An Application of the Contact Hypothesis in a Middle School Setting

A Senior Honors Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for graduation with distinction in Psychology in the undergraduate colleges of The Ohio State University

by

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Abstract

The contact hypothesis, proposed by Gordon Allport (1954), maintains that prejudice and discrimination between conflicting groups can be reduced if the groups are brought together in a situation of positive interdependence with a common goal. The current research consists of four studies based on the contact hypothesis in which groups in conflict worked together to write and produce a play on stereotypes and prejudice. The first study determined fault lines that divide students at Grant Middle School in Marion, Ohio. A total of 475 sixth through eighth grade students identified 12 groups (e.g., preps, jocks, etc.). The reliability of the categories of social groups was checked by two judges who independently sorted a random sample of 100 student lists. The agreement between judges was 86.5 percent. In study 2, 34 core group members who were nominated by three school counselors were administered an inventory that consisted of five scales designed to assess intergroup relations. Three of the scales did not have inter-item consistency and therefore were revised. In study 3, 26 of the 34 nominated students filled out the revised version of the inventory. Cronbach’s alpha indicated that all of the scales had items that were internally consistent. In addition, the inter-correlations among the scales indicated construct validity for the inventory. In study 4, students who participated in Study 3 completed their scripts and began rehearsing the play. The inventory for Study 3 was re-administered (posttest) and compared to the pretest scores of Study 3. No significant changes in intergroup relations were obtained. Limitations of the present research are discussed in light of previous research on the contact hypothesis.
INTRODUCTION

According to Allport (1954), a child as young as five years old is capable of reasoning that he or she is a member of various groups. For instance, the child’s family may be one group, school another group, and gender another. However, an important question that arises is the question of personal identification: How does the child choose which groups he or she wants to be affiliated with. Personal identification is an area that is lacking attention, yet it is critical to personality and social behavior theories (Brewer, 1991). Our personal identity is who we perceive ourselves to be. It is the center of who we are and the values and beliefs that we hold dear to our identities; it is our personal and unique identification which differentiates us from others (Turner, Oakes, Haslam & McGarty, 1994).

However, personal identity is not the only identity that is important to us. Our social identity is crucial as well, and we find our social identities by categorizing ourselves with others in terms of shared similarities (Turner, Oakes, Haslam & McGarty, 1994). Just like adults, children use social categories, grouping people by sex, race and other categories, in order to simplify their social environment (Brown, 1995). Once children are aware of categories, they begin to identify with certain ones (Brown, 1995). One common problem that comes with categorization is that when individuals begin identifying with a certain group they tend to favor that ingroup and under certain conditions, may discriminate against outgroups (Hawley & Jackson, 1995).

The formation of categories, with which we identify ourselves and others, automatically contains properties that are generalized to all other members of that particular category (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). For example, someone who is
considered a "nerd" is thought to wear glasses. This allows quick judgments to be made so we do not have to pay attention to details and we save time and mental energy by categorizing others according to our assumptions. We also have the ability to associate ourselves with several groups depending on the level of security those groups can provide for us, how well those groups enhance who we are, and how closely we can identify and relate to the other members of those groups (Allport, 1954). However, individuals may belong to a social group without adopting that group as part of their social identity as Brewer (1991) notes; our social identities are chosen by ourselves, whether or not our membership with a group is voluntary or imposed.

Therefore, in middle school setting, we should expect that adolescents will choose friends in part because they can identify personally with them. At the same time, when the adolescent becomes a member of a group he or she may experience depersonalization. In other words, the adolescent no longer sticks out as an individual, but feels part of the group as a whole. Many adolescents find this attractive for different reasons, including the desire to gain popularity that is associated with the group.

Aside from the motive for joining a group, it is important to remember that intergroup bias and conflict are usually not due to outgroup devaluation, but instead to ingroup enhancement (Gaertner, Dovidio & Bachman, 1996). According to social identity theory, we are motivated to evaluate ourselves positively, and also to judge our group and its members more favorably than outgroups (Wittig, 1998). Being a member of a group allows interaction with one another quite frequently and this brings members close together and allows for similarities within the group to be perceived as larger than similarities to outgroup members (Gaertner, Dovidio & Bachman, 1996; Jackson, 2002).
This in turn distances them from outgroup members (Gaertner, Dovidio & Bachman, 1996).

Outgroup devaluation and prejudice does occur though, and is often acquired through direct socialization from parents, peers, and culture (Brown, 1995). Aboud (1998) created a three-stage model that shows the development of how children categorize. In the first stage, a child sees the world in very broad terms; male and female, or as Aboud states, "familiar and unfamiliar" (Brown, 1995). In the second stage, around the ages of 5-7, simple likes and dislikes become stereotypes, and traits now become associated with categories (Brown, 1995). In the third stage, the child is more capable of seeing individual variation among groups, which should lead to a decline in prejudice and discrimination (Brown, 1995). However, if a child is a part of a subordinate-group rather than a dominant-group, and their inferiorities stand out, the child might be more inclined to develop prejudice towards outgroup members rather than enhancing their ingroup (Brown, 1995). The inferiorities of subordinate-group members may also lead to negative attitudes towards other ingroup members since it is the outgroup who holds the dominating status in society.

