Who is White? Assessing Students' Perceptions of Whiteness through Active-Learning Effectiveness and the Construction of Racial Doubt

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Abstract

Building on previous studies on action-oriented strategies for teaching race-related courses, we explore the general effectiveness of teaching about racial stereotypes and racial/ethnic identity construction in two undergraduate race and ethnicity courses. Given that race and the term "White" are culturally constructed and serve to maintain racial power in the U.S., this study focused on student conceptions of the categorization of whiteness. Specifically, we ask to what degree students' general perceptions of race, their confidence in identifying the percentage of Whites or non-Whites from a list of twenty-seven countries, can change after exercises in critical thinking and active learning. We found that students' generalized perceptions of people from other countries were in fact radically different after going through the lessons and projects. Students who received the materials were less confident in who was White or not and thus overwhelmingly answered that they were "not sure" when prompted to classify the racial/ethnic backgrounds of each of the twenty-seven different national groups.

Keywords: Active learning, critical pedagogy, race and ethnicity.

Teaching courses that center on race, diversity, and inequality in America can be a challenge for instructors due to student resistance (Case & Cole, 2013; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Chan & Treacy, 1996; Cleary, 2001; Higginbotham, 1996; Hunter & Nettles, 1999; Jackson, 1999; Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; Moulder, 1997; Nunnally, 2009; Omi & Winant, 1994; Tatum, 1992, 1994, 2003). Students often enter these courses with strong personal opinions and viewpoints about their own race and the races of others, typically shaped by a host of forces throughout their lives (Cole, Case, Rios, & Curtin, 2011; LaBeff & Clark, 1986; LaDuke, 2009; Lucal, 1996; Tatum, 2003). Instructors teaching these courses often face the arduous task of attempting to challenge these prior opinions and viewpoints, as well as the responsibility of constructing course content in such a way that can reverse students' stereotypical assumptions about race (Davis, 1992).

The first step in carrying out this task is getting students to question what they know, and what they think they know about race by establishing a sense of "racial doubt" that chal-

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lenges their own preconceived assumptions, stereotypes, and experiences in a diverse world. This questioning process, we contend, potentially opens their eyes to broader issues such as racial inequality (Picca, Starks, & Gunderson, 2013). This approach also helps instructors overcome resistance to learning about racial inequality and allows students to see and understand how the social construction of race can ultimately lead to structural inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Goldsmith, 2006; Haddad & Liberman, 2002; Sweet & Baker, 2011). This is particularly true for students from white privileged racial backgrounds who may find it challenging to recognize structural inequality in the United States (Johnson, 2005; Sue, 2010). More specifically, students with race privilege are typically unaware of their unearned advantages that come with being perceived as White (Case, 2007, 2013; McIntosh, 1988, 2012, 2013). By introducing racial doubt, especially to those in the majority or dominant group, instructors can help build critical thinking skills as a means of getting students to understand their relationships and connections to broader social structures and forces. Most thinking is not critical; in fact, it is often biased, uninformed, and even prejudiced (Paul & Elder, 2009). Critical thinking, on the other hand, is disciplined, self-directive thinking. When students think critically, they must examine their assumptions about a subject and reflect upon how those assumptions shape points of view and beliefs (Paul & Elder, 2009). We believe that the introduction of racial doubt in the classroom develops students' critical thinking skills by encouraging students to question their previously held assumptions and beliefs about race.

Building on Jakubowski's work (2001) on action-oriented strategies for teaching race-related courses, we explore the general effectiveness of teaching about racial stereotypes and racial/ethnic identity construction in two undergraduate race and ethnicity courses. Specifically, we examine the degree to which students' general perceptions of race, their confidence in identifying the percentage of Whites or non-Whites from a list of twenty-seven countries can change after exercises in critical thinking and active learning.

