

**In Defence of Social Justice:
A Qualitative Study on an Intergroup Dialogue Programme
in American Higher Education**

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Abstract

The continuous struggle for equity in American culture and the recent racial tensions on university campuses across the United States prompt further exploration into innovative initiatives that maximise the educational benefits of diversity in higher education. Intergroup dialogue (IGD) has gained recognition as a transformative social justice education practice that focuses on issues of diversity and inequality while employing critical, democratic pedagogies. This qualitative study examines the extent dialogue across identity differences can be used in higher education to motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice. Freire's (1970, 1974) critical pedagogy framework is combined with Pettigrew's (1998) intergroup contact theory to provide theoretical context for examining the complex learning experiences and outcomes of intergroup dialogue. This theoretical framework positions the examination of intergroup dialogue as a social justice praxis versus intergroup dialogue as an individual intervention with intergroup harmony as its objective. The study uses qualitative data from focus groups with voluntary participants from a convenience sample of students who enrolled in an intergroup dialogue class at a US-based university (anonymised as USU in this thesis) in the autumn semester 2017. The study found that IGD shows promising results on the individual level, facilitating deeper awareness and understanding of social injustice, but does not seem to have an influence on supporting social justice at the institutional and systemic levels.

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List of Abbreviations

BLM	Black Lives Matter
CAPS	Counselling and Psychological Services
CLP	Community Learning Project
GPA	Grade Point Average
IGD	Intergroup Dialogue Programme
IRB	Institutional Review Board
ISU	International Student Union
LARA	Listen, Affirm, Respond, Add Information
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer
PWI	Predominantly White Institution
SES	Socioeconomic Status
TA	Teaching Assistant

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The struggle to achieve social justice and equity is connected to issues of character development and civic responsibility, foundational goals of university education (Astin & Astin, 2015). But education is not only about the intellectual and moral development of individuals, education also addresses social and political concerns (Biesta, 2006). As the world becomes increasingly globalised and interconnected, universities must find transformative ways of maximising the educational benefits of diversity and building capacity for social justice to prepare young adults not only for careers working with diverse people, but also to develop into civically engaged leaders, critical thinkers, and change agents. This qualitative study examines the following research question: To what extent can dialogue across identity differences be used in higher education to motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice? The research reported in this thesis is based on data collection from a US university, USU. To protect the anonymity of the university, not only the pseudonym, USU, is used, but all citations and references which might identify the research context have been anonymised.

1.1 Defining Social Justice

This study uses a definition of social justice based on a spectrum that moves from the individual to the systemic. Most university-based IGDs in the United States use a definition of social justice rooted in an individual awareness and understanding that “social identities and group-based inequalities encourage building of cross-group relationships and cultivate social responsibility”

(Zuniga et al., 2007, p. 3). On the other end of the spectrum are theoretical foundations of social justice that address the systemic nature of justice, power, and oppression, and move beyond individual awareness of inequality to a vision of what a more socially just and equitable society might look like (Adams et al., 2016). For example, in their seminal work, *Teaching for Diversity, and Social Justice*, Adams et al. (2016) define social justice as both a goal and a process. Their definition of social justice is informed by theories of justice from philosophers ranging from John Rawls (1999, 2001) to Iris Young (1990, 2011).

The goal of social justice is full and equitable participation of people from all social identity groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. The process for attaining the goal of social justice should also be democratic and participatory, respectful of human diversity and group differences, and inclusive and affirming of human agency and capacity for working collaboratively with others to create change... Our vision for social justice is a world in which the distribution of resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, recognised, and treated with respect... (Adams et al., 2016, p. 3).

Intergroup dialogue programmes in American higher education claim to apply social justice pedagogy to classroom learning (Gurin et al, 2013). Intergroup dialogue has a foundational role in contributing to the goal and process of social justice by providing space for students to begin building capacity for individual awareness and understanding of systems of inequality, with the

objective of moving towards strengthening interpersonal relationships across identity differences, and ideally striving for institutional and systemic change through the lens of social justice.

1.2 Intergroup Dialogue (IGD)

Intergroup dialogue distinguishes its practice from debate and discussion and emphasises that dialogue is a specific skill to be developed. While the differences may seem insignificant, dialogue is a unique form of communication where participants seek to broaden perspectives, discover shared meaning, find places of agreement, express paradox and ambiguity, invite differences of opinion and experience, and challenge preconceived notions (AnonymousA, 1999; Kachwaha, 2002). By contrast, in discussion participants present ideas, seek answers and solutions, and solve problems (Kardia & Sevig, 1997). Finally, participants engaging in debate seek to win, look for weakness, stress disagreement, defend own opinions, focus on right and wrong, and search for flaws in logic (AnonymousA, 1999; Kachwaha, 2002). Through dialogue participants assume that many people have pieces of the answer and that only together can they craft a solution (Yankelovich, 1999). Dialogue is a collaborative process where participants work together towards common understanding. Sharing personal experiences is one of the key avenues through which participants deepen their understanding of and respect for one's own personal reality and reality as it is experienced by others (Kardia & Sevig, 1997). Keeping in mind this concept of dialogue as a specific skill to be developed, this study examines the research question: To what extent can dialogue across identity differences be used in higher

education to motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice?

Zuniga et al. (2007) present the pedagogical goals of successful intergroup dialogue in higher education in the following subcategories: consciousness raising of social systems, causes and means of social inequality, and oppression; building relationships across differences and conflicts; building capacity for sustained communication; bridging differences; and developing personal and social identity awareness. The actual design of intergroup dialogue programmes is more sequentially conceptualised in the following stage model: Stage 1: Forming and beginning relationships; Stage 2: Exploring differences and commonalities of experiences; Stage 3: Exploring and discussing hot topics; Stage 4: Action planning and alliance building (Zuniga et al., 2007).

The spectrum of unsuccessful or ineffective intergroup dialogue to successful intergroup dialogue ranges from failing to develop dialogic skills, to failing to overcome the challenge of differentiating between being able to tolerate difference while discussing divisive social issues in a manner appropriate to an academic setting, and the fundamental character shifts in empathy and understanding necessary to move from dialogue to action.

In this study, successful intergroup dialogue is defined as meeting all the pedagogical goals of intergroup dialogue (Zuniga et al., 2007). Both the stage model's and intergroup dialogue's pedagogical objectives begin with the students gaining the requisite communication skills to have meaningful

dialogue. These objectives are first to begin empathising and understanding the perspectives and experiences of people from different social groups and second, to discuss topics that often cause disparities between social groups. Once dialogic skills are gained and intergroup relationships are established, students explore ways of progressing from dialogue to action. The final objectives include establishing capacity for sustained communication, forming and maintaining intergroup relationships, and translating the skills and empathy students gain to actual and intentionally driven social change (Zuniga et al., 2007). When practiced successfully, intergroup dialogue can be argued to be a social justice critical pedagogy, fostering greater awareness about group power dynamics as well as alliance building for actionable social change towards freedom. Strengthening intergroup relations in this study means generating a reduction in intergroup conflict, educating across group differences, and creating alliances across difference towards intergroup harmony.

1.3 USU and IGD

USU's IGD goal is to "facilitate dialogue across difference" (USU, 2019). IGD defines dialogue as "collaborative communication in which people create shared meaning by being both teachers and learners" (USU, 2019). IGD defines "across" as "to cross to the other side of a separating expanse so as to be understood" (USU, 2019). IGD defines "difference" as "the parts of ourselves that make us unique (status, power, perspectives, experiences, and beliefs)" (USU, 2019). Based on this stated goal, USU appears to be using intergroup dialogue as a measure to create awareness of societal inequities

and understanding of difference in an effort to move towards intergroup harmony. This is contrary to what the original architects of intergroup dialogue might have intended, which moves beyond awareness, understanding, and harmony towards greater social justice and freedom as a praxis. This thesis questions whether the way the IGD is practiced at USU results in this outcome.

USU, like several of its American higher education counterparts, has invested in IGD as its main diversity education programme, not necessarily to invite participants with newfound awareness of societal ills to be social activists, but to help improve intergroup relations on campus (USU, 2019). It can be argued that USU, and American universities in general, do not want their campuses to be social justice incubators; rather USU may be relying on IGD to be an individual intervention and not to address institutional and systemic problems of social injustice. Education and moral suasion have not changed systems of inequality; systemic policy change has (Kendi, 2016; Kendi, 2019). By continuing to rely on individual interventions like IGD, USU may give the impression they are not invested in realising institutional change through an academic initiative such as IGD. When claiming socially just outcomes in educational programming, the framing and representation of the problem must be rooted in power and policy transformation (Fraser, 2003; Fraser, 2009), and not limited to fostering greater awareness and changing individual perspectives towards intergroup harmony. But deeper awareness and understanding of structural inequality may be a beginning for building capacity to strengthen intergroup relations and mitigate intergroup conflict and bias.

Intergroup dialogue is one way of examining the problem of social inequality, and research on IGDs in higher education is necessary to determine the effectiveness of intergroup dialogue and whether the goals of intergroup dialogue are being achieved. Intergroup dialogue has gained recognition as a transformative social justice education practice that focuses on issues of diversity and inequality while employing critical, democratic pedagogies, and experiential learning (Zuniga et al., 2012).

Several universities in the US run IGDs, including USU, the research context of this thesis. Congruent with other forms of democratic engagement and social justice education practices, the IGD at USU claims that intergroup dialogue:

...helps students develop intergroup relations skills, thereby preparing them to live and work in an increasingly diverse world. [Intergroup dialogue] empower[s] students to communicate and collaborate across social, cultural, and power differences, and to promote equity and democracy in their communities (USU, 2019).

Research asserts that when practiced successfully, the process by which participants in intergroup dialogue explore social identities and social constructs, and raise consciousness about power, privilege, and oppression and how these dynamics operate on the individual, institutional, and system levels fosters meaningful learning about agency and has the potential to inspire action leading to more socially just outcomes (Gurin et al., 2013).

1.4 USU IGD Structure

Intergroup Dialogue classes at USU are peer-facilitated, three-credit, semester-long courses comprised of 12 to 16 undergraduates and two trained peer facilitators. While each section concentrates on only one aspect of identity (i.e. race, gender, SES), the sections are all delivered in similar ways, exploring identity and subsequent differential lived experiences, access, and opportunities. Not all intergroup dialogue practices in higher education employ peer facilitation; many have faculty facilitating and teaching in the intergroup dialogue classroom (Gurin et al., 2013). At USU, IGD uses peer facilitators to help mitigate the cost of scaling up IGD classes. However, there remains debate about the advantages and disadvantages of using peer facilitators and whether peer facilitators help reduce power dynamics in the classroom thus encouraging more authentic engagement, versus whether peer facilitators have the requisite skills and knowledge to effectively facilitate contentious dialogues across different social identity groups, power, and privilege. There is, therefore, scope to research IGD practices to gain a deeper understanding of the processes and outcomes.

1.4.1 USU and Campus Bias

USU founded its IGD programme in 2012. As Table 1.1 indicates, the USU campus community has witnessed an uptake in reported bias-related incidents since 2012 (USU, 2017). These numbers do not include bias incidents that were not reported. The nature of concern for bias-related incidents includes protected aspects of social identity and other related factors

(i.e., race/colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender/gender identity/gender expression, religion/creed, national origin, disability, age, socioeconomic status [SES]). Reported bias-related incidents are one indication of campus climate (USU, 2019).

Table 1.1

Reported Bias-Related Incidents 2002-2019

Fiscal Year (FY) = July 1 – June 30 FY Ending	Number of <i>Reported</i> Bias-Related Incidents
2002 (bias data first available)	81
2003	57
2004	42
2005	60
2006	75
2007	55
2008	74
2009	45
2010	47
2011	21
2012	23
2013 (IGD courses offered for the first time autumn 2012 and spring 2013)	46
2014	39
2015	55
2016	113
2017	181
2018	261

Prompted by ongoing issues of bias-related concerns on USU's campus and following a racial altercation between white and black students in September 2017 (AnonymousB, 2017a), the USU President convened a university task force on campus climate to "examine and address persistent problems of bigotry and intolerance at [USU]" (Office of the President, 2018). One means to address these issues is the IGD programme. This study seeks to understand the extent to which dialogue across identity differences can be used in the classroom to motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice and to examine the limitations of IGD in helping to build community across difference.

1.5 Background and Rationale

This section's content provides evidence of entrenched societal problems highlighting persistent social inequalities and shared vulnerabilities that affect our collective ability to advance intergroup relations towards social justice.

1.5.1 Systemic Problem

Despite the United States being described as a melting pot of diverse peoples and cultures, structures of inequality, institutional bias, and individual prejudice divide the nation. The most recent upsurge of bias and hate related incidents in the United States can be traced back to February 2012 with the shooting of a black unarmed teenager, Trayvon Martin, in Sanford, Florida, and the subsequent not guilty verdict of Martin's killer, George Zimmerman

(Bates, 2018). In response to Zimmerman's acquittal, a black-centred political movement called #BlackLivesMatter was founded in 2013 by three black women activists, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi (blacklivesmatter.com).

In August 2014, Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, was shot and killed by Darren Wilson, a white police officer, in Ferguson, Missouri. The killing incited lengthy protests that were reignited when a grand jury did not indict Wilson (Davey & Bosman, 2014). In November 2014, Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old black boy, was playing with a toy gun in Cleveland, Ohio, and was fatally shot by a white police officer, who was never charged with the killing (Dewan & Oppel, 2015). In November 2014, Tanisha Anderson, a black woman experiencing a mental health episode, was killed outside her house by police officers who forcefully restrained her and put her in the back seat of the police car where Anderson experienced "sudden death in association with physical restraint in a prone position..." (Ferrise, 2018). The police officers were cleared of her death. In April 2015, Walter Scott, an unarmed black man, was shot in the back five times and killed by a white police officer, Michael Slager, following a traffic stop in North Charleston, South Carolina (Lartey, 2017).

Recently, as the United States found itself in an uncontrolled and unprecedented global pandemic that disproportionately impacted on the country's low-income communities of colour, the killings of three unarmed black people, Ahmaud Arbery in February 2020 (Fausset, 2020), Breonna Taylor in March 2020 (Oppel & Taylor, 2020), and George Floyd in May 2020

(Oppel & Barker, 2020), sparked nationwide protests and further divided the nation on issues of systemic racism.

1.5.2 Systemic to Institutional Problem

Although racial residential segregation in the United States has not been legal since 1968 with the Fair Housing Act, American neighbourhoods largely remain divided along racial lines, resulting in limited exposure to racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity (Charles, 2006). Many students have experienced this normalised segregation in the neighbourhoods, schools, and communities they grew up in (Orfield, 2009). As a result, many young adults are exposed for the first time to peers who have come from vastly different backgrounds when they enter university settings (Chang, 2002). Living on a university campus, students find themselves interacting amongst the most diverse set of peers ever encountered in their proximate living spaces (Hurtado, 2006). These exchanges across difference happen most often in roommate relationships and informal socialising, while romantic relationships and close friendships across racial and socioeconomic lines are less likely to occur (Espenshade & Radford, 2009). Because interracial friendships are rare in American society (McPherson et al., 2006), it is unsurprising that friendship formation across racial lines remains uncommon in American higher education (Smith et al., 2010).

1.5.3 Institutional Problem

Above examples have been referenced showing how the #BlackLivesMatter movement was born out of what some describe as racially motivated police

brutality. However, law enforcement is not the only institution where racial tensions have escalated. College campuses are not immune to the national landscape of racism. At the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, white supremacist groups marched with lit torches across the campus in August 2017, provoking a violent, hateful, and deadly clash between these heavily armed nationalists and counter-protesters determined to stop the Unite the Right rally (Heim, 2017). At American University in Washington, DC, black students endured racial onslaughts including bananas hung in nooses, hateful speech on social media, cyber-trolling from neo-Nazis, and Confederate flag flyers with cotton attached, after the first-ever black female president was elected to the student government (Sani, 2018). At the University of Maryland, College Park, a black Army lieutenant who was about to graduate from Bowie State University was stabbed to death by a white student while waiting at a bus stop (Bui, 2019).

College campuses across the United States are thus grappling with how to address the rise of overt incidents of racial hate and bias. Yet close interracial friendships give hope for positive race relations in our society and in the world (Pettigrew, 1998). Transformative education practices are relevant types of interventions that have the potential to create a more socially just campus climate and by extension, more socially just communities and societies

1.6 Research Aims and Methods

The method of data collection was focus groups and participation in this study was voluntary from a convenience sample of students who enrolled in an

intergroup dialogue class at USU, autumn semester 2017. Volunteer participants offered their perceptions, ideas, beliefs, and feelings as qualitative data to examine the ways students learn from interactional diversity and how such learning may or may not influence intergroup relations on the campus. This study examines whether the acquisition of dialogic skills and practice translates to shifts in intergroup relations. Positive intergroup relations can result in a reduction of intergroup prejudice and bias, whereas negative intergroup relations can produce intergroup bias and outgroup avoidance (MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015). In turn, the study interrogates whether students who participate in intergroup dialogue are motivated to move from discourse to action, ultimately promoting social change.

This study provides clarity around IGD as a tool for social justice and more clearly defines IGD's limitations. This study's question over the extent to which dialogue across identity differences can motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice is a foundational step towards social justice praxis and is an approach that focuses on fostering stronger intergroup bonds, intergroup friendships, meaningful interactions across difference, and perspective-taking. A move towards social justice suggests a specific orientation, alliance, and application. This thesis examines whether USU's classroom practice of intergroup dialogue may enable students to exercise their empowered agency and newfound awareness to move towards social justice.

1.7 Underpinning Theoretical Framework

One of the core tensions in this thesis is whether intergroup dialogue necessarily means a direction towards social justice, in other words, a greater awareness about group power dynamics plus alliance building for actionable social change toward freedom; or, if intergroup dialogue is more of an individual intervention with intergroup harmony as its objective. This study combines Freire's (1970, 1974) critical pedagogy framework and Pettigrew's (1998) intergroup contact theory to provide theoretical context around promoting positive intergroup relations and the educational process that the successful intergroup dialogue classroom strives to achieve, which is described in the literature as a critical dialogic praxis (Gurin et al, 2013).

Intergroup dialogue has its roots in both intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Freire, 1974), with intergroup contact oriented towards an intergroup harmony approach and critical pedagogy oriented towards a social justice approach. Intergroup contact proposes intergroup harmony as its main goal, arguing that the greater the contact between social identity groups, the less prejudice they feel towards each other. Contact reduces prejudice through emotional processes that occur when people develop relationships with other groups (out-groups); they feel less anxious and threatened by group difference, they feel more comfortable, more empathetic and caring towards others (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Allport's (1954) seminal contact hypothesis work contends that prejudice reduction occurs under optimal conditions: equal status, common goals, cooperative interaction, and support

of institutional authorities. These conditions are simulated in the IGD classroom. Intergroup contact, however, ignores power and asymmetrical contact. By focusing on contact of equals and ignoring power dynamics, the reality that society is hierarchical with differential access to systems of power based on social group identity statuses is minimized. The focus is also on prejudice reduction because most intergroup contact studies have centred on majority group members (who have social power), and the objective leans towards, for example, white people to be less prejudice towards people of colour (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Critical pedagogy offers a way of learning to help liberate people from oppression and through liberation, the transformation of reality through praxis (Freire, 1970; Freire, 1974). Whereas intergroup contact is based on a prejudice-reduction model, critical pedagogy cultivates critical consciousness through an emancipatory teaching model. The educational process involved in successful intergroup dialogue programmes can be described as a critical dialogic praxis, a practice for freedom, following key concepts from Freire (1970, 1974). Intergroup dialogue, when practiced successfully, critically examines social realities within a situated practice that encourages participants to imagine and create new ways of being and relating across difference.

Research supports that intergroup contact is one of the foremost catalysts for social change across identity differences, as under ideal intergroup contact conditions evidence suggests prejudice reduction outcomes (Allport, 1954; Durrheim & Dixon, 2018). But when the goal of social justice is introduced,

does the influence intergroup contact produces generalize from ideal intergroup contact conditions, like those produced in the IGD classroom, to situations of entrenched social inequality? In other words, will the prejudice-reducing effects of intergroup contact motivate people towards actionable social change towards producing a more just society (Durrheim & Dixon, 2018)?

Because IGD has its roots in both critical pedagogy and intergroup contact, the theoretical framing in this thesis helps tease out the distinction between intergroup dialogue as a measure to reduce intergroup conflict, bias, and discrimination on campus and promote positive intergroup relations, versus intergroup dialogue as moving beyond awareness toward greater social justice and freedom as a praxis. This qualitative study combines Freire's (1970, 1974) critical pedagogy framework with Pettigrew's (1998) intergroup contact theory providing theoretical context for analysing the complex and relative learning experiences intergroup dialogue can create. This theoretical framework positions the examination of intergroup dialogue as a social justice praxis versus intergroup dialogue as an individual intervention with intergroup harmony as its objective.

1.8 Reflexivity

The researcher's career in higher education administration spans twenty years. She is interested in high-impact transformative educational practices, both curricular and co-curricular, that inspire students towards more socially just ambitions in their social, personal, and professional lives. In her work on

several American university campuses, the researcher has observed a cycle of marginalization of students who have aspects of diverse identities and for whom are at most risk of failing and not persisting to graduation. Some of the work the researcher is engaged with professionally relates to closing the equity chasm and implementing equity design approaches to support marginalized and at-risk students. She works in collaboration with campus colleagues to find ways to improve the student campus climate for success and equitable outcomes.

The researcher does not work with the USU Intergroup Dialogue programme, and she has social and professional distance from both the participants in this study and IGD programme staff. She was interested in examining the effectiveness and outcomes of intergroup dialogue as practiced at USU, given that IGD is USU's only institutionally supported academic diversity education initiative. The researcher was curious to learn whether the generally accepted goals of intergroup dialogue are being achieved, considering USU has invested a great deal of resources in its IGD programme.

The researcher's epistemological and ontological framework is interpretive. She embraced the concept of multiple realities that are socially constructed by individuals together. She reports these multiple realities and subjective perspectives as experienced by research participants using the actual words of different students and their lived social realities in Chapter 4 (Pillow, 2003).

1.9 Summary

Measured against institutional and systemic ideals of social justice as defined above by Adams et al. (2016), it becomes important to examine which social justice tools – one such tool being IGD – contribute to this type of structural transformation and distinguish if and how they fall short so we can better understand what these types of tools are good for on individual, interpersonal, institutional, or societal levels. This chapter provided a definition of social justice used in this thesis, introduced intergroup dialogue and the research context at USU, outlined the background and rationale for the research question, summarized the research aims and methods, described the underpinning theoretical framework, and outlined the researcher's reflexive positioning. This thesis addresses the research question, to what extent can dialogue across identity differences be used in higher education to motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice? There remain entrenched barriers to equity and opportunity for people of diverse backgrounds in the US at a national level, which permeates to the experiences of students on US university campuses. Students with marginalized aspects of social identity experience campus and university life differently. IGD programmes have been introduced in US universities to address ongoing social disparities and bias. The following chapters of this thesis will cover the literature review, methodology, findings, and conclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following review of literature situates this research study within the context of American higher education and focuses on the factors contributing to this study's research question: To what extent can dialogue across identity differences be used in higher education to motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice?

The literature review begins by addressing topics more broadly relevant to this study, including campus climate, compositional and interactional diversity, the propinquity effect, social justice education, intercultural development, critical reflection, transformative learning, and moral reasoning. Next, this chapter introduces intergroup dialogue practices in higher education, critical pedagogy, and an analysis of critical dialogic praxis and intergroup contact theory. The chapter concludes by addressing the significance of this research and the need for further investigation into the extent intergroup dialogue can be used as a tool for social justice and positive intergroup relations in a progressively diverse and globalised world.

2.1 Campus Climate

University campuses are increasingly more diverse, which has a positive impact on intellectual and campus life (Hurtado et al., 1999; Pascarella, 2006; Pike et al., 2007). However, compositional diversity alone does not automatically equate to students learning from diversity (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2009). Cross-group friendships and worthwhile interactions with diverse peers indicate healthy aspects of the campus climate (Hurtado et al.,

1998). When universities create learning environments that inspire critical discourse about relevant social issues of today such as power, privilege, and oppression dynamics in systems of racism, classism, and sexism, for example, students are empowered to engage in thought-provoking and meaningful interactions across different ideological perspectives and lived experiences (Landreman et al., 2007). These exchanges foster students' resiliency, introspection, identity development, and deeper reflection about often invisible forms of systemic oppression which inflict various ingrained societal ills, leading to a reduction in prejudice and greater likelihood to advocate for social justice (Abes & Jones, 2004; Enfield & Collins, 2008).