There is evidence suggesting that the origin of some intergroup attitudes can be found early in life. For example, gender attitudes have been thought to be reinforced since infancy. Repetti (1984) found that parents transmitted their gender attitudes about toy preferences and occupations to their children (Brown, 1995). The children then carried these attitudes with them and later, when put in a setting that allowed them to choose toys to play with, their choices were based on their gender stereotypes. When
children were put in situations where they saw their gender stereotypes being reversed from the way they had learned them, negative attitudes and prejudice occurred.

Gender stereotyping and categorizing are just a couple of ways that can encourage negative attitudes about outgroup members. Therefore psychologists such as Allport (1954) have developed hypotheses about the conditions under which contact between adversarial groups can lead to a reduction in intergroup prejudice and discrimination.

There are many approaches to prejudice reduction. Wittig (1998) notes the importance of clarifying each approach separately, but also implies the importance of a multifaceted approach to prejudice reduction. Allport’s book became the most influential work on intergroup contact (Pettigrew, 1998), partly because his approach to intergroup contact was multifaceted, combining many techniques that were necessary for prejudice reduction. His “contact hypothesis emphasize[d] the social situation, targete[d] individual prejudicial attitude change, and propose[d] several conditions necessary for intergroup contact to be successful in reducing prejudice and enhancing tolerance” (Wittig, 1998, p. 3). Basically, he theorized that when conflicting groups were brought together in a situation of positive interdependence with a common goal, the prejudice and discrimination between these groups would be reduced.

FOUR CONDITIONS FOR INTERGROUP CONTACT TO WORK

Allport (1954) originally specified four conditions that were essential for intergroup contact to increase positive intergroup attitudes: equal group status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support of authorities (see Figure 1). All of these have shown to decrease bias and improve perceptions of outgroups through a process in which ingroup members re-evaluate their mental representations of outgroup members
(Dovidio, Gaertner & Validzic, 1998). In the following, I discuss the four conditions that need to be in place for intergroup contact to work. I have combined two of the conditions, common goals and intergroup cooperation, under the more inclusive category, interdependence.

Figure 1.

Equal Group Status

Equal group status occurs when the contributions from a group are equal to those contributions from another group. While many psychologists have supported and backed the use of equal group status as a condition for contact to reduce biases, there are equal status interventions that do not reduce prejudice because the contact produces threat to the groups’ distinctive ingroup identities (Dovidio, Gaertner & Validzic, 1998). Therefore, more careful interventions that preserve group identities need to occur (Dovidio, Gaertner & Validzic, 1998).

According to Hewstone and Brown’s (1986) model of mutual intergroup differentiation, when the original group identities are kept intact and not threatened by interaction with outgroup members, then a reduction in intergroup bias will occur.
Furthermore, groups need to be distinguished by their expertise and brought together to combine their qualities, without losing their identity (Dovidio, Gaertner & Validzic, 1998). This allows each group to respect the other group’s contributions by identifying their ability to benefit from the other group’s expertise (Dovidio, Gaertner & Validzic, 1998).

Interdependence

Allport (1954) specified that a common goal and cooperation were both needed to reduce bias between groups. Sherif’s (1954) Robbers Cave Experiment is an example of how cooperation and a common goal can lead to a reduction in bias. The participants in the experiment were boys who were attending a summer camp. They were separated into groups and then competed against one another in different activities. After prejudice and discrimination grew between groups they were then brought together to work towards solving problems that needed the help of everyone. One discovery that Sherif found was that cooperation towards a common goal needed to be repeated more than once for significant reduction in biases to occur (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). However, another condition that needs to be met for maximum positive attitude change is that the outcome of the superordinate goal be successful (Gilbert, Fiske & Lindzey, 1998).

Clearly, a superordinate or common goal is a goal that can only be attained if all the members of different groups work together through intergroup cooperation, and not through competition (Cross & Rosenthal, 1999). When groups are interdependent, they share responsibilities and tasks that are needed to achieve the superordinate goal. With this in mind, Cross and Rosenthal (1999) created the interactive problem solving model which hypothesizes that groups need to be interactive and engage in joint problem
solving with common goals in order to improve “communication, ... intergroup 
expectancies and attitudes, [and to reduce] misperceptions and destructive patterns of 

When members of groups interact they are given the “opportunity to work 
together, to communicate, to express values, to argue, to compromise, to reach 
agreement, and to gain information about ingroup and outgroup members” (Gaertner, et 
al., 1999, p. 388). Hence, the way groups interact and their views on their contributions 
are important factors in determining their subsequent attitudes (Hewstone & Brown, 
1986). In short, one must be careful to pay attention to maintaining distinction between 
groups and arrange the situation so that both contribute and work interdependently 
toward common goals (Hewstone & Brown, 1986).

