students to think critically about their identities but also it highlights the social location in which this student realized that they occupy.

Self-Reflection

Self-reflection included students' capacity to process internally, which often included their ability to notice and understand their own emotions around what it is they are listening to. For example, one student described how IGD helped them learn about themselves, "I learned a lot about the way that I internally process or react to things." This quote highlights that IGD prompted a form of internal self-reflection in that the student began to understand their own internal processes. The following quote further illustrates this type of conscious awareness of self.

I think that I'm much more conscious of where my mind takes me. And I think that that also kind of—I mean—just generally—I'm much more conscious of when I feel a certain way of stopping, and stepping back, and trying to figure out where that's coming from.

Notably, this student also mentions the ways in which their recognition of internal processes guided the ways that they engaged with their thoughts and emotions thereafter. As social work students, engaging in self-reflection is not an uncommon practice, however, within the context of power and privilege this student found self-reflection to be particularly valuable.

I think a lot of times with social work, it's kind of like—you kind of have to check in with yourself, right. So, I felt like confronting my identities and kind of

looking at privilege, and what you have, and kind of how that applies in your work. I felt like that was very helpful to kind of understand where I'm coming from and then also to have other participants who come from different backgrounds be able to kinda reflect on ... what privileges they have.

Silence

Silence was described in several ways: as an indication that participants were actively processing information, as an opportunity to overcome discomfort and as a necessary component of group processes. Finally, silence was also discussed in ways that illustrate disproportionate participation among members of varying social identity groups. One example illustrates how students described the constant nature of silence as an indicator of processing information.

There will always be silence, and sometimes you just have to sit in it and marinate. And sometimes, that's okay because it might be someone telling you a story about something that happened to them, and you just kinda have to sit on it. And I think that's one way of affirming their experience because you don't wanna be like—whatever it's called where you short-cut someone. They're like, "Oh, this happened to me," but then you're like, "Oh, well, you still have a home to go to." You know, that kinda thing.

Silence was also discussed as a challenging experience for which facilitators must learn to navigate across a variety of practice settings.

And then, silence. Silence has always been hard for me, but it's really helped me develop a lot more. Especially, it's going to be important career-wise. It's helped me a lot because that's what I do now. I talk to patients and when they're silent I'm like, "Okay. I'll let you speak and let you think, and they can get back to me"

One facilitator described how silence was both uncomfortable and a necessary component of group processes.

I think something that I definitely learned as a facilitator was to be comfortable with conflict. As a facilitator, not feeling like we had to mediate everything, sometimes letting the awkward or uncomfortable silences go on as long as the group wants to.

Sharing Space: The Role of Silence in Listening

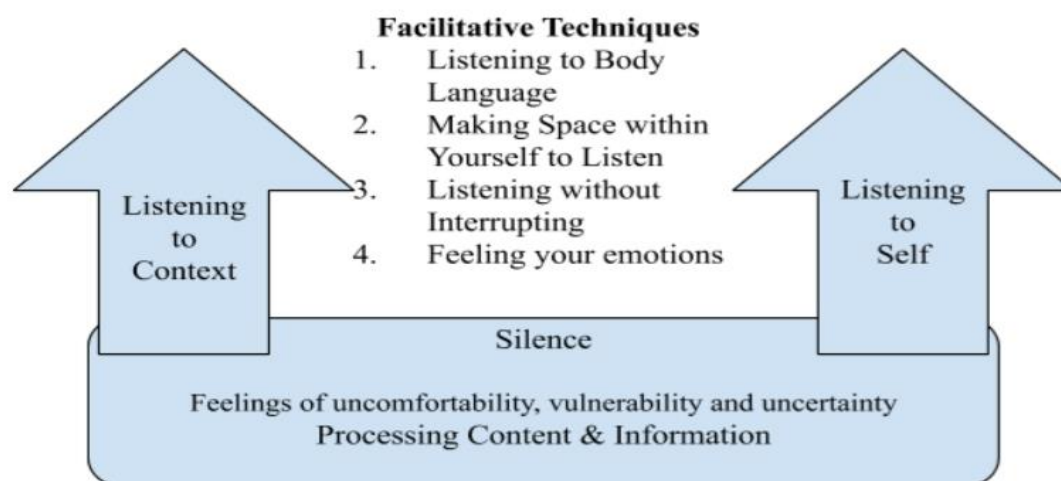


Figure 2.2. Listening through silence.

The experience of silence within dialogues engendered a more intentional form of listening, which emerged as opportunities whereby students learned how to share space. One student described it in this way:

[T]his was kinda helpful, I think, to just listen. Also I think a lot was listening. Because sometimes, you just wanna keep talking, and you don't give that person a voice. So, being able to have—just sit back, open body language, just listen, I think that was very helpful too.

Silence was also an opportunity for both participants and facilitators to learn and develop techniques to understand the nature of the silence. In essence, listening to silence enabled students to learn more intentional facilitative strategies.

Facilitators also described a variety of techniques and strategies that they adopted as a means of listening more deeply amid silent moments during the dialogue. These include listening to nonverbal expressions and body language, asking open-ended questions, and voicing the

occurrence of silence. One facilitator described their experience of surfacing silence by picking up on nonverbal cues,

I think I dove in deep, and if no one was going to talk, then if I see someone scoff, I'm going to ask them about the scoff. Or if I see someone make sad eyes to their friend, I'm going to ask about that.

The ability to ask open-ended questions was described in relation to a sense of critical self-awareness as a facilitator; thus, using silence as an opportunity to investigate what might be the cause of silences.

It's just like, oh, I know myself. So I think it was easier to facilitate and just kind of listen and see where I could plug the open-ended questions. ... Because they'll be crickets, right, when you're talking and asking open ended questions. ... Sometimes its like, chirp, chip, chirp. And you're like, okay, maybe I phrased this wrong and try to jump in and bring out these questions. Yeah.

The process of further understanding silence included actively naming the experience of silence while also critically reflective of silent moments during the dialogue. Both processes tended to help facilitators navigate silence more comfortably: "I remember we were all talking about silence and how we move through it. So, now with silence, I think I've become more comfortable with it, and also trying to analyze what's going on through silence."

Table 2.3*Techniques That Facilitate Listening During Silence*

Technique	Descriptive examples
Listening to body language	“So, you kind of have to, as a facilitator, you have to work with those attitudes. Like, “I see you, with your arms crossed, and your face is like ...” The whole time. “Okay, tell me about why your arms are crossed the whole time?” Let’s pick up body language, if you don’t want to say anything verbally.”
Making space within yourself to listen	“This was kinda helpful, I think, to just listen. Also, I think a lot of it was listening. Because sometimes, you just wanna keep talking, and you don't give that person a voice. So, being able to have—to just sit back, open body language, just listen, I think that was very helpful too.”
Listening then pausing for processing, listening without speaking, not interrupting	“I think actually listening, because you aren’t supposed to interrupt. And I think we were trying to be really good about listening and then pausing, like, holding some space and actually processing and then having a conversation instead of jumping right in.”
Feeling your emotions	“It was basically like, okay, if someone would say something to me, and I would be like—and, you know, I felt something from that. I felt some kind of way about that. I realized, “Okay. Cool.” And then, just navigating how does this impact me? How might this impact them? And, the whole idea about will this serve in the future if I bring it up? Because, it might serve in the moment, but we always talk about planting the seed. So, will this plant the seed or will it just be like not even hitting the ground, you know?”

Discussion

In sum, student experiences in IGD revealed that listening involved being aware of the larger context: the dialogue environment, others’ vulnerability, and willingness to listen. It also involved listening to the content, problematic statements, and others’ stories, and finally, listening entailed being aware of one’s internal thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Students’

experiences of silence mirrored their experiences of listening, in that silence was simultaneously being aware of the content, context, and interpersonal aspects. Silence was often an indication of processing the content of the dialogues, and the intrapersonal aspects of silence were denoted by students' ability to recognize or be aware of their own feelings of discomfort during silent moments in the dialogues. Silence often facilitated more active listening processes. For participants, silence fostered students' ability to be vulnerable. Vulnerability was characterized as an intrapersonal aspect of listening that relates to internal thoughts, feelings, and emotions. For facilitators, silence fostered an immense amount of flexibility and required a higher level of acquaintance with the intrapersonal aspects of listening (awareness of emotions, positionality, and triggers). In order for facilitators to be able to learn from silence, it was essential that they learn to be flexible in their approach as a way to make meaning of silence. In addition, in order to encourage the collective understanding facilitators often employed a range of strategies that raised awareness of participants' engagement or lack thereof with the content of the dialogues. For example, facilitators described how they developed a broader understanding of listening that went beyond listening to words. They were able to listen to the context by employing strategies such as reading the room and naming silence.

Facilitators also adopted strategies that allowed them to become more aware of their social and emotional capacities (e.g., feelings, emotions, and positionality). Strategies such as sitting with their own emotions during silence deepened their ability to engage in critical reflection. Furthermore, facilitators' listening skills in conjunction with their ability to be flexible supported a context in which participants felt more comfortable expressing themselves in more authentic ways. Finally, facilitators' ability to listen effectively, even in the midst of silence, made space for students to gain a broader understanding of how the context, content, and

intrapersonal aspects of intergroup dialogues were integrated. Other studies have also noted the integrated nature of talking listening and feeling (Frantell et al., 2019; Gurin-Sands et al., 2012). Similarly, Tobin (2009) studied the role of radical listening during dialogues across difference and suggests that radical listening serves as a powerful tool for dialogue participants to deconstruct and move through harmful experiences of oppression.

