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## FOREWORD

Stanley Sue

*Integrating Multiculturalism and Intersectionality Into the Psychology Curriculum: Strategies for Instructors*, edited by Jasmine A. Mena and Kathryn Quina, is the most recent volume of the highly successful series of books on the teaching of diverse populations and cultural issues, including *Teaching a Psychology of People: Resources for Gender and Sociocultural Awareness* (1988) and *Teaching Gender and Multicultural Awareness: Resources for the Psychology Classroom* (2003) by Phyllis Bronstein and Kathryn Quina. Because I was invited to write forewords for two of the three books, I have an opportunity to reflect on changing issues in the field of multiculturalism and to compare the current version with the earlier versions.

The field has changed. First, in the past, multiculturalism and diversity issues were considered as peripheral or outside the mainstream of psychology. There is now greater acceptance of multiculturalism and diversity as an essential part of human existence. Although there are some who continue to regard a multicultural focus as a matter of “political correctness,” people have increasingly adopted the view that human diversity should be recognized and respected. The change in these views is reflected in research on multiculturalism. Over the past 30 years, our knowledge about multiculturalism and diversity has increased dramatically. In the process, methods have emerged for studying different populations (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches) and small ethnic populations (e.g., improved sampling techniques), reducing reluctance to participate in research, and involving diverse communities in research and interpretation of findings. Thus, the field of psychology has benefited from multicultural research not only because of the new knowledge generated but also because the research has

spawned innovative and expanded research approaches. What is the knowledge that should be conveyed, and what are the best approaches to teach multiculturalism to students? How can this knowledge be applied to or used in the lives of students? These are critical questions that must be addressed. Adding to the importance of these challenges in the teaching of multiculturalism is the continuing high student demand for psychology courses in general and multicultural and diversity courses in particular.

Second, the concepts of diversity and multiculturalism have become more inclusive. Ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and immigration are but some of the topics that are included in discussions of diversity and culture. But how can the inclusion be conceptualized or theoretically linked? That is, are diversity and multiculturalism simply a collection of different topics with the only commonality being “nonmainstream?” In the past, I would teach a course on ethnicity and race and give little coverage to other kinds of diversity. Now, it is important to discuss not only ethnicity and race but also different aspects of diversity (e.g., gender, social class, sexual orientation). Human beings are members of multiple groups (e.g., a woman who is heterosexual, who is Catholic). But rather than simply providing a list of our different group memberships, the task before us is to provide insights into the integration and interactions of various aspects of diversity. For example, the concepts of intersectionality and multiple identities have been used to conceptualize the different influences that affect our lives. Thus, in our approaches to teaching students about particular aspects of diversity (e.g., ethnicity and race), it is important to convey that human beings are a product of different groups and cultures and that these multiple memberships create complexity when dealing with self-identities, subjective experiences, and social status. How can this complexity be conveyed effectively to students? This is another important question.

Third, diversity and multiculturalism have always been associated with controversy and conflicts. For example, the genetic “superiority” of Whites over Blacks, the “abnormality” of being gay, and the “emotionality” of women are but some of the controversial claims that have been raised in the past. What has changed in the past 30 years is the overt polarity that has occurred not only in the United States but also worldwide. Immigration reform and isolationism (i.e., the philosophy that “America is for Americans”) are particularly strong current controversies in the United States. Heated debates have occurred over the use of bathrooms by transgender persons, genocide and terrorism by religious extremists, police shootings involving African Americans, and so forth. Other countries are facing similar issues (e.g., trying to deal with the influx of Syrian refugees fleeing the war in their country). The pertinence of multiculturalism and diversity in all these controversies is apparent.

It is also important to realize that the controversial nature of these issues can make the classroom difficult to manage. Students may hold strong feelings and confront the teacher or classmates. Students themselves may experience personal conflicts. For example, in one class, a student who always felt she was racially unbiased became dispirited when she came to the realization



that she was prejudiced and engaged in racial microaggressions. How do teachers deal with the difficult dialogues that can occur within and between students with different perspectives and experiences?