Support of Authorities

Authority support during intergroup contact has been shown to be an important 
variable influencing positive affect among groups (Dovidio, Gaertner & Kawakami, 
2003). Authorities not only provide structure, but also can promote greater contact 
(Gilbert, Fiske & Lindsey, 1998). Additionally, authority figures help to create a new 
social climate which allows more tolerable attitudes to emerge (Gilbert, Fiske & Lindsey, 
1998).

MODELS / THEORIES OF CONTACT THEORY

Allport’s (1954) influential “contact hypothesis” has generated a great deal of 
attention on the conditions that are needed for prejudice and discrimination to be reduced 
during intergroup contact (Hawley & Jackson, 1995). While most research findings have 
been generally consistent with the conditions he specified more than 50 years ago, more
recent research has offered elaborate explanations for the effectiveness of contact theory. Throughout this next section some of these explanations will be presented.

**Optimal Distinctiveness Theory**

Social identities can be activated at certain times and during certain situations. When an individual becomes individuated, the need for inclusion, or collective identity, becomes more intense (Brewer, 1991). On the other hand, when a person is too immersed within a group the drive for more individuality may pull them away from group identification. Hence, the optimal distinctiveness theory proposes that through identification with categories, which are developed to classify individuals according to their common properties, we must achieve both a level of similarity to and differentiation from others (Brewer, 1991).

In intergroup contact, assimilation and differentiation are both capable of being achieved. By allowing groups to keep their own identity, their social inclusion can be met (Brewer, 1991). When the groups are brought together though, their interactions with one another can meet the need for differentiation (Brewer, 1991). Improved intergroup relations can occur as long as the boundaries can be clearly drawn so as to allow for both assimilation and differentiation (Brewer, 1991).

**Common Group Identity Model**

When groups form, their members become closer and ingroup enhancement occurs which is usually the beginning of intergroup bias (Gaertner, Dovidio & Bachman, 1996). The common group identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; see Figure 2) reduces intergroup bias by introducing a superordinate social category that encompasses both the ingroup and outgroup members (Dovidio, Gaertner & Validzic, 1998; Miller,
If the members of different groups are brought together and start to re-categorize themselves as a single group, then their perceptions of the former outgroup members are expected to become more positive and they will be more accepting of them (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

Figure 2. The Common Group Identity Model of Gaertner and Dovidio (2000; found in Miller, 2002).

**Decategorization Model**

Many of factors that are specified by the contact hypothesis reduce bias by decategorization (Dovidio, Gaertner & Validzic, 1998). During decategorization, “intergroup interaction can individuate members of the outgroup by revealing variability in their opinions or can produce personalization interactions with the exchange of more intimate information” (Dovidio, Gaertner & Validzic, 1998, p. 109). Decategorization allows group members to be seen as distinct and individual (Miller, 2002).
Mutual Intergroup Differentiation Model

The mutual intergroup differentiation model proposed by Hewstone and Brown (1986) takes an approach to group identity which argues that individuals in groups should not be deprived of their “valued group identities.” When cooperation towards a superordinate goal involves groups excelling at one particular task, mutual group differentiation makes it possible for ingroups to see that outgroups are capable of achieving a task that is pertinent to the attainment of a common goal (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). Precautions need to be made though, to ensure no group emerges as superior which could enhance discrimination tendencies (Hewstone & Brown, 1986).

OVERVIEW OF PRESENT STUDIES

During the 2004-2005 school year, three diverse middle schools in Marion, Ohio, merged to form one middle school (Grant Middle School). Prior to the merging, school administrators and parents were concerned about the possibility that deep fault lines (social boundaries) between students representing each of the schools might emerge. Project Unity was created to first identify emerging fault lines between students and then improve intergroup relations by applying the contact hypothesis. There are three crucial steps that took place in this research: identifying the social boundaries; identifying individuals at the center of the social groups; and creating a task built on positive interdependence. The task was a theatrical production. Once students were selected to participate in the study, they were asked to create their own scripts, put together sets, and perform a production that deals with stereotypes and prejudice. Some may be more knowledgeable about one task than another; therefore, they were combining their
individual contributions to produce an entire theatre production. The expectation was that intergroup relations would be improved through cooperation.

In the first study sixth through eighth grade students were provided a survey that asked them to identify the different social groups in their school; 12 groups were identified (see Figure 3). In study 2, 34 core group members, who were chosen by counselors at the middle school, were administered an inventory that consisted of five scales designed to assess intergroup relations. Three of the five scales had items that were unreliable. These scales were modified for Study 3. In study 3, 26 students of the core group members wanted to continue their involvement in the project, and filled out an inventory on their first day of participation. This time the scales were found to be reliable. The scales also were correlated with one another indicating construct validity (i.e., that each of the scales were measuring the same underlying construct in varying degrees). The data from study 3 served as a pretest. In Study 4, students wrote the scripts for the play. Then they filled out the intergroup relations inventory for a second time (post test). Pretest and post test scores were compared to see if the interdependent activity (script writing) improved intergroup relations.