Another important idea that emerged is the idea that students' experience and interpretation of silence during the dialogues varied across race. Student facilitators noticed that white students described silence as painful and were more likely to speak up in an effort to break the silence. In noticing this pattern, one student facilitator asked white participants about this pattern. This facilitator was then able to use this conversation as an opportunity to explain the ways in which this pattern further marginalizes students who were socialized differently, namely students of color.

Their explanation was like "Well, it just gets painful. The silence. We just sit there ..." I'm like, "Yeah, but if you're always the person that tries to break the silence, or you're always the person that is the first one to answer, because you're uncomfortable with that silence, you're never going to give other folks the space to want to come forward." And it takes a lot of courage when you're socialized to sit in the back and not speak. When you're socialized that your voice isn't valued in society.

A similar experience was described by a white-identified facilitator in this way:

I think it was a pretty shy group of people. I'm someone that likes to talk a lot and I think there were a few other people like that but, also, I think we were mostly white—the people who liked to talk a lot. And, so, then of course we were trying to pull back, but then a lot of times, questions would be asked and it was just really quiet.

In this instance, the racial identity of the facilitator may have played a role in their interpretation of the experience of silence as a reflection of "shyness." On the other hand, the facilitator was critically aware of the racial dynamics and the need for white students to "pull back" in an effort

to share space with students of color. Perhaps uncharacteristically, the strategy of asking white students to pull back resulted in more silence. Even though the results of this study offer few insights into why this was the case in this instance, it is likely that the racial demographics of this particular group, majority white, played a role in the outcome.

Whereas other studies have sought to understand the role of silence in critical dialogues (Gurevitch, 2001; Herakova et al., 2011), and specifically the extent to which silence plays a role among students of color participating in IDGs (Ford & Malaney, 2012), the findings of the current study reiterate conclusions which suggest that silent moments are immensely valuable to both participants and facilitators. Facilitators' experiences navigating silence supported their ability to understand the role of listening during dialogues as merely hearing the words of the speaker to consciously holding space. Facilitators ability to move from listening to holding space emerged as an important finding in this study. The study suggests that by engaging previously isolated senses (e.g., eyes, heart, mind, ears), facilitators were able to develop a more integrated form of listening, more akin to holding space.

In the text *Education for Critical Consciousness*, Friere notes that dialogue requires social and political responsibility and a sense of transitive consciousness. He also debunks popular notions that silence signifies the absence of response among participants in the dialogues. He writes that "silence doesn't not signify the absence of response but rather a response which lacks a critical quality" (Freire, 1974), suggesting that silent instances may support the development of such critically. In many ways the findings of this study speak to the development of critical consciousness that may occur during intensely silent moments during dialogues. Freire goes on to note that the proper climate that supports critical dialogue is one in which "men can develop a sense of participation" (p. 49).By juxtaposing the findings of this

study with Freire's notion of education for critical consciousness, it becomes more apparent that when the contextual factors of the dialogue foster open communication, students are able to engage in dialogue that supports the development critical consciousness. Moreover, the development of such consciousness may occur during intensely silent moments.

Implications for Practice Listening With TING: A Framework for Conscious Listening

TING is the Chinese character for listening. The character TING is made up of many smaller characters that have distinct meanings in the Chinese language. TING is made up of six characters with distinct meanings. They are, to hear, to see, to feel, to think, to focus, to be present. In the context of this study to hear related to hearing others' stories, to see related to observing body language and group dynamics, to focus related to listening without interrupting, to think related to complexity of thinking and processing content or information, to feel related to being conscious of and allowing for and attending to emotions and to be present related to making space internally in order to attend to the speaker. Each of these are described here as listening with the respective sense or cognitive capacities. First, *Listening with Mind (to think)* is defined as one's capacity to understand "the words the speaker is saying and the message they contain, "to understand, to analyze, and broaden perspective, attribute [their] intentions without prejudgment and accurately discern the depth of [their] meaning" (Huang-Nissen, 2000, pp. 18, 20). This was described in instances whereby students sought to gain a deeper understanding of the content about which the speaker was dialoguing. This was described as the ability to analyze what is going on in silence, understanding where it comes from, and what the intention is behind the act of being silent. In this study, listening with the mind was also indicative of students' ability to inquire, to decipher deeper meaning, to recognize patterns, and to connect ideas. Listening with the mind is perhaps a more integrated form of listening because it involves

cognitive processes that listening stimulates. For example, facilitators needed to listen with the mind in order to determine what follow-up questions to ask. The purpose of this exercise, which facilitators described often, was to come up with larger inquiries to stimulate critical thinking among the group or to challenge a participant bias or misunderstanding. Listening with the mind required facilitators to adopt an open mindset or to become multipartial, which is the ability to consider multiple perspectives without judgment in order to understand what people want, to hear what people have to say, to provide opportunities to observe through silence, and to reflect with the mind.

Listening with Ears (to hear) is the ability “to hear the words, the tone and the pitch,” and other sounds such as scoffing. *Listening with Eyes* (to see) is to recognize any nonverbal messages the speaker might be sending, “to see the facial expression, to read the body language, and to look at the ‘window of the soul’” (Huang-Nissen, 2000, p. 18). Students described listening with the eyes in instances where they recognized body language or facial expression; for example, recognizing when a participant had sad eyes, arms crossed, listening to facial expressions. *Listening with Heart* is an ability “to feel [one’s own] emotions, to empathize, to respond, feel the intensity of [the speaker’s] emotions, be kind to [their] fragile vulnerability, resonate with [one’s] sense of compassion, [one’s] humanity” (Huang-Nissen, 2000, pp. 18, 20). This was illustrated by many examples described in the results. Many of which were associated with being vulnerable and open within a safe environment.

The ultimate task of effective listening or listening with TING is the ability to reach a sense of oneness with each other, with your full power, give me your attention as if each person is wise and has something to say and therefore allowing others the opportunity to make a contribution. In IGD this resembled the skills of listening described as not cutting people off, as

sitting with others' stories, experiences, and feelings. This resulted in participants feeling heard and rewarded while facilitators were able to hold everything that everyone was saying and supporting people in ways that they needed and wanted to be supported.

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PAPER 3: INTERGROUP DIALOGUE AND SOCIOPOLITICAL DEVELOPMENT:
A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL PILOT PROJECT

Presently, young people (10–24 years old) are coming of age in a sociopolitical environment that is riddled with social and economic inequities. Whereas social and economic inequities are not a new phenomenon, young people born between the years of 1995 and 2005, known as Generation I (iGen; Twenge, 2017), have had a distinctly different experience compared with previous generations. The internet age and the invention of smartphones have become a central defining characteristic of adolescence for Generation I. Such technological advances have had an overwhelming impact on the experiences of young people within this generation. The ubiquitous nature of digital media, social networking, and access to the internet via smartphones has not only increased young people's exposure to and understanding of their social, political, and economic environment, it also has transformed how they socialize and interact with their peers. Compared with previous generations that have relied on conversations at home, in their community, and in school or print media to develop critical literacy of their sociopolitical environment, adolescents of iGen have come to rely heavily on online media platforms as a primary source of news and information about the world around them. For example, in 2015, two out of three young people owned an iPhone (Twenge, 2017) and on average, teens in the United States spent roughly 9 hours per day consuming media (Rideout, 2015).

Although increasing access to digital information via the internet has been celebrated as a marker of technological advancement through which young people benefit from meaningful social interactions and social support (Anderson & Jingjing, 2018; Clark et al., 2018; Ybarra et al., 2015), there is much evidence that suggests otherwise. For example, a study conducted by Twenge et al. (2018) found that adolescents who spent more time on social media were more

likely to report mental health issues such as depressive symptoms and suicidality compared with those who spent more time off-screen (e.g., in-person social interactions). Their findings suggest that increasing screen time among iGen adolescents may account for increased rates of depression and suicide. Another consequence of increasing uses of digital media and social networking sites is adolescents' experiences with cyberbullying. According to a 2018 report published by the PEW Research Center (2018), nearly 60% of U.S. teens reported being bullied or harassed online. More recently, scholars have become increasingly concerned with racism and the use of hate speech in online spaces (Matamoros-Fernandez & Farkas, 2021).

Although much attention has been given to understanding the consequences of digital media usage with regard to adolescent mental health, the impact on adolescent sociopolitical development, though equally important, remains less well understood. Given that adolescence is a time of transition, identity exploration, and expanding consciousness, young people are increasingly vulnerable to internalizing the messages they receive from online platforms. For example, many young people may adopt perspectives, narratives, or worldviews that serve to reinforce prejudice, biases, and stereotypical ways of thinking that perpetuate social exclusion.

Despite the overwhelming evidence surrounding the negative impact of social media on adolescent mental health, social media has also been a popular tool for fostering a greater awareness of social issues among young people. Markedly, the summer of 2020, the murder of George Floyd, and subsequent social movements such as Black Lives Matter and campaigns to defund the police have shed light on the role of digital media in increasing civic engagement and activism among young people in the United States and abroad. Even though adolescents' developing worldview is heavily influenced by digital media, it is important to recognize that public education still functions as a major source of learning and development for young people.

However, recent legislation that attempts to ban the teaching of critical race theory in public schools (Stout & LeMee, 2021) presents yet another barrier to ensuring that adolescents develop critical literacy pertaining to historical and contemporary issues related to oppression. Without tools of critical literacy, young people are vulnerable to adopting attitudes, values, beliefs, and worldviews that are laden with bias, exclusion, discrimination, and prejudice.