In summary, educators have several challenges: (a) to help students appreciate the new knowledge and strategies being used to study multiculturalism, (b) to encourage students to think critically about the intersections of different aspects of diversity, and (c) to enable students to gain insight into their values and perspectives and deal with different opinions and perspectives. This volume effectively deals with these challenges and serves as an important guide for teaching multiculturalism. It has something for everyone. For instructors of traditional psychology courses such as history of psychology, developmental psychology, and abnormal psychology, examples are provided about tactics to incorporate multiculturalism, including concrete teaching strategies, assignments, application of digital resources and technology, and the changing body of research and knowledge on diversity issues. For faculty members who teach specific courses on multiculturalism, the expanded definition of multiculturalism and newer concepts—such as intersectionality, multiple identities and perspectives, and microaggressions—are introduced and applied to students' lives. Finally, there are substantive discussions about ways of teaching controversial topics and engaging in difficult dialogues. The contributors, some of whom are among the most prominent in field, demonstrate their expertise and grasp of the issues.

This book is more than just a how-to manual. In the process of offering concrete suggestions for the education and training of students, it provides a sophisticated, up-to-date, and informative look at the field of multiculturalism.

## FOREWORD

Florence L. Denmark

In recent years, the increased diversification of U.S. society has become evident. Today, opportunities for increased contact with other cultures and ways of life are more prevalent than ever before. As the world population continues to grow, the prospects for engaging with people whose customs and experiences differ from our own are virtually limitless. Population growth is fastest among ethnic and racial minority groups as a whole. As of July 1, 2011, more than half of children under 1 year of age belonged to ethnic and racial minority groups.<sup>1</sup> As our opportunities to work, learn, and associate with others from a multitude of backgrounds and traditions increase, we have a proportionally greater need to foster understanding of and respect for our similarities and differences.

Psychology is touted as a discipline devoted, in large part, to the study of human thought and behavior. In the past, however, psychological theory was based solely on the thoughts and behaviors of White males. The women's movement and the civil rights movement certainly played a role in broadening our horizons, and over the years, the realms of psychology have expanded to include women and men from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. Although psychology has paid increased attention to diverse individuals, studies of such individuals are often regarded as "special topics" in psychology. As educators, when we establish that the study of women or minorities belongs only in elective courses, we are sending an unfortunate message that such individuals will not be studied in mainstream psychology courses.

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *Most children younger than age 1 are minorities*, Census Bureau reports. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb12-90.html>

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xx Foreword

But psychology is the study of people, and all human beings on this earth fall into this category.

I believe that the importance of multicultural awareness should be paramount in psychology. Our cultural and ethnic backgrounds affect each of us in a multitude of ways, and it behooves all psychologists, especially those who work with students or clients of different nationalities, ethnicities, or lifestyles, to consider the impact of one's unique life experiences within the larger cultural context. Instructors and clinicians alike must remember that not all theories or treatment modalities will be equally effective when applied indiscriminately across all races and ethnicities.

In keeping with the growing need for students entering the field of psychology to develop multicultural skills and an appreciation for diversity, courses must be made relevant to include the experiences of all people. It is no longer sufficient for students to take a single class on gender, multiculturalism, or cross-cultural studies and, as a result, believe that they have gained a true understanding of their fellow human beings. Such issues should also be incorporated into each psychology course. In this spirit, the contributors have provided an integral book that will be helpful to all individuals studying psychology who are attempting to integrate recent sociocultural issues into a variety of courses and programs of study. Chapters not only discuss those groups traditionally considered in multicultural courses, such as African Americans, Latinxs, American Indians, and Asian Americans, but also include other diverse groups such as individuals with disabilities; elderly individuals; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people, who can sometimes be overlooked in such discussions. Authors provide not only information about social and cultural groups but also creative resources and projects by which such issues may be integrated into courses from the most basic introduction to psychology to graduate students' clinical experiences. This volume encourages instructors to review and select texts and materials with a critical eye, judging their relevance not only to one particular course but also to any class composed of members of a diverse society. Classroom techniques are suggested to encourage our students to gain an in-depth understanding of the different people in the world around them. *Integrating Multiculturalism and Intersectionality Into the Psychology Curriculum* is a wonderful resource for preparing students as well as faculty to be members of a growing and diverse international professional community.