**Figure 3.** The 12 social groups that were identified in Study 1.
Study 1: Identifying Social Groups

Methods

Participants
A total of 475 sixth, seventh, and eight grade students from Grant Middle School participated in taking a survey (N=475, M=240, F=232, 6th=203, 7th=27, 8th=243, 2 teachers, 2 no gender mentioned, 1 no grade mentioned).

Materials
The survey was aimed at identifying different social groups that would be present at Grant Middle School. Questions were asked such as, “Name the most important groups in your school,” “Name groups that don’t along with each other,” and “Your ingroup.” Questions can be found in Appendix A.

Procedures
A survey, designed to identify social groups, was given to teachers, counselors, and the School Director at Grant Middle School, who in turn provided feedback on the readability of the questions for students. Teachers at Grant Middle School were then given the surveys to hand out to their students while in class. In one part of the questionnaire, students were asked to list the groups in their school. Subsequently, the number of times each group was listed was tallied in order to ascertain which social groups were most prominent within the middle school.

Results
A total of 36 groups were identified by students; those groups that were identified at least two percent of the time were used in future surveys. In addition, five groups were removed because they were the product of an education division rather than a social
group division (e.g., 8th graders). The final 12 groups identified were as followed with the most frequent appearing first, least frequent last: Preps, Jocks, Goths, Nerds, Choir, Geeks, Band, Rich Kids, Smart Kids, FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes), Skaters, Punks.

In order to assess whether students’ lists of social groups could be reliably categorized into 12 groups, the lists of 100 students were randomly selected and then two judges independently sorted the students’ responses into the 12 categories. The degree of agreement between the judges was 86.5 percent. With the social groups identified, the next step was to create an inventory that would measure intergroup relations.

Study 2: Intergroup Relations
Examining the Reliability of Three Scales

Methods

Participants

A total of 34 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students were selected by counselors and teachers at Grant Middle School to participate in Study 2 (N=34, 45.1% 8th grade, 32.2% 7th grade, 22.5% 6th grade, 3 no grade mentioned).

Procedures

Students at Grant Middle School were nominated by the school’s counselors and principals. Counselors and principals were asked to select students on the basis of the students’ centrality to each of the 12 social groups previously identified. A meeting was held at Grant Middle School to bring the students together and talk to them about the project. Students were given an inventory that measured their relations with the 12 different social groups. The inventory consisted of five scales: (1) intergroup attitudes,
(2) intergroup unity, (3) perspective taking, (4) group identity, and (5) empathy in relation to each of the 12 social groups (e.g., peers). Three of the scales (Perspective Taking, Empathy, and Group Identity) were comprised of two items. The reliability of these scales was assessed with Cronbach’s alpha. Cronbach’s alpha is used to check the consistency of the items that comprise a scale (Iacobucci & Duhachek, 2003); the higher the alpha coefficient, the more reliable the item (Reynaldo & Santos, 1999). For example, if two items consistently changed together in the predicted direction, so that the value of one item could be predicted perfectly if one knew the value of the other item, the alpha would be 1.0. Reliability can range across different disciplines, though generally 0.7 is used as the minimum acceptable level in psychology (Reynaldo & Santos, 1999).

Results

No reversed scored questions were found to be reliable with Cronbach’s alpha. Therefore, negatively scored items were not used in subsequent studies. Items were rewritten so that they were positively worded. For example, the reversed scored question used for Perspective Taking in Study 2 was as follows: 1. I don’t waste much time listening to preps. The same question was then reworded for Study 3 as follows: 1. It’s easy for me to see things the way preps do. With the new questions in place, the new inventory was ready for the next step which was rechecking the reliability of the items and checking the construct validity of scales.

Study 3: Measures of Intergroup Relations
Assessing Reliability and Construct Validity

Methods

Participants
A total of 26 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students who chose to take part in the project, participated in Study 3 (N=26, 7 sixth grade, 10 seventh grade, 9 eighth grade). Sixteen of the students were from the sample in Study 2. In addition, the project was open to students’ friends.

**Procedures**

The revised inventory was given to all 26 students on their first day of participation, since not all students started on the first day of the workshops. Students could take as much time as they needed to complete the inventory. The revised inventory is in Appendix B.

**Results**

Cronbach’s Alpha was computed to assess the reliability of three scales that were not reliable in Study 2: Perspective Taking, Group Identity, and Empathy scale. As seen in Table 1, both Empathy and Group Identity were found to be reliable scales when worded positively and in reference to each of the 12 social groups. The coefficients were at or above 0.70. Perspective Taking, however, had five groups whose coefficient was below 0.70, leaving us with some uncertainty about the reliability of the Perspective Taking scale.