The juxtaposition of adolescents' increasing consciousness of racial and economic inequality with the emergence of legislation to end critical education in public schools presents a unique opportunity for youth development scholars: to engage in scholarship that centers issues of equity and justice as they pertain to youth development and youth studies.

Although many critical scholars recognize that the lack of critical education in schools hinders the development of critical literacy, mainstream youth development scholarship largely ignores the underlying processes that characterize the formation of adolescents' worldview. There is a prescient need for youth development scholarship to devise strategies that counteract the negative effects of digital media on the development of critical literacy during adolescence. In order to do so, however, scholarship must attend to three overarching gaps. First, more research is needed to further understand the theoretical foundations as it pertains to adolescent sociopolitical development. Second, there is a need to explore whether and to what extent consciousness-raising interventions and curriculums increase young people's awareness of social inequities and promote the development of skills necessary to dismantle systems of oppression that maintain those inequities. Finally, there is a need to assess whether school settings are an appropriate context to support adolescent sociopolitical development.

This paper attempts to fill the aforementioned gap by offering a brief description of the key concepts that comprise theories of sociopolitical development. In addition, the background

literature offers a concise review of research on consciousness-raising interventions that have been implemented among adolescent populations. Finally, this paper reports on a pilot project that used intergroup dialogue (IDG), a consciousness-raising educational approach, to promote sociopolitical development among three 10th-grade students within an urban high school.

Background

Sociopolitical Development and Critical Consciousness

Theories of sociopolitical development have emerged from a liberatory perspective that focuses on exposing injustice and ending oppression through the acquisition of human rights and social equity. Watts et al. (2003) defined *sociopolitical development* as “the process by which individuals acquire the knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and the capacity for action in political and social systems necessary to interpret and resist oppression” (p. 185).

Sociopolitical development draws on developmental psychology to provide a framework that describes the formative processes involved in critical consciousness. Similarly, *critical consciousness* has been defined by Freire (1974) as “learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p. 4).

Freire’s conceptualization of critical consciousness and Watts’s theory of sociopolitical development hinge on three key concepts: critical reflection, critical social analysis, and critical action. *Critical reflection* is characterized by the capacity of oppressed individuals and groups to gain an in-depth understanding of the world in which they live, including its social, economic, political, and psychological dimensions. *Critical social analysis* is the capacity to think critically about existing social conditions in order to expose injustices. *Critical action* involves engagement in liberatory behaviors, or actions that seeks to dismantle oppressive systems.

Critical theorists and scholars understand consciousness-raising processes as the “practice of

freedom” (hooks, 2005), a tool for liberation (Freire, 1979), and even an antidote to oppression (Watts, 2002). Critical pedagogy or critical education is the primary form of educational practices through which the development of critical consciousness transpires. An essential feature of critical pedagogy is dialogue. Freire’s understanding of dialogue goes beyond the simple act of conversation between people. Dialogue, in the Freirean view, has been described as “the encounter between men [women and people], mediated by the world, in order to name the world” through conversation (Freire, 1970, p. 5). Reflection and action (or praxis) are the primary dimensions or instruments of dialogue that enable individuals to transform their reality. Although reflection and action have been deconstructed throughout the literature in order to grasp an understanding of their individual role and function within the process of critical consciousness, the existence of one without the other lacks transformative or liberatory power.

The lack of critical reflection is a major barrier to the development of critical consciousness and sociopolitical development occurs when we do not think deeply about our actions, we are not using conscious thought, or perhaps we are thinking only insofar as the thought is applicable at that very moment. It follows that the sooner we engage youth in reflexivity or conscious reflection, the sooner we will be able to guide their ability to dream about a more just world.

Critical Social Analysis

The most central skills defined by this theory are consciousness or conscious awareness of inequities and critical social analysis. *Consciousness or awareness of inequities* is recognizing that something is unequal or inequitable or determining whether or not it constitutes unjust inequity. The skill of critical social analysis is learning to think critically about accepted ways of thinking and feeling. Other aspects are discerning the hidden interest in underlying assumptions

and framing notions (e.g., class, race) as well as learning to see in the mundane particulars of ordinary lives, how history works, and how received ways of thinking and feeling serve to perpetuate existing structures of inequality (Gramsci, 1971). An individual's analyses of society may or may not occur with respect to who we think, know, or understand ourselves to be (often defined by characteristics of our identities). For example, if a youth does not identify as a member of an oppressed group, but rather identifies as a member of the dominant group in society, their experiences with structural inequalities would likely be limited. These experiences, or lack thereof, could inform how that youth reflects on society. Without previous knowledge of oppressive systems, this youth may not be able to perceive injustice and further attribute injustices to systems of oppression (Watts, 2005). On the other hand, if a youth identifies as a member of an oppressed group, they are more likely to have experiences with structural inequalities, which can inform their reflection on society (Cross, 2002). However, youths' personal experience of being negatively affected by structural inequalities play a lesser role in the extent to which they attribute their own experiences to the structural nature of inequities (i.e., systems of oppression). Only after youth reflect upon the meaning of their experiences with the structural context of societal injustices in mind are they able to offer an analysis that recognizes the structural attribution of social inequities (Cross, 2002).

Studies of Adolescent Sociopolitical Development

In a study of urban adolescents, Diemer et al. (2006) presented a theoretical model that proposes a relationship between critical consciousness and perceived support for challenging racism, sexism and social injustice among peers, family, and community in the adolescents' network. As introduced in previous sections, critical consciousness is conceptualized as two distinct components: critical reflection and critical action. The model highlights the bidirectional

relationship between the reflection component and the action component of critical consciousness. To test their theoretical model, Diemer and colleagues used mixed methods. Quantitative methods involved using the Sociopolitical Control Scale (Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991) to capture the outcome variable of critical consciousness, which assessed both urban youth's capacity for reflection and critical action.

Qualitative data were used to assess perceived support for challenging racism, social injustice, and sexism. The findings demonstrated that support for challenging racism, sexism, and social injustice was not significantly related to the action component of critical consciousness. However, the study did demonstrate that support for challenging racism, sexism, and social injustice was related to the critical reflection component of critical consciousness. It is interesting that the highest perceived support among this sample of urban adolescents was for challenging racism (Diemer et al., 2006). This finding is particularly important because the act of challenging race functioned in a way that could reaffirm a positive sense of racial identity among youth of color more broadly. One practical implication of this study is that interventions that seek to develop critical consciousness should include components that reflect support for challenging racism, sexism, and social injustice among key actors (family, peers, and community). Although support of people challenging inequalities is an important aspect for engaging youth in social action, the lack of supportive peers, family, and community must be considered, especially in communities in which youth already feel marginalized.

To further demonstrate studies that incorporate theories of sociopolitical development across settings, Watts et al. (2002) evaluated the Young Warriors Project, a school-based psychoeducational pilot intervention that used radical rap to prompt critical reflection of sociopolitical environment and oppressive structures. The authors argue that sociopolitical

development is an ongoing process that can be supported and reinforced throughout the community. This is a key component to understanding that critical consciousness and sociopolitical development are not static processes, but instead are ever-evolving. One major limitation of the Watts et al. study was that the sampling was not systematic. Students with emotional, behavioral, and learning issues were identified to participate in this study.

In some studies, political efficacy has been theorized as a component of critical consciousness that plays a role in political action (Diemer et. al, 2015, 2016; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). The idea is that a sense of agency is necessary to lead to political agency. However, in their study using structural equation model to examine which dimensions of critical consciousness leads marginalized youth toward disparate forms of political action, they found that political efficacy did not mediate or moderate the relations between critical reflection and disparate forms of political action. This means that one's perceived ability to actually affect change may not be a significant prerequisite to political action. For this reason, political efficacy is not a proposed component of this model. Diemer and Rapa (2015) also hypothesize that critically analyzing ethnic, racial, and gender disparities in education and employment might lead to more social movement activism, whereas an egalitarian approach to critical reflection in which the focus is on how groups should be more equal may lead to more conventional forms of political participation. Subcomponents of critical reflection (i.e., egalitarian and perceived inequality) were conceptualized in their study. This distinction moves the field toward a deeper understanding of critical reflection

Although these distinctions are important and measurable, the subjective meaning behind various forms of action may capture a better picture of critical action among Black youth. Previous empirical research demonstrated that marginalized youth with greater levels of critical

action were more likely to vote. This finding suggests that there is a relationship between both forms of critical action, protests and conventional political participation (Hope & Jagers, 2014; Watts et al., 1999).

Deimer and Rappa (2015) sampled 2,811 ninth-graders from 150 schools in the United States who participated in the Civic Education Study (CivEd), which measured youths' attitudes about their nation and its institutions, as well as expectations for future and political participation. They found that neither form of critical reflection predicted political efficacy. More central to the development of the proposed theory, they found that marginalized people perceived more structural inequities and believed that those in power were less invested in people with less power. It is surprising that these findings diverge from what is known about critical consciousness, which indicates that agency leads to action. It may be that marginalized youth already feel unheard, so their confidence that others will listen is irrelevant. The lack of youth voices in scholarly research and the public policy that affects their lives is indicative of further marginalization by well-intentioned scholars attempting to uncover risk and protective factors of healthy youth development. Watts and Flanagan's (2007) article supports this critique in their conceptualization of "adultism," which uncovers the challenges adults face in working with youth.