Despite equal opportunity and affirmative action efforts, college students with one or more underrepresented identities in the United States continue to experience marginalisation and feel disenfranchised in their higher education experience (AnonymousC et al., 2014; Griggs, 2015). Research highlights the need for a supportive, inclusive, and welcoming campus climate for students to benefit from the educational and social involvement university life should offer (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kuh, 2009; Lundberg, 2012). Yet studies show, for example, that white students and students of colour experience predominantly white institutions in different ways based on racial and ethnic identity (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Sternberg et al., 2003). These differences in racial and ethnic backgrounds and resultant differing lived experiences may impact on their academic performance presenting an inequality rather than social justice. Racism and its psychological impact on students of colour can negatively influence self-esteem and academic and social experiences,

leading to roadblocks to student success and graduation (Johnson & Arbona, 2006; Reynolds et al., 2010; Utsey, 1998). The relationship between students' sense of belonging and inclusion on campus in academic and social spaces and student retention is significant (Stebbleton et al., 2014). When students feel like they belong and are included in all aspects of campus life, they are more likely to pursue graduation. A community with a salient racial climate of microaggressions and incidents of bias and exclusion impacts negatively on students of colour sense of belonging, which again impacts on successful progression with studies (Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

Marginalised students, who feel they are not equal and valid members of the campus community, are more likely to experience grievances and disenchantment with higher education (Baker & Robnett, 2012; Fischer, 2007). These students can feel invisible when the academy avoids dialogues about systems of oppression embodied in everyday experiences such as racism to students of colour, heterosexism to students who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual, cis-normalised assumptions to transgendered students, and classism to limited-income and first-generation college students. When the academy institutionalises discourse around issues of power, privilege, and oppression dynamics, the educational benefits of diversity are more fully realised because of the intentional actions to encourage and support these meaningful exchanges.

At USU, improving intergroup relations and campus climate are a priority for administrators as the university president convened a task force on campus climate to “examine and address persistent problems of bigotry and

intolerance at [USU]" (Office of USU President, 2018). One of the first steps in addressing the ongoing bias-related issues at USU is to examine the capacity the university has in building community across difference and strengthening programmes and courses such as IGD that strive to intentionally improve intergroup relations, and by extension positively transform the campus climate. If the goal of IGD is being met, study data should show evidence that students are perceiving a change in intergroup relations in the campus community, and data should indicate that students are empowered to help enact this change.

2.2 Compositional Diversity

Recently an infectious revolution on campuses across the United States has led to students demanding institutional change from administration (Gee, 2017; Hartocollis & Bidgood, 2015; Richardson, 2016; Saincome, 2017). Many universities maintain affinity group spaces for underrepresented students (Chang et al., 2004; Hurtado, 2001) that offer support, empowerment, and opportunities for identity exploration and educational events for the campus community (Harper, 2008). These havens encourage underrepresented students to find connections amongst themselves and define their own spaces on campus, in turn helping to mitigate attrition for this demographic. In supporting affinity spaces, universities promote compositional diversity by empowering groups of students with minoritized identities so they can thrive, be dignified, and achieve equitable outcomes. This in turn can help promote diversity as an educational benefit for everyone. As described by Milem (2003):

Individual benefits refer to the ways in which the educational experiences and outcomes of individual students are enhanced by the presence of diversity on campus. Institutional benefits refer to the ways in which diversity enhances the effectiveness of an organisation or institution. Societal benefits are defined as the ways in which diversity in colleges and universities impact on quality-of-life issues in the larger society. Examples of these include the achievement of democratic ideals, the development of an educated and involved citizenry, and the ways in which groups who are underserved in society are able to receive the services that they require. (p. 128)

However, compositional diversity does not guarantee students will have the desire and opportunity to connect in meaningful ways with those who are different from them. Interactional diversity is a necessary step to facilitate students to have personal interactions with diverse people and the differing worldviews they bring to enhance the educational benefits of diversity and build capacity for social justice (Lundberg, 2012).

The value of building cross-cultural relationships extends beyond the interpersonal effects of bridging social capital and fostering critical thinking skills (Goddard, 2003) to improving cross-race relations in society through civic engagement (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Tamam, 2013). In an environment where the campus climate is perceived as positive by white students, students of colour, and those with other aspects of identity that are underrepresented, interactional diversity is more likely to occur and have positive outcomes because groups have equity and institutional support

(Hurtado et al., 2003). Providing a structured course like IGD focused on bringing a diverse group of students together to dialogue across differences is one strategy that provides an opportunity for students to engage in interactional diversity.

2.3 Educational Benefits of Interactional Diversity

The positive impact diversity has on student life has far-reaching significance. When students are exposed to new ideas and knowledge it strengthens their intellectual capacity, critical thinking skills, participation in community life, and helps mitigate discrimination (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2009). When they have frequent and quality interactions with people who are unlike them, students tend to express deeper empathy, compassion, and understanding of heterogeneous peers and their differing lived experiences (Gurin et al., 2002). With increased and enriched interactions, students are more comfortable talking about diversity issues such as race, gender, sexuality, and class (Milem et al., 2004). With exposure to thought-provoking dialogues and experiences across difference, students are more likely to cultivate sophisticated relationships and sharpened leadership skills (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Stretching their comfort zones, navigating differences and conflicting opinions, and working through dissent helps students learn valuable lessons about communication and negotiation, and interpersonal and group dynamics. Quality diverse experiences are associated with civic engagement and progressive social advocacy (Bowman et al., 2011). Without providing these opportunities for student engagement across difference, the

academy falls short in furthering the educational goals of diversity and building capacity for social justice.

Multicultural curricula and diverse campus life activities can have a significant impact on students' awareness of inequities in broader society, when these students relate peer narratives to ideals of social justice (Aberson, 2007).

Having intergroup friendships and participation in diversity courses are predictors of broadening intellectual capacity and educational equity (Gurin et al., 2002; Lopez, 2004; Smith et al., 2010).

Creating a democratic space where students can engage in dialogue across difference helps them develop intergroup relations skills, such as communication, listening, and collaboration. Research shows how superficial mixing and mingling across diverse lines on campus falls short in furthering the educational goals of diversity (Espenshade & Radford, 2009). While universities are admitting diverse student bodies, they must also find productive ways to encourage meaningful social interaction across difference that maximises the educational benefits of diversity, which will then in turn contribute to creating a more socially just campus climate.

Espenshade and Radford (2009) analysed how students mix and mingle on campus to understand how compositional diversity is enacted. Mixing and mingling was defined and examined across four social domains, ranging from superficial mixing and mingling to meaningful mixing and mingling: casual "hanging out", roommate relationships, friendship networks, and dating patterns. They discovered that a clear majority of college students (90%)

mixed and mingled within the same race. Socialising across racial and ethnic lines happened most often (66%) in a casual way through “hanging out”.

Roommates were mixing and mingling across racial and ethnic lines 50% of the time. Friendship networks were mixed across racial and ethnic lines 50% of the time, with at least one out of five best friends being of a different race or ethnicity. Dating across racial lines occurred 33% of the time (Espenshade & Radford, 2009).

Living on a diverse campus does not mean students are learning from difference. Thinking back over four years of college, students reported how much they learned from people who were different from them. Thirty percent reported “a lot”, 30% reported “not much”, and 40% reported “something”. By race, whites were in the majority who reported “not much” because they were not “hanging out” with different students of different races and ethnicities.

Twenty-five percent of whites replied, “a lot” and 45% of Hispanics replied, “a lot”. These results correlated to patterns of mixing: if students said they had a cross-racial experience on any social domain, they were twice as likely to say they learned “a lot” (Espenshade & Radford, 2009).

While universities pride themselves on admitting diverse student bodies, campus interactions show that students are not mixing and mingling across difference as much as expected. Offering a sustained IGD experience may be one way to enhance the educational benefits of diversity for students who would not otherwise mix and mingle with diverse peers. Understanding what interests and motivates students to participate in a course such as the IGD is important to uncover. Student interest, attitudes, and motivation are key

aspects of interactional diversity and building capacity for social justice on campus. Without student interest and motivation to mix and mingle across difference, the academy falls short in realising the educational benefits of diversity. Intergroup dialogue courses for academic credit may be one productive way to encourage meaningful mixing and mingling across difference.

2.4 Propinquity Effect

Social psychologists propose that the mere exposure effect or the familiarity principle plays a critical role in the way we establish relationships and who we establish relationships with (Sigelman & Welch, 1993). Proximity to peers with whom students would not otherwise have sought contact is a powerful predictor of friendships (Park, 2014). Universities can capitalise on this proximity factor, known as the propinquity effect, by offering intentional learning opportunities for mixing and mingling across difference on campus. Higher education has an opportunity to accelerate progress against racism and other forms of oppression. Having a roommate from another race and having a mix of diverse students who live on the same floor and in the same building can have a snowball effect, creating engaging environments where interacting across racial and class lines becomes the norm.

When students are regularly interacting with one another in their living spaces, interpersonal attraction increases (Stearns et al., 2009). There is an added value of a university residential experience to accelerate intercultural relationships. The on campus living environment also impacts on student

subcultures. When these living environments are healthy and diverse, students are less likely to self-segregate based on race (Schofield et al., 2010). The opposite is true with subcultures where homogeneity is most important, such as race and class within Greek life, where traditional Greek life structures favour white students from higher socioeconomic class backgrounds (Park & Kim, 2013). However, while universities are admitting diverse student bodies, they must improve by implementing productive ways of encouraging meaningful social interaction across difference that maximises the educational benefits of diversity, which will then in turn contribute to creating a more socially just campus climate. The IGD classroom is one opportunity to bring diverse students together where they can learn from their differing lived experiences.

2.5 Social Justice Education

The IGD at USU was created in part to fulfil USU's campus-wide diversity initiative, and to provide a broad institutional framework for diversity incorporating USU's stated commitment to "extending its legacy of recruiting a heterogeneous faculty, student body, and staff, fostering a climate that doesn't just accommodate differences, but engages with them, and providing rich opportunities for learning from those differences" (USU, 2017). The IGD aims to provide students with a classroom space for engaging and learning across difference. Creating a democratic space where diverse students can engage in dialogue can help them develop intergroup relations skills, such as communication, listening, and collaboration. This study provides clarity around

IGD as a tool for social justice. Adams et al. (2016) define the goal of social justice as:

full and equitable participation of people from all social identity groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. The process for attaining the goal of social justice should also be democratic and participatory, respectful of human diversity and group differences, and inclusive and affirming of human agency and capacity for working collaboratively with others to create change (p. 3).

Promoting social justice education has its roots in Freire's (1970) idea of critical consciousness: having a deeper awareness and understanding of social injustice and inequality on the individual or cognitive level. Once students develop critical consciousness, the assumption in programmes like IGD is that they will translate learning and knowledge to action and use their agency for social change. However, while awareness and greater knowledge may provide a foundation for understanding social justice, these do not necessarily in and of themselves translate to action and change efforts. Changing attitudes alone will not necessarily result in changed behaviours, although one's attitudes, values, and beliefs are important components of one's subsequent motivation to act (Cook, 1990; Fox, 2003; Torres-Harding et al., 2011). Social justice education can help promote socially just concepts and ideals in learners, but these educational efforts may fall short if they lack a connection to social action (Torres-Harding et al., 2011). There is a need for social justice education to not only educate but to lead behaviour change.

Measured against institutional and systemic ideals of social justice as defined above by Adams et al. (2016), it becomes important to examine which social justice tools – one such tool being IGD – contribute to this type of structural transformation and distinguish if and how they fall short so we can better understand what these types of tools are good for on individual, interpersonal, institutional, or societal levels. Intergroup dialogue endeavours to engage students with experiential learning through creating a micro laboratory of learning in the classroom through facilitated experiential activities and listening to peer narratives of differing lived experiences based on differing aspects of social identities. One goal is to engender perspective taking, humility, curiosity, and empathy when hearing stories as manifestations of hegemony and broader societal ills. Through fostering a deeper understanding of differences, IGD aims for students to be better equipped to integrate and apply their learning to their lives.

2.6 Intercultural development

According to the model of intercultural development, as students develop their intercultural maturity, they are more readily able to recognise and interpret the complicated intricacies of intercultural exchanges, and their responses and behaviours become more culturally sensitive, relevant, and applicable to the context (Bennett, 1993). When students reflect on their own stages of development, they are more open to understanding the entrenched influence their native culture has on their social construction of reality. Developing the ability to objectively analyse and reflect on social constructions allows different cultural perspectives to be perceived as being equally valid to one's

own (Bennett, 1993; Kegan, 1994). This cognitive frameshifting depends on the student's ability to utilise complex reasoning skills from a diverse range of perspectives. In doing so, socially just ideals can be fostered.

When navigating situations and interactions in an unfamiliar culture, students rely on their capability to apply complex learning to new and sometimes challenging circumstances (Bennett, 1993; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

The multidimensional framework of intercultural maturity (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005) integrates student development theories with the model of intercultural development. Intercultural maturity progresses through initial and intermediate stages before maturity is realised over cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains.

Understanding human behaviour and how meaning-making and learning is processed requires making a connection between individual characteristics (such as self-identity in relation to underlying assumptions about people and the world), and environmental characteristics (such as socially and culturally specific dynamics) (Kegan, 1994). Ethnocentrism develops when we fail to acknowledge the impact culture has on influencing our social constructions about the world and becomes further entrenched when we assume our own culture is dominant and cultures different from our own are not legitimate.

Developing the capacity to think objectively about our social constructions fosters a more socially just epistemology (Bennett, 1993).

Intercultural development is one component of realising IGD's goal of creating community across difference through dialogue. Intercultural development

includes the idea of perspective taking and developing intercultural empathy, necessary for creating shared meaning and understanding different ways of knowing, being, and doing. Paramount to learning about diverse cultures is the development of intercultural empathy. Empathy encompasses not only the desire to learn about a different culture, but also to understand another culture from that culture's perspective; it surmounts cognitive dissonance with impartiality and generosity while maintaining respect. In studies that try to quantify empathy, it is questionable whether people can be expected to provide answers that display unsympathetic perspectives. Rather than trying to quantify empathy from what students' professed perspectives are, it may be more valuable to investigate how programmes and courses change students' thinking. While deductive survey assessment may search for increases in cultural knowledge and changes in attitudes of acceptance, inductive assessment would ask students what they learned, how they changed, what experiences changed them, and what they are going to do in the future in respect to these changes. The shift would be from assessing students' ability to provide examples of having had a transformative learning experience, to asking them to describe their transformative learning. In changing students' thinking through transformative learning, the door opens to the opportunity to build capacity for social justice.

2.7 Critical reflection

Connecting the ways in which experiential learning like intergroup dialogue can influence students' understanding of social responsibility should be included in deliberate reflections about the learning process. Active and

guided reflection and unpacking of complex experiences can stimulate cognitive learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Without critical reflection, students often fail to make the transformative link necessary to process their intergroup dialogue experience with their academic learning. Structured activities, events, and courses that provide students with the space and opportunity to engage with other students help impact on deeper learning and meaning making of their experiential learning undertakings. These programmes, when facilitated in a nurturing and supportive space guide students to reflect on and express how their participation impacted on them and encourage students to articulate their individual learning and make meaning out of how they have grown and developed personally and academically from their participation in an intergroup dialogue class. This provides the affirmation and structure necessary for successful learning outcomes to be realised (Kortegast & Boisfontaine, 2015).

When structures are put in place to facilitate learning through diversity, critical reflection becomes a central practice of diverse learning experiences. Critical reflection has the potential to enable students to understand root causes of inequality and empower students to be agents of social change. Through reflective consideration of the broader global, cultural, and historical contexts of injustice, students begin to question their own assumptions and ideas of truth (Dewey, 1933). Critical reflection can help build capacity for socially just ideals in undergraduates through reflexive activities that support developing critical consciousness and instil a drive to act on one's values and beliefs (Pillow, 2003).

2.8 Transformative Learning

Proponents of intergroup dialogue frequently describe it as being a transformative learning experience, where students are exposed to different worldviews and cultural norms. These experiences produce cognitive dissonance as students must accept or accommodate cultural values that conflict with their own. This developmental process encourages students to recognise that their perspectives, self-identity, cultural beliefs, and epistemology are contextual and not universal (Mezirow, 1997). When students critically self-reflect and re-assess the validity of their way of thinking, understanding, and knowing the world, they question their assumptions, and cultural biases, which they have assimilated through acculturation and learned attitudes, behaviour, norms, and beliefs. When transformative learning occurs, students experience a shift not just cognitively and intellectually, but emotionally as well (Mezirow, 1997). This expansion of self-identity and worldviews is expressed in action, similar to Paulo Freire's idea of praxis where individuals reflect and act in the world in order to transform it (Freire, 1970, 1974). In other words, transformative learning means there will be resulting changes in behaviour and action.

Transformational theory posits that transformative learning experiences occur through purposeful problem posing, critical reflection, engaged dialogue, and group processes over continued intentional action (Mezirow, 1997). The transformative learning process begins with a contextual border crossing (Kiely, 2005). The context includes both obvious physical borders, such as travelling to another country during a study abroad experience, and socially

constructed borders like those used in intergroup dialogue practices related to self-identity, cultural norms, and social capital. Contextual border crossing can create cognitive dissonance, discomfort, and disorientation when existing knowledge and beliefs are questioned by differing epistemological viewpoints (Mezirow, 2000). Stretching the boundaries of personal comfort zones allows for greater learning edges through challenging situations and dilemmas, sparks curiosity, and creates the need for resolution (Bringle, 2003; Dewey, 1938). When unquestioned assumptions about self-identity in relation to social constructions are questioned through confrontation with a drastically different reality, boundary crossing occurs by moving out of familiar networks and comfort zones. This provides a salient opportunity to critically explore social issues and quality-of-life concerns affecting individuals and communities, which students would otherwise not have been exposed to (Kiely, 2005). Interactional and collaborative learning through engaged dialogue with peers, where learning takes place through sharing ideas, experiences, and expectations, is how transformative learning impacts on students (Kiely, 2005; Neururer & Rhoads, 1998; Vygotsky, 2004).

Dissonance is the relevant instigator of the transformative learning process (Kiely, 2005; Mezirow, 1997; Piaget, 1976). Through actual and contextual border-crossings, making meaning of new experiences and forced adjustment of epistemological beliefs, students learn to re-evaluate and self-examine their own identities and related positions. This emotional response and connection to the ways in which emotions influence cognitive and intellectual learning is diminished in academia. However, this interplay should be emphasised when

goals of realising social justice fall short. Connecting with others across difference and cultures through empathetic understanding builds greater capacity for holistic learning (Belenky et al., 1997). Through experiential learning opportunities like intergroup dialogue, intellectual, and personal growth are connected in more meaningful, thought-provoking, and transformational ways (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

This section explored the extent to which intergroup dialogue can help transmit or enhance social justice and whether there are means by which to assess student attainment of these concepts. However, the moral reasoning behind the practice of transmitting these values also needs to be examined. Changes in moral reasoning usually precede the motivation of acting upon philosophical and sociological concepts (Kohlberg, 1971, 1981). Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the moral foundations upon which concepts of social justice are predicated and why it is incumbent upon higher education to teach these concepts.

2.9 Moral Reasoning

Universities are in the practice of teaching values and all education has a moral component. This is true for the sciences as well as the humanities. Facts may be morally neutral, but their attainment, choice of which to teach, and subsequent use are all value judgements. Because students are taught through a curriculum, devised by many, this curriculum must have some guiding ideology, rather than representing individual value judgements. This

ideology is forever being debated and adjusted, and this study's main argument is that the guiding concept of social justice supports this ideal.

What type of moral reasoning underlies social justice? Lawrence Kohlberg (1971, 1981) describes a process through a hierarchy of moral reasoning phases. Paraphrased, these phases are: 1. obedience; 2. self-interest; 3. social norms; 4. codified law and religion; 5. social contract human rights; 6. universal principles (principles that must unequivocally be followed at all times). Kohlberg's research found that people transition through these phases in a dialectical process driven by cognitive dissonance. This dissonance occurs when previously held beliefs conflict with new types of moral reasoning causing the need to resolve these conflicts in order to preserve consistency.

To produce this cognitive dissonance, Kohlberg's research was based upon subjects reasoning through moral dilemmas (Kohlberg, 1971, 1981). A famous example is of a man whose wife will die if she does not get a certain medication, which he can only obtain by stealing. Subjects are asked what the moral impetus is for the man: does he obey the law and let his wife die or is saving his wife more important than the law? By presenting subjects with these dilemmas and challenging them through a Socratic method of dialogue, Kohlberg showed that subjects' moral reasoning moved up through the stage hierarchy.

Using hypothetical situations as a means of moral education has the benefit of not proselytising or directly instructing students on how they should reason morally. Because students are not told what values they should have, this

type of education does not offend religious or legal beliefs, or social norms. However, the deficiencies of using hypothetical situations as a means of moral education are apparent. Reasoning in a hypothetical situation, which puts no emotional duress upon the student and has no consequences, has very little correlation to the actual demands of moral reasoning. Emotional duress and consequences are central to why some moral choices are difficult and why real-life situations challenge people's values.

Universities must resolve this paradox: If they are going to undertake moral and value-driven education, they cannot systematically refute religious or legal beliefs (and still get public funding or tax deferments), but they cannot simply use methods that have little to do with real life. An experiential learning initiative like the IGD is an attempt to place students in situations that challenge their beliefs, moral and otherwise. IGD specifically strives to provide experiences in the classroom that have strong emotional components and are focused on the consequences of beliefs and actions. Universities must improve upon these types of experiential learning practices if they want their students to build capacity for social justice ideals. As evidenced in the literature, experiential learning has many associated individual benefits. However, the benefits to society and the world are less tangible yet paramount if universities have the goals of working towards diversity, inclusion, equity, and social justice that have a positive impact on the quality of life for all.

2.10 Intergroup Dialogue in Higher Education

The Programme on Intergroup Relations founded in 1988 at the University of Michigan developed an intergroup dialogue model that has now been widely implemented and adapted by universities including USU, this study's host institution, which launched the IGD in 2012. Intergroup dialogue is a curriculum designed to facilitate divisive discourse about socially, politically, and economically meaningful disparities, the intersections of social identity and social constructs with these disparities, and the process and goal of social justice.

Intergroup dialogue is not a formulaic prescription for social justice pedagogy. While engaging in dialogue is one of the simplest ways, according to Hooks (1994), for a group of people to examine consequential difference and encourage participants to imagine and create new ways of being and relating across inequality, intergroup dialogue is not a straightforward practice. When executed successfully, intergroup dialogue critically examines social realities within a complex, situated practice with a depth and breadth that unpacks the hegemonic power relations underlying diversity and inequality. Intergroup dialogue, as practiced on college campuses, engages various perspectives from multiple identity groups; it is a human laboratory for meaning making of opposing viewpoints while also envisaging new possibilities (Zuniga et al., 2012).

Assessment of IGDs in academic settings is necessary to determine the effectiveness of intergroup dialogue and whether the goals of intergroup

dialogue are being achieved. Research on intergroup dialogue outcomes in higher education shows generally positive results based on stated perceptions. Gurin et al. (1999, 2004) found differences between white students and students of colour. White students broadened their perspectives, felt a sense of unity with other groups, looked at difference as part of democracy, and became more politically progressive. White students also described more critical feelings towards other white students. Students of colour perceived less intergroup conflict and did not view conflict negatively. Students of colour reported better relationships with white students and believed they had more in common with white students.

Gurin et al. (1999), Nagda et al. (2004), and Nagda and Zuniga (2003) examined non-dominant group members and the issue of power disparities. Non-dominant, also referred to as target or subordinate group members include those with social identities who do not have systemic and institutional social, economic, and political power. Examples of non-dominant group members in the United States include people of colour, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and gender non-conforming people, people with disabilities, people from low socioeconomic class, the elderly, people who are not Christian, first-generation immigrants, people whose first language is not English, and people who are not American citizens. The researchers found that students of colour perceived intergroup dialogue as more valuable than white students. Miller and Donner's (2000) results showed that all white students believed different groups could learn from one another, whereas only half of students of colour had confidence in this.