Teaching Critical Thinking about Race

Many social science courses on race, diversity, and inequality in the U.S. follow traditional college course design patterns. They may begin by introducing students to the concepts of race and ethnicity, then move to the classical and contemporary theories attempting to explain how these social constructions shaped social interaction and contributed to the stratification of American society. However, many students not only initially experience difficulty understanding these more abstract concepts, but also may become resistant to evidence in course readings and lectures that challenges their preconceived beliefs and assumptions on race and ethnicity (Case & Cole, 2013; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Higginbotham, 1996; Jackson, 1999; Misra, 1997).

Critical pedagogy values the creation of learning environments that encourage students to think critically about their position in society (Chaisson, 2004). Developing from Freires's conceptualization of "conscientization" (1970), these critical approaches focus on a range of educational challenges to oppressive systems through feminist, queer, anti-racist, and multi-cultural pedagogies (Case, Kanenberg, Erich, & Tittsworth, 2012). Within this array of critical pedagogies, instructors challenge students to not only ques-

tion their own assumptions and understandings, but also challenge the social systems in which they interact (Case et al., 2012; Enns & Forrest, 2005). At the same time, critical pedagogies ask them to become agents of social change by acting on what they have learned (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Enns & Forrest, 2005; Fisher, 2001; Lopez, 1996; Quillian, 2006).

This investigation of effective pedagogical approaches for teaching race and racism also draws on the work of critical race theorists and critical white studies scholars (Crenshaw, 1997; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Kennedy, 1995). Delgado (1995) described critical race theory as calling for students to analyze racial myths, racial assumptions, and the social construction of reality. By challenging the dominant discourses on racism within society as a whole (Ladson-Billings, 2000), critical race theory has much to offer pedagogical research on teaching and learning about whiteness and constructions of race in the sociological classroom. Critical white studies arose as the area of critical legal studies concerned with the legal and social construction of whiteness and its impact on racial oppression. Of particular relevance to this study of student learning, critical white studies scholars examine the invisibility of whiteness in American culture (Grillo & Wildman, 1995; Wildman & Davis, 1995).

Numerous problems arise when teaching courses that address race and ethnicity that deserve attention within pedagogical discussions about effective approaches (Wahl, Perez, Deegan, Sanchez, & Applegate, 2000). These courses often require instructors to explore so-called "uncomfortable" subjects despite student resistance (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Case & Cole, 2013; Davis, 1992; Haddad & Lieberman, 2002; Hedley & Markowitz, 2001). Without sound pedagogy, these courses can potentially negatively affect students' understanding of race-related issues (Case, 2007; Chang, 2002; Cole et al., 2011; Hogan & Mallot, 2005; Jakubowski, 2001).

Over the last decade, scholars introduced a host of pedagogical approaches to ease students' sensitivity to these subjects and heighten their understanding of race (Case & Cole, 2013; Cleary, 2001; Marullo, 1998; Moulder, 1997; Pence & Fields, 1999; Wahl et al., 2000; Williams, Garza, Hodge, & Breaux, 1999). Instructors often attempt to reduce ethnocentrism and prejudice through service learning projects and field observations (Dinka, Mazzella, & Pilant, 1980; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Raskoff, 1994; Marullo, 1998; Puffer, 1994), ethnomethodological experiments (Chesler & Zuniga, 1991), research article critiques and novels (Fitzgerald, 1992; Haddad & Lieberman, 2002), and the use of popular music and film in the classroom (Downey & Torrecilha, 1994; Martinez, 1994; Valdez & Halley, 1999). Using these strategies, the central focus of instruction has been to foster an intellectually safe environment that better connects students to course content and addresses critical pedagogical concerns. These approaches often ask students to "take the role of the other" (Smith, 1992) through oral histories (Poll, 1995) or the use of intensive interview data that focus on personal explorations and experiences with issues of race or privilege versus traditional texts (Chaisson, 2004; Davidson, 1987).

The consensus across these studies suggests that by making race-related issues more personal, students a) understand the course content better and b) take strides toward reducing

their own prejudicial or privileged attitudes and beliefs. Although these studies make invaluable contributions to our pedagogical approaches, they have rarely evaluated their effectiveness in introducing racial doubt as a means to challenge students' stereotypical views about race and ethnicity.