A framework for empirical research on youth activism is presented that weaves both developmental and liberation psychological perspectives. The framework demonstrates that social analysis and worldview is related to societal involvement and that a sense of agency and the opportunity structure moderate this relationship. Similar to the critique of Watts et al. (2014), although opportunity structures must be present in order to engage in social action, such opportunities are not always structured. For example, the social act of engaging in a hunger

strike does not avail itself to this argument. It is my conception that the mere presence of inequities is opportunity enough to engage in social action.

Another notable finding is that more disadvantaged people do not immediately take a macro view in their social analysis compared with privileged others, indicating that disadvantaged people do not automatically recognize how macro-level inequities contribute to social problems. It may be the case that educating disadvantaged youth about the mechanisms of systems of oppression increases the rate at which they recognize the role of oppressive systems in widespread social problems. Finally, societal involvement diverges from the original theory of critical consciousness, in that it is both commitment and action. The action component involves conventional involvement in social and political institutions, but also community service and unconventional sociopolitical action. The expanded conceptualization is helpful in that it captures many dimensions; however, it also serves to dilute the focus on social action to combat oppressive systems.

IGD is one consciousness-raising approach to reducing bias and prejudice among learners. IGD is an evidence-based practice model that uses critical pedagogy and experiential learning to help students understand privilege, oppression, conflict, and the role of dialogue. The IGD courses aim to help students develop a structural analysis of how power and privilege are related to various types of inequalities (Gurin et al., 2013). This is enabled by providing students with a safe and structured opportunity to dialogue about difficult topics by encouraging open and reflective communication among participants. The practice of IGD emerges out of the critical dialogic theoretical framework, which explains the role of three major components (pedagogical features, communication processes, and psychological processes) that promote dialogues across race and other group boundaries (Gurin et al., 2013). Studies on IGD have demonstrated that

participation in IGD promoted intergroup understanding, intergroup relationships, and intergroup action and collaboration (Lopez et al., 1998; Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003; Spencer et al., 2008). The overall importance of IGD as a means of reducing prejudice has been widely discussed across academic disciplines (Dessel et al., 2006; Lopez & Zúñiga, 2010; Maxwell et al., 2011; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001; Zúñiga et al., 2007).

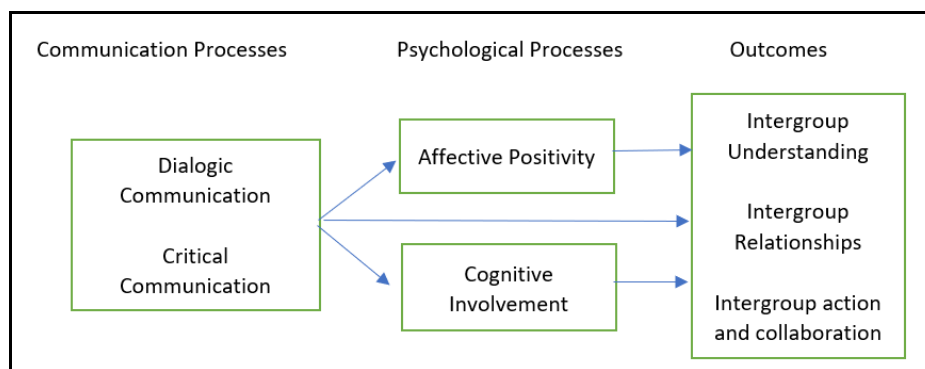


Figure 3.1. A critical dialogic theoretical framework of intergroup dialogue.

The critical dialogic model of IGD places great emphasis on dialogic processes, which focus on how we speak with and listen to each other (Gruin et al., 2013). Bohm (2013) identified four elements that constitute effective dialogue practice: suspending judgement, deep listening, identifying assumptions, and reflecting with inquiry. Drawing on the work of Paulo Freire (1970), the critical processes of the IGD practice model encourages students to take into account the role of power and privilege, as well as the influence it has on the lives of people from various social groups. Relevant findings from research on communication processes in IGDs demonstrated that four major communication processes—appreciating difference, engaging self, critical reflection, and alliance building—mediated the resulting effects of participation in IGDs, specifically on the underlying motivation to bridge differences (Nagda, 2006). These communication processes foster the psychological processes further described in the framework, as seen in Figure 3.2.

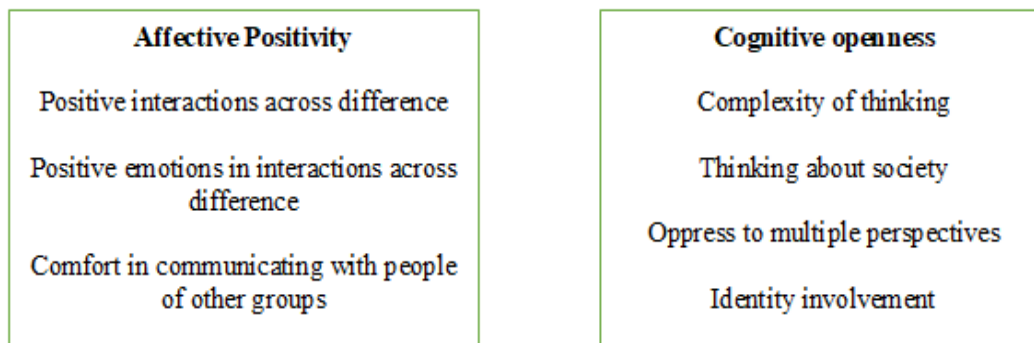


Figure 3.2. Psychological processes. Note. Authors' compilation of psychological processes adapted from *Dialogue Across Difference: Practice, Theory, and Research on Intergroup Dialogue* by P. Gurin, B. A. Nagda, & X. Zúñiga, Russell Sage Foundation, 2012.

An important and often overlooked assumption of the critical dialogic model of IGD is a focus on positivity in interactions and emotions as well as comfort in communicating across differences (as outlined in the core affective elements of Figure 2). Whereas it is important to better understand how to achieve these aspects of affective positivity, little is known about the ways in which negative interactions, emotions, and discomfort across differences arise during dialogue and how that affects students' capacity to navigate these psychological processes. In addition, there is a need to further examine these processes among adolescents. Such an investigation could help scholars further understand the ways in which IGD facilitates critical consciousness among adolescent populations, with particular attention paid to the contextual factors presented by offering IGD within a high school setting.

Present Study

The purpose of this study is to document and describe the operations and implementation of the IGD pilot project in order to assess the appropriateness and feasibility of an adapted intergroup dialogue course within a public high school setting. Furthermore, this study

investigates the benefits of participation among 10th-grade students. The benefits of participation inherently include an examination of the communication and psychological processes described above. The individual processes central to the study objective, (a) engaging self, which includes sharing one's own stories and perspectives, taking risks, and admitting vulnerabilities and (b) critical self-reflection, which entails appraising one's personal perspectives, biases, and assumptions in the context of systems of privilege and disadvantage (Nagda, 2006), substantiate the need for a qualitative approach. The role of contextual factors influencing student experiences further calls for an exploratory case approach. The main questions to be investigated are (a) What were the core components of the school-based IGD program? (b) What were the implementation challenges and how were those challenges and (c) What were the benefits of participation?

Study Setting

This study took place at a local high school in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. The High School has been known as one of the most well-funded high schools in the city. However, despite its central location, populations that lived in this central area had been experiencing displacement due to rising costs of homeownership in the surrounding area. The school had a diverse student population and a racially and ethnically mixed teacher population as well.

Role of Researcher

A challenge to any research design is the issue of bias or the potential distortion of research outcomes due to unintended influences from the researcher as well as research participants. This is a particularly critical issue in qualitative research wherein researchers take extraordinary efforts to establish strong relationships with their participants and research sites in

order to delve deeply into the subject matter. Reflexivity (Maxwell, 2013) is an interactive practice that addresses the distortions or preconceptions researchers may unwittingly introduce in their qualitative designs and processes. The act of reflection enables the researcher to thoughtfully consider their identity, worldview, and values and speculate about the ways in which the ways the researcher-participant interaction may have been exacerbated by presumptions arising from obvious sources, such as certain demographics (e.g., age, gender, and race), or more subtle cues such as socioeconomic status, cultural background, or political orientation. With personal beliefs and assumptions, as well as power dynamics and tensions playing an influential role on the research process, I discuss my positionality. I am Black woman, whose philosophy toward research is grounded in the understanding that knowledge is constructed through the unification of multiple worldviews and perspectives to bring about novel conceptions of the phenomenon under investigation. Her research adopts a race-conscious lens that informs every stage of the research process from conception to dissemination.

Study Population and Sampling

Random purposeful sampling was employed to identify and recruit students for the IGD Pilot Project. Researchers received a list of student names from the school. The list was randomized; using a stratified sampling technique, five students across each grade level, with the exception of ninth grade, were identified. Students then received a recruitment letter sent to their advisory teacher. Students who were interested in participating were instructed to have their a parent or guardian sign the recruitment letter, which also served as an informed consent form (see Appendix B). There were three 10th-grade students who participated for the entire duration of the program. Students attended an urban high school in the Pacific Northwest. Student demographics are listed in Table 1. Initially, 10 students were recruited and eight returned

informed consents with parents' signatures. However, during the first 3 weeks of the program many students did not attend regularly and eventually stopped attending altogether. By Week 4, the study sample had retained three 10th-grade students who participated regularly for the duration of the program. Although this was not the initial goal, the small sample was more appropriate for the 40 min that the program was allotted to operate 2 times per week, during the students' advisory period.