Gurin et al. (2002), Hurtado (2005), Nagda et al. (1999), and Nagda and Zuniga (2003) showed that participants in intergroup dialogue learned more about and valued the viewpoints of students from different social groups, they developed greater analytical skills, the students came away with an awareness of the intersections of social group memberships and identity, and they gained knowledge of social inequalities. Miller and Donner (2000) observed increased hopefulness in divisive groups being able to actively listen to one another, and Khuri (2004) observed intergroup dialogue as a platform for recognising multiple perspectives. Its practitioners claim that intergroup dialogue is a social justice educational practice that borrows learning from critical pedagogy, as explored in the following section.

2.10.1 Critical Pedagogy

This study examines critical pedagogy through the lens of Paulo Freire (1970, 1974), who developed critical theory into a pedagogy that promotes social justice through critical consciousness, an ability to meta-analyse social class, political power stratification, identify mechanisms of oppression, and create opportunities for individual empowerment to emancipate oneself from social oppression. Freire's critical pedagogy follows in the tradition of critical social theory and Marxism, which has been developed in several permutations such as DuBois' critical race theory and Jane Addam's feminism.

Freire's (1970) initial focus was on adult literacy projects targeting the poor. Not only is the acquisition of literacy personally empowering, but since the focus of Freire's literacy projects was political consciousness, the

advancement of the group was contingent upon individual achievement. In this paradigm, improvements in group economic conditions and social status are reliant upon individuals gaining a degree of literacy and critical consciousness. Elevation in group status and economic conditions are not, for example, contingent upon individuals within a group achieving literacy or critical consciousness, yet each individual's understanding of the pedagogical praxis of literacy abilities and critical social consciousness adds to group social power and opportunities. In this sense, a social group is like a multicellular organism, where the social health and status are largely reliant upon individuals' knowledge and abilities to transcend social injustices. Freire (1970) promoted praxis as involving a continuous cycle of theory, application, evaluation, reflection, cycling back to theory, and so on. Praxis at the collective level results in social transformation.

Freire's fundamental assertion was that social justice and progressive change through democracy are intricately tied to education and learning. In critical pedagogy, the terms "education" and "learning" are not used synonymously, as critical pedagogy often requires some beliefs and modes of thinking to be "unlearned" (Freire, 1970, 1974; Kincheloe & Steinburg, 1997; Shor, 1999). Freire's (1970) initial interest in literacy programmes in Brazil recognised that disparities in literacy were fundamentally reinforcing other social disparities of the status quo. Therefore, the poor becoming literate was instrumental if social change and freedom from oppression were to occur.

The Freire method of teaching literacy illuminates several practices and concepts related to intergroup dialogue. In the first stage of the Freire method,

an educator studies the lives of a particular group experiencing some type of oppression and/or discrimination (Freire, 1970). The educator examines their shared vocabulary, asks about their frustrations and aspirations, and the difficulties of their daily lives. In this context, the educator is facilitating a group as its members reflect and describe their own lives. An awareness of group is created (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1992).

In the second stage of the Freire method, the group being taught expands their vocabulary and improves the grammar through which they can converse about their lives. One means of doing this was to create dialogue using pictures depicting some aspect of their daily lives. The process starts by simply investing in the learners with the belief that they are able to learn more complicated words, which in turn helps them express themselves better. If a picture, for example, showed a landowner confiscating a peasant's burro, the group would hold a dialogue together with the educator, increasing their ability to speak about the situation, but also gaining awareness of why such power and material disparities exist (Freire, 1970). The group awareness that the Freire method seeks to create is built into the IGD course structure.

Social justice progress through democracy requires that a society be critical of its social structures and practices. Critical pedagogy examines whether an educational system's structure and curriculum have prepared students to achieve greater social justice ideals through the exercise of democracy. This creates a praxis, or informed action, where education theory and practice converge (Freire, 1970). In other words, this underpins the development of an educational system and curriculum that seeks to create a more socially just

society: most importantly, it prepares students through information and modes of thinking, and empowers them to achieve through democratic action greater social justice in their societies.

Aliakbari & Faraji (2011) state: "Critical pedagogy is an approach to language teaching and learning which is concerned with transforming relations of power which are oppressive and which lead to the oppression of people. It tries to humanize and empower learners" (p. 77). Furthermore, the authors assert that: "...the major goals of critical pedagogy are awareness raising and rejection of violation and discrimination against people" (p. 77). Freire (1970) proposes that critical pedagogy be centred on moving people's thinking through three stages: 1) intransitive (acceptance of inequity, without attempt to change, as being correct); 2) semi-transitive (an awareness of inequity as injustice, but without attempting to change social dynamics or thinking that change is possible); 3) critical consciousness (educationally acquired understanding, motivation, and empowerment to produce greater social justice). The intergroup dialogue stage model loosely borrows from this and proposes the following design: Stage 1: Forming and beginning relationships; Stage 2: Exploring differences and commonalities of experiences; Stage 3: Exploring and discussing hot topics; Stage 4: Action planning and alliance building (Zuniga et al., 2007).

2.10.2 Critical Pedagogy Critique

Criticisms have been raised about critical pedagogy, particularly when applied within an institutional setting such as higher education. Ellsworth (1989) notes

that universities are part of a societal system that contains the same biases and implicit power dynamics that create such disparity in society. If these biases and power dynamics are not explicitly deconstructed, then education within this system runs the risks of reproducing disparities, even if there are courses meant to give students a voice. For example, if society more highly favours outspoken men and in schools and universities outspoken women are graded at a disadvantage, then creating a single class that allows women to have a voice is not only insufficient, but it also creates the illusion of empowering women while the same gender biases penalise those women who are outspoken. Thus, critical pedagogy can possibly mislead students into a false sense that the rules by which their academic performance is to be judged has changed, when in fact, it has not.

Ellsworth (1989) argues that having a voice or a chance to express oneself is not empowering if there are no changes in the environmental and political realities that perpetuate disparities. There is even the potential that giving a false sense of empowerment may further disempower a person. Courses and activities that purport to empower students through the chance to authentically express themselves may give students the impression that there has been a change in what expectations are or that critical pedagogy is being employed throughout the university, instead of being used in a narrower sense, such as in an IGD class. If programmes such as IGD are created to address problems of intergroup relations, bias, and discrimination on a college campus, but are not effectual in changing the fundamental biases and power dynamics that produce discrimination on college campuses, then having a voice or a safe

space for a controversial dialogue is insufficient and may possibly discourage further attempts to promote social justice in such contexts.

There are differences between critical thinking and critical pedagogy (Burbules, 2016; Burbules & Burke, 1999). For example, underrepresented minority students score lower, on average, on IQ tests than white students. Critical pedagogy begins with asking who most benefits from the test and then examines how that affects students disproportionately, why and how the test is used, and what factors make such tests socially unjust. Critical thinking, conversely, begins with accepting the fact that underrepresented minority students score lower and, regardless of the justness of the test, it tries to determine why the students scored lower. Critical pedagogy may try to deconstruct and remove unfair tests from a curriculum and critical thinking continues to analyse and attempts to improve the situation. The principles of critical pedagogy are often given in absolutes and demand specific outcomes, but that action often requires compromise (Burbules, 2016). Students must also continue to analyse how best to navigate unjust situations that have not yet changed. While critical pedagogy is concerned with deconstructing unjust situations, critical thinking continues despite the situation being unjust.

2.10.3 Critical Dialogic Praxis and Intergroup Contact Theory.

The process by which participants in successful intergroup dialogue explore social identities and social constructs, and raise consciousness about power, privilege, and oppression and how these dynamics operate on the individual, institutional, and systemic levels have the potential to foster meaningful

learning about agency and has the potential to inspire action leading to more socially just outcomes. This educational process can be described as a critical dialogic praxis, a practice for freedom, following key concepts from Freire (1970, 1974). Intergroup dialogue purports to critically examine social realities within a situated practice encouraging participants to imagine and create new ways of being and relating across difference.

If intergroup dialogue is revered as a valid social justice educational practice by its proponents and practitioners, then Freire's (1970, 1974) acknowledgement of multiple perspectives and unbalanced power dynamics should be recognised throughout the process and analysis of outcomes. This differentiation informs on how intergroup dialogue practices are envisaged, posited, and organised when diverse students interact in the classroom and on campus (Zuniga et al., 2007). In the intergroup dialogue space, diverse opinions are valued, unpacked, questioned, and reconsidered. Intergroup dialogue places a strong emphasis on the sharing of personal narratives and peer-to-peer learning through lived experiences. This humanising process of critical social inquiry helps students understand why individuals and groups experience dissimilar social realities and exhibit different ways of being and acting based on different aspects of identity (Nieto, 2005).

Allport (1954) hypothesised that positive intergroup contact necessitates four conditions: equal group status, common goals, cooperation, and institutional support. Pettigrew (1998) expanded on Allport's contact theory and found that change transpires through learning about different groups, allowing the opportunity to reconsider opinions about other groups, develop empathy

towards others and friendship potential. Pettigrew affirmed that creating opportunities for intergroup friendships is most influential in improving intergroup relations.

One of the questions underlying intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998) and USU's attempts to deal with issues of bias (AnonymousB, 2017b; AnonymousF, 2018; AnonymousG, 2018), diversity related hostile campus incidents (AnonymousH, 2017; Bauer-Wolf, 2017), and a lack of empathy towards different social identities, has to do with the creation of moderated conflict in the IGD classroom and whether this is necessary for the resolution of systemic conflict. Rodenburg and Bosch (2009) examine this when they reference: "Sometimes group work involves conflict that is based upon stereotyping and prejudice" (p. 78). Rodenburg and Bosch (2009) further state: "Intergroup dialogue is a non-therapeutic group work method designed for intergroup conflict" (p. 78), moving the theoretical praxis of intergroup dialogue away from character development and critical consciousness. Under this model, the individuals participating in these dialogues can remain psychologically static. This model is "non-therapeutic" in that it avoids dealing with individual psychology; the individual does not need to change, there is no expectation of the students' psychology changing, nor will an attempt be made to change the students' psychology. This model is concerned with group structures and the interpersonal relationships within the group. Is it possible for group structures and relationships to change without significantly affecting the psychology of those who are changing their group structure and personal relationships? Is this what the IGD should be focused on: dynamic

groups with static individuals? Bargal (2004) resolves this methodological fallacy by conceding that IGDs focus largely upon “intragroup structures and processes [and] ... interpersonal and intrapsychic problems [internal psychological processes]” (p. 304).

As stated earlier, the struggle to achieve social justice and equity is connected to issues of character development and civic engagement (Astin & Astin 2015). Yet a gap in the literature exists and has been illustrated with these views on how to increase social justice, reduce intergroup and intercultural conflict, reduce personal bias, and increase empathy towards a greater diversity of individuals and groups. Corey et al. (2006) note that group work is based upon stereotyping and prejudice, yet the nature of stereotypes and prejudice is that they are nearly always formed by groups and directed to other groups or individuals representing the perceived stereotype. This would indicate that initiatives of intergroup dialogue are primarily concerned with group structures and the interpersonal relationships within these groups. Clearly, positive intergroup structure is not the same as individual character development. The importance of Bargal’s (2004) theoretical resolution of these competing models cannot be overstated. For group structures, beliefs in stereotypes and prejudice and the resulting negative actions to change, the constituent members of these groups must also change psychologically; their intrinsic values must change. This paradigm is what is meant by character development.

Pettigrew’s (1998) intergroup contact theory has four conditions that present problems to IGDs. Paraphrased, they are:

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1. Selection bias, since prejudiced people would be more likely to avoid intergroup contact.
 2. Educators focus on facilitating intergroup dialogue at the expense of exploring what essential conditions are necessary for individual and group change.
 3. The hypothesis fails to address the four primary conditions for the programmes' success: "learning about the outgroup, changed behaviour, affective ties, and ingroup reappraisal."
 4. The hypothesis fails to generalise how the outcomes of a specific programme can be generalised to "situations, the outgroup or uninvolved outgroups" (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 65).

This study links Pettigrew's (1998) conditions to character development as follows. First, intergroup dialogue group participants must be motivated to engage in intergroup conflict, change their opinions and modes of thinking, and must represent identities across which intergroup conflict exists. The psychological change of prejudiced and conflict-causing individuals is a prerequisite to the change of group structures that exhibit these very prejudices or discriminatory practices. Second, how an intergroup dialogue is facilitated is less important than creating the environmental and emotional conditions allowing for intra- and interpersonal change, as well as ensuring a clear understanding of the essential goals of the programme. Third, hypotheses testing the efficacy of these groups must not focus on specific beliefs or personalities unless they are representative of generalisable psychological processes.

Freire (1970) conceptualises oppression as a relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor in which the oppression is rationalised. In Freire's view, it is not merely overt intimidation and force that create oppression, because force is merely a tool that reinforces a psychological condition. Freire goes further to say that the oppressed might fear their freedom. According to Freire, freedom must be fought for, and it is a responsibility of the oppressed to actively strive for their freedom. Education is the key to this psychological metamorphosis of the oppressed and it allows for informed action through which freedom is fought for and achieved. The premise for reaching a *practice of freedom* is that the advantaged must also feel that they have a stake in it. Freire argues that the oppressor is dehumanising the self in enacting oppression, so that the transformation also benefits the oppressor.

To unpack the role intergroup dialogue may have on improving intergroup relations, which is one foundational step towards strengthening capacity to promote and advance social justice, a phenomenological research approach may best illuminate the relationship between intergroup dialogue and agency. This analysis assumes that institutional change ensues through the actions of individuals. When individuals are inspired and instilled with the capacity for social action, they are more inclined to speak out, advocate for policy changes, and organise for collective liberation. If social change is a goal of intergroup dialogue, then mastering interpersonal communication within small diverse groups (Ruesch & Bateson, 1987) has potential for intergroup dialogue as a practice for freedom (Freire, 1970, 1974).

2.11 Conclusion

While the literature addresses raising consciousness of our myriad of social identities, research is lacking around unpacking the ways in which intergroup dialogue explores the causes and effects of social inequities at the individual and structural levels and the impact of this learning on students. Moreover, research is deficient on intergroup dialogue's influence on strengthening individual and collective capacities to promote and advance social justice. To address this gap in the literature, the main research question that will guide this study will examine: To what extent can dialogue across identity differences be used in higher education to motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice? This is one foundational step to strengthening individual and collective capacities to promote and advance social justice. While this is a case study with limits on generalisability, the findings contribute to the gap in the literature by increasing understanding of how intergroup dialogue as a critical dialogic praxis may or may not improve intergroup relations through building capacity to promote and advance social change beyond the classroom; it may clarify what the model of intergroup dialogue may be good for as well as the limitations of what it cannot do in the process and goal of social justice.

In a landscape of budget constraints and low priority for diversity courses in American higher education, the importance of empirical research showing the added value of courses and programmes such as the IGD is ever present. If we are to make progress in the process and goal of social justice education, then it is imperative that funding and institutional support for courses

impacting on social change are not jeopardised. Intergroup dialogue bridges experiential learning with academic scholarship. When students participate in collaborative partnerships across diverse knowledge bases and ways of being, the academy has the unique opportunity to build capacity for social justice on campus and beyond.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Intergroup dialogue has gained recognition as a transformative social justice education practice that focuses on issues of diversity and inequality while employing critical, democratic pedagogies, and experiential learning (Zuniga et al., 2012). Congruent with other forms of democratic engagement and social justice education practices, intergroup dialogue:

...helps students develop intergroup relations skills, thereby preparing them to live and work in an increasingly diverse world. [Intergroup dialogue] empower[s] students to communicate and collaborate across social, cultural, and power differences, and to promote equity and democracy in their communities (USU, 2019).

This chapter addresses the research paradigm, data collection method, IGD research context, focus group design, ethics, participants, participant demographics, procedure, and data analysis. The development and facilitation of focus groups were used to uncover the extent and limitations of how dialogue can be used in higher education to strengthen intergroup relations and promote social justice.

3.1 Research Paradigm

This phenomenological case study was guided by an interpretivist paradigm and employed a qualitative methodology. A fundamental philosophical component of intergroup dialogue is its emphasis on the sharing of multiple perspectives and multiple perceptions of reality. As such, an interpretivist

paradigm informed this study's comprehensive understanding of how the intergroup dialogue experience influences individuals, agency, and strengthens capacity for social change, as recommended by Willis (2007). As stated in Chapter 1, the researcher does not work with the USU Intergroup Dialogue programme, and she has social and professional distance from both the participants in this study and IGD programme staff. There were no power imbalances between the researcher and participants. The researcher acknowledges the risk of bias given her employment at USU; however, having institutional knowledge of USU helped her probe more deeply into the nuances and complexities of the IGD programme and its position within the institution.

3.2 Data Collection Method

The main qualitative method of data collection was focus groups with the students who participated in the IGD at USU in the autumn semester of 2017. Focus groups were chosen as this study's methodology for several reasons. Student perceptions about their own learning and development during the intergroup dialogue experience provided insight into their thoughts about IGD and its relative influence on their understanding of intergroup relations. Additionally, focus groups allowed the researcher to capture student perceptions about the group process involved in attempting to strengthen intergroup relations and promote social change through dialogue in the classroom and the social realm of the campus. Focus groups allowed for group interaction and greater understanding of the phenomena of intergroup dialogue as a pedagogical method.

Developing a survey instrument was briefly considered and dismissed. Even surveys that contain open-ended questions limit the scope of the qualitative feedback obtained from respondents. Interviews were not considered due to practical reasons; as this study has 171 participants, it would have been overtaxing to conduct individual interviews. A mixed-methods approach was not considered as this study did not necessitate a statistically rigorous process for testing cause and effect. However, a mixed-methods approach would make sense in a future study seeking to statistically measure effects of intergroup dialogue and explanations for measured changes in attitudes and actions; this could be combined with a qualitative approach exploring how students critically engage with the dialogue process and resultant outcomes. Likewise, a quantitative approach could be useful in a future longitudinal study involving several intergroup dialogue courses across multiple institutions, including USU, where a standardised curriculum and experimental intervention might reveal and measure the communication and psychological processes that would produce projected outcomes such as deeper intergroup understanding, empathy for others across identity differences, and actions supporting social justice. A quantitative research design would not tease out the nuances and narratives of individual experiences with intergroup dialogue, but it would provide broader data on intergroup dialogue effects and show how USU's practice of intergroup dialogue measures against other intergroup dialogue outcomes.

Focus groups offered the most efficient way to collect meaningful nuanced data, examining whether dialogue can be used in higher education to

strengthen intergroup relations and promote social change. Participants were undergraduate students at USU, a campus that has been plagued with persistent issues of bias and has witnessed an increase in formal bias incident reporting.

Focus groups were used to amass thorough and comprehensive qualitative data on participant experiences from students including those from marginalised groups who historically have been disregarded in conventional research (Bamberger & Podems, 2002; Brown, 2000). Focus groups sought the experiences, perceptions, understandings, behaviour changes, and learning arising from participation in IGD.

3.3 IGD Research Context

Intergroup dialogue classes are peer-facilitated, three-credit courses offered in both autumn and spring semesters. Each of the 13 intergroup dialogue course sections at USU comprise of 12 to 16 undergraduates and two trained peer facilitators. Each intergroup dialogue revolved around one of several social identities: race/ethnicity, gender, SES, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, or nationality. To maximise learning, participants with different social identities were purposefully placed in each course section to ensure a balanced representation of views and experiences. For instance, a sexual orientation intergroup dialogue had equal numbers of participants and facilitators identifying as heterosexual and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) (USU, 2019). Participation in this study was voluntary from a

convenience sample of 190 students who enrolled in IGD autumn semester 2017; 171 gave their informed consent to participate in the study.

3.4 Focus Group Design

The focus group research questions were conceived with the purpose of this study in mind, ensuring the questions were relevant to the participants and their experiences taking IGD as a class. The questions are outlined below. All focus group questions focused on assessing IGD's potential to be used in higher education to strengthen intergroup relations and promote social change.

- 1) *What skills, if any, have you gained from IGD? How do you see yourself using these skills at USU?* Skill building is a foundational component of the IGD syllabus, with a particular emphasis on the LARA method, adapted by IGDs across the United States. The LARA method is a tool used to communicate across difference. IGD purports that “regular use of this tool helps to reframe one’s ability to engage in conflict empathetically in a way that invites diverse perspectives in an effort to create shared meaning” (USU, 2019). LARA stands for Listen, Affirm, Respond, Add information. With the number of reported bias incidents at USU and the data from the student climate survey (AnonymousC et al., 2014), it can be argued that skill building for USU students provides a foundation from which they might strengthen intergroup relations and promote social change.
- 2) *How has participating in this course affected your relationships (with friends, family, strangers, etc.), if in any way?* Relationship building is

another way of strengthening intergroup relations and promoting social change. Strengthening intergroup relations is one method for reducing ingroup/outgroup conflict and stereotypes (Pettigrew, 1998). The skills pedagogically intended by IGD should manifest themselves in changes in intergroup relationships.

- 3) *What are you noticing about campus life at USU that you did not notice before participating in the IGD?* Noticing social group interactions is one way of beginning to understand the complex dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression and how people with various identities experience these systems differently based on their position in the social group hierarchy.
- 4) Now I am going to ask some questions about social justice. I will ask you to keep the following definition of social justice in mind: social justice refers to transforming institutions and systems with principles of equity, recognition, and inclusion. Social justice practitioners strive to eradicate the injustice generated when differences are ranked in a hierarchy so that some groups are advantaged while other groups are marginalised (Adams et al., 2016, p. 4).
 - a) *In what way, if any, has IGD strengthened your individual and collective abilities to promote and advance social justice?* Promoting and advancing social justice at USU may help mitigate the persistent issues of bigotry and bias, creating a campus community that is inclusive of diversity.
 - b) *In your opinion, what are IGD's limitations when it comes to strengthening individual and collective abilities to promote and advance social justice?*

c) *Do you think IGD can help promote positive intergroup relations and challenge disparities on campus? How?* Examples of disparities on USU's campus are examined in an article on student experiences and diversity by AnonymousC et al. (2014). AnonymousC and her team (2014) gathered data from USU students who provided stories that:

illustrate many forms of bias, discrimination, and harassment that typically go unreported. 'It's a daily thing' to be reminded by others about one's low SES, invisibility, difference, or concern for safety in an environment where the norms of privilege are based on race, class, gender, and heterosexuality. Different examples drawn from students' experiences range from overt forms of traditional racism, sexism, or homophobia to more subtle forms of offences or microaggressions that cause students to feel unsafe, internalise negative messages, or use adaptive strategies to subvert them. Some students felt as though they would be 'causing more trouble by reporting something', and some raised a concern that there appear to be no consequences for perpetrators of bias or discrimination. A related issue raised is the need for faculty and staff who can handle controversial discussions, have knowledge about multiple forms of diversity, and can identify implicit bias and common patterns of bias/discrimination across identity groups to help students make sense of their experiences (p. 10).

5) *What has most challenged your thinking in class about race/gender/sexuality/nationality/socioeconomic status/or other aspects of social identity?* Students' ability to think critically enables them to see

connections between their social identities and the social contexts that scaffold their lived experiences.

- 6) *What new things are you doing or what are you doing differently as a result of participating in IGD?* If IGD is successful at using dialogue to strengthen intergroup relations and promote social change, changes to student behaviour should be evident.

The researcher acknowledges the risk of bias in focus groups towards dominant voices, including a possible imbalance of agent versus target voluntary participation. One way this power imbalance could have been mitigated was by mandating that all students respond to each question prompt. However, this may have produced unreliable results. If participants were required to respond, they may have responded in inauthentic ways to appease the focus group facilitator. This study did not identify target/agent status to cross reference different experiences. Instead, the researcher opted for breadth across the 13 IGD classes, allowing for broader claims about IGD in general. Future research could explore equal participation of agent and target voices, and examine differential experiences and outcomes of IGD based on target/agent status.

3.5 Ethics

Ethical approval was sought through Lancaster University and USU's Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). The researcher was added as a researcher with the IGD when she passed all the IRB tests required to do human subjects research at USU (USU, 2017). Written informed consent was

gathered from volunteer participants; the form outlined the research study overview, any foreseeable risks, and the option to end participation at any time, with an emphasis on no right or wrong responses. Participants' identifying information would be kept confidential and data would be stored securely following appropriate IRB protocols.

