

MULTIRACIAL STUDENTS ACADEMIC POSTER

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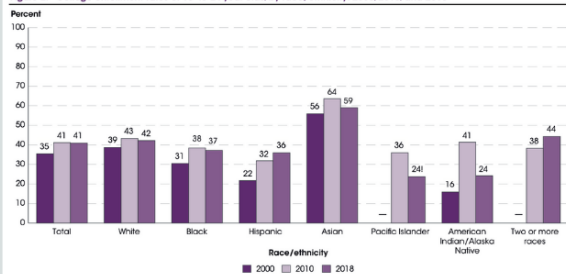
STUDENT POPULATION OVERVIEW

Multiracial students are defined as students who come from two parents who hold different racial ancestries (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The multiracial population in America is steadily growing and has changed considerably since 2010. It was measured at 9 million people in the 2010 U.S. Census and is now 33.8 million people in 2020, a 276% increase. (Jones, et al., 2021). As a result of continued growth, the number of multiracial students on college campuses is predicted to increase (Okamoto, 2020, p. 2).

IMPORTANT!

Multiracial students are not monolithic.

Figure 2. College enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: 2000, 2010, and 2018



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Limited and imprecise data on multiracial people have rendered multiracial college students an underexplored group (Mitchell & Warren, 2022). Multiracial people constitute one of the fastest growing demographic groups, growing substantially just in the last few decades alone (Mitchell & Warren, 2022, p. 2). Between 2010 and 2018, the college enrollment of multiracial students increased by 120 percent, from 294,000 to 647,000 students (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

TRENDS, CURRENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Recent qualitative research on multiracial college students indicates that they face a number of challenges during college, including racial microaggressions, the policing of racial categories, and feelings of isolation from monoracial groups (Mitchell & Warren, 2022, p.5). Multiracial individuals tend to score worse on measures of mental health than monoracial people, experiencing elevated levels of depression, lower rates of satisfaction, and higher rates of suicidality (Mitchell & Warren, 2022, p.2).



RELEVANT TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- **Multiraciality** - a broad term pertaining to multiracial or mixed-race identity, categories, groups, or phenomena (Guillermo-Wann & Johnston, 2012, as cited in Johnston-Guerrero et al., 2020).
- **Monoracism** - the systemic social oppression that targets individuals who do not fit into monoracial categories or groups (Harris, 2016; Johnston & Nadal, 2010, as cited in Johnston-Guerrero et al., 2020).
- **Microaggressions** - brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color (Heilman, 2022).

DIVERSITY WITHIN THE POPULATION

Multiracial students are not monolithic. They might have different identities within their multiracial identities (Johnston-Guerrero et al., 2020, p. 32). In considering this variance, investigations using four years of data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) showed that there are differences in engagement among multiracial students from different racial heritage groups and across institutional types, illuminating diversity among multiracial students and institutional diversity as a factor in student engagement. (Renn as cited in Johnston-Guerrero & Wijeyesinghe, 2021, p. 23).

ISSUES OF DEVELOPMENT

Multiracial students are a particularly vulnerable group that struggles to find community on campus, faces exclusion for failing to be monoracial "enough", and has their multiracial identity denied by both their white and nonwhite monoracial peers (Mitchell & Warren, 2022, p.6) While exploration and affirmation are important components of positive racial identity development, multiracial youth seem to spend more time in the exploration stage of their racial identity, and many do not even reach the affirmation stage (Campbell, 2020, p. 3). One's identity development and exploration should never be a negative experience but due to society's discomfort with being unable to racially categorize everyone, mixed-race people suffer the most (Okamoto, 2020, p. 6).

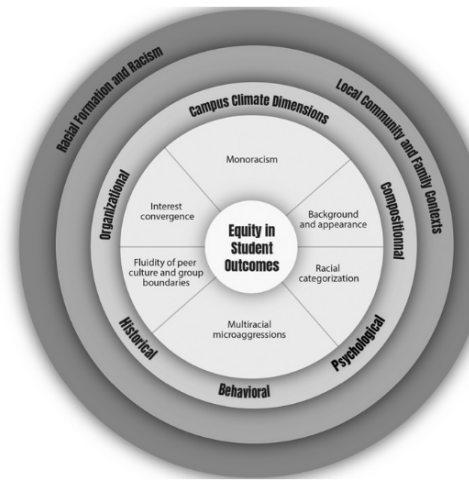


Figure 11.1. Contextualizing Multiraciality in Campus Climate (CMCC) model. Note. © 2020, Chelsea Guillermo-Wann and Marc P. Johnston-Guerrero.

STUDENTS' COLLEGIATE EXPERIENCE

In college, multiracial students have the opportunity to build their own identities outside of the racial identification of their parents, often for the first time. This transition allows students to explore the fluidity of race (Mitchell & Warren, 2022, p.3). This exploration is still challenging since the policing of racial boundaries by monoracial people often leads to a sense of racial homelessness and social displacement in multiracial students (Mitchell & Warren, 2022, p.2). Studies show multiracial students have difficulty claiming multiracial oppression, which indicates that there needs to be more education about monoracism as a system of oppression. (Johnston-Guerrero, 2020, p. 31).

IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

While many schools have directed efforts toward diversity and equity initiatives to support minority students in PWIs, much of the messaging around these programs unintentionally excludes multiracial students who may not identify with opportunities coded for monoracial groups (Mitchell & Warren, 2022, p. 14). College campuses need to have specific spaces designed for multiracial or multiethnic students to gather. If a mixed-race student decides to commit their education to a particular college campus, it is essential that they know how to navigate and access spaces where they feel welcomed, safe, and comfortable. (Okamoto, 2020, p. 13).

STRATEGIES FOR ADVISING

- Avoid contributing to the cycle of monoracial socialization (Johnston-Guerrero et al., 2020).
- Challenge multiracial students to think about their race through both a monoracial lens and a multiracial one (Johnston-Guerrero et al., 2020).
- Be aware of intersectionality, power, and privilege (Johnston-Guerrero & Wijeyesinghe, 2021).
- Provide multiple options for self-identification and allow students to change that self-identification over time (Johnston-Guerrero & Wijeyesinghe, 2021).
- Offer multiracial groups in university counseling centers (Johnston-Guerrero & Wijeyesinghe, 2021).