Pedagogical research in mathematics, science, family counseling, and education highlight the benefits of doubt and uncertainty for enhancing learning (Carter, 2008; Kaiser, McAdams, & Foster, 2012; Zaslavsky, 2005). This disconnect between students' current categorical beliefs and newly introduced information that Piaget (1970) referred to as "disequilibrium" provides students with an opportunity to reevaluate previously held assumptions, such as the assumption that racial categories are distinct, clearly defined, and predictable. As Singh (2012) states:

> At their best, the classes we teach are shaped by our goal of challenging our students' assumptions and unsettling the narratives of America or race that they might have already received from uncles and aunts, priests and politicians, friends and neighbors, teachers and mentors, myth and folklore. (p. 8)

Active learning can be a beneficial pedagogical approach when discussing race-related topics and requires reflection that moves students beyond merely participating in a class activity (Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000). This type of learning allows for more exploration of attitudes and values, which is critical when teaching about race. It allows the students to discuss their beliefs and current understanding, while receiving immediate feedback and engaging a higher order of thinking (Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000). Active learning techniques can also be used to help raise doubt and challenge students' previous assumptions about race and ethnicity. Mobilizing data collected in two undergraduate courses on race and ethnicity at a diverse public college in a major metropolitan city, we assessed the effectiveness of critical thinking and active-learning projects towards these ends.

Setting and Data

Data were collected in two undergraduate sociology courses on race and ethnicity at the authors' institution over two semesters ($N = 97$) with institutional human subjects approval. The student body is both traditional and non-traditional and represents a rather diverse group in terms of age, sex, and race/ethnicity. The average age of students is 31. The presence of so many older students could potentially influence the results, as non-traditional students often have more life experience, which can either further entrench their stereotypical preconceptions about race or lead to increased social contact that unravels these views. The university's student population is 64% female (36% male), 36% racial and ethnic minorities, and 10% international students (with no specific race or ethnicity data available other than an "international" designation). Looking at the specific ethnic/racial breakdown, not including the international students, the students identified as 54% White, 11.5% Black, 21.8% Hispanic, 5.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.6% American Indian, and 0.5 unknown or "other." Given that the university has a Hispanic population constituting over 20% of the overall student body, it is a federally designated His-

panic Serving Institution (HIS).

The sample drawn from these two classes consists of 31% male and 69% female juniors and seniors. In terms of racial and ethnic self-identification, the sample identified as 20% Black, 39% White, 21% Hispanic, 7% Asian, and 13% Bi or Multi-Racial/Ethnic. These two courses serve the university core curriculum as a social science requirement for many degrees, as well as a key course in the diversity elective pool, and therefore, the sample represents students from a host of disciplines. The racial/ethnic composition of the class was more diverse than the university overall; while over half of non-international students at the university are classified as White, only 39% of our sample identified as White. In our sample, no racial/ethnic group achieved majority status. The greater diversity of the class may be due to racial minorities having a greater interest in taking courses specifically on race; this comment was noted by many students in their end of course evaluations in both courses.

The classes were taught once a week, Tuesdays from 1-4pm, for roughly three hours minus a brief break, in consecutive spring semesters - spring one and two. Although both courses were relatively the same in terms of content/topics covered in lecture and student population, only one course received the materials and lessons designed to increase racial doubt and challenge racial assumptions. This first course, spring one, we call the "treated" course. It received all the critical and active-learning lessons, described in detail in the next section, in addition to a service-learning component. The second course, spring two, the "non-treated" course, did not receive these materials and lessons designed to increase racial doubt and was strictly lecture with no interactive PowerPoints. It did not have a service-learning component either. We set up this control course as a means to evaluate the effectiveness of both the "treated" course materials and the success of introducing racial doubt as a means to challenge students' preconceived assumptions about race. Both courses received a pre and post-test survey. Both courses, again, met once a week for three hours allowing, in the case of the "treated" course, a great deal of flexibility for discussion and active learning projects. We believe that the projects and lessons we outline below would be equally effective for classes that meet twice a week for an hour and a half.