3.6 Participants

Ninety percent (171/190) of students who participated in an intergroup dialogue course at USU, during the autumn semester 2017, gave their informed consent to participate in focus group interviews and for their focus group interview responses to be used as data for this research. Participants were fully informed of the voluntary nature and purpose of the study.

Respondents provided their consent by reading the evaluation overview on the informed consent form and signing their names. Participants were given notice that all identifying information from respondents was confidential. Their perceptions, ideas, beliefs, and feelings about their experiences helped the researcher understand the reasons why they chose to engage in conversations across difference and how these dialogues impacted on their experiences individually, socially, and intellectually. Therefore, there were no right, or wrong answers. Personal benefits for participants included finding it rewarding to share ideas and feelings about social justice, identity, and community, and finding it useful to share experiences as a participant in an intergroup dialogue class. There were no foreseeable risks, but respondents were aware they could end their participation at any time should they choose to do so.

There were 13 IGD sections during the autumn semester 2017, with a total of 190 students, of which 171 gave their informed consent to participate in this study. There were five sections on gender, four sections on socioeconomic status, two sections on race, one section on sexual orientation, and one section on nationality. All participants were USU undergraduate students.

Participants found out about the study through a class announcement. All 171 volunteer participants were included in one of 13 focus groups. Trained peer facilitators (two per section) were not invited to participate in focus groups.

Each of the 13 focus groups kept each of the sections intact, capitalising on the relationships students had built with one another in their sections throughout the semester of dialogue work. Focus groups were held during additional class times in the last week of the semester. This allowed students to voluntarily participate knowing they would not have a scheduled conflict. If they chose not to participate, they did not come to the last scheduled class of the semester and were given an alternative writing assignment. Their absence did not count against them. Nothing else was scheduled during the last class meeting; the time was reserved for voluntary focus group meetings. All volunteer participants were given notification in November 2017, outlining the study, and including the consent form. If they voluntarily consented to participate in this study, they signed the consent form prior to the start of the focus group.

Discomfort talking about power, privilege, oppression, and other topics related to identity could have arisen through participation in a focus group; however, the level of discomfort was anticipated to be within the students' comfort and

learning zones and not enter danger zones, where students would feel physically and/or psychologically unsafe. Students spent a whole semester dialoguing across social, cultural, and power differences, so it was likely they had less discomfort due to the familiarity of sharing personal stories with their peers, raising consciousness of social identities, and exploring the causes and effects of social inequities at the individual and structural levels. Since the focus groups took place during the last class of the semester, this did not inconvenience volunteer participants, as they already had that time blocked off in their schedules for class.

Participants were informed that they were permitted to leave the focus groups if discomfort arose during group interviews. However, no participants chose to leave. A list of campus resources such as Counselling and Psychological Services, the Intercultural Centre, the Women's Resource Centre, and the [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] LGBT Resource Centre, etc. was provided for if students wanted to seek support.

Via the informed consent form, participants were notified that they were welcome to withdraw their informed consent at any time before their focus group began; however, they were also notified on the informed consent form that they were not able to withdraw their contribution to the dialogue once the focus group had started and recording had commenced. If participants felt they could not continue to participate once a focus group had begun, they would be informed verbally by the researcher that they were permitted to leave the focus group. However, whatever contribution they had made before

leaving was still recorded as data. No participants chose to leave their focus group.

Participants were briefed about the informed consent parameters prior to each focus group commencing. Ground rules were set for each focus group (i.e., share airtime, listen and respond respectfully, participate and share at your own comfort level, etc.). The focus group was a space into which everyone entered voluntarily. The intention was to facilitate the focus group in inclusive and equitable ways.

Unless participants verbally stated aspects of their identity in their response, individual participant names and attributed social identity groups in the study are confidential to respect participant anonymity.

If a participant had disclosed information that indicated they or others may be at risk of harm, pursuant to the USU Good Samaritan policy, this would be reported to university officials (i.e., psychologist, university police, Title IX coordinator, etc.). In the participant information sheet, the limits of confidentiality were explained.

No ethical constraints were anticipated relating to power imbalances or dependent relationships. While USU is the researcher's employer, the researcher does not work with IGD in any formal capacity and the researcher's job and its bearings do not co-mingle with those of IGD. Any matriculated USU student can enrol in an IGD class regardless of college affiliation. Voluntary participation or opting out of participating in a focus group had no impact on students' academic performance.

Participants may have been motivated to participate in this study as they may have learned new information about themselves, enjoyed sharing their ideas, feelings, perceptions, beliefs, behaviour, etc. about intergroup relations, campus life, identity, oppression, etc. Participants may have found it useful to share their experiences as a USU student and may have felt this type of exercise and voicing their thoughts contribute to their sense of belonging on campus.

3.7 Participant Demographics

The following graph gives a summary of participant social identities. Exploring the complexities of the intersectionality of social identities is not a focus of IGD classes at USU. Through an example Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) expresses the concept of intersectionality: “the experiences of women of colour are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism, and... these experiences tend not to be represented within the discourses of either feminism or antiracism” (pp. 1243–1244). It is important to note that IGD purposefully engages in only one aspect of social identity. This single-issue focus may be a weakness of the IGD curriculum.

This study’s focus was not a comparison about the similarities and differences which different social identity groups experience in intergroup dialogue. As such respondents in this study are anonymous and therefore not identified by a social identity group. Previous studies on intergroup dialogue suggest students from all social identity groups engaged in intergroup dialogue show improved intergroup understanding, communication skills, and stereotype

reduction, despite a tilt towards those with dominant group identities reporting deeper learnings, a result of their access to privilege and power and personal inexperience with systemic oppression (Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Nagda et al., 2009). Table 3.1 presents collected demographic data on all participants.

Table 3.1

Social Identities of Focus Group Participants by Section (ND = No data)

Topic		Gender					Socioeconomic Status				Race		Sexual Orientation	Nationality
Section		204	207	209	211	213	201	205	210	212	202	206	203	208
No. Students		16	13	12	15	12	16	14	14	15	16	16	15	15
Race	White	5	7	4	7	6	11	8	5	9	8	9	6	5
	Asian	4	1	2	4	0	1	3	4	2	3	5	3	5
	Biracial	2	2	2	0	2	1	1	2	0	0	1	3	1
	Black	4	1	3	2	3	1	0	3	3	2	1	1	4
	Latinx	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
	Middle Eastern	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
	Multiracial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Gender	Male	7	6	6	8	5	8	7	4	6	6	6	9	3
	Female	9	7	6	7	7	8	7	10	9	10	10	6	12
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	16	10	ND	15	11	16	11	ND	12	15	15	8	ND
	LGBTQ+	0	3	ND	0	1	0	3	ND	3	1	1	7	ND
Socioeconomic Class	Working Class	6	2	1	2	2	4	3	0	5	1	0	3	4
	Lower-Middle Class	1	2	1	2	0	3	5	3	2	3	0	0	1
	Middle Class	1	3	1	2	2	3	3	4	1	3	2	2	3
	Upper-Middle Class	6	3	9	9	6	5	3	6	4	7	14	10	6
	Upper Class	2	3	0		2	1	0	1	3	2	0	0	1

Topic	Gender					Socioeconomic Status					Race		Sexual Orientation	Nationality
	USA	16	13	12	15	9	16	12	13	15	13	15	15	10
Nationality/ Citizenship	Dual (USA +)	4 Brazil, Indonesia Nigeria (2)	1 India			1 Nigeria	5 Poland, Nigeria South Africa Germany Pakistan			3 Canada Brazil Nigeria	1 France	2 Taiwan, Germany		2 Kenya, Nigeria
	Other					Canada Romania Kenya		Honduras Syria	Singapore		Korea Ecuador Canada	India		Tanzania Sri Lanka China Korea

3.8 Procedure

Due to the number of focus groups conducted and the overlapping times of some of the focus groups, a small team of eight USU IRB approved researchers for the IGD programme helped the researcher facilitate focus groups. The eight focus group facilitators did not have any involvement or conflicts of interest with any of the 13 course sections offered during the autumn semester 2017. The focus group facilitators met with the researcher before data collection began to ensure to the best of their ability that each focus group was facilitated as objectively and consistently as possible. They all had previous experience facilitating focus groups and they had a brief overview of best practices. All 13 focus groups were audio recorded. One of the biggest challenges experienced in the focus group interviews was that some students were physically present but did not actively share their thoughts resulting in their perceptions not being captured as data and it is unknown whether these students identified as agents or targets.

The first three focus groups (Sections 201, 202, and 203) were transcribed by IGD student staff who were USU IRB approved and who signed the Lancaster University Confidentiality Agreement for the Transcription of Qualitative Data. The rest of the focus groups (Sections 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, and 213) were transcribed by a professional transcriber who was USU IRB approved and who signed the Lancaster University Confidentiality Agreement for the Transcription of Qualitative Data.

After receiving the transcribed focus group interviews via USU Box, the researcher printed them out, and organised them in a research data binder. Each of the 171 volunteer participants were labelled with a unique number. When a participant spoke during the focus group, they were instructed to say their name in the audio recorder before speaking. The participants were then each assigned a unique number during the transcription process. For gender Section 211, the focus group facilitator forgot to instruct the participants to say their name in the audio recorder before speaking and as such, this is the only focus group where participants were not assigned a number. The transcribed focus group interviews did not have any identifying information. The researcher then organised responses according to the questions asked in each of the 13 focus groups. The researcher printed out all responses per section and per focus group question and arranged them according to question number in the research data binder, and the second copy was arranged according to section in the research data binder. The researcher identified emergent repetitive codes and categories that evolved into themes across the focus group responses.

During each of the 13 focus groups, the following questions were asked. Each question was projected on a screen in the classroom where the focus group was being held, in addition to being read aloud.

The researcher anticipates retaining data for ten years minimum. Focus groups were transcribed and stored using USU Box. The data were encrypted and password protected via USU's cloud system. The study's data will be shared with university officials for secure transfer of the data to Lancaster

University for long-term storage. Data will be deposited in Lancaster University's institutional data repository and made freely available with an appropriate data licence. Data will be protected according to the Information Act and Lancaster University's data management plans/procedures regardless of any future changes or updates.

Table 3.2

Focus Group Questions Used to Find Emergent Themes

No.	Question
1	What skills, if any, have you gained from IGD? How do you see yourself using these skills at USU?
2	How has participating in this course affected your relationships (with friends, family, strangers, etc.), if in any way?
3	What are you noticing about campus life at USU that you did not notice before participating in the IGD?
4	<p>Now I am going to ask some questions about social justice. I will ask you to keep the following definition of social justice in mind:</p> <p>Social justice refers to transforming institutions and systems with principles of equity, recognition, and inclusion. Social justice practitioners strive to eradicate the injustice generated when differences are ranked in a hierarchy so that some groups are advantaged while other groups are marginalised (Adams et al., 2016, p 4).</p> <p>a. In what ways, if any, has IGD strengthened your individual and collective abilities to promote and advance social justice?</p> <p>b. In your opinion, what are IGD's limitations when it comes to strengthening individual and collective abilities to promote and advance social justice?</p>

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- c. Do you think IGD can help promote positive intergroup relations and challenge disparities on campus? How?
 - 5 What has most challenged your thinking in class about race/gender/sexuality/nationality/socioeconomic class/or other aspects of social identity?
 - 6 What new things are you doing or what are you doing differently as a result of participating in the IGD?
-

3.9 Data Analysis

The questions in Table 3.2 formed the basis for the themes presented in Chapter 4. This study reports the summary results in narrative terms. The researcher spent one year attempting to learn Atlas.ti. Focus group interviews were uploaded into the qualitative data software. The researcher experimented with analysing the data in Atlas.ti. Unfortunately, too much time was spent trying to learn how to use the software programme. Because the researcher felt valuable time was wasted in moving forward with data analysis, the use of Atlas.ti was abandoned, and the researcher proceeded with manual coding.

The researcher independently coded and interpreted the qualitative focus group data using a reflexive process (Pillow, 2003). While all the focus group data were taken into consideration, only the most significant sections of the data pertaining to this study's research question were examined and coded, following standard qualitative research practice (Guest et al., 2012; Morse, 2007; Saldana, 2013; Seidman, 2006).

Prior to beginning the qualitative data analysis, the researcher assessed expectations and perceptions on the research topic. Beyond general assumptions learned from a review of the literature and personal and professional experience, the researcher had some expectations about how intergroup dialogue may improve intergroup relations in meaningful ways, due to frequent positive institutional exposure IGD has at USU, as well as the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy and intergroup contact used in this thesis.

To interpret the focus group data, the researcher reviewed and coded each focus group multiple times and searched for themes and patterns that emerged from the data through the lens of critical pedagogy and intergroup contact. The theoretical framework helped identify thematic results, which became apparent from the set of core open-ended questions posed during each focus group. Recognising the importance of context, the researcher used a systematic method for coding and analysing descriptions of participants' phenomenological experiences. A few different coding filters were applied. These include in vivo coding, where the researcher used the student's own language as the code, descriptive coding, used to classify similar opinions from multiple students, and values coding, to identify the breadth of subjective perspectives expressed by students (Saldana, 2013). The narrative data were sorted into various categories based on participant responses. Summaries of each category were composed and interpreted, while acknowledging the subjective nature of coding. By comparing and contrasting the narrative data across sections for each category, the

researcher found that the core ideas emerged into themes, thereby capturing the common and unique aspects of participants' experiences and perspectives.

In this study, the research question, theoretical framework, and focus group questions, data, codes, and categories provided the starting point for identifying the following themes and their relevance to the theoretical framework:

1. Skills developed (intergroup relations)
2. Changes in relationships (intergroup relations)
3. Campus life observations (intergroup relations, critical consciousness)
4. New ability to promote social justice (critical consciousness)
5. Limitations of IGD's scope (intergroup relations, critical consciousness)
6. Promoting positive intergroup relations (intergroup relations)
7. Challenging disparities on campus (intergroup relations)
8. Changes in thinking (critical consciousness)
9. Changes in behaviour as a result of participation in the IGD (critical consciousness)

Within these themes, core concepts emerged for either why intergroup dialogue works or why it does not work to improve intergroup relations and promote social justice. The broader concepts synthesised responses to the major question of the study. For example, core ideas in the broader concepts were thematic responses to the research question: To what extent can dialogue across identity differences be used in higher education to motivate

awareness about and actions in defence of social justice? See Table 3.3 for example codes, categories, and themes.

Table 3.3

Example Codes, Categories, and Themes

Sample of Codes	Categories	Themes
LARA, affirm, affirmation, communication skills, active listening	LARA method	Skills Developed
Self-awareness, awareness of others, empathy, empathetic, listening, different perspectives, other's opinions	Deeper Awareness and Perspective Taking	
Sense of responsibility, educating myself, be more inquisitive, gain more knowledge, become a better agent	Educating Self	
Identity, diversity, social identity groups	Recognition of Identity	
Ally, allyship, practical application	Advocacy Skills	
Intervene, conflict management, oppressive behaviour	Peer-to-Peer Intervention	
Assumptions, judgements, relationships, friends, family, hurt relationships, frustrations, negative impact, tensions, power dynamics, jokes, negative impact	Positive	Changes in Relationships
	Negative	
Segregated campus life despite diversity, social identity, cliquey, little to no interaction between groups, missed opportunities, exclusionary, what USU is lacking, racial segregation, hanging out, same social identities, comfort zone, similar backgrounds	Campus Segregation and Group Dynamics	Campus Life Observations
Opinions about incidents, different perceptions, hate crimes, incidents, did not notice, see things differently,	Campus Incidents	
Structural racism, structural discrimination, community learning project (CLP), gender non-binary, injustice, inequality	Disparities	
Did not really gain much, already paying attention, and noticing things happening on campus	Nothing Different	

Sample of Codes	Categories	Themes
Individual level, conversations, strengthened abilities, learn from peers, do not know enough to promote social change, need more education, undereducated	Education	New Ability to Promote Social Justice
Allyship, skills, respectful of others, types of allies,	Allyship	
Being more aware of other social identities, broadened perspective, more aware of social justice, issues in society, different viewpoints	Greater Awareness	
Implementation of IGD, brave space, class did not reach objectives, was already doing a lot of things	IGD Did Not Meet This Objective	
LARA not useful outside of this space, LARA is too formulaic, hard to directly use skills in IGD outside of class, lack of knowledge of how to dialogue with people who do not know LARA/are at different stage, LARA necessitates reciprocity, no level of trust, CLP shortfalls, college bubble, no long-term effect, did not learn enough content about social justice, lack of action plan	IGD's Lack of Practical Application Subcategories: LARA only useful in the IGD classroom, lack of content-based education resulting in students not feeling adequately prepared to promote social justice	Limitations of IGD's Scope
Reduce people based on their identities, agent/target dynamic, lack of empowerment, no acknowledgement of intersectionality, no resolutions of class conflicts, unresolved issues, frustration, tensions, classroom dynamics, not enough time, course grading, no professor teaching the class, lack of class credibility, class info was accessible elsewhere, limited to the knowledge of the students in the class	Curriculum and Classroom Limitations Subcategories: Negative effects of sorting students by social identity group, no space for intersectionality, lack of conflict resolution in contentious class dialogues, classroom facilitation, and use of peer facilitators	
Selection bias, attracting students who want to be there, opt-in, self-selected group of	Selection Bias of Students Who	

Sample of Codes	Categories	Themes
students, voluntary basis, preaching to the choir	Choose to Enrol in IGD	
Patience, gain perspectives, get to know each other, trust building, IGD cannot promote positive intergroup relations, up to individual, limited scope, dialogue does not solve everything	Improve Intergroup Relations	Promoting Positive Intergroup Relations
Personal decision, first need awareness, takes more to challenge disparities, IGD not effective at challenging disparities and inequities, no critical mass	Challenge Disparities on Campus	Challenging Disparities on Campus

Chapter 4: Findings

Ninety percent of students enrolled in an IGD course at USU during the autumn semester 2017 gave their informed consent to participate in this study (n=171). This chapter reports the summary results in narrative and numerical terms. To interpret the data, frequent features occurring across responses were extracted and coded into categories, and qualitative aspects were studied, thereby capturing the common and unique characteristics of participants' experiences and perspectives as discussed previously in Chapter 3 on the methodology. Themes emerged in relation to focus group prompts and student responses. While this approach helped generalise to a degree the qualitative data, there are limitations to this design such as discrepancies between different types of data, unequal evidence in the narrative responses, and the researcher's subjective lens.

This chapter provides a description of participant responses and findings in each of the following themes:

1. Skills developed.
2. Changes in relationships.
3. Campus life observations.
4. New ability to promote social justice.
5. Limitations of IGD's scope.
6. Promote positive intergroup relations and challenge disparities on campus as a result of participation in the IGD.

While emergent themes indicated participants in IGD developed communication skills such as the LARA method, greater awareness through perspective taking, and recognition of how different social identities may result in differing lived experiences, participants expressed reservations about whether these skills would help them pursue social justice action on campus and beyond.

4.1 Skills Developed

The focus group interviews included a prompt on the topic of skill acquisition as follows: What skills have you gained from IGD and how do you see yourself using these skills at USU? Thirty-six percent (n=62) of students participating in focus groups responded to this question. This section offers an overview of participant responses in the following categories: the LARA method (i.e., Listen, Affirm, Respond, Add Information), deeper awareness and perspective taking, educating self, recognition of identity, advocacy skills, and peer-to-peer intervention.

4.1.1 LARA method

Overwhelmingly the qualitative data speak the most about LARA or aspects of LARA. The LARA method was mentioned by 36% of students (n=22) who responded to the skills development question in all but one of the 13 focus groups. Skill building is a foundational component of the IGD syllabus, with a particular emphasis on the LARA method, adapted by IGD programmes across the United States. The LARA method is a tool used to communicate across difference. IGD purports that “regular use of this tool helps to reframe

one's ability to engage in conflict empathetically in a way that invites diverse perspectives in an effort to create shared meaning" (USU, 2019). With the number of reported bias incidents at USU and the data from the student climate survey (AnonymousC et al., 2014), it can be argued that skill building in the LARA method might be beneficial for USU students at a minimum to help facilitate interaction with diverse peers in an open manner.

One student from SES Section 212 summarised this common view: "I guess one of the biggest skills I have learned in IGD is using LARA and I found it very helpful when using LARA, it really makes you understand another person's point of view." Other responses about the LARA method include: "From the IGD I have learned, one skill in particular that comes to mind, is the LARA method" (gender Section 204); "I have gained lots of skills, the first that came to mind is communication skills and using things like LARA or active listening to make sure you are really understanding..." (race Section 206); "...touching on people's humanity through the LARA method..."(race Section 206); and "I guess LARA was the big thing for me and I think that really helped in how I engage with people's viewpoints I don't necessarily agree with" (nationality Section 208).

A participant in SES Section 201 reflected on the affirmation piece of LARA stating:

I think I've learned how to approach high intensity conversations or conflicts in a calm manner and I also learned how to diffuse those situations using skills like LARA and affirming people for giving their

input and those are skills that I have already started to use at ...
[USU]...

A student in sexual orientation Section 203 also commented on affirmation, noting:

One skill that I've learned is how to affirm others. I feel as though affirming people shows them that you are understanding them and you're giving them the respect that they're demanding. And I feel as though a lot of times to avoid conflicts or what gives rise to conflicts is a lack of understanding and a lack of empathy and I feel as though affirming someone introduces that into a conversation, introducing that empathy, introducing to that person, oh I understand you, I understand where you're coming from, and that's definitely a skill I've tried to incorporate throughout my daily life.

Affirming the speaker is the second step in LARA (listen, affirm, respond, add information) and is an attempt to establish common ground and understanding. Affirmation is not agreement. It is an opportunity for the listener to relate back what the speaker has said, showing the speaker that the listener has heard and understood what they said, and promotes openness rather than defensiveness. Through active listening and affirming, students may also ask clarifying questions to deepen understanding. A student in race Section 206 reflected on the active listening aspect of LARA saying:

I think I have gained a lot of skills but the first thing that came to mind is communication skills and using things like LARA or active listening to make sure that you are really understanding, especially if they disagree with you on a controversial topic, and making sure you know how to respond in a way that is conducive to actually participating in dialogue and growing from the conversation. I think that was something that I wouldn't focus on before when I would have these types of discussions and that was something I learned from taking part in this class.

Another participant in race Section 206 reflected on communicating differently as a result of IGD:

Now I think I look a lot more for, well I try to have more constructive conversations and I think I have that because I am listening differently. In my head I am processing differently. Before this class I feel like it was a little bit more in my nature to be a little more debate-based in terms of conversations and look for points of contention. Now I try to look for areas I can bridge two different ideas and try to kind of work through a problem and come to some sort of agreement or solutions in a collaborative manner. In that way, I think my communication skills have really developed.

LARA is the main skill students learn in the IGD classroom and is then subsequently practiced weekly throughout the semester. Listening, asking questions, and affirming the speaker allows for listeners to reflect on and revise their own perspectives as a result of the dialogic process. Developing

these intentional communication skills such as the LARA method takes practice, as a student in SES Section 205 reflected: "...we are coming together once a week for three hours and talking about real things and you can't just go through that so many times and not get better at talking like that". Because LARA is constantly reinforced in IGD, it can result in becoming a main takeaway, as a student in gender Section 209 reflected:

I think strategies for listening and communicating are the main bulk of what I learned from this class. Definitely active listening and part of that is trying to gather the emotion behind what people are saying so you can more effectively engage and appeal to that when you respond to them.

IGD attempts to use the LARA method of communication as more than a tool of dialogue. In the classroom, LARA is a stated agreement among students that tries to create an equalising power structure and mutual respect. The overwhelmingly positive statements about the LARA communication method exhibits intergroup cooperation and the acceptance of equal status, two key conditions for reducing prejudice and promoting intergroup harmony according to Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory. Equal status in the IGD classroom – USU undergraduate students who do not hold institutional power over one another (not including the facilitators) – is not to be misinterpreted to mean equal status in society. However, participation in IGD is not necessarily evidence of common goals, which is one of the four key conditions in Allport's (1954) intergroup contact hypothesis. Many students report taking IGD to fulfil their diversity requirement, not to learn how to

become effectual change agents. Instead, evidence of common goals informally established amongst students is seen in statements of empathy, a desire to understand others' viewpoints, a belief that toleration of different opinions is a more fundamentally shared value than the professed opinions, a desire not to offend others, a degree of faith that the LARA method has the potential to provide the essential conditions of equal status, intergroup cooperation, and a dialectic approach to negotiating these informal common goals in the IGD classroom. It is also possible to see the building of a new community of shared socially just values in the conflict some students found when confronted by family or friends who were hostile to socially just concepts. This transitioning between the IGD classroom where topics of social justice are at the forefront of classroom dialogue to interactions outside of the IGD classroom is most clear in students who identify positively with IGD and/or the LARA method, but nevertheless indicate that it has damaged their personal relationships, as discussed later.