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Table 1. The reliability of two positive scored items when computed with Cronbach’s alpha.
In order to assess construct validity, the scales were correlated with one another. As illustrated in Table 2, the Group Identity scale and Intergroup Unity scale were found to be related. This presumes that both are measuring the same underlying property. Basically, when a person holds a strong identity to a group they are more likely to feel an emotional attachment to the group (Tajfel, 1981). All groups with the exception of two (Geeks and Choir) were found to be positively correlated.

Perspective Taking and Empathy have also been found to be related (Batson, Early & Salvarani, 1997). As seen in Table 2 Perspective Taking and Empathy were found to be positively correlated in all 12 social groups.

It is important to remember that not all measures are related. For example, Group Identity and Perspective Taking are not related. Though Perspective Taking could enhance one’s Identity to a group, it is not necessarily needed to have an Identity (Enright, et al., 1983). However, in Table 2 one can see that when Perspective Taking and Identity were correlated, all 12 groups were found to have significance. This occurrence could be interpreted with the explanation that those students who identify with a certain social group are able to understand that group’s perspective; and vice versa.
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Table 2. Significance that is generated when comparing two measurements for all 12 social groups.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Since the scales were found to be related, suggesting they were measuring the same underlying construct (i.e., intergroup relations), the same inventory was used in the post study (Study 4). The data from Study 3 and 4 were then compared to determine if any significant differences were present; hence supporting the hypothesis that contact improved intergroup relations.
Study 4: Comparing Pre and Post Test Scores

Methods

Participants

The same participants from Study 3 participated in Study 4 except for one person who did not participate. (N=25, 6 sixth grade, 10 seventh grade, 8 eighth grade, 1 no grade mentioned).

Procedures

Student’s participated in workshops for several weeks, during which they had discussions about social groups, created short skits, sang songs and danced. After the workshops, participants took the intergroup relationship inventory once again (posttest). This inventory was identical to the inventory that was used as the pretest in Study 3.

Results

Each of the five scales (e.g., Perspective Taking) for each of the 12 social groups was compared, before and after participating in the script writing, using a t-test for related measures. Not all scales were expected to show a significant difference because some scales, such as Intergroup Unity and Group Identity, were expected to provide a stable and enduring measure of the individual’s social identity. However, scales such as Perspective Taking, Intergroup Attitudes, and Empathy were expected to yield a significant difference when pretest measures were compared to posttest measures. No significant differences between the pretest and posttest occurred on any of the five scales. Hence, there were no changes in overall intergroup relations.
Discussion

The present research was designed to address concerns expressed by parents, teachers, and administrators over the merging of three schools into one large school. A question arose: How can this transition be facilitated in a way that prevents intergroup conflict. Among the best theories that can be used for guidance in preventing conflict is contact theory. The purpose of this research was to apply contact theory in a middle school setting. However, in order to apply contact theory, several preliminary studies had to be carried out.

In the first study, the students were given a survey that asked them to identify the different social groups that existed in their middle school. They were able to identify 12 social groups that were used in all subsequent studies. Interestingly, the groups they identified were not the groups that were of concern to parents and administrators. Instead of breaking along the lines of schools from which the children came, the social fault lines broke along traditional lines (e.g., nerds, jocks, etc.)

The second study consisted of an inventory that was created to assess intergroup relations between the 12 social groups identified in Study 1. Of the five scales on the inventory, three had unreliable items that were modified for Study 3. In Study 3 students who continued their involvement with the project took an inventory similar to the one given in Study 2, but with questions modified. This time, the scales were found to be reliable and when correlated with one another, indicated construct validity. Clearly, Study 3 demonstrated that it was possible to develop five reliable scales that tapped the underlying construct, “intergroup relations.”
Even though the measure of "intergroup relations" was reliable and had construct validity, the measure failed to detect any changes that might have occurred due to students participating in script writing together. The lack of a significant change in intergroup relations is puzzling. Perhaps some of the conditions for contact theory were not met.

Students did cooperate, did have a common goal, and did participate on the basis of equal status. In particular students went through a series of workshops at the school where participation and discussion about social groups took place. Short skits were written and rehearsed in front of other participating students during these workshops and students were encouraged to put themselves into the roles of individuals from different social groups (e.g., perspective taking). Additionally, songs and dance movements allowed students to choose lyrics that had meaning to their lives. They would then act out those lyrics to show how they would feel in that situation in order to encourage empathy. Each student put forth the effort towards completing the script, but without the help of others the goal would not have been met. Therefore, with the involvement of each student and the opportunity for each to participate in the different aspects of the projects, cooperation toward a common goal under equal status conditions occurred. In addition, there was support by authorities throughout the production.