The survey we administered is based on the work of Vernellia Randall at the University of Dayton Law School that was adapted by the Science Museum of Minnesota for the American Anthropological Association's project *RACE, Are We So Different?* The project, funded by the Ford Foundation and the National Science Foundation, is both a traveling and virtual online exhibit that draws together: 1) every day experiences of living with race in the United States; 2) the history of "race" as an idea; 3) the role of science in that history; and 4) the findings of contemporary science that are challenging and deconstructing race and its foundations (see http://www.understandingrace.org/home.html). The physical exhibit was in the home city of the authors during the time of data collection; students in the treated course actually visited the exhibit while it was here. Both the traveling physical exhibit, now on permanent display at the Smithsonian, and the website project are widely considered some of the best anthropological resources for teaching race (see for example the review of the original Minnesota exhibit, Horrigan, Tomlin, El-

lenbogen, and Pizza 2007). As a result, both the exhibit and the on-line materials served as the basis for the structure of our own study. This allowed for greater comparative analyses with well-established methods and measures.

Critical and Active-Learning Lessons

During the second week of class, prior to fully introducing the concepts and definitions of race, ethnicity and identity construction, we asked students in both classes to fill out the race and ethnicity section of the 2010 U.S. Census. We then asked them if they had any difficulty self-identifying themselves. In both classes, 97% of the students reported having no issue filling out the form and were confident in their understandings of their own race and ethnicity. We then asked students hypothetically if they felt they could identify the race and ethnicity of others either by seeing a picture of them or by giving them information about the country of origin. Most students again stated that they would have no difficulty with the task (94%). We then gave out the survey and asked students to a) self-identify themselves by race and sex and then b) identify people from twenty-seven different countries simply by their stated nationality with no pictures, as either white, not white or state that they were "not sure." The list of countries comes from the American Anthropological Association's project and includes: Albanians, Algerians, Belgians, British, Canadians, Chileans, Congolese, Cubans, Dutch, Egyptians, Germans, Iranians, Israelis, Italians, Japanese, Kenyans, Latvians, Moroccans, Nigerians, Poles, Puerto Ricans, Romanians, Russians, Spaniards, Swedes, Ukrainians, and Vietnamese. The countries selected are identical to those used by Randell's original project, which was a random sample drawing on countries by first letter and descending through the alphabet. Only the names of the countries were listed with no pictures of people from these nations. This was done deliberately both in our study and the original study to allow for students to draw on their own experiences, knowledge, and/or imagination in describing nationalities.
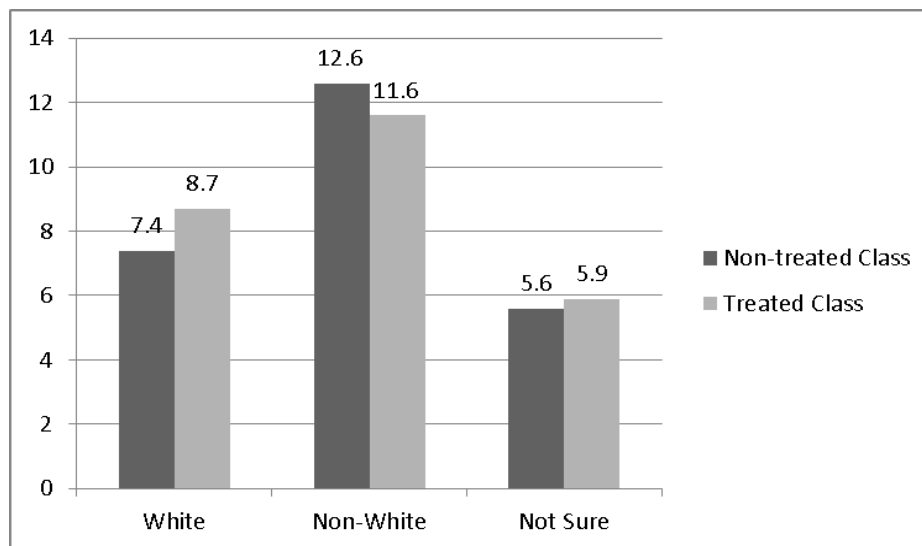