4.1.2 Deeper Awareness and Perspective Taking

Deeper awareness and perspective taking are looked at through the lens of empathy. Fifteen percent (n=9) of students, who responded to this prompt in the focus groups, reported gaining a deeper awareness, including self-awareness and awareness of others, as a skill they acquired through IGD. Four students out of nine commented on the idea of perspective taking as a useful takeaway from IGD. Typical of these responses, a participant in SES Section 201 shared:

I learned the skill of how to become more aware of dynamics that are happening within a conversation, regarding identity or things that might influence someone's ability to share in a group environment so if it's a gender dynamic or a socioeconomic standing dynamic.

A student in gender Section 204 offered thoughts about disparities and privilege: "I think it is really easy to ignore where disparities and privilege are and I think IGD has taught me to be more in tune to being more aware of what might be considered problematic".

Another participant in gender Section 207 summarised what several other students commented on regarding deeper awareness:

The skills I have gained from IGD are kind of being more aware, both self-aware and aware of other people. Because now I am aware of things that are being said to me and that I am saying to other people...

Perspective taking and the ability to understand someone else's viewpoint or experience is a first step towards empathy. A participant in SES Section 205 commented:

I think one thing I learned to do a lot better is to consider people's viewpoints as if they were my own before I thought about what I thought about them. So just to try and step into someone else's shoes, say okay, what are they thinking? And way before I make a judgement on what I think about it.

A student in gender Section 207 acknowledged:

I think perspective taking is something that I have definitely gained from IGD because I noticed that now instead of thinking about why my opinion is right, I find myself seeing their point of view a lot more and sort of putting myself in their shoes...

Another participant in gender Section 209 added:

I have definitely found myself more open to and tolerant of other opinions that strongly differ from my own. Rather than outright rejecting them off the bat I am really willing to engage in the conversation and try to understand that person's point of view in a calm manner and express my own point of view with the person.

A student in SES Section 210 remarked about being more empathetic as a result of attending the IGD:

I learned how to see people in a fuller lens, which isn't really a skill. It is learning how to be more empathetic and more understanding of where people may be coming from. Which may just be being a better person...

Intergroup dialogue helps some students gain a deeper awareness of other's differing lived experiences. But does this deeper awareness translate to intergroup empathy? Empathy is a foundation of intergroup work and can be linked to positive effects such as prejudice reduction and an increase in perspective taking (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). The potential shift between perspective taking and empathy can happen when there is a deeper

awareness and understanding of power inequities and injustices faced by people with minoritized identities. Developing the skill of hearing another perspective, minus a deep understanding of how someone's perspective is situated in an identity-based experience that makes some, based on their social identities, more vulnerable to oppression, can have the effect of equalising perspectives that are not equally valid based on hegemonic realities. One example of this is validating a white supremacist's perspective that white people are the superior race. While the data illustrate that some students may have developed relational empathy towards their peers, the responses lack a critical understanding of how their peers are differently positioned within a system, such as systemic racism and other systems of oppression. Thus, IGD may not be successful at connecting students' multiple lived experiences and differing perspectives to their varying connections to these systems of power and privilege. IGD may function as an equivocator in that it values and promotes all perspectives being heard and through this premise may conceal power inequities under the idea that all voices should be heard equally, a premise of pluralism (Cross, 1972).

4.1.3 Educating Self

While only two participants, who responded to this prompt in the focus groups, reflected on the need for further self-education to be more effective in engaging across difference, their insights are important to note given that in many intergroup interactions, students who have minoritized identities are often the ones educating their peers about what their experiences and lives are like (Chesler et al., 2005). Yet if only two students reported feeling the

need for further self-education, it may suggest that the call for deeper understanding about power inequities was not achieved.

By recognising the need to educate oneself, it helps take this undue burden off their peers. A participant in race Section 202 responded:

...educating myself on stuff I don't know or I'm not that informed on, it's sort of my responsibility to do that, ...recognising where I don't have enough knowledge, it's my responsibility to make sure that I'm contributing in ways that I can.

Admitting the need to educate oneself is practicing humility and vulnerability. Traditional college-aged students in the United States are typically between the ages of 18 and 22. Developmentally, these students are still figuring out who they are by exploring their social identity groups and various interests. At the same time, college students in an elite institution such as USU, may feel pressure to “know everything”. The IGD curriculum may not have achieved the desired effect of self-motivating agent participants to better understand the systemic social conditions of target participants. This might be a contributing factor to only two participants offering the educating of self as an important skill that needs developing. Similarly, a participant in sexual orientation Section 203 spoke about her agent identity adding:

...being more empathetic to a person's experiences, being open in the sense that as an agent, sometimes I'm not knowledgeable in how a target student or a person that's in a target group experience their

life... Trying to learn how you can be a better agent is how you become a better agent.

IGD purposefully places students in sections so there are equal numbers of agents and targets as defined by United States societal norms. For example, in a race section, white students would have the agent identity, as white people in the United States have white privilege, systemic, and historical legacies of advantages and benefits from being white. Students of colour would have the target identity as people of colour in the United States, and experience systemic discrimination, racism, and oppression based on their race. Despite civil rights legislation in the 1960s and 1970s, economic and social disparities and differential outcomes across racial lines remain, resulting in distinctly different lived experiences of whites and people of colour, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. IGD attempts to create a classroom environment where these differences are intentionally explored and where students can learn from one another's dissimilar vantage points. IGD strives to foster critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) through personalised narratives where students learn about impacts on their peers' lives caused by social group identities. Yet the very small response on self-education may be indicative that students did not feel motivated to learn beyond what was offered in the classroom. The recognition of identity is discussed next.

4.1.4 Recognition of Identity

Nineteen percent (n=12) of students who responded to this prompt in the focus groups spoke about how recognising social group identities was an

important skill. Exploring identities is a main component of the IGD curriculum. Indicative of the importance of learning about social group identities, a student in gender Section 204 reported:

...becoming more comfortable talking about aspects of identity and aspects of diversity and ... having those conversations even when you are not comfortable... If you don't recognize that diversity exists then you can't talk about issues that people could be facing because of identity.

Students expressed the ability to see identity differences and diversity, but they did not necessarily state the ways these are tied to power inequalities and advantages for agent groups and disadvantages for target groups.

In successful intergroup dialogue practice, social group identities are intentionally kept relevant to foster exploration of these identities in relation to one another, encourage appreciation of commonalities and differences, and connect identities to systems that position groups differently in their relationship to power and privilege. In speaking about the recognition of diversity in everyone, some of the power differences recede creating a gap in critical analyses of inequity and injustice. A look into social responsibility through advocacy skills follows.

4.1.5 Advocacy Skills

Only two students, who responded to this prompt in the focus groups, spoke about advocacy; however, the acquisition of advocacy skills is a step towards

building capacity for social change. The low response rate may be indicative of the lack of learning practical applications and transferrable skills. One advocacy skill is learning how to be an effective ally, also discussed further in the New Ability to Promote Social Justice section (4.4) below. A student in gender Section 204 said this about allyship:

I would say advocacy skills, so how to be an ally in a way that is effective and also authentic. ...I think a lot of students, particularly white students at ... [USU] who come from higher SES backgrounds, tend to equate holding progressive ideology with being an effective ally and I think... a key realisation one must have to really make an impact is to recognise your own privileges and sort of the myth of meritocracy and use that in the spaces where you do have the privilege and the ability to make an impact where others might not and to do so, I guess, in a genuine way.

Another student in gender Section 204 spoke about gaining knowledge about terminology to better effect policy change as an advocacy skill:

...the group that I have co-founded and currently lead on campus is called Transitioning at ...[USU] for transgender students. A big aspect of what we do is practical policy change. IGD gave me a lot of the language that I did not already have for what I was doing. Like talking about instances of structural versus institutional discrimination, along with individual discrimination and kind of integrating that language into what I am already doing has actually been helpful.

When advocacy skills are used to promote policy change as this student commented on, institutions may see greater transformation. Referencing racism, Kendi (2019) argues that education, empathy, love, and good intentions are failed strategies that have not yet eradicated systemic racism and never will alone. Kendi (2019) proposes that policy and power transformation are necessary for retracting systemic racism and offers historical evidence for how policy and power are what created the system of racial oppression in the first place. Instead of working within the current system and current policies, Kendi (2019) recommends we envisage an antiracist and socially just society and new ways of knowing, being, and doing. If IGD is successful in fostering critical dialogic processes, then a next step would be both improved intergroup relations as well as a critical understanding of systems of inequalities resulting in inspiring change agents for transforming these systems. However, as only two participants responded, this may indicate that IGD does not necessarily provide awareness of the need for advocacy at a policy level. Education can be viewed as a precursor to transformative change, as identifying and understanding the problem are necessary first steps to envisioning transformation. One basic step towards enacting change is on the interpersonal level with peer-to-peer intervention, discussed next.

4.1.6 Peer-to-peer Intervention

Interrupting problematic discriminatory behaviour is a skill many students feel uncomfortable engaging in, even though intervening may be an opportunity for peer education. Two students, who responded to this prompt in the focus

groups, reflected on this, again a low response rate that may indicate IGD does not impart specific skills related to intervening in problematic social situations, despite the increasing number of reported bias incidents on campus. A student in SES Section 205 offered:

I think that before this class if there was ever an instance where if someone would say something offensive to another identity group, I would just stay quiet and accept it and not intervene. I think now I am definitely a lot more willing and able and feel more comfortable to intervene in those situations.

While this student is expressing the intention to intervene in problematic situations, they are not actually stating examples of how they have intervened. Saying you are going to do something such as challenging a peer on their behaviour differs from actually taking action. Yet the student is stating a commitment and comfortability to act, but relative to their peers they are an outlier.

Another participant in SES Section 205 spoke abstractly rather than giving a concrete example of intervention:

I think an important skill that I have learned is to be able to handle conflict in a more respectful way. Even though previously I did not often speak up when I saw oppressive behaviour. I think if I had prior to taking IGD, I wouldn't have known how to do it in a respectful way and I think that being able to handle conflict in a respectful way is important

because that is the only way you are going to help someone to change the way that they are behaving.

This student might be referring to the LARA method as a “respectful way” of confronting another’s problematic behaviour, in that LARA’s formula includes affirmation as a key step in dialogue, respectfully affirming and acknowledging the speaker’s comments rather than using attacking and accusing words. But this student seems to be speaking more about conflict in general rather than intervening in oppressive situations, which might require skills beyond the limitations of LARA.

While IGD does not specifically offer bystander intervention training as part of its pedagogy, learning skills on how to intervene in problematic situations by interrupting non-inclusive or discriminatory behaviours has the potential to positively facilitate peer-to-peer education and influence thinking and behaviour. Only four (n=171) participants indicated advocacy and peer-to-peer intervention as skills they felt they had developed. This number is considerably low, indicating a breakdown between learning LARA and applying advocacy and peer-to-peer intervention skills. This could signify that most students did not overcome their initial discomfort in confronting a peer and this discomfort was not outweighed by the altruistic feelings of doing the right thing and making a difference, with the ultimate goal of bridging differences (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). IGD has not helped increase participant drive to share across difference (Nagda et al., 2004), and has not necessarily helped increase participant confidence in both educating oneself and educating others to promote equity and social justice, and it has failed to

instil in its participants a drive to notice and respond in counteracting bias through bystander intervention techniques (Watkins et al., 2007), despite literature on intergroup dialogue finding otherwise (Gurin et al., 2013).

When IGD participants begin to have an awareness of critical consciousness about hegemonic systems of power and oppression, sometimes this results in changes in relationships students have with their family and friends, as discussed in the next section.

4.2 Changes in Relationships

This section provides the participants' responses to the following focus group interview prompt: How has taking this course affected your relationships with family, friends, strangers, etc., if in any way? Forty-one percent (n=70) of focus group participants responded to this prompt. The results are sorted into the following categories: positive changes in relationships with friends (n=23), and negative changes in relationships family (n=14). The remaining responses to this prompt did not have any common threads, codes, or categories to interpret.

4.2.1 Positive Changes in Relationships with Friends

Twenty-three students, who responded to this prompt in the focus groups, reported positive changes in relationships with friends. One student in race Section 202 reflected that he changed his initial assumptions about his suitemate which allowed for them to develop a positive relationship:

So initially coming into the class I think I was kind of judgemental towards members of the agent group because I assumed they had certain beliefs even though I didn't get to know them. So, after taking this course, I feel like when I meet a stranger I have to make the effort to actually try to get to know the person before assuming whatever beliefs I think they might have. An example of this would probably be one of my suitemates. He grew up in the middle of America like in a very conservative area, so I assumed he was very racist. But he's actually a pretty cool guy and we get along very, very well [laughs]; we get along very well so I just have to stop assuming certain things based on where someone came from and try to get to know them a little bit more, and understand why they might have certain beliefs.

This reflection recognises the unconscious biases we all have (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013); the student acknowledges that he must consciously and intentionally recognise and dismiss the bias when meeting new people and avoid making assumptions about them based on social identity group, appearance, where the person is from, etc.

A student in gender Section 209 spoke about the differences between engaging in dialogue with a friend who was taking IGD in a different section and other friends who have not taken IGD:

I have a really close friend that is also in IGD and I find it easiest to engage in dialogue with that person because they have also taken the course. It is kind of like you are applying what you have learned in

class when you are talking to each other, and I felt more comfortable. I realised that they are also going over the same dialogue techniques and things like that. It happened naturally I guess... I have had really constructive dialogue about things that we have talked about in class or things that are going on campus.

By practicing lessons from IGD with a friend who is learning the same lessons in a different section, this student has been able to reinforce dialogue learning outside class. However, when speaking about friends who are not taking IGD, this student does not seem to attempt to have IGD types of dialogue with them:

I guess with my other group of close friends, I haven't really seen my relationship change in any way. I don't know. I have begun to notice more nuanced things that they do or say or others do or say when I am with my friends that may be problematic. I don't know. I actually really haven't seen my relationship with them change as much.

This neutral approach to interacting with friends may mean a lack of extrinsic drive needed to transfer IGD learnings to outside the classroom and in social life that would indicate a step towards promoting social change. Contrary to this neutral approach, another student in gender Section 209 shared an example of applying classroom learning to a social situation:

I wouldn't say it has necessarily changed my relationship with my friends, but I have definitely noticed how some conversations with my friends have gone. One example that I can think of is we were at .. [a

fast-food outlet]. It is a big popular spot on campus. One of my friends, we were just in line waiting and he just kind of out of nowhere just blurted out transgender people have a mental disease. I think a lot of times I would have just rolled my eyes and not responded and brushed it off. In that particular instance, I said I understand that you may actually feel that and you have been raised to believe that, but you have got to understand that statistically one of the people in this building could be having a gender identity issue. You don't know how adversely your words could affect them. It is the first time I have done anything like that with a close friend of mine. He was surprisingly very receptive to it and that is definitely something that I would probably otherwise never have done, had I not taken this class.

This response also relates to the peer-to-peer intervention topic presented earlier in section 4.1 Skills Developed, and is an example of how IGD learning has the potential to reach beyond the classroom, when students take their learning and apply it to real-life situations with peers. This student shared a concrete example of how they actually intervened in a social situation, as opposed to students (reported on above), who shared about hypothetically being more equipped to intervene as a result of attending the IGD.

Another student in gender Section 211 spoke about an example of teaching the LARA method to her friends and family, sharing:

I actually taught the LARA method to my family and friends. So now when I have a conversation on the phone with them about something

that happened to my day, they know to give me space to be able to say what I would like to say. They affirm and respond and also add information. It sounds like it is maybe a little too stern. But it actually really helped and now they kind of understand the theory behind it and why it is important to affirm someone before adding things. So that was really helpful because now I not only learned LARA in this class but now I use it with family and friends and it actually helped our relationship a lot.

Students spoke about their relationships being positively influenced by their confidence in feeling better equipped to negotiate communicating across difference or conflict. Only one student described feeling they can better negotiate communicating across difference or conflict specifically around social injustices, bias, and harmful impacts towards marginalised people. These responses suggest a general improvement in communication in their relationships versus their relationships being positively impacted on because they can better challenge biases, discriminatory behaviours, and statements. The dialogic relationship between IGD students and their friends outside IGD seems to be strengthened in these examples as the IGD students were able to use their skills to bridge any potential breakdowns in communication. One IGD student is further practicing critical communication by noticing and naming biases and inequities in their social spaces. Positive reception from their peers to communicating critically can result in IGD students feeling more empowered to act again (Fook & Askeland, 2007).

4.2.2 Negative Changes in Relationships with Family

Fourteen students, who responded to this prompt in the focus groups, spoke about the negative changes they have experienced in relationships with family as a result of attending the IGD. Three students in gender Section 204 spoke about having a more difficult time relating to family members:

I would say it might have actually hurt some of my relationships. I think going home this past week for Thanksgiving and everything, I am much more cognizant of the stereotypes and things that my family are saying and that makes me a lot angrier on the inside at them, which I think is kind of the opposite I should have gotten out of the course. But it is what happened and I am starting to notice. I don't know, misogynistic phrases that my brother and my dad use and I want to react to that by using LARA. But they have been doing that my entire life and it has just been recent that I realised that because of this class. It is really hard to combat that and I think has actually hurt a lot of how I view my parents and things like that.

Another student in gender Section 204 also had a similar experience with their family over Thanksgiving break, adding:

Going back home for Thanksgiving as well, it has definitely hurt my relationship with my family. My dad is [a] very stubborn, headstrong person, so I was telling a story about one of my projects I had to submit. My dad cut me midway and started interrupting me... So I just blatantly told him "can I please finish what I was going to say..." He

completely shrugged it off and called me, oh my god, it was a derogatory word for immoral imbecile. I can't translate it very well.

Another incident at home where it hurt was one of my cousins just had a baby and she brought her baby and she was taking care of it and then all the men in my family started talking about two kids isn't enough and a third would benefit and make a good little tricycle and having three kids is the best. All the men started talking about how she had to prep herself again to have a third child and her husband was agreeing with everything that was said. It was at Thanksgiving and they are saying this and I had to literally leave the room... because I could not stand what they were saying because it was so rude. It was something that I would definitely do beforehand. But this class has made me realise like right there if I had interrupted in front of all my brothers, my male cousins, my uncles, and my dad, they would just say this is a liberal education at its best. You are being tainted by what ...[USU] stands for as a liberal institution. It has definitely hurt incidences where there is such a foundation of like disparities between men and women as seen in my family.

Another student in gender Section 204 affirmed these experiences with family adding: "I guess my parents have also joked or teased that this is what a liberal education brings about".

A participant in SES Section 205 spoke about the frustrations in relating to family:

I think this course has actually made relationships with my family and some friends a little more frustrating. My parents are very deep rooted in their tradition and conservative beliefs. It is not really a possibility for me to change those beliefs at this point because it would just result in really bad consequences for me, being estranged from them, or something. It is frustrating when they will say pretty either racist, sexist, or homophobic comments. It is because of this course I really want to say something and I want to LARA them but I can't because they are my family and they won't take it the way that this course will take it. I think it is good in a way because it has made me more aware, but also frustrating because I can't change it.

A student in SES Section 212 similarly said:

This has negatively impacted [on] my relationship with my parents. I have always been aware that there has been a bit of a gap between me and my parents. Before I attended this class, I just assumed that the relationship that I had with them was normal. But then after hearing everyone else's experiences, their stories about their relationship with their parents, it kind of dawned on me that maybe what I had wasn't very normal and then also part of it is that my family or my parents are proud people. They are not the type of people that would appreciate being called out for things. When I tried to bring up topics to them then it just worsened the divide that was already there.

While only one student noticed and named increased racial tensions in their relationships in response to this prompt, it is important to note these group dynamics observed as a result of heightened awareness. This could be a result of there being only two sections out of 13 on race. A student in race Section 206 remarked that they are noticing group dynamics now after taking IGD:

I noticed a lot of racial tension more, especially in my relationships that I wouldn't have noticed, like power dynamics between different groups or just being conscious of the way people say things that normally I would have been, "oh that is a joke" or "that is a normal stereotype" knowing that there is actually a lot of historical and structural factors that go into those dynamics that allow privileged members to make jokes like that. I think I have been able to see that more, especially back home. I came from a very sheltered background, especially seeing that in my friendships and now being aware of how that perpetuates different cycles of oppression. That definitely after taking this course has affected my relationships.

Unlike the observations from positive changes in relationships with peers, these IGD students reported not feeling empowered to use their communication skills such as LARA when engaging in dialogue with family members. Freire (1970) agrees that the necessary components of successful dialogue cannot happen when one party denies the other an opportunity to speak and be actively listened to, instead of engaging in debate tactics such as who is right versus who is wrong. This evidence suggests that IGD is not

necessarily effective outside a context where there are common agreements. It is unclear whether IGD provides strategies to students for establishing a foundation of mutual respect that would enable dialogue to occur outside the classroom, where community agreements for dialogue have not already been established as the norm. Students are experiencing relationship conflicts because they have developed awareness about power, privilege, and oppression, and can now see the blind spots and the perpetuation of those norms in their families and friends. So, while they may be experiencing more negative relationships here, they may also be building greater affinity for communities and alliances that cohere around social justice. While IGD purports mutual respect as an objective for intergroup dialogue, this is less about mutual respect (though one can take diverse perspectives respectfully) and more about the antagonisms that arise when one challenges norms and status quo behaviours that perpetuate discrimination and inequity.

Shifting of values is likely to result in cognitive dissonance and conflicting feelings. One student in SES Section 201 stated that the class: "...has had a kind of negative impact on my family, but I like just call out my family now in a lot more things than I used to". This student notes that the class has a negative impact on their family relations, but seems to feel a social responsibility to "call them out," which is likely to be a source of conflict. This negative impact on family relationships was a common refrain. A student in the sexual orientation Section 203 stated: "I think that this is, may have had a more negative impact with my family". Another student in gender Section 204 commented: "It has definitely hurt my relationships with my family." However,

some students did indicate that the IGD: "...helped me to communicate with my family" (SES Section 201), while other students said that the IGD helped improve relationships with their current peers, though their current peers may be a different group than their pre-college social group. This negative impact is arising because they are challenging norms that perpetuate privilege and ignorance. In this sense, IGD is coming closer to the objective of creating greater advocacy and intervention for social justice at the interpersonal level.

The positive effect upon relationships appears to occur if the other person is willing to change the way that they talk. Again, the method of communication reveals much about the power dynamics and goals of the dialogue. While the mode of communication matters, the ideological differences are a root source of the conflicts, such that even when one uses cooperative forms of communication, these cannot be bridged so easily anymore. It is possible to conjecture that the nature of the dialogue, whether it is a cooperative or competitive venture, reveals whether Allport's (1954) essential conditions for reducing prejudice have been met. In competitive debates, the conditions for reducing prejudice have not been met and therefore, it is unlikely the conversation will reduce prejudice no matter what is said in the conversation. There is a sense that the most damage to family relationships occurred when students were insulted by a family member because they expressed empathy towards an opposing viewpoint.

In order for the effects of IGD to be felt beyond the classroom, students first need to be aware of group dynamics outside of the IGD bubble. Awareness of group dynamics may not be relevant if communication styles of the family or

group they are attempting to dialogue with is competitive rather than cooperative. At stake is keeping a sense of belonging to one's family unit versus challenging that unit's ideological norms. When students make that challenge, competitively or cooperatively, they face threats against their belonging, moving them to silence or further conflict. This is not inherently negative; in fact, it may be indicative that participants of the IGD are more identified with social justice perspectives and at the interpersonal level, are willing to challenge those who refuse to acknowledge discriminatory behaviours or power inequities. Observations of campus life are discussed in the next section.

