The Presence of Contact Conditions in a Magnet School

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The Magnet School

“If children of different races and economic and social groups have no opportunity to know each other and to live together in school, they cannot be expected to gain the understanding and mutual respect necessary for the cohesion of our society.”

Desegregation and Positive Interracial Attitudes

- Is mere contact enough to promote positive interracial attitudes?
- Research shows that contact alone between different social groups is not sufficient (Allport, 1954; Brewer & Miller 1974)
- Data supports that optimal inter-group contact should be a critical component of any successful effort to promote positive interracial attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp 2000)
Gordon Allport’s Contact Theory

Positive effects of contact occur when the following criteria are met:

- Equal group status within the contact situation
- Common goals
- Individualized contact
- Support from authorities
Research Question

Is a Magnet School environment effective in fostering positive inter-racial attitudes and behaviors?

Prediction

With the presence of contact conditions a magnet school is effective in fostering positive inter-racial attitudes and behaviors.
Methodology
Measuring Contact Conditions

- **Participants**
  - upper elementary classroom
  - 12 students: 58% Black, 33% White, 9% Latino
  - 1 Teacher

- **Observation Technique**
  - Support from authorities & common goals – global scan
  - Equal status – 2.5 hour observation - verbal interaction
  - Individualized contact – 2.5 hour observation – classroom traffic
Results for Equal Group Status

Teacher Interaction - Equal Status

![Bar chart](chart.png)

**Time (minutes)**
- 0-10
- 10-20
- 20-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50-60
- 60-70
- 70-80
- 80-90
- 90-100
- 100-110
- 110-120
- 120-130
- 130-140
- 140-150
- TOTAL

**Interaction (% of occurrences)**
- BLACK
- WHITE
- LATINO
## Results for Individualized Contact

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Discussion of Results

- Montessori ~self formation of the child
  ~free choice
  ~uninterrupted work cycles
- No cooperative learning such as Jigsaw or STAD to promote equal status or individualized contact.
- Contact conditions are effective over time.
- Longitudinal study may show more positive results.
References


Thank you