It was expected that with all the conditions mentioned above (equal group status, common goal, intergroup cooperation, and support of authorities), these students would experience a positive change in their relations with and attitudes towards various social groups that they would not get along with under normal circumstances. One explanation for the lack of significant changes in intergroup relations can be found in
decategorization theory (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Validzic, 1998). When decategorization occurs, a member of a group is seen as an individual, rather than a part of that group (see Figure 4). In this situation, a student who was a member of a social group (e.g., preps) is decategorized from that group and in turn is seen as a distinct individual with whom it is possible to have a more intimate relationship with now. However, the student has only changed his/her opinion about this individual and not about the group as a whole. Therefore, because of decategorization, the student would not change his or her attitude or relationship with the “prep” social group.

Figure 4. A model of the effects of Decategorization.

Another explanation could be that there was limited time available (about six weeks) for students to interact before the posttest was administered. Therefore, if more time were provided so that students had a longer period of interaction, the results might have yielded significant differences. Among these lines, Sherif and Sherif (1953) have suggested that cooperation towards a common goal be repeated more than once. Hence, more time would have given ample opportunity for several tasks to be completed towards
various common goals, which could have led to a change in intergroup relations. However, at the time of this writing, students are rehearsing and introducing acting venues (e.g., videos, dance, etc.). Perhaps by the time the performance occurs in June, there will be changes in intergroup relations.

Perhaps another reason why a change in intergroup relations did not occur is that the common goal, the creation and production of a theatrical play, was not rewarding for all the students. Allport (1954) proposed that common goals were one of the four conditions needed for a decrease in bias to occur, and others, such as Sherif and Sherif (1953) have tested this proposition. However, the Robber's Cave Experiment by Sherif and Sherif had the boys working towards goals such as fixing the camp's water supply or pulling their broken-down bus up a hill. Those goals required the boys to work together or their consequences would be felt (i.e. no water, no transportation). Hence, maybe the theatrical play is a goal that some students might not find rewarding once it is achieved; therefore those students do not put forth the cooperation and effort towards the goal that is needed.

Although we were able to develop reliable and valid measures of intergroup relations, there is reason to believe that modifications should be made in future research in order to create significant changes in intergroup relations. Decategorization was one suggestion as to why attitude change did not occur towards groups but rather towards individuals. Instead of bringing individual students who are central to social groups, maybe the groups themselves, or several students from a group, should participate in activities. Additionally, as suggested by Sherif and Sherif (1953), more time and several even varied tasks are needed for a significant reduction in biases to occur. Perhaps
starting at the beginning of the school year would yield enough time for changes in
intergroup relations to occur. Future research should remedy these problems in order to
better test the contact theory as applied to middle school settings.
REFERENCES


Appendix A: Social Group Survey

Teachers: Please Read Aloud to your Students

Check Grade Level: 6th □ 7th □ 8th □

Check one: Male □ Female □

Let's begin with groups in your school:

Name the most important groups in your school.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

Name groups that do not get along with each other.

Name groups that don't talk to each other.

Name groups that do get along with each other.
Teachers: Please Continue Reading Aloud to your Students

We all belong to groups and these groups are part of us. For example, a girl named Heidi who is in the seventh grade belongs to many groups. One group is the girl group (not boy group). Another group is seventh graders. Maybe Heidi comes from a family that has a lot of money. Then, Heidi belongs to three groups: girls, seventh graders, and rich people. Heidi also belongs to groups in her school. Heidi feels all of these groups are part of her. They are part of who she is.

When you think about it, each of us belongs to many groups: For example, the school you belong to is Grant Middle School. You also belong to one of the houses at Grant Middle School. You belong to a family. You belong to a neighborhood. The city you live in is called Marion. Marion is part of you. Your grade level is part of who you are. All of these groups are part of who we are.

Think about the groups you belong to. Which group is really important to you when you are in school? In the box below, write down a group that you belong to, a group that is part of you. We will call this group your ingroup because you are in that group.

Your Ingroup

Now think about a group that does not get along with your ingroup. We will call that group your outgroup because you are outside that group. Write the name of the outgroup in the box.

Your Outgroup

Circle your answer to these questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can always count on my ingroup.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I am glad to be a member of my ingroup.</td>
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<td>3. Members of the outgroup treat me badly.</td>
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<td>4. The outgroup gets in the way of my ingroup?</td>
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Appendix B: Revised Inventory

Name ____________________ Grade ______

The Feeling Thermometer

The feeling thermometer measures how you feel about people and things.

For example, let’s say this is how you feel about oranges.

Extremely Positive
A Little Positive
Not Negative, Not Positive
A Little Negative
Extremely Negative

In this example, you feel extremely negative about oranges.

Now, let’s say this is how you feel about apples:

Extremely Positive
A Little Positive
Not Negative, Not Positive
A Little Negative
Extremely Negative

In this example, you feel a little positive about apples.
Now, use a pencil or pen to fill-in the feeling thermometers.

How do you feel about Preps?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative

How do you feel about Nerds?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative
How do you feel about Goths?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative

How do you feel about Geeks?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative
How do you feel about Punks?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative

How do you feel about Band kids?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative
How do you feel about Jocks?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative

How do you feel about FCAs?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative
How do you feel about Rich kids?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative

How do you feel about Smart kids?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative
How do you feel about Skaters?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative

How do you feel about Choir kids?