Figure 1. Average Number of Countries Identified as "White," "Non-White," and "Not Sure" at Time 1 (*N* = 97)

Results of these *pre*-lesson assessments found that students in the treated class identified, on average, approximately 9 of the 27 nationalities as White, 12 as non-White, and 6 of the 27 as not sure. Students in the untreated class had similar results; they identified, on average, approximately 7 of the 27 nationalities as White, 13 as non-White, and 6 of the 27 as not sure. In sum, students in both classes were fairly confident about who was White or not White by indicating one or the other and were only "not sure" about roughly 22% of the nationalities. T-tests revealed that there were not any statistically significant differences between the two classes in the number of nationalities identified as White, non-White, and not sure.

After this exercise, students in the treated classes broke into groups to discuss why they identified certain nationals as white or not. They then returned to the larger class to report on their small group discussions through guided interaction with each other and the instructor. Students were allowed to explore personal experiences and feelings in the context of the week's reading on racial construction—selections from Gallagher's (2012) *Rethinking the Color Line* including "How Our Skins Got Their Color" (Harris), "Drawing the Color Line" (Zinn), "Racial Formations" (Omi and Winant), and "Defining Race and Ethnicity" (Snipp). During discussions, most students suggested that they identified certain countries as White based on previous knowledge. When asked where this knowledge about other countries came from, most students admitted that they had not actually visited these countries, but rather had derived a general perception of a country's population based on media depictions in movies, television, and newspaper or magazine articles. Students also stated that they largely identified countries as non-White by the same process but added that if they had not heard of the country, or were not sure where it was, that "it must be non-White." Breakout sessions and guided discussion did not occur with the non-treated class because the structure of the class, as a control for the study, did not allow for these sessions. The treated course was more interactive, thus allowing students to reflect deeper and more critically on the material (Braxton et al., 2000).

Over the next several weeks, we introduced students in both courses to the concepts of race and ethnicity through a series of lessons. In the treated course, students were introduced to these concepts through interactive lessons, projects, and strategies that previous research demonstrated as successful in not only introducing students to racial concepts, but also in helping students recognize the impact of racial construction on a host of issues including structural inequality (see for example, Cleary, 2001; Dinka, et al., 1980; Goldsmith, 2006; Haddad & Lieberman, 2002; Hodagneu-Sotelo & Raskoff, 1994; Picca et al., 2013; Poll, 1995; Smith, 1992; Sweet & Baker, 2011; Valdez & Halley, 1999). These pedagogical strategies included having students read key literature in the field, go through interactive lectures on the origins and use of the terms race and ethnicity, watch episodes from the documentary series *Race the Power of an Illusion*, and visit the American Anthropological Association's local museum exhibit *RACE, Are We So Different?*

Students also completed a *personal narrative* describing their own personal experiences with their own race and those different from themselves. The personal narratives helped raise racial doubt because students learned how other students self-identified in terms of race/ethnicity. These self-identifications sometimes contradicted how a classmate would

have identified his or her classmate's race. In a culminating exercise during the fifth week of class, we returned to the question we had asked students at the start of the semester. Can students identify race/ethnicity based on pictures? Students in the treated class were presented with a PowerPoint slide with the pictures of twelve individuals that the instructors knew personally and had interviewed. We asked the students to break into groups and then describe the people in the pictures in terms of their race and ethnicity. At the start of the semester, 94% of students said that they would feel confident identifying individuals' race/ethnicity based on pictures. We found, however, that after five weeks of course content designed to raise racial doubt students found the exercise difficult. The class actually asked us to give them the self-defined identities of the individuals. After playing a guessing game with the identities, we then told the students how the individuals self-identified.