Table 3.1

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Student Participants

Sociodemographic characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Total no. of participants	3	100
Gender		
Female	1	33
Male	2	66
Grade level		
10th	3	100
Race/ethnicity		
Pacific Islander/Filipino	1	33
Asian/Chinese American	1	33
White	1	33
Age, years		
15	2	66
16	1	33
Socioeconomic status		
Middle class	1	33
Lower middle class	2	66

Note. Participants self-reported their gender, race/ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semistructured interviews and program materials. We utilized an existing semistructured guide that was developed by the Program on Intergroup Relations and used in the largest multiuniversity study of IGD (see Appendix C for the interview guide). Each discussion lasted between 20 and 30 min. The semistructured interview approach

was useful because the inquiry about students' perspectives was done by the research-practice team of facilitators, whom the students had developed relationships with over the duration of the program. All interviews audio recorded with participants' permission. Field notes were collected during the interviews and focus groups to track participants' body language and facial expressions. Researchers also wrote reflective memos afterwards to track emerging understandings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis techniques used for this study followed a six-step framework for qualitative analysis established by Braun and Clark (2006). First, to increase familiarization with the data, the primary researcher listened to the audio files of the semistructured interviews and took detailed notes of key ideas that were expressed. The audio recording from each interview and focus group session were professionally transcribed. Once transcribed, the research team reviewed the transcripts to make any changes (considering dialect) that were missed or reported incorrectly. This process is important to capturing the participants' experiences and perspectives accurately. The focus group transcripts were then uploaded into Dedoose, a web-based software program for qualitative data analysis. Once transcripts were uploaded the author independently coded each transcript, then recruited a research assistant to code the transcripts as well. Thereafter, both met to discuss the coding process and reconciled discrepancies in codes. The primary researcher employed a variety of inductive analytic techniques (i.e., coding, constant comparisons, and memoing) during this stage of the process. Once all codes were reconciled, they were compiled into the initial codebook that was used to code the remaining transcripts.

The rest of the transcripts were then coded independently by both researchers. Once all transcripts were coded, the researchers convened to reconcile codes. Discrepancies were

discussed and reconciled, until codebook was finalized. Thereafter, the primary researchers established a list of emergent themes. Themes were assessed based on the extent to which they addressed (directly or indirectly) the research questions. On the basis of the emergent themes, the researchers organized relevant codes into the most appropriate theme. Codes that did not fit into a theme were left out of the analysis. Themes were initially reviewed by the primary researchers and subsequently reviewed by the third author. Finally, the research team was convened to ensure accuracy in naming and defining each theme.

Credibility and biases were addressed in several ways. First, researchers completed a reflective memo after each IGD session. Second, as data were analyzed, transcripts were coded independently by two researchers. Codebooks were then created and shared, and discrepancies were reconciled. In addition, all procedures were documented and detailed records were kept from each data source in order to enhance the credibility of this study. Finally, researchers ensured that the confidentiality of study participants remained protected by discussing emergent themes in the aggregate and using only relevant quotes that could not be traced back to any individual student.

Results

Overview of the School-Based IGD Pilot Project

The IGD Pilot Program was designed in alignment district-wide initiative to improve school climate and promote the development of socioemotional skills among students (see Appendix D for the IGD Student Handbook). The objectives of the district-wide racial equity initiative were to ensure educational excellence and equity for every student, improve systems district-wide to support academic outcomes and meet students' needs, as well as to strengthen school, family, and community engagement and diversity. Currently, however, opportunities to

learn and practice (praxis) skills such as reflective thinking, critical social analysis, and IGD within a psychologically safe environment are not reflected in the high school curriculum. There was a desire among school and district personnel to focus on increasing the level of interaction among students from different sociodemographic backgrounds as a means to improve school climate (see Appendix E for facilitator demographics).

Rooted in social justice education and critical pedagogy, IGDs have been used to promote authentic, substantive communication across difference. The IGD Pilot Program adopted a practice model that promoted meaningful dialogue across race and other group boundaries through sustained communication, consciousness-raising content, and learning about commonalities and differences. Altogether, the program sought to reduce barriers to learning and critical thinking.

The IGD Pilot Program content was curated to increase students' awareness and understanding of the sociopolitical context in the United States as it relates to racial and economic injustice. Experiential learning activities were used to engage students in critical social analysis about the existence and maintenance of social inequality. The content and critical skills developed throughout the program were used to encourage students to take action to change these societal structures. By promoting knowledge of the self within the social context of the community, positive quality of life, strong peer relationships, and belief in ability to succeed, the IGD Pilot Program aligned with the district and county initiative on race and equity by operationalizing a program that could be offered during school hours. The figure below illustrates the four-stage practice model of IGD.

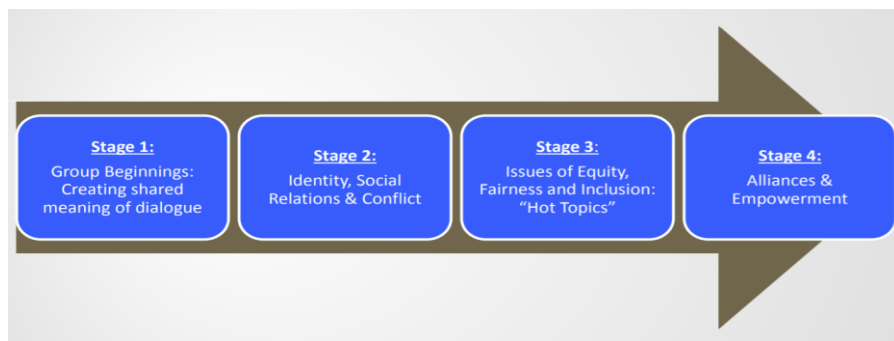


Figure 3.3. IGD Four Stage Practice Model

The goals of IGD were outlined to the students and the school community prior to the launch of the project. See the table below for the overarching goals of the pilot project.

1. To develop self-awareness of one's membership in a social group in the context of systems of power and privilege
2. To explore similarities and differences across and within social group memberships
3. To examine the causes and effects of group differences and their effects at the personal, interpersonal, community, cultural, institutional, and societal levels;
4. To practice dialogue skills and constructive methods of addressing social justice issues and conflicts between groups
5. To foster alliances and other strategies of collaboration across differences
6. To identify actions that actively contribute to developing more inclusive, equal, and socially just relations between social groups.

Figure 3.4. Intergroup dialogue practice model. Learning goals

Planning for the pilot project included adapting and IGD curriculum that would be appropriate for the students. Table 3.2 describes the curriculum outline that guided the content learning for this pilot project.

Table 3.2

IGD Pilot Project Topic Outline

Fostering an Inclusive Learning Community/Defining Social Justice Education			
March 12, 2018	Welcome & Introductions Develop Community Guidelines	March 13, 2018	Defining Social Justice Education, Introductory Reflection Journals, Identity Collage
Conceptual Frameworks			
March 19, 2018	Social Identity, Social Construction, and Socialization	March 20, 2018	Cycle of Socialization Dialogue
March 26, 2018	Prejudice, Discrimination, and Oppression	March 27	Person in Environment
April 2	Oppression, Privilege and Liberation,	April 3	Structural Nature of Oppression
Historical and Contemporary Manifestations of Oppression			
April 16, 2018	Defining Race and Racism	April 17, 2018	Hot Topic (Interpersonal)
April 23, 2018	Contemporary Manifestations of Racism	April 24, 2018	Hot Topic (Institutional)
April 30, 2018	Defining Class and Classism	May 1, 2018	Hot Topic (Interpersonal)
May 14, 2018	Contemporary Manifestations of Classism	May 8, 2018	Hot Topic (Institutional)
Envision Social Change and Taking Action			
May 7, 2018	Healing From Social Injustice	May 15, 2018	Healing From Social Injustice
May 21, 2018	Guest Speaker	May 22, 2018	Transformative Change: Brainstorm ICP Projects
June 4, 2018	Group Work	June 5, 2018	Group Work
June 11, 2018	Action Project Presentations	June 12, 2018	Action Project Presentations
June 18, 2018	Closing: Revisit Identity Collage	June 19, 2018	Celebration/Post Evaluation Survey

Implementation Processes and Challenges

Analyses revealed four major challenges that occurred during the implementation of the IGD Pilot Program. These include (a) students being pulled from class, (b) length of time allotted for each dialogue session, (c) inconsistent access to physical space, and (d) role of adult facilitators as outsiders. Given that the pilot project occurred in the spring quarter, student participants were not accustomed to meeting for IGD during their advisory period. On many occasions' facilitators needed to go to the student's advisory room to invite them to attend IGD. The length of time allot during the advisory period was another challenge. Given that the period lasted only 40 minutes, engaging in deep discussions were not common during the pilot project. Finally, the facilitators of the pilot project were all students from the University of Washington and were not known to the students or familiar with the school environment. This was challenging because facilitators had to work hard to build rapport with both the students and the school community.

Benefits of Participation

The major benefits of participation fell across three domains whereby students (a) developed the capacity for critical dialogue, (b) increased their awareness of social identity and socialization, and (c) increased their understanding of the nature of structural inequality. The dialogic skills that students developed were related to engaging self and others. These included learning about others, speaking and listening, perspective taking, critical self-reflection, and intergroup collaboration and action. Students' increased awareness of social identity and socialization were related to gender stereotypes and cultural differences. Finally, students' understanding of the nature of structural inequality was primarily related to class and wealth inequality.