4.3 Campus Life Observations

This section provides participant responses to new observations about campus life, which they had not noticed before attending the IGD. The focus groups were asked the question: "What are you noticing about campus life at USU that you did not notice before taking IGD?" Because the question is framed around increased awareness, measuring these responses against whether students take action may not be the key point to emphasise in this subsection. Whether this newfound awareness makes it more likely for students to act, and therefore whether IGD is useful in facilitating that shift is of more interest. Fifty percent (n=85) of students responded to this focus group prompt. The results are sorted into the following categories: campus segregation and group dynamics, campus incidents, and disparities. Only one student (nationality Section 208) commented on how they had not noticed anything different as a result of completing the IGD, stating:

I think that this question gives IGD a little bit too much credit... I guess for me I feel like I didn't really gain much... There is nothing that has happened that I didn't already really notice or was aware of prior to taking the class.

This student may be reflecting an embedded assumption about ignorance or trying to convey that marginalised groups have to live the daily realities of discrimination, so IGD in some ways may be structured for those with privilege and/or ignorance more than those who have aspects of marginalised identities.

4.3.1 Campus segregation and group dynamics.

Twenty-eight students, who responded to this prompt in the focus groups, shared observations about the campus being segregated. Typical of the responses, a participant in sexual orientation Section 203 offered:

I really noticed how much more segregated campus life is than I first assumed... I was looking around one of my classes the other day and I looked row-by-row and it went white kids, Asian kids, sorority girls, men...

A student in gender Section 204 also commented on campus segregation stating: "Something I definitely noticed that I am shocked that I did not notice before is how segregated USU is... It is causing a lot of issues on campus because there is not a lot of interaction between different groups". This student reports they were "shocked" they had not noticed USU's segregated

campus, perhaps a consequence of socialisation into a society where segregation based on various social identities such as race and SES has been normalised over several generations. As discussed in Chapter 2, neighbourhood segregation based on race and class is typical in the United States. That is, middle class white families tend to live in neighbourhoods with other middle class white families. Black lower income families tend to live in mixed neighbourhoods with other black lower income families. The residential segregation we see today is in part a consequence of redlining, the widespread discriminatory policy and practice of mortgage lending based on neighbourhood racial demographics, resulting in white neighbourhoods receiving higher levels of investment and black neighbourhoods being further economically marginalised and isolated (An et al., 2019). The fact that these students have not noticed this segregation prior to enrolling in IGD speaks to a larger societal flaw of a collective unwillingness to notice and name systemic forces of inequities. This collective unwillingness is played out in the K-12 public education system, where racial literacy and lessons on race, racism, and classism, for example, are not commonly found in the curriculum (Kohli et al., 2017). When students realise a baseline critical consciousness about systems of inequity, these previously invisible systems are made more visible. Only one student (race Section 206) remarked about how surprised they were to learn that peers were not noticing racial segregation on campus prior to IGD:

...immediately when I arrived on campus, I was very aware of the fact that social groups at ... [USU] are pretty racially segregated... I have

been surprised on a few occasions when like my classmates and people I am friends with seem to be realising for the first time, oh yeah that is a problem at ... [USU]. I am like “you have been here for a year and a half and you haven’t noticed that the vast majority of people in Greek life are white and when you go into certain clubs and settings that most of the people are white?” It is definitely upsetting to me. I just assumed that was at least something people were taking note of.

This student may have been exposed to more compositional diversity in their K-12 education and neighbourhoods, or this student may have a more heightened awareness of difference based on their own aspects of marginalised identity.

Only one student (gender Section 207) reflected on the idea of self-segregation, a term typically used by white people to draw attention to groups of people of colour, yet perhaps who are lacking an understanding of systemic racism and reasons why students of colour may seek out others with commonalities (as discussed in Chapter 2):

...I feel like at ... [USU] a lot of it is hanging out with the same social identities as you. I was just talking to one of my friends. We were discussing that we noticed that ... people of the same race would hang out together. For cheer try-outs, there was a girl and she is Asian and she would like always want to choose people that were trying out and that were also Asian. I talked to one of my friends that were Indian and she said that a lot of her friends are Indian and it is just because they

are able to relate. They are not really talking to other communities because they are closer to relate. It is staying within your comfort zone and kind of not reaching out.

Perhaps this student does not grasp the meaning and need for affinity spaces for students of colour that shelter them from racial discrimination, empower them within their own communities, and give them reprieve from isolation; in contrast, white dominated fraternity affinity spaces do not have to grapple with issues around systemic oppression and its impact on mental health, graduation rates, achievement outcomes, identity development, to name a few disparities (Tatum, 2017).

A critique of the university is offered by a student in gender Section 204, who suggests that the university could do more to help integrate diverse groups of students thus enhancing interactional diversity where learning from difference occurs, reflecting:

...there is no opportunity that ... [USU] presents for, I don't want to use the word forcing, but I guess that is the word I will use, people who aren't like each other to congregate and reflect on these issues and I think that is really disappointing... My larger point is that what happens is you get people who come from immense privilege congregating together and never having exposure to anything else, so Greek life financial barriers, business fraternity financial barriers, secret societies, honour societies. They are all exclusionary... This course made me disillusioned about what ... [USU] is lacking.

While some students commented on USU's segregated social life, this student spoke more pointedly about why this lack of interactional diversity might be an issue, specifically referring to class privileged students who are not socially mingling with low-income peers, who have vastly different lived experiences and opportunities, and who have differential academic and social outcomes (Stinebrickner & Stinebrickner, 2003). The social groups such as fraternities and business clubs this student is referring to are not only exclusive but they also perpetuate the status quo (Harris et al., 2019; Joyce & Cawthon, 2017; Ray, 2012). These social networks transcend the boundaries of college life and often become an influencing factor in career advancement (Cabrera & Thomas-Hunt, 2007; McClain, 2014). When students are not mixing and mingling across identity lines, individual, institutional, and societal benefits of diversity are impacted on (Milem, 2003) as discussed in Chapter 2.

Three students shared meaningful observations about noticing and naming group dynamics in response to this prompt. A student in nationality Section 208 spoke about the divide between black Americans and black immigrants:

I personally have been noticing different communities within the black community because at another point in the semester we had a conversation about the dynamic between Black Africans and the African Americans. That was a dynamic that I felt that IGD made me more aware of and try to see it on campus life.

This student was referring to a demand made by an institution representing black students to the USU president to admit more underrepresented black

Americans, loosely interpreted as students who are descendants of enslaved blacks, rather than international black students from the Caribbean and African countries (Anonymous1, 2017; Onyenekwu & Mwangi, 2017).

Reflecting on her white, class privileged identity and similar social circle, a student in gender Section 213 noted:

... I think I have just become more cognizant of social identities and how the people I am surrounded by on campus share the majority of my social identities... I live with all females. We are all, with the exception of one, white. Everyone is of high SES and just realising that ... [USU] is a very diverse community, but my specific bubble is a very similar identity bubble. I think that has kind of upset me a little. It is like hmm, I didn't notice that before I actually took the time to look around and be like wow, I am surrounded by people that look like me, act like me, and come from similar backgrounds as me. I think through IGD I have, like becoming aware of that is a big thing and wanting to broaden my circle identity-wise.

This student speaks of noticing how her chosen social group shares social identities and expresses wanting to diversify her friend group, but it was beyond the scope of this study to discover whether this desire was acted on. It seems there is increased self-awareness about segregation, but evidence is lacking regarding an intentional action to shift social circles and interactions, which in turn leads to social advantages of interactional diversity across differences outside IGD.

Higher education in the United States has increased campus diversity over the past several decades. What were once institutions designed mostly for white wealthy men, higher education today values all forms of diversity and admissions practices ensure deliberate recruitment efforts that attract a racially/ethnically and nationally diverse student body. Diversity in this sense is about composition and numbers. Yet campus life does not erase equity chasms and students are still choosing to interact and socialise in homogenous groups rather than developing meaningful relationships across difference, (Espenshade & Radford, 2009), as the student above reflected upon.

Deep rooted reasons point to why students who share similar social identity groups tend to socialise with one another and these social trends are normative in higher education spaces and structures. For those students with aspects of marginalised identity, distinct motivations for affinity group spaces still exist (Tatum, 2017) as discussed in Chapter 2. Higher education is emblematic of diversity without full inclusion, which can result in bias-related incidents and other manifestations of disparity, as discussed next.

4.3.2 Campus Incidents

In response to this section's question: "What are you noticing about campus life at USU that you did not notice before taking IGD?" Three participants commented on the racial incidents that occurred on campus during the autumn semester in 2017. This low response rate is surprising, given that these high-profile racial conflicts happened during the semester in which

students in this study were enrolled on the IGD, and only a month or two prior to the focus group interviews. Perhaps these incidents were either unimportant to their campus experience or not salient enough to comment on during the focus group. A student in SES Section 205 spoke about how they used to disregard racial tensions on campus in the past, but now recognise the need to acknowledge these types of incidents as a first step in developing awareness and consciousness, sharing:

On campus there is always these events, like what is going on with Greek life and what happened with that student in that fraternity who had the racial slurs against that programme house on North campus or that other fight that happened in [placename]. I would always hear about it and not really care about it. But after discussions in this class about how important it is, not simply to do something about it, but even to empathise, or care about it. I feel like that is the first step to any process and I just realised that maybe it is okay to have an opinion on something rather than just overlook it. But recently after this class realising, even just to have something as simple as having an opinion on something can have such a big impact.

The “big impact” implied is influencing their sphere of influence and peer circles by having an opinion on racist incidents on campus. Helping to raise awareness is a step towards critical consciousness, but this student falls short of sharing a concrete example of how their opinion has either changed someone else’s or helped nurture their own critical consciousness. A student

in race Section 206 also spoke about being more aware yet failed to share how this awareness could translate towards social action:

I think it was especially important that we were in this section this semester because there were so many issues that all of a sudden that came to fruition and came to light. They were pretty big deals that were broadcast all across campus... We saw three different instances of hate crimes against minority students take place on campus... I think I just kind of started noticing the response that students had and the variation and almost how it was forgotten about... I guess for me before I took IGD, I would have probably been the same as everyone else and kind of forgotten about the problem without kind of focusing on more of why this is happening instead of oh this happened. I think that is something that is different... now I am trying to think why has ... [USU] become a place where it is tolerable for this to happen and why is it when one example of hate happens students all of a sudden feel like they can have more instances. It wasn't like there was one isolated incident. It was three different incidents that happened within a month from each other and I think for me all of a sudden being aware of that instead of being a bystander to the incident is something that is different because I am in IGD.

This student's heightened awareness of the problematic nature of racial incidents on campus does not translate towards social action, but rather the difference in attentiveness is most important in this student's mind.

Awareness, though, can lead to a greater likelihood to intervene and act

(Nelson et al., 2010). Although there is no concrete example of intervention given, participating in IGD might have the potential to make it more likely to raise the overall consciousness of a group of students on issues of hate crimes and discrimination enough to act and intervene. Similarly, another student in race Section 206 reflected on the development of awareness as a key learning from IGD, rather than using that awareness to help implement change, reflecting:

I think there's a lot of things that before IGD I personally would brush off or I would not notice it... After IGD or during and after I now see the world differently. It sounds so cheesy, but I take more notice of things and I think deeper, which is something that would not have happened without this class.

These responses reflect a basic understanding of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970), noticing and questioning new situations from multiple perspectives rather than passively observing and sometimes forgetting the differing social realities, which are experienced by minoritized students on campus (Ziegahn, 2007). This noticing of the disparities that exist amongst different social identity groups are further discussed in the next section.

4.3.3 Disparities

Five students offered insights into various disparities on campus, where they noticed that university life is not experienced equally. Speaking about structural racism around recruitment in a student organisation, a student in race Section 206 shared:

I think that one thing I am noticing and other people in this class are probably noticing is that there is a lot of undiscussed structural racism, especially as we did our CLP projects and learned more about different things happening on campus. Our project was about the ... [student-run newspaper] and if there was a diversity problem and what caused that and how to change that. We discovered that their hiring practice was a prime example of structural racism because they were recruiting in their own areas and not branching out. Nobody really had an answer for it even though it has been brought to the e-board's attention last year. They hadn't really made a change. They talked about it and then kind of let it go. There is definitely a lot of things that go unnoticed and un-talked about all around campus and everyone needs to be more aware of that.

Diversifying exclusive and competitive club recruitment has been a topic of debate at USU (AnonymousJ, 2019; AnonymousK, 2017), yet despite raising awareness around these issues, little has changed. In this instance, IGD did not influence students moving from developing awareness and understanding of a problem to actionable implementation of positive change. The CLP is intended to be an opportunity for IGD students to apply their learning to a real-life problem, but, in actuality, students are reporting how it serves as an awareness raising exercise rather than an assignment that helps to facilitate social change on campus.

Also speaking about the CLP, a student in nationality Section 208 commented on disparities the international student community experiences:

I feel like that project [CLP] really made me more conscious of campus life and social consciousness on ... [USU]'s campus... For example, I work at the Career Service Centre for the Engineering School and I knew how difficult it was for students to be able to network and try to find opportunities. But after conducting the CLP project, which was about international students and how they don't have the same resources or they are not able to use the same resources that domestic students have, I feel like after doing that project and after going to the ISU [International Student Union] body and after talking to the different people we talked to, it just brought about a different perspective. It not only highlighted the problem, but we delved into who can fix it and what needs to be fixed, what parts of the problem are evident, what parts of the problem are not evident. I felt like that specifically is one thing that I never noticed before because I wasn't put into the position where I had to realise that.

This student reinforces the common experience that IGD raises awareness of disparities and this awareness may translate to motivation to take action.

Even if IGD as a class does not fully facilitate direct social action, IGD strives to create a link between awareness and the likelihood to act in the future. A student in SES Section 212 remarked about the general idea of how IGD raises consciousness about inequities in general at USU, offering:

I feel like the class helped reinforce the fact that although we like to think of ... [USU] as this place that is full of equal opportunities and where no one is discriminated against, it is just another reminder that it

is really not, and just realising, I have paid a little bit more attention in the past couple of weeks. The black student being beaten up in Collegetown or anti-Semitic posters being thrown all over campus. There is still a lot of problems and we have a long ways to go. Really nothing new but it definitely reinforced like the fact that there is still a lot of injustice and inequality here.

These IGD students spoke about their campus life observations in the categories of campus segregation and group dynamics, campus incidents, and disparities. The IGD classroom offers a space for students to unpack these observations about campus life but how students may be empowered to act as change agents beyond the IGD classroom is discussed in the next section.

4.4 New Ability to Promote Social Justice

This section provides the participants' responses to the following focus group interview prompt: in what ways, if any, has IGD strengthened your individual and collective abilities to promote and advance social justice? Students were given the following definition:

Social justice refers to reconstructing institutions and systems in accordance with principles of equity, recognition, and inclusion. Social justice practitioners strive to eliminate the injustice created when differences are sorted and ranked in a hierarchy so that some groups are advantaged at the expense of other groups that are marginalised (Adams et al., 2016, p. 4).

Forty-five percent (n=77) of participants responded to this focus group prompt. The results are sorted into the following categories: greater awareness, education, allyship, and IGD did not meet this objective. None of the participants addressed systemic social justice as defined above in their responses, but rather they addressed the individual changes that occurred that laid the foundation for potentially effecting social change in the future. Indicative of the responses, a student in sexual orientation Section 203 remarked:

I think something that IGD has done is kind of reinforced to me that the best way that I can advance social justice is really on an individual level. Something that really stood out to me with this course was the fact that we were able to have really good conversations and discussions because we really got to know each other as people and I think that a lot of times we don't get that opportunity when we are going to a protest or a rally or something, so I feel like at least for me it kind of reinforces the idea that I had that if you really want to change someone's mind and you really want to kind of open their eyes to stuff they might not be aware of, there has to be a certain level of trust and a certain level of respect that can only come through getting to know the person.

While the focus on interpersonal relationship development is one way students interpreted gaining a new ability to promote social justice, students did not speak about whether they were cultivating relationships across difference beyond the structured IGD classroom.

4.4.1 Greater Awareness

Sixteen students spoke about being aware as a step towards social justice.

Typical of the responses, a student in sexual orientation Section 203 mentioned:

One way in which IGD has strengthened my ability to promote and advance social justice is being more aware of other social identities that I never took into consideration. So for example, when I used to think of social justice, it was more like race cause that pertains to me or SES and gender but I never thought about sexuality, able-bodied-ness, religion, and all these other social identities that oftentimes we don't associate with social justice, and how those still need attention brought to them, so I think IGD has definitely broadened my perspective and the social identities that I believe need more attention, need more visibility.

Having an understanding of social identity groups helps students broaden their perspectives about difference. Prior to IGD, this student was not thinking about social groups to which they may have held privilege or agent identities, such as "sexuality, able-bodied-ness, religion". Through IGD they became more aware of how having target identities such as being LGBTQ+, having a disability, or having a non-Christian faith, are also part of the system of oppression, beyond their own individual experiences as a target identity. Examining their areas of privilege, in this person's case, being heterosexual,

able-bodied, and Christian, helped reduce these blind spots and build capacity for being a change agent (Adams et al., 2016).

A participant in gender Section 204 reflected on gaining more awareness as a component of social justice:

I think after taking IGD my perspective of social justice has been broadened and it doesn't have to be these giant monumental changes right away. That sometimes the best thing that you can do is just make people aware. A really big takeaway for me is that sometimes just being aware of these issues really prompts people to want to make a change. I think a lot of changes that I want to see are like changes that I didn't realise were a big issue until I took this class.

This student spoke about change but did not expand on what changes they have made or what changes they have seen others make as a result of taking IGD, but IGD has imparted a baseline awareness. Similarly, another student in gender Section 204 spoke about gaining a general awareness as an important step:

I think after taking this course I am a lot more aware of social justice and I don't think you don't necessarily have to do these huge things. Like oh I am going to start a whole activism programme or whatever. Just doing little things like even yourself becoming more aware and therefore making others around you become more aware of issues in society. That is already a big step. So just making these small changes in everyday life really is like important in the long run. This course has

made me become more open to making these small changes in my life and for others.

A participant in nationality Section 208 summed up this idea of gaining deeper awareness as a starting point by offering:

I think what IGD taught in terms of promoting and advancing social justice, something that was valuable is that it doesn't necessarily have to be really big steps. Promoting and advancing could mean like just to be aware and educate other people. Which on a very large scale will make the biggest differences, I think. It is just be aware and educate other people about different forms of social injustices and discrimination and what not.

IGD helped these students gain an awareness of social disparities and issues that they had not been exposed to before and gaining this newfound awareness has opened a new way of seeing social systems. These students believe that just being aware is enough to promote social justice on an individual level, but since these students have not reflected on the institutional and systemic issues affecting progress towards a more socially just campus, IGD's strengths may be in interpersonal relationship building rather than instilling a deeper curiosity into root causes of inequality necessary for transformative social change.

Not confident they have the requisite skills and knowledge to promote social justice, a student in SES Section 205 spoke about their reluctance to advance social justice saying:

Now I am not sure if I am really willing to promote social justice and all. Not because I don't support it. I am not sure if I am well-equipped or well-informed or like even have the time to go out of my way to do something like that. It has really taught me to have an opinion on something... Maybe you could talk about it with a friend or family or like any peer and bring that opinion forward and maybe sharing your experience and your opinion on it might influence them or clear some misconceptions on what was going on and so just that ability to do something so small...

Likewise, another participant in SES Section 205 reflected on speaking out about their opinions as a way to promote awareness:

Being able to take the... different viewpoints and everything and be able to bring that back home to my friends and family, I definitely think that has been a big help for me because other than that, they were both saying, just even speaking out just one opinion and one thought in an argument or debate can change the whole course of it and really open people's mindsets more or less.

The insights regarding greater awareness expressed by these students reflect the ways their experiences in IGD shaped their understanding of their personal development, including awareness of differing social identities, awareness of sharing their opinions with others, and an awareness that small changes and educating oneself can be enough for them in their individual journeys. Awareness minus action is not social justice in and of itself and

these responses imply that IGD lacks an ability to promote social justice, or at most is limited in its engagement with social justice. Participants have a greater awareness but are not necessarily oriented towards actions that would lead to transformative institutional and social change. Students spoke about education as an individual change, in response to gaining a new ability to promote social justice, as discussed next.

4.4.2 Education

Ten students spoke about educating oneself and/or others in response to this focus group prompt. These responses are similar to the two students who spoke about educating oneself in the Skills Developed theme, the difference being the goal of education for social justice instead of educating oneself to learn more without necessarily translating learnings into social action. A participant in SES Section 201 spoke about acquiring new knowledge in response to their new ability to promote social justice:

I think IGD definitely strengthened my abilities and I think the main way would just be education in the first sense. I think coming into the class I had very little knowledge of even what privilege or oppression or social justice even were, and I think by taking the class you really get more of like a nuanced definition by hearing about people's experiences, you do the readings, you read the journals, but you also hear about people's actual stories and I think that helps. Everyone's gonna have a different way you know of either educating other people or helping out different groups or organisations and I think for me the first step was

just education and learning about what everything is and that'll give me more of the foundation to go about social justice in a way that's probably best for me.

This student speaks about acquiring a basic foundational knowledge of what social justice is through taking IGD, but they do not go into detail about the content of this new knowledge. IGD's pedagogical intersection with social justice necessitates both knowledge about social inequities as well as an understanding of why these inequities continue today (Gurin et al., 2013). This student spoke about learning from their peers' personal stories during class, an indication that IGD is focused on building individual awareness rather than theoretical knowledge acquisition and applying these understandings to broader oppressive systems. Another student in SES Section 201 agreed with this attention to individual learning while missing the practical application of this learning, reflecting:

I think education is the greatest thing that IGD has given me, personally, to advance social justice, but I feel like after ending this course I still do not know enough to properly make a change. I feel like I need more education...need more background knowledge before I can definitely make a real change to overall social justice.

A participant in gender Section 207 also reflected on their desire to continue self-educating themselves before they can effect social change, stating:

IGD has taught me that I am undereducated even when it comes to me – about my own gender, race, and sexuality and all of my social

identities. I really am undereducated. It has basically just strengthened my need and ability to self-educate. Then I am able to educate the people are around me...

The drive to educate oneself is related to prejudice reduction and personal change, while educating others is linked to the motivation to act beyond self-education (Gurin et al., 2013). As opposed to the Skills Developed section, (section 4.1), these comments indicate an internalised motivation for more self-education about identity and inequality, as well as a drive to educate others. The evidence here suggests a commitment to social justice, albeit among a small percentage of participants. Alliance and coalition building bring collective action, and allyship is one way for students to work together across difference towards the common goal of social change, as discussed next.

4.4.3 Allyship

Six students mentioned allyship as an important component to promoting social justice. Allyship happens when people who have an agent group identity, such as white people or heterosexual people, work in coalition with those who have a target group identity, such as black people or LGBTQ+ people, to help dismantle systems of oppression (Adams et al; 2016; Broido & Reason, 2005; Edwards, 2006; Kivel, 2006). A student in race Section 202 spoke about allyship and the need to continue learning about how to be an effective ally:

Our discussions in IGD towards the end of the semester that really focused on allyship and the role of allyship and how no matter what

your social identity is, you can play a role in some of these movements. I think that those are explicit skills that we need to learn and need to discuss so that moving forward when we are trying to continue promoting this social awareness, we're doing it in a way that is respectful of the movement and respectful of the issue and respectful of the people who are affected by it.

By recognising allyship as a combination of skills, motivations, attitudes, and values that manifest in repeated actions and behaviour rather than allyship as a label of self-identity and self-interest, IGD has the potential to help students become more effective allies. A student in race Section 206 reflected on learning about the complexities of allyship in IGD through a class reading assignment:

...We had a reading on allyship and ...I realised that I used to be an ally but only for the people who were close to me... but then I learned that by only caring about the people I know, I am just totally excluding a whole group of people who deserve just as much equality. I have a better understanding now of what my motivations should be when I am working towards social justice and being an ally.

By reflecting on their motivation behind being an ally, this student recognised their place along the continuum of allyship, being in a space of relational self-interest to defend their friends, and expressed understanding of moving towards a focus on allyship for all based on values, not just those they know (Goodman, 2011).

While students may have good intentions towards striving to be a supportive ally, practicing sustainable allyship takes time beyond the semester-long IGD course length. A student in sexual orientation Section 203 spoke about their motivation leading to their drive to make change but also questioned how to do it:

IGD has done a really good job of giving me a greater motivation and more of a fire in my heart to go and address issues of injustice that I see around me. However, from there, it's really gonna be hard finding ways to do that.