Building on course readings, namely Nagel (1994) and Sanders (2002), we went on to describe how the process by which a person self-identifies is rather complex and built on more than physicality. We highlighted how it is possible for race and ethnicity to be both *asserted* and *ascribed*. That is, how people can assert an identity versus how people view them or assign an identity on them. Furthermore, we discussed how this process of identity formation around race and ethnicity could lead to self-identifications that are both *thick* and *thin* in the ways in which they shape people's lives and their experiences of themselves regardless of their country of origin. For example, people with a so-called thick racial or ethnic identity may lead lives largely through the lens of that identity shaping and managing their daily social interactions. However, people's social actions and interaction with a so-called thin racial or ethnic identity may only be minimally shaped or managed by these identities.

While both classes completed the same readings and heard versions of the same lectures, it is important to note that the lectures in the non-treated course were considerably longer with no personal student reflection outside of occasional questions. In addition, there were no activities and lessons designed to raise doubt about race and ethnicity. Students did question various aspects of race in this course, but they were not challenged beyond the straightforward presentation of the material through lecture - whether they chose to listen or take notes could thus only be judged by exams, and even here, doing well may not be an authentic assessment of changing students' attitudes and beliefs about race. We believe that targeted exercises, like the photograph identification activity, provide a better assessment of students' understanding of race/ethnicity. The lectures in the treated course were briefer and broken up by active learning sessions that allowed students to put their own experiences into the context of the readings and lectures, which allowed the instructors to contextualize their biographies using the sociological imagination - seeing the general in the particular contours of their life experiences/understandings about race.

After having the students in the treated class collectively tell us that they were thoroughly confused about the saliency of race and ethnicity, we gave them the *post*-lesson survey before we moved forward with the courses and any clarifications. Again, the goal of these lessons and exercises was to create confusion or a certain level of racial doubt that could challenge students' preconceived assumptions about race and ethnicity. We hoped to find

that students in the treated course differed in their racial and ethnic assessments after our lessons and projects than students in the non-treated course.

Post-Lesson Findings

Findings suggest that students' generalized perceptions of people from other countries differed after going through the lessons and projects. Students who received the materials were less confident in who was White or not and thus overwhelmingly answered that they were "not sure" when prompted to classify the racial/ethnic backgrounds of each of the twenty-seven different national groups. Figure 2 summarizes these findings.
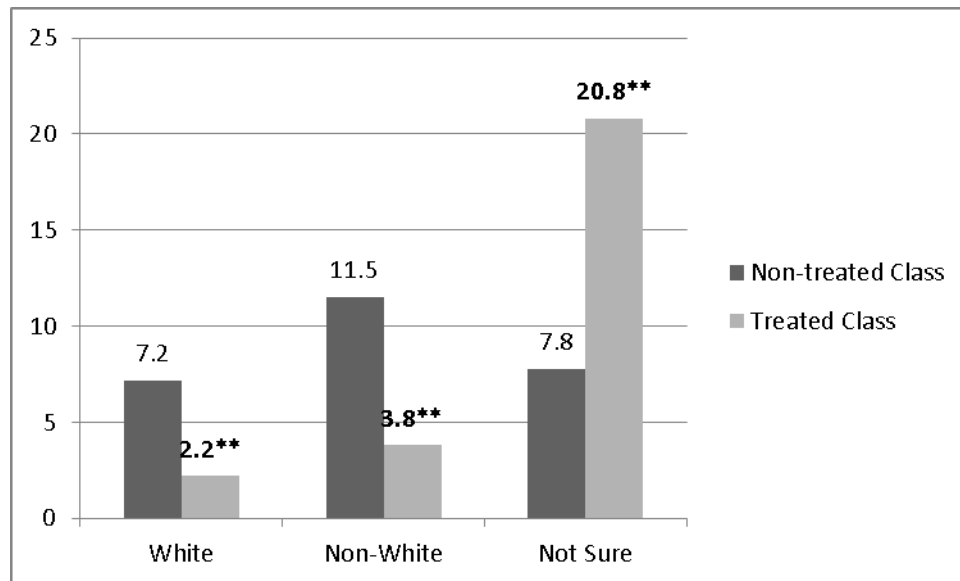