- Extremely Positive
- A Little Positive
- Not Negative, Not Positive
- A Little Negative
- Extremely Negative
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<tr>
<td>Put a ✓ in the box that fits you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It's easy for me to see things the way preps do</td>
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<td>I feel I belong to the prep group</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have caring feelings for preps</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel sorry for preps when they have problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>I sometimes try to understand preps by seeing things through their eyes</td>
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<td>I am a prep</td>
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<td>It's easy for me to see things the way nerds do</td>
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<td>I feel I belong to the nerd group</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have caring feelings for nerds</td>
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<td>I feel sorry for nerds when they have problems</td>
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<td>I sometimes try to understand nerds by seeing things through their eyes</td>
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<td>I am a nerd</td>
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<td>It's easy for me to see things the way goths do</td>
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<td>I feel I belong to the goth group</td>
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<td>I have caring feelings for goths</td>
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<td>I feel sorry for goths when they have problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>I sometimes try to understand goths by seeing things through their eyes</td>
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<td>I am a goth</td>
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<td>I have caring feelings for geeks</td>
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<td>I feel sorry for geeks when they have problems</td>
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<td>I sometimes try to understand geeks by seeing things through their eyes</td>
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<td>I feel sorry for punks when they have problems</td>
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<td>I sometimes try to understand punks by seeing things through their eyes</td>
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<td>I am a punk</td>
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<td>I feel I belong to the band group</td>
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<td>I have caring feelings for band kids</td>
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Some Questions about School Groups

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<td>I have caring feelings for smart kids</td>
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<td>I feel sorry for smart kids when they have problems</td>
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<td>I sometimes try to understand skaters by seeing things through their eyes</td>
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<td>I am a skater</td>
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<td>It's easy for me to see things the way choir kids do</td>
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<td>I feel I belong to the choir group</td>
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<td>I have caring feelings for choir kids</td>
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<td>I feel sorry for choir kids when they have problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>I sometimes try to understand choir kids by seeing things through their eyes</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am a choir kid</td>
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Questions about Relationships

Circle number of the picture that best describes your relationship with Preps.

1. You  Preps
2. You  Preps
3. You  Preps
4. You  Preps

5. You  Preps
6. You  Preps
7. You and Preps

Circle the number of the picture that best describes your relationship with Nerds.

1. You  Nerds
2. You  Nerds
3. You  Nerds
4. You  Nerds

5. You  Nerds
6. You  Nerds
7. You and Nerds
Circle the number of the picture that best describes your relationship with Goths.

Circle the number of the picture that best describes your relationship with Geeks.
Circle the number of the picture that best describes your relationship with Punks.

1. You and Punks
2. You and Punks
3. You and Punks
4. You and Punks
5. You and Punks
6. You and Punks
7. You and Punks

Circle the number of the picture that best describes your relationship with Band kids.

1. You and Band
2. You and Band
3. You and Band
4. You and Band
5. You and Band
6. You and Band
7. You and Band

Contact Hypothesis 44
Circle the number of the picture that best describes your relationship with Jocks.

1. You and Jocks
2. Jocks
3. You and Jocks
4. You and Jocks
5. You → Jocks
6. You → Jocks
7. You and Jocks

Circle the number of the picture that best describes your relationship with FCAs.

1. You and FCAs
2. You and FCAs
3. You and FCAs
4. You and FCAs
5. You → FCAs
6. You → FCAs
7. You and FCAs
Circle the number of the picture that best describes your relationship with Rich kids.

1  You  Rich
2  You  Rich
3  You  Rich
4  You  Rich

5  You  Rich
6  You  Rich
7  You and Rich

Circle the number of the picture that best describes your relationship with Smart kids.

1  You  Smart
2  You  Smart
3  You  Smart
4  You  Smart

5  You  Smart
6  You  Smart
7  You and Smart
Circle the number of the picture that best describes your relationship with Skaters.

1. You  
   Skater

2. You  
   Skater

3. You  
   Skater

4. You  
   Skater

5. You  
   Skater

6. You  
   Skater

7. You  
   Skater

Circle the number that best describes your relationship with Choir kids.

1. You  
   Choir

2. You  
   Choir

3. You  
   Choir

4. You  
   Choir

5. You  
   Choir

6. You  
   Choir

7. You  
   Choir
Appendix C: Theatre Activities

UNITY PROJECT
Theatre Presentation

"STICKS AND STONES..."

I. Short Skits

A. Game Show
   In this skit a game show host like on Jeopardy or Who Wants to Be a Millionaire will ask questions to middle school contestants about the various groups and stereotypes in school. The goal of the skit is to dispel stereotypes and allow the audience to think of groups as more complex than uni-dimensional.

