Are We Ready to Translate Research Into Programs?

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There is enough basic research on social cognition, developmental psychology, and peer relations as they relate to prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping to address program development and evaluation. At the same time, there are enough race relations programs being developed and implemented to inform basic research on prejudice. This issue brings together articles on the interface between basic research and programs on prejudice. The articles focus on specific programs such as affirmative action, multicultural and bilingual education, cooperative learning, social-cognitive skills training, and bystander interventions. This introductory article provides an overview of the goals and implications of the issue.

As the 20th century comes to a close, instances of prejudice, hate, and discrimination continue to make headlines. The road to racial harmony has truly been an uphill climb throughout the century. Yet personal fervor and the commitment to shape a fair and equal society has continued to motivate social scientists working in this field.

Those who have witnessed the trials and errors of the past 50 years have at times become disillusioned by the failed experiments and the backlash they created. Many retreated to their laboratories to understand better the dynamics of prejudice within tightly controlled settings while others remained in the field developing programs for school, work, and community settings. We believe it is time to bring together these innovators. There is enough basic research on social

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cognition, developmental psychology, and peer relations as they relate to prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping to inform program development and evaluation. At the same time, there are enough race relations programs being developed and implemented to inform theorizing on prejudice.

In this issue, we offer a set of articles on the interface between basic research and programs. Contributors to this issue have one foot in the academic laboratory and one foot in the community's television studios, classrooms, or places of work. Depending on their orientation the authors address the programs first and then the research used to evaluate them, or the research first and then the programs that emerged from them.

The articles in this issue all focus on specific types of programs such as affirmative action, multicultural education, bilingual education, cooperative learning, social-cognitive skills training, bystander interventions, and teacher training. A unique contribution of these articles is that they focus on ways to reduce prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination in everyday life. They bring to bear a multidisciplinary range of ideas that have benefited by being tested in the field.

Although the questions framed by authors of this issue were driven by the tricky problem of how to reduce prejudice and promote respectful interactions, the search for answers has been directed by theory and research. Evaluation of the programs' successes and failures can then be used to provide feedback to a body of knowledge shared by others in the field. Consequently, the articles in this issue discuss programs within the context of past theory and research. The diversity of programs, however, shows how creative social scientists can be with their theories and background research.

The process of translating theory and research into programs has been a difficult one, going through many iterations. The first set of articles in this issue describes programs that emerged from one particular process. Driven partly by ideological and political will, desegregated, integrated, and bilingual schooling became a social reality. The most commonly used theories of intergroup contact at this time, Allport's (1954) contact theory and Tajfel's (1970) social identity theory, pointed to social and cognitive factors that would play a part in the unfolding of these programs. Laboratory analogue studies, such as those by Cook (1985) with college students, provided encouraging evidence that mixed-race groups of problem solvers could work together effectively under certain conditions. Translating this research into programs has proved difficult and disappointing to many. As we see from the articles by Khmelkov and Hallinan on peer relations in desegregated schools, Slavin and Cooper on cooperative learning groups, and Genesee and Gándara on bilingual programs, daily contact in the classroom provides opportunities for contact but not always the hoped-for respect for members of other groups. However, it does produce students who are more knowledgeable about others and more skilled in social interaction than would be possible without these programs. The successes and failures of these programs have drawn our attention to ways to

improve school practices and teacher training so that they produce the conditions for equal, cooperative, and individualized intergroup contact.

The second set of articles was inspired by socialization theory (e.g., Allport, 1954) emphasizing conformity and learning. One of the most powerful classroom applications of this theory was the blue-eyed/brown-eyed technique developed by an elementary school teacher, Jane Elliott, to illustrate how terrible it feels to be the target or perpetrator of discrimination. Such demonstrations were necessary to break the myth that children are unprejudiced and should be protected from the acrimonious conflicts of adults. Translating a demonstration into a program proved to be difficult to sustain. In fact, as Bigler points out in her article, much of the early work with children was ideologically based and so lacked a sound theoretical or empirical rationale. When the more carefully controlled studies cited by Bigler failed to show any effect of the intervention, the research stagnated because of lack of direction. As illustrated by Graves' article, some turned to the mass media as a vicarious source of intergroup contact and tolerant racial attitudes. Unfortunately, television has often communicated the wrong messages to its viewers in its depiction or lack of depiction of visible minorities. Graves reviews several decades of research and programming and describes two exciting new media interventions. Another powerful learning tool, reminiscent of the blue-eyed/brown-eyed demonstration and developed further by Stephan and Finlay, is to engage the receivers' emotions through empathy. Vicarious contact through the media can have a more beneficial impact when it arouses anger at unjustified discrimination as well as emotional identification with outgroup members.

The final section brings together the diverse orientations of social, personality, and developmental psychology. Although work stemming from these theoretical perspectives has shown that categorization is inevitable and adaptive (e.g., Brewer & Brown, 1998; Fishbein, 1996; Fiske, 1998) the articles in this section focus on evidence for variation and change in stereotyping and prejudice. Historical, cultural, age, and individual differences belie the conclusion that we are set in our ways. Attempts to change people, and eventually the system, demand that we bring to bear theories of change. Levy's article links developmental and social psychological theorizing on perceiver differences in social-cognitive factors and applies the findings to prejudice reduction efforts. One important conclusion is that most people have access to a variety of social schema and skills, which can be differentially strengthened through training or social influence. Aboud and Fenwick's article elaborates on research, in field and laboratory settings, that demonstrates the impact of social influence in changing the way people think and talk about race. Their work illustrates that low-prejudice persons can reduce the prejudice of their more highly prejudiced peers. And the final article by Pratkanis and Turner presents an innovative model for interpreting the reactions of White people to affirmative action. Once again, there are many routes open to people who wish to change the pattern of race relations that exists in the workplace and in society

at large—the one proposed here, called democratic altruism, includes many of the constructs raised by the other authors in this issue.

In the 21st century, the challenge for researchers in this area will be to continue evaluating rigorously the many interventions currently used while continuing to examine in more controlled settings the mechanisms underlying prejudice reduction. The success of the interventions also will hinge on developing a stronger partnership between educators, psychologists, and parents who need each other's input when designing, evaluating, and implementing interventions. In this way, the interventions targeting adults go hand in hand with the interventions targeting children. Because there is not a one-to-one correspondence between prejudice and discrimination, several intervention programs directed at emotional, cognitive, and behavioral change will likely need to be implemented and integrated. And last but not least, as computers become more and more commonplace, researchers will need to embrace the Internet as a potential vehicle for reducing prejudice and hate across the globe.

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