Developing the Capacity for Critical Dialogue

Learning about others. All students who participated in the pilot program expressed learning about others as a major benefit of participation. Notable, however, were the experiences whereby students learned about others in relation to aspects of their social identities. For example, referring to one of their most impactful learning experiences, one student stated, “I’d probably say, I think when [another student] said he was born in China and came from there, I was like, whoa, because I thought he was just born here because of how fluent he speaks English.” When further prompted to consider whether their reaction to learning of the other student’s country of origin made them think differently about their own understanding or assumptions about others’ experiences, the student replied, “Yeah, because I think most of the time, I probably think people are just born here. Until I actually get to know them, they tell me they are born somewhere else, I’m like, what the heck?” In this example, the student’s expression of “what the heck” demonstrated that learning about the other student was surprising, contradicting their existing assumption or understanding of others’ nationality or cultural background.

Speaking and listening. Another critical dialogic skill that students reported learning related to their confidence in speaking and listening. For example, when asked what was one of the major skills that they learned during IGD, one student remarked, “I guess I probably maybe feel more comfortable than I was before, just speaking.” Another student expressed listening as one of the major skills they developed during IGD. The student stated, “That would probably be just listening to what people had to say.” Regarding the application of this skill, the student noted a shift in how they engage in listening in everyday dialogues “by listening to people openly.”

Perspective taking. Two students also described what they learned about taking perspectives. One student recalled, “I learned that it’s good to be just open to other people’s

experiences, and opinions, and everything.” Another student expressed, “I don’t know. It was interesting to hear everyone’s perspective. Yeah. I don’t know.” A final quote that illustrates students taking others’ perspectives is this: “I got to learn a lot about like people that I didn’t think I knew before ... I feel like I learned a lot about other groups.”

Critical self-reflection. All students reported increases in their critical reflection. One student described their ongoing reflection about the topics as such, “because, before we started all the meetings, I never really thought about any of the topics that we talked about. So, now I just start thinking about those topics sometimes.” Another student expressed that although they had thought about a lot of these topics prior to attending IGD, their participation within the group helped hone their reflection in more specific ways. “Well, I’ve definitely—I’d already been thinking about a lot of the topics we talked about. But it’s made me think about more specific facts and examples of things.”

Last year at the beginning of the year ... I was sitting with my friend’s friends. They weren’t my friends, but still ... But it—I don’t know ... I guess I didn’t really realize until then .Maybe just more of the same thing about the sitting with people at lunch and stuff. And then, my parents were having their 50th birthday party this summer. And then, they realized that—I don’t know—like 95% of the people on the list were white, just kind of crazy.

Intergroup understanding, collaboration, and action. Intergroup understanding was another benefit of participation. A female student described how she could relate to other students’ experience around socialization: “I think when we were talking about the wheel of—what is it? Like the circle ... Socialization, yeah. It was interesting, all the examples that people were giving. And I could relate it to my own life a lot.” One student described how she came to realize the homogeneity among the groups she associated with and subsequently described how she currently makes an effort to get to know people from different backgrounds:

Talking to—I don't know—more diverse group of people, I guess. I don't know. And trying to talk to people who aren't just very similar to me because—I don't know. Last year, we did a project on this. It was to try to see who was around us at lunch or something. And I looked around me and, literally, every single person was white and a girl ... I was like—I don't know ... It was just kind of surprising. But I don't know. So ... Just trying to branch out, I guess.

Increased Awareness and Understanding of Social Identity and Socialization

Gender stereotypes and socialization. One of the male participants described another participant's story about gender socialization:

She shared this story about her, like when she was little, and people had this stereotype about like little girls and like wearing dresses growing up. And I thought that was pretty interesting ... Because like, it shows that stereotypes about gender is still in society.

Another student described how they benefited from discussions on socialization, “maybe thinking more critically about the socialization wheel and how people's—or just how society kind of forms you into—.” A final example that exemplifies students increased or broadened their understanding of gender socialization by hearing others' stories is described in this way:

Let's see. When [another participant] was talking about the—crossing his legs as a boy and how people made fun of him for that. Thought that was interesting because I had—I don't know. In elementary school and stuff, when boys were being too feminine or something, they would be made fun of. So, I thought that was interesting.

Structural Inequality

Inequality: Class and wealth inequality. Upon being asked to identify the content that they found to be most impactful to their learning experience, one student described viewing a video about wealth inequality and elaborated on their reaction to what they learned, saying, “there's this video that we watched, I think it was about wealth inequality and like, it was just really shocking to me how skewed wealth distribution in America really is.”

“Yeah. I don’t know. It made me think—I’ve said this before—but a lot about the economic class, and everything, and just how crazy that chart was and skewed it was.” When prompted to elaborate on how learning this new information made them feel, the student replied, “Again, I would say just kinda disappointed that—Because there’s no need for that much money and power. So, I don’t know why you can’t spread it out. Finally, when asked to rate the impact of IGD on a scale of 1–7, “I would say a 5, because before this group, I already knew some things about inequality but like, this group further contributed to my understanding.” Expanding on this idea, the student remarked, “I guess I developed a broader understanding of inequality and how it comes up. Like, I know more about it and I have a better understanding, like what’s happening right now and what we’re doing.”

Discussion

The findings indicated that students’ benefits from learning about others, perspective taking, speaking and listening, and critical self-reflection are qualitatively similar to those proposed in the framework. Nagda (2006) identified engaging the self as one of the communication processes that occurs during IGDs. However, the students increased knowledge of topics such as stereotypes, socialization, and inequality is noteworthy. Although students’ interview responses to learning new ideas about inequality and gender socialization were sometimes limited to the use of the phrase “it was interesting,” such a response may not indicate a lack of critical thinking; rather, it may be the case that students have yet to developed the language to describe or express a more critical point of view. On the basis of theories of sociopolitical development, it is clear that students had progressed from an acritical stage (injustices are outside of their awareness) to a critical stage, one in which there is a desire to learn more about injustice.

None of the participants described racial or ethnic discrimination—the major focus was on economic inequality. The use of digital media may have been more effective in stimulating dialogue among this group. One explanation could be that racial/ethnic identity was less salient compared with gender among the young people who participated. However, responses from one participant who identified as white indicated ongoing critical reflection related to the ways in which their racial identity played a role in their social networks. These results constitute the major areas to be addressed in the future.

Findings about what was learned during the implementation will help understanding of future opportunities to address and improve IGD programs within similar contexts. First, schools should consider a model that fully integrates IGD into the academic curriculum because there was limited time to deepen dialogues during a 40-min advisory period. In addition, implementing IGD during the spring semester of the academic year interfered with district and statewide testing schedules. As such, schools may want to consider how IGD can directly or indirectly support academic testing. For example, using a model such as IGD to create opportunities for students to engage in critical dialogue about testing itself and deconstructing the role of public education maintains values may uncover a range of curricular contradictions of which students are presently unaware. Perhaps students may discuss the extent to which there is disproportionate value placed on specific knowledge or subject areas. Finally, by providing a structured environment to engage in critical dialogue, this project can support school climate. Creating shared experiences among diverse groups of peers could also advance racial equity efforts by increasing individual awareness of biases and assumptions through consciousness raising. These findings can also be used to advocate for more critical and dialogic pedagogy in the high school curriculum, because participation in the IGD Pilot Program increased students' critical

knowledge and skills, which may further ensure that they are prepared for college, career, and life within an increasingly diverse society.

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CONCLUSION

Paper 1 investigated the extent to which IGD supported the development of students' critical consciousness. Data revealed that IGD fostered CC on the personal level by increasing students' ability to recognize and understand the impact of their social identities, their positionalities (social location), and their standpoints (worldview) on those around them. IGD also helped students understand how structural inequities are perpetuated and maintained. Nearly all students reported that their IGD experience presented cognitive and affective challenges for themselves and their peers. However, students felt that the challenges they encountered, compelled them to learn and adopt strategies that ultimately supported their ability to navigate similar challenges in IGD and across professional practice settings. This study identified a number of strategies that supported the development students' critical consciousness through the IGD Facilitator Training Program. In spite of the varied cognitive and affective challenges students experienced throughout their participation in the program, the results demonstrated that students were able to develop a valuable skill set that included both conscious dialogue and facilitation skills. This study also demonstrated the complexity of articulating the experiential nature inherent in consciousness-raising education. Finally, the results of this study offered a valuable understanding around dealing with difficult challenges. Although this study focused specifically on mitigating the cognitive and effective challenges that students had, extending this understanding may be useful at the program level as well. As many programs struggle to implement curriculums that explicates the social work mission to an antiracist practice, it is important to realize that achieving such a mission will be inherently challenging. In this way, it is crucial that we bring forward the knowledge of understanding how to move through conflict and challenges at the administrative level.

In study two, students' understanding of listening did in fact shift. However, there was a distinct difference between students' understanding of listening as a participant compared with listening as a facilitator. Dialogue participants expressed that they had an increased ability to be attentive to the speaker. Another important aspect of this study found that students shifted in their capacity to hold their own and others' vulnerability. This finding was much more salient for student facilitators. The study found that the capacity of facilitators to encourage listening among group members was much more challenging, primarily because their experience not only involved the act of listening, it also required the maintenance of thoughtful attention and the use of reflective listening strategies to ensure that each member was listened to. The results of this study illustrate the ways in which listening in a more comprehensive way fosters immense opportunities for students to develop conscious listening skills both as participants and as facilitators of IDGs.

In study 3, analyzes revealed that students benefited from hearing others' stories, increased their understanding about racism, discrimination and socialization. The study also found that IGD interventions can support youths' sociopolitical development processes by facilitating the acquisition of knowledge, analytical, and emotional skills to support their capacity for action in political and social systems necessary to interpret and resist oppression. Students developed the capacity for critical dialogue, increased their awareness of social identity and socialization, and broadened their understanding of the nature of structural inequality. Finally, while the adapted curriculum was appropriate and conducive to high school students, in the third study, there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that a school-wide approach is feasible. More trials are needed to further develop a programming model that addresses the unique

contingencies embedded in the school environment; which include, the duration of each meeting was limited to 40 minutes and inconsistent access to physical space within the school.