B. Star Trek
   In this skit an alien life form from Planet Gothica will beam to earth a videoconference with a group of middle school kids. Planet Gothica is having a lot of internal strife amongst their warring groups. Planet Gothica hopes that earth kids can help them find a way to get along.

C. Puppet Life
   In this skit done with larger than life-size puppets, we will meet a family of White Rabbits. They are having trouble with two of their group. Bunny Pink has decided to wear pink leather with studs and a bright pink wig and a pink dog collar and armbands with studs. Then there's Bunny Ambler who has decided he prefers to walk and not hop. How will the rabbit family learn to live with these two rebels?

D. Trading Places
   In this skit, a Goth and a Jock are secretly friends. Both their respective groups can't believe they have the other as a friend. The Goth and the Jock decide to play a trick on the other Jocks. The Jock will dress up as Goth the next day and the Goth will dress as a Jock. The Jock group doesn't recognize the Jock dressed as Goth and beat him up. When his true identity is revealed, the school must come to terms with their ideas of each other.

E. Family and School Life
   In this skit there will be two settings - one at home and one at school. At home we will see a student interact with his parents and siblings. Their behaviors are stereotypically racist, sexist, and all about group stereotypes. The student then behaves similarly when in school. The goal of the skit is to reveal that students are influenced at home, by the media, etc., and that what they bring to school is part of that. Moreover, all these learned behaviors can be unlearned.
F. Rumors/Telephone
   Here a series of students will stand in line on stage (maybe as many as 20 to 25). This
   may be an audience participation skit. Then at one end of the chain a message will start
   and be passed on secretly from student to student. We will see what the final message
   ends up looking like.

G. Survivor Episode
   While on their biology trip to an island, the middle school students and their two
   teachers get stranded. The group of students is comprised of many of the various groups
   at school. Each student/group must use their strengths to get the whole stranded bunch
   back to land.

II. Songs with Dance and Movement

A. Beautiful

B. Don't Laugh At Me

C. Hero

III. Video Montages

A. The Diversity Within (with Grant students)
   A video montage of the diversity that already exists at Grant Middle School amongst
   students, faculty, administrators, and parents set to music

B. Sicks and Stooes, . . . (with Grant students)
   A video montage of students' responses to the following question: What is the worst
   thing you have been called and how did it make you feel?

C. Labels, Schmabels (with Grant students)
   A video montage of students' responses to the following question: Why do we label
   everyone as this or that and how does that affect school unity?

D. The Value of Diversity for Our Kids (with Grant students' parents)
   A video montage with parents responding to the following question: Is diversity at
   school and in the community important for your child's education? Why or why not?

E. Down Memory Lane (with Grant teachers)
   A video montage with Grant teachers about groupings and name callings when they
   were in middle school and how that made them feel etc.
Beautiful by Christina Aguilera

Every day is so wonderful
And suddenly, it's hard to breathe Now and then, I get insecure From all the fame, I'm so ashamed

I am beautiful no matter what they say Words can't bring me down
I am beautiful in every single way Yes, words can't bring me down
So don't you bring me down today

To all your friends, you're delirious
So consumed in all your doom
Trying hard to fill the emptiness
The piece is gone and the puzzle undone That's the way it is

You are beautiful no matter what they say Words won't bring you down
You are beautiful in every single way Yes, words won't bring you down
Don't you bring me down today...

No matter what we do
(no matter what we do)
No matter what they say
(no matter what they say) When the sun is shining through Then the clouds won't stay

And everywhere we go (everywhere we go)
The sun won't always shine (sun won't always shine) But tomorrow will find a way All the other times

We are beautiful no matter what they say Yes, words won't bring us down
We are beautiful no matter what they say Yes, words can't bring us down
Don't you bring me down today

Don't you bring me down today Don't you bring me down today
Don't Laugh At Me By Mark Wills

I'm a little boy with glasses The one they call the geek
A little girl who never smiles 'Cause I've got braces on my teeth And I know how it feels
T a cry myself to sleep

I'm that kid on every playground Who's always chosen last
A single teenage mother Tryin' to overcome my past You don't have to be my friend But
is it too much to ask

Don't laugh at me
Don't call me names
Don't get your pleasure from my pain In God's eyes we're all the same Someday we'll all
have perfect wings Don't laugh at me

I'm the cripple on the corner You've passed me on the street And I wouldn't be out here
beggin' If I had enough to eat
And don't think I don't notice That our eyes never meet

I lost my wife and little boy when Someone cross that yellow line The day we laid them
in the ground Is the day I lost my mind
And right now I'm down to holdin' This little cardboard sign...so

Don't laugh at me
Don't call me names
Don't get your pleasure from my pain In God's eyes we're all the same Someday we'll all
have perfect wings

Don't laugh at me

I'm fat, I'm thin, I'm short, I'm tall I'm deaf, I'm blind, hey, aren't we all

Don't laugh at me
Don't call me names
Don't get your pleasure from my pain In God's eyes we're all the same Someday we'll all
have perfect wings Don't laugh at me