As allyship is an important component of coalition building for social change, IGD may consider spending more time on allyship so those students who are motivated to act as allies are better equipped to do so in a positive way. It is not enough to have the motivation to genuinely seek to act as an ally in pursuit of social justice. People with good intentions may in fact be harmful in their impact and their actions may perpetuate inequality in systems they are hoping to change. One example is if an intervention is perceived as unhelpful, embarrassing, or patronising. Allies can have various intrinsic motivations which can result in differences in how effective an ally can be to a community or in a specific circumstance, and how consistent that ally may be towards working for social change. Allies who may be unaware of systemic issues may be acting only with self-interest and performative motives versus in collaboration with targeted groups. There may also be differences in outcomes and how sustainable allyship is in any given situation (Edwards, 2006).

4.4.4 IGD Did Not Meet This Objective

Only two students spoke about IGD not meeting its objective of promoting and advancing social justice in relation to this particular focus group prompt.

Limitations of IGD's scope are discussed further in the next section. One student in sexual orientation Section 203 critiqued the course saying:

I think IGD in the way it was described to us, there are several ways it could have strengthened these ideals of social justice. I just feel the way that IGD was implemented really did nothing for me.

And a participant in nationality Section 208 spoke about already working towards social justice despite having taken the class, asserting:

I don't know that this section specifically was able to strengthen my individual and collective abilities to promote and advance social justice. I think that it kind of highlighted things that I have already been doing. I was already doing a lot of things that we talked about in the class.

These observations segue into the next topic, limitations of IGD's scope.

4.5 Limitations of IGD's Scope

This section provides participant responses to the following focus group interview prompt: in your opinion, what are IGD's limitations when it comes to strengthening individual and collective abilities to promote and advance social justice? Students were given the following definition:

Social justice refers to transforming institutions and systems with principles of equity, recognition, and inclusion. Social justice practitioners strive to eradicate the injustice generated when differences are ranked in a hierarchy so that some groups are advantaged while other groups are marginalised (Adams et al., 2016, p. 4).

Seventy-six percent (n=130) of participants in this study spoke in focus groups about their perspectives regarding the limitations of IGD's scope. The results are varied and include responses sorted into three main categories. The first is IGD's lack of practical application, which includes ideas expressed around LARA only being useful in the IGD classroom and students not feeling adequately prepared to promote social justice. The second category is curriculum and classroom limitations, which includes ideas expressed around the negative effects of sorting students by single social identity group, no space for intersectionality, lack of conflict resolution in contentious class dialogues, and classroom facilitation and use of peer facilitators. The final category is selection bias of students who choose to enrol in IGD, as selection bias tends to attract students who are already interested in social justice issues and diversity dialogues and as a result does not recruit students who are more likely to be discriminatory.

4.5.1 IGD's Lack of Practical Application

Thirty-two percent (n=41) of students who responded to the focus group prompt about IGD's limitations spoke about IGD's lack of practical application,

including how LARA is only useful in the IGD classroom, resulting in an absence of learning communication skills across difference to be used outside the classroom, and how there is a lack of content-based education resulting in students not feeling adequately prepared to promote social justice.

4.5.1.1 LARA only useful in the IGD classroom.

The LARA method (listen, affirm, respond, add information) is used as a communication tool to dialogue across difference. One student in SES Section 201 critiqued: “LARA is only useful when you’ve established that brave space... I just don’t find LARA really that useful outside of this space”. Another student in the same SES Section 201 added: “I think that LARA is so formulaic that it sometimes feels artificial in person”. A student in race Section 202 assessed: “I think it would be really hard to directly use the skills that we have in IGD outside of class”. Another student in race Section 202 offered:

[IGD] didn’t necessarily address how to dialogue with people who are at a very different stage... I would have really liked more explicit skill-building or advice or tactics on how to work with people who are at just a completely different stage... it’s very hard to have a dialogue when someone else [who] is just at an entirely different stage.

A student in gender Section 204 reflected on the necessity of reciprocity when using LARA:

If you are not conversing with someone who also knows how to LARA it is really difficult to implement the skills... When we talk to people who

aren't accustomed to using these skills, it is kind of difficult to get anywhere.

Another student in gender Section 204 responded:

[I]f you are trying to LARA and someone doesn't LARA then you are kind of just not. You are in this position where it is like I am listening to you and having this conversation but if you are not open and you don't know how to do it, what are you supposed to do then?

A student in gender Section 204 spoke about not knowing how to respond to someone who immediately shuts you down, saying:

How can you have a dialogue with someone where as soon as you start saying something they are like "oh that is just your liberal propaganda". What can you do when you just keep getting written off?

Another student in gender Section 204 recalled a story about a family holiday tradition that he describes as being racist and when he brings this point up to his father, he explains: "It is just this back and forth of this is how it is and then him [his father] saying no this is how it is. I just have no idea of how to break it down from there". A student in gender Section 209 reflected:

IGD is the concept of trust. It took us into week ten or nine to get to the actual controversial issues. If you try to apply those skills to real life like if you are conversing with a stranger, there is not that level of trust between you and the other person... We aren't really equipped to deal

with that type of situation. We never really talked about those kinds of things.

A student in gender Section 213 summarised student sentiments about the challenges of LARA: “I think IGD does a great job of educating us as long as we don’t leave the classroom”.

These student perspectives support Allport’s (1954) intergroup contact hypothesis. When students attempted to engage in intergroup dialogue outside the IGD classroom, all four intergroup contact key conditions were missing: equal status (as reported by students in conversations with their parents), intergroup cooperation and common goals (several of these interactions appear to be more like debates where the goal is winning, rather than dialogue), and lack of institutional, and social support. But this can mean that IGD is a place for social justice incubation since it works towards establishing these conditions in the classroom. The university is looking to IGD to not only help students learn to speak and interact across difference respectfully, but also to help reduce bias incidents on campus and to instil the seed to promote institutional and systemic transformation towards social justice. When outside the IGD classroom, students not only feel that they cannot practice the LARA method of communication, they also do not feel adequately prepared to promote social justice, as discussed next.

4.5.1.2 Students not feeling adequately prepared to promote social justice.

Each IGD class requires a CLP towards the end of the semester. Students are sorted into small groups and tasked with researching a current initiative,

student organisation, or project on campus. A student in SES Section 201 noted: “We just don’t have enough time to learn enough and be credible to apply a CLP in a proper way that would actually make a difference and be credible and understandable”. A peer in SES Section 201 added: “We’re not really that qualified after only a few months to act like we know everything about these communities after a small [CLP] project”. Another student in SES Section 201 shared their expectations going into the CLP project, was excited about the opportunity to help implement change and then felt disappointed about the reality of the project’s scope:

I thought with the CLP project, it would be a great platform to combat an issue on campus and like actually have a tangible impact... but there’s no actual tangible difference if you just write the paper, present it, and then it kind of gets thrown away, you don’t actually do anything in practice.

A student in sexual orientation Section 203 also spoke about the CLP project’s lack of practical application, saying: “We just never talked about how to use [the CLP project] for social justice... I just really expected more from that project”. A student in nationality Section 208 shared similar frustrations with a missed opportunity for the project to have meaning, reflecting:

I think first of all would be the lack of action plan or a follow up plan based on what we have learned. We have learned about some issues regarding nationalities. But not really. After IGD how can we follow up

or continue the work? Actually have an action plan and how to deal with those social injustices.

A student in gender Section 209 reflected about the CLP's goal of executing a project that deepens student exploration of the topic of their dialogue, but falls short of being a mechanism that helps facilitate change:

I was thinking about our CLP while I was writing my paper and thinking like we have this issue and we have these suggestions for solutions, but we are not actually implementing them. We don't have to do anything with them. We are just kind of sitting on the ideas that we had. It wasn't required as part of the project that we had to do anything...

If the goal of this assignment is to deepen understanding of the topic of dialogue (i.e., race, gender, sexuality, class, nationality) rather than help a partner organisation implement change, IGD may want to consider other educational assignments that help facilitate this or at a minimum manage student expectations about the limitations of the CLP.

A student in sexual orientation Section 203 spoke about the difficulties they had with getting their CLP project approved by IGD so they could start working on it and expressed frustration with this perceived bureaucratic structure:

Our initial impression was that we were creating a project that we would implement within our community to make a change. And it took us about five weeks of dealing with the bureaucracy of trying to get our

project approved before [the IGD staff coordinator] approved our proposal and by that time it was changed so much to tailor it to what [the IGD staff coordinator] wanted that it wasn't really even a project we wanted anymore... My biggest concern with that was that we ended up not doing anything with it. It turned into a book report. After our project was presented, there was zero discussion at all about what could be done with the information and how it could be useful, how we could move forwards with it, I mean, it was just sort of swept aside.

This student's critique is not only about the logistics of the assignment itself, but the perception that the hard work and effort they put into working with a community organisation did not result in any incremental change, even if nominal.

Two students in SES Section 205 talked about the insular college experience as limiting IGD's scope, the first student reflecting:

I think one of the biggest limitations in this is that we are still at ... [USU] and still kind of like in almost a college bubble. We are not actually going out into the community and seeing first hand what some of this stuff looks like.

And the second student supporting these sentiments, echoed:

I think we really are in a bubble at ... [USU]. We are at one of the best institutions in the world and we don't really see what is happening outside of our little bubble. Most of us don't even leave campus and

see what is going on in the rest of ... [state name]. I mean ... [county name] is really poor but most of us haven't actually ventured off campus enough to see what is really happening. I think although IGD has allowed us to kind of gain a better perspective on SES within ... [USU], I think there is still a lot to be done with regards to the rest of the world even.

Experiential and community-based learning are gaining momentum as conduits for applying in-classroom learning to real-life contexts. The CLP had the potential to be an engaged learning opportunity, but structural limitations inhibited the full realisation of this exercise. Looked at from another perspective, a student in SES Section 205 reflected on the individual versus systemic ways to strengthen social justice, stating:

I have always just thought that real social justice and promoting and advancing it, maybe the promoting part we can do on an individual level, but advancing it on a larger scale I think only can be done with large alliances and those giant, you know, movements. I don't think [IGD] is really capable of making these large-scale changes. The sad truth is that the majority of us are going to forget this little bit in a couple of semesters... I think it might be hard to get that long-term effect.

Without being aware of the potential long-term gains of IGD, students may in fact not apply course learning to broader social contexts, but this is a question for further study. Longitudinal effects of intergroup dialogue have rarely been assessed in the literature so it is uncertain as to whether learning gained

during a sustained intergroup dialogue experience like IGD will last over time (Gurin et al., 1999; Gurin et al., 2004; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). It is likely that many factors will move students to long-term engagement, action, and allyship in the process and goal of social justice. A student in nationality Section 208 summarised:

I feel like I learned some skills. I learned LARA and I learned how to have a dialogue, but I don't know how those are things that are going to help me. Those are necessary to have to promote and advance social justice, but you need more than that. I feel like I didn't learn enough content about social justice. I don't feel like prepared or well-educated enough to go out and try and like bring about any social change.

While dialogue is a critical skill that can help bridge differences, some critics argue that dialogue itself does not equate to action or social change (Gorski, 2008). There appears to be a lack of structured intention in the IGD curriculum that would help students translate their newly acquired dialogic skills and understanding of social group identities situated within power structures to forms of individual and collective action (Chesler, 2001). Without linking the relationships built across difference in the critical dialogic classroom to social action, IGD may not be realising the potential influence intergroup dialogue can have. USU is not using IGD as a university measure for learning across difference so as to promote social justice; rather it is promoting intergroup dialogue without the intent that the institution is challenged to transform. However, the data suggest that students acquire greater awareness and self-

motivation for further education and allyship, for example. IGD appears to realise its goal as a skill-building course for learning how to communicate across differences, even if students are reluctant to apply course learnings to their social lives. IGD is teaching students the skill of dialogue so students will be better equipped to talk about challenging and controversial topics with people who have different perspectives. Because dialogue recognises the multiple realities experienced by individuals, one of the goals is to come to a shared understanding and shared meaning rather than to promote social justice or social change, and several curriculum and classroom limitations of IGD serve as another lens for examining why IGD has inherent limitations in its scope, as discussed next.

4.5.2 Curriculum and Classroom Limitations

Sixty-six percent (n=86) of participants, who responded to the prompt regarding IGD's limitations, cited aspects of the IGD curriculum and classroom limitations broken down into the following categories: negative effects of sorting students by a single social group identity, no space for intersectionality, lack of conflict resolution in contentious class dialogues, and classroom facilitation and use of peer facilitators.

4.5.2.1 Negative effects of sorting students by single social group identity.

IGD sections are based on various social identity groups (i.e., race, SES, gender, sexuality) and each section roughly contains an equal number of students who have agent and target status in each identity (i.e., for a race section, there would be an equal number of white students and students of

colour). By making identity status salient in course learning, IGD highlights the differing lived experiences of students and attempts to individualise these experiences to humanise target groups, and IGD also attempts to emphasise social identities to provide collective empowerment and alliance (Gaertner et al., 2000). IGD uses only one axis of identity as a point of focus to highlight agent (privileged) and target (marginalised) identities and differing lived experiences without the complexity of intersectionality. By more deeply examining one aspect of identity, the intention in IGD is for students to make connections and transfer learning to other identities and forms of oppression. This sorting of students based on a single social identity group can be perceived as a limitation. A student in SES Section 201 remarked:

I think that one of the limitations of this class is we've been trained to dissect people based on their identities... I think that's very dangerous because we can start to reduce people to ideas and we forget that they're people...

A student in SES Section 205 spoke about the target-agent distinction, critiquing:

From very early on everyone, knows whether they are the agent or target within the class. This whole class I have acted as the target, but I have never really learned to react to situations as an agent. There are situations in which I am an agent and there are agent students in this class in other situations where they are targets. I don't think we have

had experiences on that other side, learning how to react on the opposite side.

A student in gender Section 213 reflected on a concern specific to students with target group identities in the IGD classroom, sharing:

A lot of the times if there was somebody that was saying something that is problematic it is not always empowering for the target group to be in this space... especially if you have intersecting identities that are target groups: it can just feel really overwhelming to be in this space and to also have to sometimes feel like you are teaching other people... I feel like there could definitely be more empowerment for some target groups. I feel like it is empowering for agent groups to start change. I feel like some target groups you don't always... most of the sessions you don't always feel like you can necessarily do more than call somebody out...

This student highlights concerns found in the literature about who benefits from IGD, namely those with agent identities at the expense of their peers with target identities (Gorski, 2008). The positive effects of intergroup relations on different racial groups show that the majority of benefit is to advantaged groups, not marginalised groups (Alimo, 2012). In IGD, to help agent students examine hegemonic causes of injustice and inequity that privilege agents while disadvantaging targets, target students may feel like they are in a position, whether they want to, or not, to educate their agent peers through reliving trauma or sharing stories of their lived experiences that highlight their

individual sufferings within systems of oppression. IGD is structured so that storytelling is one of the main ways students learn about difference and IGD capitalises on the sharing of peer narratives in an attempt to build empathy (Narayan, 1988).

The significance of social group identities in intergroup contact situations is still being explored in the literature (Allport, 1954; Brewer & Miller, 1984; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Gurin & Nagda, 2006; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Tajfel, 1974; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005; Wilder, 1981). Allport's (1954) seminal work on intergroup contact stipulates four specified conditions for favourable outcomes such as intergroup harmony and prejudice reduction. Research highlights three different approaches exploring how social identity should or should not be integrated into the four specified intergroup contact conditions.

One approach emphasises the individual rather than social identity groups, which individuals may ascribe to (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Wilder, 1981). Through decategorisation, where the individual is emphasised and social group identities are deemphasised, it is argued that prejudice and bias reduction follow (Brewer & Miller, 1984). Another approach, recategorisation (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), proposes that group members prefer others in their same group. When members of out-groups are accepted as members of the in-group, they are given the advantages of having in-group status (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). In both the decategorisation and recategorisation models, social group identities are down-played and group members are viewed as individuals or part of a new group where they are accepted as individuals. The goal is intergroup

harmony. A third model examines the goal of justice moving beyond intergroup harmony and uses social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974) to empower social identity groups for advocating for social change through solidarity and equal relationships.

There has been growing consideration of power and privilege standings with studies skewed towards examining the benefits of intergroup contact for those with agent identities leaving a gap in understanding the perspectives of those with target identities (Nagda & Gurin, 2012; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). IGD seems to be most aligned with social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974) in part because it is attempting to educate students on structural issues and power relations, through exploring social identity and students' differential access to systems of power and privilege, and through examining how systems of oppression have deeply impacted on student lives. While IGD may be aligned with social identity theory, it intentionally does not tackle intersectionality in a meaningful way, and this is explored in the next section.

4.5.2.2 No space for intersectionality.

Intersectionality is a term coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991) who argues that black women face distinct challenges as a result of their identities being both black and female, and that these “intersecting patterns of racism and sexism” have not been “represented within the discourses of either feminism or antiracism” (Crenshaw, 1991, pp. 1243–1244). Crenshaw (1991) further explains that the law did not allow labour grievances of workplace discrimination to be staged on both the basis of race

and gender (black women had to pick one or the other). Intersectionality applies whenever a person is a member of two or more social identity groups that experience systemic marginalisation and discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991). How the term intersectionality is used colloquially today is often divorced from considerations of power and marginalisation and usually only emphasises multiple social identities (Jones & Abes, 2013).

A student in sexual orientation Section 203 reflected: “We don’t spend a lot of time talking about the intersectionality of sexual orientation and other identities and that may be a limitation of how the course is set up”. Another student in sexual orientation Section 203 followed up: “I think the curriculum lacks intersectionality... Other identities could have easily been woven into the curriculum throughout the semester”. Another student agreed saying: “I really agree that there was overall lack of acknowledgement of intersectionality”.

Through the IGD curriculum failing to explore other social identity groups, students feel limited by what they are able to learn. A student in gender Section 207 remarked:

We are focusing on gender, but you don’t really hear that much about some of the other social identities...you don’t really become aware of SES or race. It kind of has that limitation just because they are all intersected so by not hearing about each one it kind of limits what you know.

A student in nationality Section 208 also expressed similar sentiments: “I feel like I learned so much about nationality, but there are groups like SES that I am very ignorant about. I wish there was at least an opportunity to touch on all the other ones”. A student in SES Section 210 echoed:

I feel like I learned a lot about socioeconomic status... But in terms of every other component of social justice whether it be race or gender... I have no idea where to start looking or how to help solve issues related to different topics that are not SES.

The IGD curriculum at USU is designed for class sections to examine only one aspect of social identity (e.g., race, gender, SES, or sexual orientation). However, people have multiple identities and these layered identities intersect and affect people’s lived experiences, perspectives, and relationships to power and marginalisation in distinct and meaningful ways (Crenshaw, 1991). An intersectional approach to IGD may foster a deeper understanding of privilege status (agent group) and oppression status (target group) and the complexities around how people can simultaneously experience both. An intersectional approach to IGD may also help students understand the intersections of systems of oppression. The limitations students are pointing to are potentially negatively impacting on progress for intergroup relations and IGD’s ability to promote social justice. By not addressing these intersectional issues, a barrier has been created to building stronger intergroup relations. In addition to citing the limitations of single identity focus and deemphasising intersectionality, students also mentioned the lack of conflict resolution in contentious class dialogues.

4.5.2.3 Lack of conflict resolution in contentious class dialogues.

Eight students offered their perspectives noting that class conflicts were not resolved during contentious dialogues. A student in sexual orientation Section 203 summarised:

...out of all the conflicts that have happened in this class, I don't think we've ever really properly resolved one of them... We just don't really spend enough time trying to figure out why it happened and how to go about it.

Two students (sexual orientation Section 203 and race Section 206) noted that the facilitators discouraged unpacking the source of disagreement, mentioning:

Any time there was some element of disagreement or a controversial statement, and I know this happened to me multiple times where I would feel like I would call attention to a big lapse in something, and the facilitators were like, "Well let's get back to the question at hand," but it's not really off topic when it is a point of discussion for someone, and so feeling like it either has to be a huge fight or it's nothing (sexual orientation Section 203).

And a student in race Section 206 commented on how the facilitators seemed to be avoiding classroom conflict:

I felt like when we reached a point of tension or people were upset or mad and kind of at a point where we could come to a solution at the

end, [the facilitators] said “let’s put a pin in this and come back to it later”. I personally didn’t feel like we actually came back to it a lot of the time. It left a lot of things undone week to week.

This topic of unresolved conflict continues with a student in gender Section 204 reflecting:

A limitation that IGD has is there are a lot of times when the class ended with a lot of feelings of unresolvedness. When everyone feels angry, intense, or conflicted and maybe even at the end of the course still feeling that way... I think that is a limitation because I think when people are stuck in their frustration and not having guidance to get out of it, it makes people cynical, and not want to implement change.

A student in sexual orientation Section 203 noticed that the facilitators may not have the skills for managing classroom dynamics resulting in a lack of classroom structure for addressing conflict:

I feel like there should have been more of an organised structure for dealing with dynamics in the classroom because I think one of the reasons why it didn’t seem like we had enough time was just because it didn’t seem very organised in actually dealing with the conflict which is confusing because that’s kind of what IGD is all about, it’s about conflict resolution, or at the very least trying to come to some sort of understanding.

Another student in sexual orientation Section 203 spoke about wanting more opportunity to actually dialogue about hot topics, saying: “I wish there was a better balance between following the curriculum and then following what the objective of the course [is], which is to facilitate dialogue about these difficult topics”. And another student in sexual orientation Section 203 reflected:

We could have spent more time having an organized space for taking apart the dynamics and it'll take time and I feel like sometimes that should take precedent over the rigid material that has to be covered in the course just because I think for our group that was more important.

One critique of intergroup dialogue expressed in the literature is that there is too much emphasis on developing interpersonal relationships without recognition of systemic power dynamics and irresolvable conflicts. Rather than creating a space in the IGD classroom to challenge these unequal power relationships, they may instead be reinforced (Gorski, 2008). If the dialogue becomes decontextualised, the classroom dynamics could end up privileging agent groups and further marginalising target group members. Additionally, there is the risk of the classroom dialogue valuing civility over examining inequalities and notable differences in social group experiences based on unequal social positions (Burbules, 2000). This can diminish the difficulties of dialogue; as Lerner and West (1995) state: “Dialogue is a form of struggle; it's not chitchat” (p. 266). The lack of conflict resolution in these contentious class dialogues may also be a result of classroom facilitation and the use of peer facilitators, as discussed next.

4.5.2.4 Classroom facilitation and use of peer facilitators.

IGD does not use faculty to teach course sections and instead relies on trained peer facilitators, students who have completed the IGD and been selected to return in a teaching assistant capacity. The peer facilitators not only facilitate each class but also assist with grading student participation, journals, CLP projects, and final papers. This subsection is organised into three areas addressing: facilitation and authority, facilitation and dialogue about difference, and the use of peer facilitators in IGD.

Facilitation and authority. Regarding the course grading, a student in sexual orientation Section 203 reflected:

Another huge problem I had with the course was the grading... Instead of writing well-written referenced essays, I kind of just wrote what I thought they wanted to hear from me which was a lot easier and quicker and I got 100% on them after but it wasn't really what I was feeling, so I kind of felt like we were being told what to feel and personally, I don't feel oppressed in my sexuality, but I felt like I had to talk like I did feel oppressed to get the grade I wanted... We were just catering to who was grading our paper.

A couple more students spoke about course grading as a barrier, rather than as a promoter of learning. "It became more of how do I get full points because some issues and some viewpoints were clearly more valued by the programme than others" (sexual orientation Section 203.) A student in gender Section 204 warned:

[The grading] is something that I have to mention to friends who want to take [IGD]. Because I have to tell them that you have to be careful with the grading because they are strict on that. Make sure you do everything just right so that you don't lose points and get a B in class and jeopardise your grade. I am from a pre-med background where GPA [grade point average] matters.

A student in race Section 206 admitted: "If I had a controversial opinion, I really struggled to speak up about it because I am afraid the facilitator is going to get mad and we are going to get downgraded because they are the ones grading". Another student in race Section 206 candidly reflected:

At the end of the day, we are being graded and our only motivation here is not social justice, it is also we do have our grades in mind. There were some things that I wanted to say but at the end of the day, I didn't want to say something that was going to make my facilitator unconsciously like me a little less and then grade me worse.