Across these three studies, IGD served as a promising approach that enabled high school and undergraduate students to increase their understanding of the world around them, to engage in critical (self) reflection, and the findings across these studies also demonstrated students' ability to take action to incorporate their new learnings into their everyday lives. For example, findings from paper one indicated that although the experiential nature of the course proved challenging at times, it was during those challenging moments that students developed and executed critical dialogue skills that they then applied in other contexts, personally and professionally. In study two, facilitator's ability to move from listening to holding space suggests that students' may have developed a more integrated form of listening, or conscious listening which involves the integration of multiple senses (e.g. eyes, heart, mind, ears) that promoted their ability to awareness across all three domains (context, content and intrapersonal).

Implications for Social Work Education and Practice

The most promising approaches to educating for critical consciousness reflect three interconnected components; an in-depth understanding of the world, reflection on social and political contradictions, and taking action against oppressive elements in one's own life (Friere, 1979). Consciousness-raising courses or programs, such as IGD in the core curriculum would help ensure that social work practitioners are prepared to effectively engage in anti-oppressive practice. Not only would this help students develop the skills necessary to engage as facilitators of critical consciousness in community settings, but social workers in direct practice settings could benefit as well. The skills facilitators develop, which are often understood as specialized skills, are necessary for all social workers no matter their field of practice. The spirit of IGD

already exists across many domains of social work curriculum; for example, skills for direct practice, which include motivational interviewing, and techniques such as active listening. The difference between IGD and the other foundational courses is that other courses contextualize the development of these skills in an existing framework of traditional social work practice that does not recognize the sociohistorical context and positionality of the social worker of the client. By framing direct practice skills in the sociopolitical context either across existing curriculum or by implementing or advancing specialized consciousness-raising programs such as IGD, the profession would benefit greatly.

Second, social work programs should consider more effective ways to introduce critical pedagogical strategies that foster the development of critical consciousness. The scholar bell hooks (2014) writes about inviting diversity into the classroom to enrich the learning experience. The EPAS 2022 standards also suggest the value of diversity and lived experiences in the classroom and across practice settings. One way to do this could be a cross-listed course that applies to both BASW and MSW programs. A strategy such as this may provide an opportunity for cross-cohort learning communities and foster consistent relationship-building among students. Other curricular challenges were identified throughout the course of this study, which suggests the need for social work programs to expand their utilization of critical pedagogical strategies. For example, the utilization of problematizing strategies (Freire, 1974; Knipe, 2020) and introducing lived-experience in the classroom (hooks, 2014) would expand social works capacity to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to foster an antiracist workforce of culturally responsive social workers.

Findings also indicate there is a need for programs to offer better descriptions about what students should expect from participating in IGD. Students suggested that being provided a

structure to help them understand the overall goals of IGD would be useful. The challenge for social work programs currently is adopting effective strategies that explicitly articulate praxis, especially in the context of difficult dialogue. Drawing on experiential learning theories in social work and related fields may help uncover best practices in order to prepare folks for experiential learning. Finally, many students also suggested expansions of the IGD program, suggesting that it be a yearlong curriculum. Others suggested that all social work students have the opportunity to facilitate IGDs. The implication here is that social programs must consider a school-wide approach that provides the necessary investments to fully support and sustain dialogue programs such as IGD. This includes physical space, emotional support, and administrative investment in faculty and staff. For examples, programs may consider increasing the number of IGD instructors, advisors, and graduate students who could offer facilitators support, particularly because the findings in this study clearly indicated that students would have benefited from more opportunities to debrief any triggers or emotions that may have arisen during a group dialogue. As such, students may strengthen their capacity to confront the affective challenges that IGD poses, as was evidenced through this study. Although IGD programs provided structured debriefing sessions, there was a need for facilitators to have specialized supports, similar to supervision in field settings, because many cognitive and affective challenges that students experienced could be traced back to the necessity of consistent space to process.

Appendix A

Focus Group/Semistructured Interview Protocol

Room preparation:

- Focus Group Roadmap
 - a. **Your stories/experiences** 1st- (IGD participant) 2nd- Facilitators
 - b. **Your learning** - Skills and Knowledge
 - c. **Application**
 - d. **IGD's future**

TO BE DONE BY COORDINATOR AND FACILITATOR:

Pre-Focus Group (10 minutes)

- Coordinator greets participants as they come in.
- Coordinator and Observer: Hand out demo and meeting agreements individually as participants enter and allow time for reading and signing.
- Facilitator will greet participants at focus group discussion area, offer refreshments, and distribute handouts.
- Observer will greet/orient any latecomers, provide them with a participation form, and add them to the group.

TO BE DONE BY FACILITATOR:

Introduction (10 minutes)

- Welcome and encourage everyone to feel comfortable. Facilitator introduces self to group.
- *We are researchers from the University of Washington's School of Social Work. The purpose of this focus group is **To understand student experiences in IGD.** To understand the ways that *intergroup dialogue affects student learning and professional development.* Finally, To provide recommendations to the University of Washington School of Social Work on ways to sustain the Intergroup Dialogue Program.*
- *Before we begin our discussion, there are a few housekeeping things I want to mention.*
 - Speak clearly and in a voice at least as loud as mine so we can capture your voice on the recorder and everyone can hear what you say.
 - Be as specific as possible in your responses.
 - We will share a summary of findings with you after we have consolidated our findings.
 - Your names will not be associated with any of the transcriptions or findings.
 - If I use any terminology that you are not familiar with, do not hesitate to ask me what something means.

- Bathrooms, refreshments

Review Meeting Agreements

- *How many of you have been in a focus group before? There are a few things to know. We've come up with some guidelines that we think will help create an environment and ensures respectful and open dialogue. Just take a minute to look over these meeting agreements.*
- Easel page 1: Meeting Agreements:
 - a. Everyone is encouraged to participate at their own comfort level. Your story, opinions, and experiences are important, but please don't feel like you have to answer every question.
 - b. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers so this means you don't have to agree with what someone else says.
 - c. One person talks at a time. Please avoid interrupting and having side conversations.
 - d. Respect others by listening to and respecting what they have to say.
 - e. Share the "airtime." We want to make sure everyone has a chance to speak.
 - SAY: **So I might ask some people to say more and others to say less, to give everyone a chance.**
 - f. Stay present. Please silence cell phones and attend to whoever is speaking.
 - g. Keep other noise low, as it may impact the quality of the recording.

- *Is there anything that you think needs to be added to this list? Any questions?*
- Introductions
 - *Let's start by having each of you say your first name and the capacity you've participated in Intergroup Dialogue.*
 - *I'll start. I'm _____ and I like to _____.*
 - Research team introduce themselves
 - Participants
- Focus group roadmap – explain

Today, we would like to talk about ...

QUESTION SET # 1: Your stories/experiences

- How IGD went for you?
- What resonated with you and or what stood out to you?
- What was the classroom climate?

QUESTION SET #2: Your learning

- Skills and Knowledge

QUESTION SET #3: Application

- How have you utilized what you learned?
- What challenges did you have translating your knowledge and skills.
- What other aspects of your life did IGD inform?

QUESTION SET #4: IGD's future

What could have supported your learning more?

Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. *If there are any other additional thoughts that would be important to include, please write them on your note pages.*
2. *Your contribution is very important to us, we will send a summary of the focus group findings out to everyone who participated today to make sure that what we heard is correct. We welcome your feedback and comments. If there were specific concerns that you mentioned today, we will work with Friends of the Children to help you get in touch with someone that can help resolve them.*
3. **Thank them for their help.**
 - *Collect all note sheets, thank you and good bye*

Appendix B Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON INFORMATION STATEMENT & PARTICIPATION FORM Piloting Intergroup Dialogue among High School Students

Social Development Research Group (SDRG)
School of Social Work
Box 358734
Seattle, WA 98115

Principal Investigator: Kristin J. McCowan, MSW; mccowank@uw.edu; 314-482-2288

Researchers' Statement

We are asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this information statement is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether or not you would like to participate in this study. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the survey, the Intergroup Dialogue groups, your involvement, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research project or this form that is not clear. When we have answered all of your questions, you can decide if you want to participate in this study which includes the survey and the Intergroup Dialogues. This process is called 'informed consent.' We will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this project is to evaluate student outcomes related to students participation in Intergroup Dialogues (IGD) among 10th and 11th grade students that attend Garfield High School. IGD is an evidenced based diversity curriculum, that aims to help students understand how power and privilege are related to various types of inequalities.

STUDY PROCEDURES

- Your child will be asked to complete the Intergroup Dialogue Survey at four different time points. Your child may choose not to complete this questionnaire or any of the questions within it.
- Your child may be randomly selected to participate in the Intergroup Dialogues hosted during their Advisory hour at Garfield High School.
- Your child will also participate in a pre dialogue & follow-up interview conducted by trained social work practitioners prior and after their participation in Intergroup Dialogues.
- The Project Investigator, along with other trained facilitators will facilitate the Intergroup Dialogue Sessions. There will be 14 weeks of Intergroup Dialogue sessions that are intended to increase your child's knowledge about social identities, power & oppression and racial and economic inequality.
- Your child may choose not to answer any questions and you may end your child's participation at any time.