Figure 2. Average Number of Countries Identified as "White," "Non-White," and "Not Sure" at Time 2 ($N = 97$) **Identifications between the two classes are statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

While there were not any statistically significant differences in identification at Time 1 between the two classes, there were statistically significant differences in identification at Time 2. After the lessons, students in the treated class were overwhelmingly likely to be "unsure" about racial classifications. Student in the treated class identified, on average, approximately two of the 27 nationalities as White, four as non-White, and 21 as "not sure." Conversely, students in the non-treated class were far more certain in their identifications. They identified, on average, approximately seven of the 27 nationalities as White, 12 as non-White, and eight as "not sure." From this data, it is evident that students in the treated class were far less certain about racial classification then students in the non-treated class.

In addition, the data in Table 1 reveal that all students in the treated class were likely to become more uncertain about racial classifications after receiving the lessons and course material. Due to low sample sizes in several of the racial/ethnic subgroups, we did not

Table 1. Average Number of Countries Students in Treated Class Classify as "Not Sure" (*N* = 63).

	Time 1	*Time 2*
Race^		
White	2.7	19.7
Black	5.8	21.5
Hispanic	5.2	19.1
Asian	4.3	18.5
Multiracial	18.1	26.5
Sex		
Female	6.8	21.5**
Male	4.0	19.0**

** Two-Tailed t-test statistically significant at the 0.001 level.
^Due to small cell sizes, no tests of statistical significance conducted.

test for statistically significant differences in identification at Time 1and Time 2. We do think, though, that this data is still meaningful to examine in terms of how much of a shift there is in identifications across racial and ethnic groups. At Time 1, only multiracial students were likely to be uncertain about racial classifications. They identified, on average, approximately 18 out of the 27 nationalities as not sure, compared to Whites who were the least likely to be unsure. They identified, on average, three nationalities as not sure. White students were only "not sure" about 11% of the nationalities. This is not that surprising given what we know in the literature (Case, 2007; Chaisson, 2004; Haddad & Lieberman, 2002; Pence & Fields, 1999). White students, whether it is a matter of assumed privilege or the result of simply being part of a majority population, are often confident in who they are, have not been faced with questioning who they are as much as minorities, and are often certain in their assessment of others who are not white (see ibid). Students who identified as Black, Hispanic, and Asian were also relatively certain in their identifications at Time 1. Blacks identified, on average, approximately six of the 27 nationalities as "not sure" while Hispanics averaged approximately five nationalities and Asians approximately four. At Time 2, all racial and ethnic groups demonstrated a much greater likelihood of being unsure. Whites and Hispanics identified, on average, approximately 20 nationalities as "not sure," while Blacks identified approximately 22 and Asians approximately 19. Finally, multiracial students demonstrated a very high level of uncertainty at Time 2; they identified, on average, all 27 nationalities as "not sure."

In addition, both males and females demonstrated an increasing likelihood to be uncertain after receiving the course lessons. At Time 1, males identified, on average, only four of the 27 nationalities as "not sure." By Time 2, males identified, on average, 19 of the 27 nationalities as "not sure." The results for females followed a similar pattern; at Time 1, females identified, on average, seven of the 27 nationalities as "not sure" compared to 22 of the 27 nationalities at Time 2. We did test for statistical significance, due to having enough numerical power in each subgroup. For both males and females, the increase in uncertainty was statistically significant.