As someone who benefited from the previous volumes, I am eager to make use of this new volume, which includes the most current ideas and materials on multiculturalism across the psychology curriculum. I encourage all psychology instructors to use this valuable resource.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

We thank Linda Malnasi McCarter, senior acquisitions editor, and the American Psychological Association for supporting our vision of transforming the psychology curriculum by meaningfully addressing multiculturalism and intersectionality. We also greatly appreciate the feedback provided by three anonymous reviewers and David Becker's editorial assistance. We are grateful to Miryam Yusufov for her excellent assistance with the supplemental website, which was supported by a University of Rhode Island Multicultural Enhancement Grant. Finally, we thank the contributors to this and previous volumes who have devoted themselves to the advancement of multicultural issues in psychology and related fields.

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Integrating  
Multiculturalism  
and  
Intersectionality  
Into the  
Psychology  
Curriculum

## Introduction

Jasmine A. Mena and Kathryn Quina

The past 20 years have seen a proliferation of the multicultural psychology literature, and we now have a better appreciation for the importance of sociocultural factors and how they shape attitudes, cognitions, and behaviors. This expanding awareness has converged with demographic shifts in the United States, bringing an increased number of ethnoracial minority undergraduate and graduate students into psychology classrooms. Increased numbers of scholars from underrepresented groups seeking psychology degrees have increased awareness of the importance of multiculturalism and intersectionality across a wide swath of psychology.

The American Psychological Association (APA) has recognized that this new scholarship is relevant to research, practice, education, and organizational development and that multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills are imperative to address the needs of today's society adequately (APA, 2017; see also Hall, 2014; Sue, 2013). Although this growth is exciting, incorporating this vast new theoretical and research literature into the psychology curriculum remains a challenge.

Taking on this challenge, the teacher-authors who contributed to this volume share their insights and strategies for achieving a psychology of and for the people. The chapters are intended to support educators in their quest to expand their courses to include multiculturalism and intersectionality and are geared for instructors, new or experienced, who wish to invigorate their teaching through new topics, resources, and pedagogical approaches to transform the psychology curriculum as well as culture-specific courses. Chapters include

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0000137-001>

*Integrating Multiculturalism and Intersectionality Into the Psychology Curriculum: Strategies for Instructors*, J. A. Mena and K. Quina (Editors)

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background knowledge and recent findings useful for instructor preparation as well as a plethora of practical recommendations, exercises, assignments, and activities that the authors have applied over their years of teaching from multicultural and intersectional perspectives. We understand that the strategies offered here can be intense and evocative for students and instructors. However, we believe that, with preparation, instructors can increase critical thinking and commitment to equity and justice among their students and at the same time make their courses more enjoyable.

## **STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR VIEWPOINTS**

Transforming the psychology curriculum to include multiculturalism and intersectionality may present new challenges for instructors and students alike. Take, for example, an experience I (JAM) had: I assigned a reaction paper to a reading that addressed the psychological toll of oppression and marginalization. A student turned in an incomplete paper indicating the exact page number where she stopped reading the article. A reasonable response might be a lower score and a note highlighting the values of commitment to learning and accountability to oneself and others. Would your response change if the student told you she interpreted the author's position (and, by implication, yours) as an affront to her worldview? On first introduction to these topics, students can have a negative reaction and may even believe that the lessons are one sided or that we have a personal agenda.

You may be wondering how I handled this scenario. I invited the student to speak with me in person. I validated her feelings of frustration, confusion, and even anger, given that she was grappling with racism, in the voice of a person oppressed, for the first time. I then asked her a series of questions for us to reflect on together, along the lines of, What is an individual act of racism? How is that different from structural barriers that claim "business as usual" yet cause harm? That only moved us forward part of the way. We leaped forward when I asked her to name an injustice in society that truly makes her mad. After we identified that injustice as sexual assaults, she was able to apply the same concept of structural oppression to the business as usual that allows for the obstinate continuation of violence against women. This difficult dialogue became a powerful teaching moment for both of us. Experiences like these compelled our authors to contribute to a community of instructors who are motivated but uncertain about how to transform their courses to address multiculturalism and intersectionality.