- The Intergroup Dialogues will be audio recorded. The recordings will be transcribed. Your child's name will not be associated with any of these transcriptions.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

We anticipate minimal risks to you for participating in this survey. You may decline to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. We will stress the importance that all of your responses are confidential. However, if you are selected to participate in the Intergroup Dialogue Group(s), because of the nature of dialogue groups, the confidentiality of communications cannot be guaranteed. If you would like to talk to someone after the meeting, our project staff will be available to talk with you.

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

Your child may or may not experience any individual benefit from participating in this study. However, after participating in this study we hope that your youth will have an increased awareness of various social identities, an increased awareness of the structural nature of social problems, increased awareness of racial/ethnic identity, increased skills and capacity to engage in effective dialogue with others representing a variety of social identities.

OTHER INFORMATION

All information provided in the surveys and follow up interviews will be confidential. Your child's name will not be identified on the transcripts. Government or university staff sometimes review studies such as this one to make sure they are being done safely and legally. If a review of this study takes place, Intergroup Dialogue records may be examined. The reviewers will protect your child's privacy. The study records will not be used to put you or your child at legal risk of harm. However, if we learn that your child has intent to harm themselves or someone else, as mandated reporters, we must report that to the authorities to protect your child's safety and/or the safety of others.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

If you have any future questions, you may contact the investigator or study staff listed above. If you have questions about your child's rights as a research subject, you can call the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098. You can keep a copy of this form for your records.

Participant's Statement

I have read, understand, and agree to the information provided in this Information Statement.

Name of Child (print): _____

Your Name (Print) Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C. Intergroup Dialogue Student Handbook

W UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Intergroup Dialogue Garfield High School Student Handbook

Project Investigator:
Kristin J. McCowan MSW
mccowank@uw.edu

This collaboration is offered in partnership with
Communities in Action

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The Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) Pilot Project is a 10 week learning experience that uses critical pedagogy and experiential learning to help students understand privilege, oppression, conflict and dialogue. IGD is an evidence-based practice model that promotes meaningful dialogue across race and other group boundaries through sustained communication, consciousness-raising, and bridging of differences. IGD is designed to give students a safe and structured opportunity to dialogue about difficult topics by encouraging open and reflective communication among participants.

Students' Role:

Through weekly dialogue sessions, journal reflections, classroom activities and collaborative projects, students will have many opportunities to learn, engage and practice the principles of Intergroup Dialogue.

4 Principles of IGD

1. appreciating difference – listening to others' perspectives and stories, and trying to understand them and learning from them;
2. engaging self – sharing one's own stories and perspectives, taking risks and admitting vulnerabilities;
3. critical self-reflection – appraising one's personal perspectives, biases and assumptions in the context of systems of privilege and disadvantage; and,
4. alliance building and finding common ground – working with others to lessen inequalities and achieve greater social justice (Nagda, 2006).

Design Features

- A social justice approach
- Diverse, small group format (8-14 people)
- Regular weekly meetings
- Two trained co-facilitators
- Developmental, experiential curriculum
- Sustained support for facilitators

Why IGD?

Support school climate by creating shared experiences among diverse groups of peers.

Advance racial equity efforts by increasing individual awareness of biases and assumptions.

Create a culture that respects individual differences and includes fair treatment, honesty, openness and integrity.

Provide critical knowledge and skills to ensure that students are prepared for college, career and life within an increasingly diverse society.

Strengthen school, family and community engagement through experiential learning.



What is Intergroup Dialogue

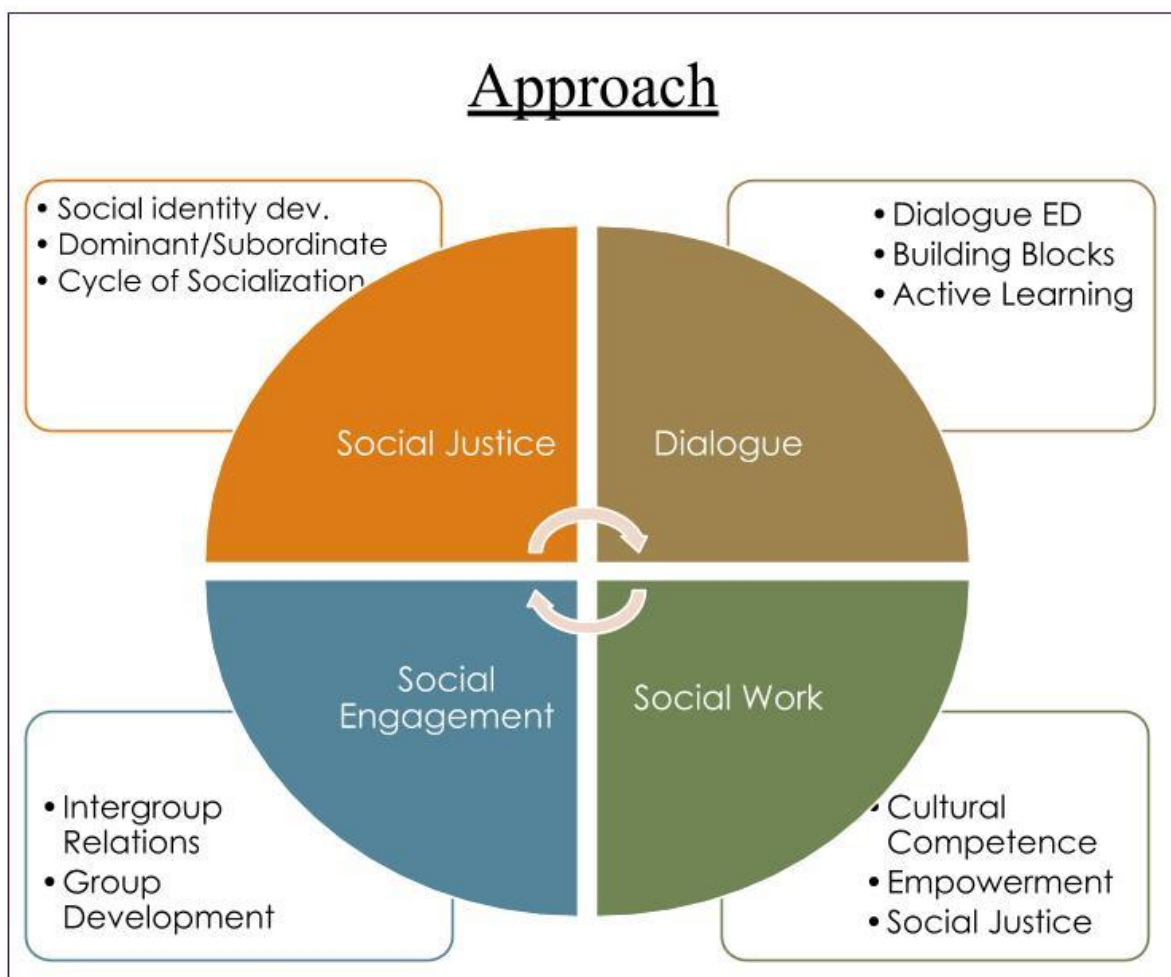
Intergroup dialogue is a learning approach that engages participants from 2 or more social identity groups in learning about social identities, social inequalities and social change through in-depth conversations over time.

Intergroup dialogues are guided by a curriculum that includes learning objectives, didactic and experiential activities, historical and social science materials, writing assignments, and questions to stimulate dialogue and reflection (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007).

Range of Social Identities: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, socio-economic class, and other socially constructed group distinctions.

Aims & Focus

- IGD courses aim to help students understand how power and privilege are related to various types of inequalities.
- Focus is to increase awareness that inequality exists and that it results at least in part, from societal structural arrangements.



1. Develop a capacity for dialogue- deep listening, suspending judgements, identifying assumptions, reflecting and inquiring
2. Reflect upon and learn about self and others as members of a social group(s) in the context of systems of privilege and oppression.
3. Explore the similarities and differences in experiences across social group memberships
4. Gain knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of difference and dominance at the personal and political levels
5. Develop skills to work with difference, disagreements and conflicts as opportunities for deeper understanding and transformation
6. Identify individual and collective actions for interrupting injustices and building alliances to promote greater social justice.

Stages of Intergroup Dialogue



Example Activities

- ❑ Personal Identity Wheel
- ❑ Cultural Chest
- ❑ Social Identity Wheel
- ❑ Gallery Walk
- ❑ 4 Corners
- ❑ Testimonials
- ❑ Cycle of Socialization
- ❑ Web of Oppression/Privilege
- ❑ Spheres of Influence
- ❑ Cycle of Liberation
- ❑ Intergroup Collaboration Project

1. Changes in individuals, perceptions of each other and the conflict
2. Cultural acquaintance—knowing each other personally and culturally
3. Increased perspective-taking, awareness, and complex thinking about diversity
4. Increased confidence with intergroup interaction and communication
5. Increased self-efficacy and commitment to action in the interest of social justice
6. Reduction of stereotypes and prejudice
7. Increased appreciation for “isms” and structural power relations
8. Experience of having one’s voice validated
9. Alliance building

Appendix D

Sociodemographic Characteristics of IGD Facilitators

<i>Sociodemographic characteristic</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Total no. of facilitators	3	100
Gender		
Female	2	66
Male	1	33
Race/ethnicity		
African American/Black	1	33
Hispanic/Latino	1	33
White	1	33
Graduate program		
Social work	2	66
Education	1	33
Trained in IGD facilitation		
Yes	2	66
No	1	33

Note. IGD, intergroup dialogue. Participants self-reported gender and race/ethnicity.