When students in the treated class were asked why they were now more likely to be unsure about racial classifications, students explained that they "had to think a lot harder" and "were really confused." Many students also referred to the assigned and shared personal narratives exercise and stated that there were students who considered themselves White that they did not think looked White and vice versa—students who considered themselves as non-White that they thought of as White. The introduction of doubt, therefore, seemed to challenge students to explore previously held assumptions and beliefs. Most students discussed some form of personal connection through the course exercises that challenged their previous thoughts. One student even cried a bit and suggested that she was embarrassed that she had not really gotten the opportunity to get to know different people and hear their stories—"I just feel like I have been living in my own little bubble." Other students also stated that they were confused about the "whole biology of race thing." As one student put it, "we all came from Africa so it makes sense that we are all Black, but Africa is not all Black, so we are all just mutts." While some students in the non-treated class did express confusion about the biology of race, they did not refer to personal or emotive points in the prior weeks that had moved them to change their perception of various populations. By making interpersonal connections and emotively investing in the stories of their classmates' otherness, students in the treated class demonstrated more racial doubt and in doing so opened themselves wider to understanding the social consequences of racial construction.

Discussion

Controversial courses abound in the social sciences but few are more intense and/or meet with more resistance from students than race related courses (Wahl et al., 2000). Despite these challenges, we cannot stop teaching these courses (Hedly & Markowitz, 2001). Given the fact that the U.S. will become a minority majority population over the next fifty years, teaching these courses has never been more important. This is particularly true given the fact that a) American racism has not disappeared since the Civil Rights Movement and in some cases it has gotten worse, and b) the fact that the nation remains highly socio-economically stratified by race (see Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Quillian, 2006; Smith, 1992).

Throughout this paper, we argued that the effective use of critical pedagogy through active-learning projects is vital to creating a safe environment in which instructors can challenge students' misinformed racial beliefs and stereotypes in race-related courses. Building on the work of previous studies, we suggested the first step in raising this challenge is getting students to doubt or question what they know or what they think they know about both their own race and the racial identity of others (see Chaisson, 2004; Jakubowski, 2001; Wahl et al., 2000). Our findings illustrate that raising doubt and uncertainty among students makes it difficult for them to apply historically entrenched racial stereotypes to others. Pedagogically speaking, the students' change in generalized perceptions of the racial and ethnic make-up of geographic locales highlights the importance of the need to "confuse" students' stereotypical generalizations by introducing substantive material that helps to dismantle racial stereotypes. If instructors utilize exercises to raise levels of racial doubt among students, they can open the pedagogical door to productive group dis-

cussions of racial social constructions that feed over-generalization, othering, and assumed homogeneity of out-groups. Exercises that raise doubt help develop students' critical thinking skills and provide them with the tools needed to examine and evaluate previously held assumptions. As stated earlier, raising doubt should be the first step in teaching courses that center on race, diversity and inequality. Instructors that prepare such courses should be mindful of the preconceived stereotypes of students entering the class and must be willing to create course content in a way that challenges stereotypical views from the onset. They must acknowledge that students of privilege and majority may have the most to gain, but they also may manifest the most resistance. Likewise, they must also be cognizant of the fact that bi or multiracial students may have not only shifted their racial and ethnic expressions over time, but they also may have experienced a certain amount of racial ambiguity that complicates their understanding of race (Jackson, 2010).

Although further work is necessary to more fully understand and address these issues, we contend that our approach should become a starting point for future pedagogical studies that center on teaching courses on race, diversity and inequality. Race can be understood more efficiently when *all* students in a course delineate on the important concepts and theories and avoid racial stereotypes. While our study focuses on a course with race-related content, we do believe that raising racial doubt can be an effective pedagogical tool across courses and disciplines because it can directly challenge negative racial stereotypes. Negative stereotypes often influence students' performances in classrooms. Steele (1997), for example, argues that the performance of students who are under a "stereotype threat" may be improved by situational changes that reduce the negative stereotypes students face. We believe that raising "racial doubt" about those stereotypes is one such method through which situational changes can occur. While our findings provide only limited insights into these areas and cannot speak to how "unlearning" affects future learning in other classes, we hope that this study will stimulate a breadth of research that will further investigate these approaches with the understanding that doubt is the beginning, not the end, of greater wisdom.

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