## **DEFINING MULTICULTURALISM AND INTERSECTIONALITY**

We have adopted an inclusive perspective on multiculturalism and diversity that aligns with the APA's (2017) *Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality*. The *Multicultural Guidelines* "consider

contextual factors and intersectionality among and between reference group identities, including culture, language, gender, race, ethnicity, ability status, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, socioeconomic status, religion, spirituality, immigration status, education, and employment, among other variables" (p. 8). In addition to a broad and inclusive definition of multiculturalism, we have taken seriously the implications of Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality theory, which takes special interest in the experiences unique to the "borderlands" of identities that are not always captured by a focus on single identities (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bowleg, 2012). As stated by Krieger (2012),

After all, we are not one day White or a person of color, another day working class or a professional, still another day a woman or a man or transgendered, on yet another day straight or lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, and yet another an immigrant versus native born. (p. 942)

Indeed, there are many dimensions and intersections of diversity that influence how people feel, think, and act. Today, most people accept that we are all cultural beings and that all encounters are multicultural. Beyond embracing diversity for the richness it adds to our lives, we acknowledge that underrepresented groups often experience oppression and marginalization; as such, throughout this book, we have taken special care to highlight the needs and strengths of marginalized groups.

## CORE ASSUMPTIONS

Given the response to this book's two predecessors (Bronstein & Quina, 1988, 2003), we know that most educators want to transform their courses in line with multicultural recommendations. To that end, the authors in this volume have tried to introduce information and ideas that will make the process of transforming existing courses more accessible and help educators at varied levels of readiness feel more prepared to do so. We have been fortunate to find contributors who have incorporated the latest evidence as well as multicultural goals and outcomes into their teaching and practice.

The courses discussed in this book are not representative of the entire psychology discipline. We selected courses commonly considered core or foundational to the psychology curriculum, with a general focus on the undergraduate level. Similarly, the social and cultural minority groups we include are also the ones most commonly taught in psychology. In making these difficult decisions, we sought guidance from the *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major, Version 2.0*, specifically Goal 2: Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking and Goal 3: Ethical and Social Responsibility in a Diverse World (APA, 2013; Dunn et al., 2010). Although our focus is primarily on undergraduate education, the background content in the chapters and the practical recommendations are generally applicable to graduate students, with minor modifications; some chapters address graduate curricula directly.

We chose the separate course model for the social and cultural groups because this approach has generated the largest literature base reporting



positive outcomes (Rogers & O'Bryon, 2014). However, there are risks associated with focusing on any one group, including devaluation of minoritized groups and the instructors teaching these courses, who are often also minoritized, and a more limited reach to nonminoritized students (Denmark & Paludi, 2008). Broad infusion has been identified as a desirable alternative (Trimble, Stevenson, & Worell, 2004), and although we agree, we believe that there is still a need for concentrated information about specific underrepresented groups, both to inform stand-alone courses (e.g., Asian American Psychology) and increase awareness of the history and experiences of members of those groups. Thus, we have elected to continue the blended model adopted in Bronstein and Quina (1988, 2003), which includes both broad infusion in the curriculum as well as separate cultural groups. We hope that the informed educator will be able to present multicultural content not only as a single topic or focus—a separate section or a “special instance”—but also as a crucial way to increase students' knowledge about all people and help them become more consciously aware of themselves, “others,” and the contexts that impact them.

We also respect varied approaches to understanding the psychological world. In the past decade, we have seen substantial increases in qualitative and mixed methods approaches to psychology, using phenomenological approaches that delve into the lived experience of participants. For example, Sevelius's (2013) qualitative interview research with transgender Women of Color revealed a context of oppression based on multiple social identities (gender identity and race) that was accompanied by psychological distress, a need for gender affirmation, and in high-risk contexts, sexual risk behavior. Qualitative methods provide richness and texture to psychological constructs, especially when seeking to understand the experiences of marginalized groups (Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009). We have included these alongside the more traditional quantitative methodologies, reflecting the range of ontological and epistemological stances identified throughout this volume.

Psychological research has often failed to account for human diversity at all levels of the research process (Parent, DeBlaere, & Moradi, 2013). The common practice of lumping “minorities” together for analyses is problematic because it obscures group differences. Some scholars have advocated for the eradication of the use of identity labels, such as race, in research because of the lack of shared conceptual definitions (Betancourt & López, 1993; Phinney, 1996). For example, Helms, Jernigan, and Mascher (2005) leveled this critique: “Equating race with racial categories gives scientific legitimacy to the conceptually meaningless construct of race, thereby perpetuating racial stereotypes and associated problems in society” (p. 27). Some of these scholars offer various substitutions, including using concepts such as values, customs, and traditions. Multicultural identities are complex; thus, a simple question about one's identity label often proves inadequate. Understanding the mechanisms behind the labels is more desirable, and it also makes room for the true heterogeneity within groups. It is equally problematic to ascribe to an individual the characteristics of a culture-sharing group. Recognizing these critiques, chapter authors have addressed within-group heterogeneity whenever possible, encouraging readers to consider the information about specific groups as common but not

stereotypical. We hope the information we offer will, rather than provide all the answers, lead the reader to ask good questions.

Scholars have urged psychologists to embrace the responsibility that comes with the growth of multicultural psychology and intersectionality by incorporating it in classrooms, research, and service delivery (Cardemil, Moreno, & Sanchez, 2011; Leong, Comas-Díaz, Nagayama Hall, McLoyd, & Trimble, 2014; Sue & Sue, 2013). As psychology instructors, we can intentionally cultivate our multicultural teaching competencies by connecting with our motivation to learn, grow, and improve (Mena & Rogers, 2017). On the practical side, we believe you will find that incorporating these multicultural topics, exercises, and instructional strategies promotes greater awareness, critical thinking, and cultural competency among your students.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS VOLUME**

Each of the three parts of this book serves a distinct purpose. Part I, Multiculturalism and Intersectionality in the Psychology Classroom, includes three chapters that provide the foundation that we believe is necessary for all instructors interested in transforming their teaching by providing an intersectional perspective and pedagogical strategies that are applicable across courses. We also present the results of a pilot study that examined racial microaggressions in classrooms, giving instructors an inside view of students' experiences.

Part II, Gender, Ethnic, and Sociocultural Perspectives: Specialized Courses and Content Areas, comprises 12 chapters, each with a focus on a specific culture-sharing or sociodemographic group and includes perspectives critical to teaching about these groups. Although most of these chapters present the perspective as it has been taught in a stand-alone course or discuss key topics and activities recommended by the authors, we suggest that all instructors review these chapters because the content and practical recommendations can easily be incorporated in traditional psychology courses.

Part III, Integrating Diversity Into General Psychology Courses, includes nine chapters that offer instructors suggestions for more inclusive materials, activities, and assignments that can be incorporated into the core psychology curriculum. These chapters assist instructors to extend their courses beyond the usual topics and address cultural diversity, offer useful critiques of traditional approaches, and/or deal with issues of power and oppression in the psychology classroom. We recommend that readers select the chapters in this section that most closely align with their teaching. Chapter contributors have taken special care to consult the burgeoning multicultural psychology literature and to guide instructors on applying the suggested strategies from their experiences.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

An exciting new feature is a companion website, which includes additional resources for the classroom and an opportunity to update and add new work (see <http://pubs.apa.org/books/supp/mena>). In this website, you will learn

more about the contributors and find sample syllabi, descriptions of exercises, presentation resources, and more. We hope you will peruse the site and use the resources to augment your teaching. We would like to receive your ideas, as well as your feedback regarding what you value most and ways you think this resource can be improved. To facilitate a “feedback loop,” we have created an e-mail account (menaquina@gmail.com), which we encourage you to use freely. Psychology classrooms across the nation represent ideal locations for multicultural transformation. In the tradition of the earlier volumes (Bronstein & Quina, 1988, 2003), we hope to inspire continued commitment to transform psychology by elevating the relevance of multiculturalism and intersectionality.

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