A student in gender Section 204 disclosed that the use of peer facilitators was the main driver behind why they held the course in lower regard, admitting:

A lot of people in my life didn't take this class seriously. Why I didn't take it very seriously was the fact that there is no professor teaching the class. It doesn't seem like there is much credibility for the class. People come to an ... university and they pay a certain amount of money for each class. I had to justify to my parents why I was taking this class. If I was spending this much and it was led by students, I

would definitely feel like my time in IGD was more valid if there was more substance. Like something I could say, “I took this class by a professor who is a leading something in something and social justice and I learned from them”, versus, “Oh I learned from two students that I am peers with”.

Facilitation and dialogue about difference. The shortcomings of peer facilitation continues as a topic with a student in gender Section 211 offering their perspective on peer facilitation when dialoguing about difference:

I think one of the biggest limitations is the fact that this is the only student-led class. It is basically students leading students. Our class is limited to how much knowledge we know collectively as students. When I think there is access especially on this campus to people who know much more – professors, grad students. Even having a grad student come in and give some of their perspectives and research that has been going on about these topics would be better than just having students leading students the whole time, just having a student teach us what they might not even know very well themselves.

Another student in gender Section 211 put it this way: “[W]e are limited to the knowledge of the students that are in this classroom when we carry on this dialogue”. And when the peer facilitator stonewalls the dialogue, students become more reluctant to speak up. A student in race Section 206 admitted:

There were a lot of moments where we would bring up controversy and we would be talking about it and we were actually dialoguing about it

and a facilitator would interject like, “I am so shook about this!” That would change the atmosphere of the room... It would just make it more of an issue rather than us having an open and honest conversation, and that would discourage people from continuing the conversation in a deeper way.

A component of intergroup dialogue is fostering an environment where participants feel psychologically safe enough to be vulnerable and share their personal stories without fear of retribution. A student in race Section 206 observed the misalignment of expectations between the facilitators and the students, reflecting:

I felt that some weeks when we actually were making progress, that our facilitators were disappointed in us somehow and we still hadn't done enough, and so for me that feeling perpetuated into the next week and then I would be ok and I thought I was being vulnerable. But they were like at the end of the session [saying], “Why did we do so bad?” And I thought I had actually done pretty well and then I wouldn't want to share the next week or I would be concerned and be like, oh I could share this or am I speaking too much? Or is this not a vulnerable enough opinion? It was just kind of hard to feel like I had let them down when I had felt like I was being more vulnerable.

On the topic of vulnerability, another student in race Section 206 reflected:

I think it took a long time for me to feel comfortable feeling emotionally vulnerable... The fact that we only saw each other once a week, it is

really hard to build that relationship or community where you feel really comfortable expressing your opinions and your thoughts because it is with a group of people that I don't really know...

These students highlight their hesitation to speak due to facilitator grading and it appears to be of particular concern to this race section.

A student in SES Section 210 summarised: "I think the benefits of IGD are really contingent upon the group cohesion and of your class and the ability of the facilitators to foster a community of trust... I think that is one of the limitations of IGD".

The opposition in student responses to the IGD facilitators playing "devil's advocate" may be a result of the feeling that the facilitators are turning the conversation in a more competitive direction. A student in the sexual orientation Section 203 noticed that:

... [the facilitators] just expect us to, like tease it out from [their] sometimes, aggressive questions. I felt like, and it was similar to being like forced to feel in my journals... There was no point to, like, put us like lab rats in a cage and being like, "Fight!" but it felt like that.

Provocative questions in classroom debate and journal responses may also create confusion about what type of dialogue is valuable in discussing social justice issues.

Some students wanted to discuss the concepts of safe spaces versus brave spaces. A student in sexual orientation Section 203 brought up: "I kind of

wanted to go back to what [other students] have said about the kind of, um, failure to have a brave space." Another student replied: "...you said this was supposed to be a brave space, but this is more like a safe space." Future inquiry into how students conceive of "safe" and "brave" spaces would be valuable in deciding whether students conceive "brave" spaces as where they might speak their mind, at the risk of insulting others, and "safe" spaces as where not offending people gains greater importance than understanding and discussing certain truths about the subject matter. It is likely, however, that some students themselves experienced confusion about what type of space is preferable, as evidenced by the two conflicting statements above. The student expresses hostility to "aggressive questions" they are forced to write about and the feeling that students are pitted against one another to fight "like rats in a cage." Yet the same student then contradicts themselves in expressing what appears to be disappointment that the atmosphere in class was not a "brave space" but a "safe space."

Just as IGD students find themselves re-negotiating their social relations, many are also struggling with internalising the type of dialogue (cooperative versus competitive) they are meant to be having. It is possible that provocative questioning from facilitators may be viewed as a violation of the two essential intergroup contact conditions of equal status and common goals. This view of facilitators may exist regardless of the facilitators' intentions, but IGD does not definitively answer this question. Therefore, rather than talk about newly realised social ideals and social actions to be taken, students talk about their emotions, particularly in terms of empathising

with others in their class, with whom some have begun to form emotional connections. In IGD, if perspective taking and building communication skills to speak across difference take precedence, then antagonisms and conflicts are suppressed. If moving from awareness to action and social justice are the goals of IGD, then one might expect that at some point clear alliances and disagreements will form in class, depending on students' ideological stances. IGD may have these contradictory goals and tensions, which the students may be perceiving as potentially in conflict.

Use of peer facilitators. IGD uses peer facilitators for scalability of the programme, budget limitations, and to help mitigate power dynamics in the classroom. Peer facilitator candidates are nominated by their peer facilitators or other IGD staff. They receive a four-day training prior to the start of the semester, when they learn key intergroup dialogue facilitation skills. Peer facilitators are trained to serve as dialogue guides rather than didactic teachers. Content-based learning is mostly through reading assignments and interactional learning takes place in the diverse classroom through structured activities and dialogue (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011).

Peer facilitators are trained to model dialogic skills and practice multipartiality, that is, equalise the ideologies present in the dialogue, amplify target group voices, and challenge agent group norms (Wing & Rifkin, 2001). This definition of multipartiality as practiced by IGD is contradictory and may present confusion amongst both facilitators and participants. How can the IGD classroom equalise the ideologies present in the dialogue while simultaneously amplifying target group voices? If a student presents a racist

ideology, is it to be equalised with antiracist ideology, but then challenged as an agent group norm? As the leaders in the classroom, peer facilitators act as time and agenda managers. However, these procedures should not take precedence over the importance of the dialogue itself and the critical dialogic exchanges among participants. Fostering intergroup relationships, collective critical reflection, and bridging the dialogue to social action deepens the learning from dialogue and helps students expand their thinking beyond themselves as individuals relative to their peers, their social group context, and promotes responsibility for social change. It is unclear whether peer facilitators in IGD are truly skilled at multipartial dialogue facilitation, whether multipartiality helps students build capacity for intergroup relations and social justice, and whether the facilitators empower students while also paying close attention and responding to dynamic communication processes in the classroom. The ability of the IGD peer facilitators to successfully facilitate intergroup dialogue is directly relevant to this study's research question: To what extent can dialogue across identity differences be used in higher education to motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice?

One of the reasons why IGD uses peer facilitators instead of salaried, qualified lecturers, is to attempt to mitigate power dynamics in the classroom. The idea is that peer facilitators would encourage more vulnerability and deeper engagement because the facilitator is their peer, rather than a professor whose age and academic expertise may produce unwanted power dynamics in the classroom. However, as students reported, peer facilitators

do have power. They grade journal assignments, papers, and class participation. Students found themselves giving their peer facilitator what they thought they wanted to hear so they would get a good grade, rather than critically processing class learning in a deeper, more meaningful, and thoughtful way. As undergraduate college students themselves, peer facilitators have their own limitations and capabilities. Since peer facilitators are chosen from a cohort of students who have completed the IGD, there is an inherent selection bias in who the peer facilitators are. This selection bias of participants in IGD is discussed next.

4.5.3 Selection Bias

Fourteen percent (n=18) of participants who spoke about IGD's limitations mentioned selection bias of students who choose to enrol in IGD. IGD is one choice out of many courses that fulfil the ... [college name] diversity requirement. This is the only college (out of eight) at USU that has a diversity requirement. A student in gender Section 204 suggested: "I think it comes down to selection bias; people taking the course have either been recommended by a friend who probably already had social justice goals in mind or people who have to fill the diversity requirement..." Referring to the ... [college name] diversity requirement, a student in race Section 202 spoke about peers who took the class to fulfil their diversity requirement but may not have had a transformational experience, sharing: "I have talked to people who have taken IGD as a diversity requirement and complained about it the whole semester, hated the class, and likely will never take the skills outside of the classroom." A student in nationality Section 208 admitted:

This is one of the easiest classes to take to fulfil that diversity requirement. Some people who are looking for that easiest way out of that diversity requirement will take this but they won't be receptive of the material, which I will admit I was one of them.

A student in gender Section 204 stated simply that: "People that need to take this class aren't going to take this class". The "people" they are referring to may include students such as "fraternity members who...beat someone up in the street and stuff like that, they are not the ones that are going to choose to take a class like this that would be the most beneficial towards someone like that" (SES Section 205). Correspondingly, a student in SES Section 212 reflected:

In real life one of the biggest challenges of social justice is getting people to care or convincing them that there is a problem in the first place. The people that might be of value in convincing might not be in this classroom in the first place.

As most students who enrol in IGD choose to take the course for various intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, a student in race Section 206 reflected:

I think the limitation in IGD is we all want to be here. We took the class. We are willing to dialogue and sit here for three hours. When I think you go to the real world not everyone is willing to hear a new perspective so that is definitely a challenge when you want to promote social justice... Everyone that comes here is open and willing to listen but in the real world there are no community agreements.

The lack of community agreement or use of the LARA method in the “real world” has been mentioned earlier as one of the challenges of dialoguing with others outside the IGD classroom.

A student in nationality Section 208 spoke about IGD attracting students with similar perspectives:

The group of people that [IGD] tends to attract tend to be like-minded. When you have a group that are of that same mentality coming into a room and having a dialogue, I think that it kind of creates this echo chamber.

Similarly, a student in SES Section 210 said:

People who are in this class select to be in this class. In the sense that you are getting a self-selective group of students that want to talk about this issue... You may not get that full breadth of perspective that may fully represent the campus.

A student in gender Section 211 offered:

I think most people that take this course are more liberal minded and are more open to changing their perspectives and hearing and learning about oppression in society and how they kind of play a role in that. I think that becomes more difficult when you leave this classroom and you are faced with so many individuals who are not only not aware of privilege and oppression in society but also are not even able to kind of be open to the idea of it.

A student in gender Section 213 summarised selection bias:

I think that at some level IGD is preaching to the choir. I remember the first class there was someone sitting over there and they said something problematic and it was, "Oh my goodness!" This semester would have been so much more interesting with her in this class. She never came back. All of us here are here because we understand or we at some level acknowledge that there is something wrong. The people that don't want to deal with that at all just don't come here to begin with.

Random assignment was not possible in this study nor was a matched control group due to time and scope limitations. Making IGD mandatory is controversial and because IGD is not a required course for graduation, selection bias will remain a consideration in evaluating IGD's potential contribution towards promoting intergroup relations and challenging disparities and bias incidents on campus. However, selection bias may not be as significant as students might think. A number of participants expressed shifts in awareness and thinking, and motivation to intervene in biased comments and behaviours, reflecting that they had not been so aware prior to IGD. Imposing a requirement to engage in dialogue about inequality has the potential to backfire, with participants performing to an expected norm in class to get a good grade, as some students reported in the data above, rather than genuinely believing in the value of intergroup dialogue, as evidenced by selection bias of those taking IGD as an elective rather than required course. However, research does support the positive effects of students who

participate in various diversity courses on college campuses (Parker et al., 2016).

4.6 Promote Intergroup Relations and Challenge Disparities on Campus

This section provides participant data corresponding to the focus group question: “Do you think IGD can help promote positive intergroup relations and challenge disparities on campus? How?” Forty percent (n=68) of students responded to this focus group question. The results are sorted into two main categories: improve intergroup relations and challenge disparities.

4.6.1 Improve Intergroup Relations

A student in SES Section 201 commented on perspective taking as a takeaway from IGD, saying:

I think I am more open to have a conversation with people who are not my race or gender or socioeconomic status... I think this course has allowed me to be more patient, gain perspective, really understand where people are coming from rather than just dismiss them.

Two students pointedly said how they are not friends with any students outside the class, yet in the classroom they feel close with their classmates:

I feel like even though I don't really hang out with anybody here outside of the class, I do feel like I know you all a lot better than some of my own friends... I think IGD has done a really good job in just helping us

get to know each other better as classmates (sexual orientation Section 203).

An SES Section 212 student commented: "I have become friends with a lot of people in this room and although we don't hang out outside of class, I do feel very close with a lot of people in this room".

It seems these students are defining friendship in the IGD classroom less in terms of social support and community and more in terms of how close they and their class peers feel to one another, possibly a result of the IGD curriculum encouraging sharing of personal stories.

Speaking about individual drive and motivation to contribute to positive intergroup contact, a student in nationality Section 208 mentioned:

I feel like IGD is a good setting for positive intergroup relations to occur, but I always feel at the end of the day it is up to the individual and how much they actually want to take from it and how much they want to use it in their day-to-day life.

A student in gender Section 204 added:

You have to have that drive to want to change outside of class. Most people see this course as just like when it is over I am done. I got my credit. You have to have that drive inside to want to do something with the skills that you learned here.

A student in SES Section 212 commented:

I think its scope is limited... I think it is for people who are already interested and have that interest in the first place. I don't know how effective it is in actually spreading that knowledge to campus because it is something that is not a requirement for anything.

Without the intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to bridge learning from IGD to their social lives, it is questionable whether students are using learning from IGD to help improve intergroup relations within their spheres of influence. This critique is a common thread through the data, and a student in SES Section 213 summed it up this way:

I don't think that dialogue solves everything. The idea behind dialogue is that you are not in that dialogue to convince someone of something else that you believe in or to win in some kind of debate. But at the same time, I think that me trying to start a dialogue with someone who is not familiar with how dialogue is supposed to work isn't really helpful. As a target in at least SES, I don't want to put in the effort to explain my entire life story to someone that is not going to really appreciate it or care. That is a lot of emotional labour on my part, which is why I think sometimes dialogue isn't going to be helpful.

One of IGD's objectives is to help bridge differences, which is considered an extension of Pettigrew's (1998) recognition of friendship potential as significant in improving intergroup relations. Some students are critical of IGD's ability to improve intergroup relations, especially outside the mediated classroom. Bridging differences requires mutual motivation and drive to not

only engage across difference but have the openness and vulnerability necessary to share lived experiences and learn about the lived experiences of others (Nagda et al., 2004). On campus, at home, and in their communities, IGD participants may not encounter others who have the drive to bridge differences or the dialogic communication skills essential for improving intergroup relations outside of the classroom.

4.6.2 Challenge Disparities

Speaking about how they believe IGD does not help challenge disparities but rather raises awareness about issues, five students explained the following as voiced by a student in SES Section 201:

I don't think [IGD] can fully make us go out there and challenge disparities and inequalities on campus. I think that's a personal decision. I think you could take this course and be aware of those disparities but do nothing... What it does is make you aware.

Another student from the same section added:

I don't think you can promote positive group relations or challenge disparities or inequities without first having awareness. So, I totally agree that it's not going to make you take action.

A student in race Section 206 remarked: "IGD does a good job of bringing awareness... A lot of us have gained a new perspective... I think it is going to take a lot more to really fix the inequality on campus". Also speaking about awareness, a student in gender Section 209 offered:

I think it does create awareness for certain issues and as we learned that is the first step before taking action. I think there is such a larger hurdle to actually taking action on these issues and creating allyship and making a positive change.

Another student in the same section added: "In terms of challenging disparities and inequalities on campus, I don't know how effective IGD has been in that regard. Raising awareness does not always translate into tangible action or change". Like other academic courses, IGD raises awareness of various social disparities based on differing social identity groups and their relative access to power and privilege. However, this awareness is more of a foundational first step towards understanding systems of oppression. To be able to effectively challenge disparities for positive social change, students are right to point to the fact that it "is going to take a lot more to really fix the inequality on campus" (race Section 206). A student in gender Section 209 remarked, "I don't think [IGD] is as effective in going beyond the dialogue to actually make a change". A student in race Section 202 said: "I think [IGD] can only help on an individual level... I feel like to create structural and institutional change, it's up to the actual administration and faculty what they actually want to get done". A student in gender Section 211 summed up: "I keep putting off creating my own change. I don't feel like this stuff is really my domain... on a campus-wide scale, it is not really my domain... I don't have any jurisdiction campus-wide with sexism and stuff".

Speaking about the CLP, a student in race Section 206 commented:

It would have been nice that part of the project outcome was to actually spell out a plan with our solutions... but it kind of falls on deaf ears and it would have been nicer if part of the project was to develop sort of the plan in which the solutions can be implemented. Ultimately that is the best way to challenge a disparity... challenged on a policy level.

Another student in the same section followed up: "I think I personally would have gotten a lot more value in terms of challenging the actual inequality if I was required to really work through putting my solutions into practice". A student in gender Section 211 commented: "I feel like if there was an action component to the CLP after we did so much research anyway, that would be really good". Similar critiques of the CLP assignment were also noted earlier in section 4.3.3 Disparities under 4.3 Campus Life Observations.

Talking about a lack of critical mass, a student in gender Section 209 remarked: "I think the number of kids taking the class is not enough... I would feel much more supported if there were more people in the community that took IGD to help make these issues..." A student in race Section 206 admitted: "It takes so many target students to sit and convince a handful of agent students that the way we are thinking about [race] dynamics is wrong. It just seems really small-scaled and kind of hopeless".

Although these IGD students expressed scepticism in their ability for intergroup action and challenging disparities on campus, a goal of intergroup dialogue is to support students in their commitment to social action. Several students looked at this through an individual lens and expressed hesitation in

taking their learning beyond the classroom. Yet an objective of IGD is to help build coalitions of students working towards a common purpose. While a critical mass of students on campus experienced in dialoguing across difference is ideal, solidarity-based action does not require masses. It is questionable whether the various IGD sections developed a shared intergroup commitment to work together towards social action. Dialogue is not just about talking; IGD expresses an action component in its stated objectives. These findings suggest the way IGD functioned in this section failed to urge students to critically reflect on their learning and commitment to be agents of social change. A comparative study of USU's IGD with other IGDs in higher education would be helpful to see if this is an intergroup dialogue design flaw or simply limited to the ways USU is implementing intergroup dialogue. This study sought understanding of the extent to which dialogue across identity differences can be used in higher education to motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice, as examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The continuous struggle for equity in American culture and the recent racial tensions on university campuses across the United States prompt further exploration into innovative initiatives that maximise the educational benefits of diversity in higher education. Intergroup dialogue has gained recognition as a transformative social justice education practice in higher education that focuses on issues of diversity and inequality while employing critical, democratic pedagogies, and experiential learning (Gurin et al., 2013).

Examining the problems of social inequality, intergroup dialogue is one solution that USU has adopted in their curriculum. Research on intergroup dialogue programmes in higher education can be used to determine the effectiveness of intergroup dialogue and whether the goals of intergroup dialogue are being achieved. This qualitative study examined the research question: To what extent can dialogue across identity differences be used in higher education to motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice?

The educational process in the successful intergroup dialogue classroom has been described as a critical dialogic praxis, a practice for freedom, following key concepts from Freire (1970, 1974), as students critically examine social realities within a situated practice that encourages them to imagine and create new ways of being and relating across difference. Research claims that in the successful intergroup dialogue classroom, once dialogic skills are gained and intergroup relationships are established, students explore ways of progressing from dialogue to action (Gurin et al., 2013). The design of IGDs can be

sequentially conceptualised in the following stage model: Stage 1: Forming and beginning relationships; Stage 2: Exploring differences and commonalities of experiences; Stage 3: Exploring and discussing hot topics; Stage 4: Action planning and alliance building (Zuniga et al., 2007).

In this study, successful intergroup dialogue is defined as meeting all the pedagogical goals of intergroup dialogue (Zuniga et al., 2007). Both the stage model and intergroup dialogue's pedagogical objectives begin with the students gaining the requisite communication skills to have meaningful dialogue. These objectives are meant to begin first by empathising and understanding the perspectives and experiences of people from different social groups and, second by discussing topics that often cause disparities among social groups. Once dialogic skills are gained and intergroup relationships are established, students explore ways of progressing from dialogue to action. The final objectives include establishing capacity for sustained communication, forming and maintaining intergroup relationships, and translating the skills and empathy students gain to actual and intentionally driven social change (Zuniga et al., 2007). When practiced successfully, intergroup dialogue has been argued to be a social justice critical pedagogy, fostering greater awareness about group power dynamics as well as alliance building for actionable social change towards freedom.

The spectrum of unsuccessful or ineffective intergroup dialogue to successful intergroup dialogue ranges from failing to develop dialogic skills to being unable to undertake the fundamental character shifts necessary to build empathy across group differences. Perhaps most significantly, an

unsuccessful intergroup dialogue falls short of cultivating the skills necessary to move from dialogue to social justice praxis. Strengthening intergroup relations in this study means generating a reduction in intergroup conflict, educating across group differences, and creating relationships and alliances across difference so that these collaborations and alliances produce social justice change. Using qualitative data from focus groups with student participants, this study examined whether the acquisition of dialogic skills and practice translates to shifts in intergroup relations. Positive intergroup relations can result in a reduction of intergroup prejudice and bias whereas negative intergroup relations can produce intergroup bias and outgroup avoidance (MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015). In turn, the study interrogated whether students who participate in intergroup dialogue are motivated to move from discourse to action, ultimately promoting social change.

The findings of this study reveal a prevalent contradiction in intergroup dialogue as practiced at USU versus what the research on intergroup dialogue purports. In theory, on the one hand, IGD strives to teach dialoguing effectively across unequal differences based on identities (target/agent); on the other hand, IGD struggles to move students toward social justice action. How the dialogic skills are understood and practiced has a significant impact on whether the latter goal of social justice praxis can be realised. For example, if dialoguing in the IGD classroom is meant to de-escalate conflict through perspective taking and empathy, it has the possible effect of rendering all perspectives as equally valid (Paolini & Graf, 2017). The findings of this study show that IGD students learned the LARA dialogic method, but

that some interpreted the method to mean that an IGD participant's factually unfounded perspective about people of colour (e.g., affirmative action recipients get "special treatment") should be listened to with equal compassion and empathy as the perspective of an IGD participant whose claims are grounded in factual, structural realities (e.g., people of colour are much more vulnerable to the outcomes of unconscious bias). Here what is missing from USU's IGD curriculum is a factually and structurally grounded articulation of historical group inequalities and their persistent present-day effects. While USU's IGD may attempt to integrate this knowledge base into its curriculum, the focus remains on learning dialogic skills and students are left unchallenged in their unfounded perceptions, except through individualised "perspective sharing" by people in the target groups. Target group perspectives are limited in offering a knowledge base about structural inequalities because their intervention is individual rather than systemic. Agent groups can learn to empathise with target group perspectives but simultaneously dismiss them with claims of "Well, that was your individual experience". This absence of a structural understanding of inequalities in the IGD curriculum, exacerbated by the issue that the courses are taught by peer undergraduate students, who are likely to lack the expertise to explain systemic inequalities and injustices, makes it difficult to shift USU IGD students from a position of "all perspectives are individually valid" to a position that supports creating a more just world or campus, i.e., a position in which students not only acknowledge inequalities and privileges but engage in actions that create more equitable outcomes for all. Here, the paradox built into the structure of USU's IGD—we must learn to listen to all perspectives

across difference and move toward social justice actions—may be irreconcilable. What does IGD do when dialogues across difference reveal irreconcilable ideological positions? This is one core tension articulated by this study's findings. Once it establishes effective communication and dialogue methods, the study's findings suggest that USU's IGD mostly fails to generate a wilfulness to apply these methods toward social justice action. A question to consider in a future study is whether this is an intergroup dialogue design issue in higher education (Gurin et al., 2013) or if it is specific to how USU is implementing intergroup dialogue.

There are considerations limiting conclusions which can be drawn from the focus group results. These limiting conditions align with some of the problems Pettigrew (1998) identifies as being frequent to the research and writing about intergroup contact theory. For example, Pettigrew (1998) names selection bias as a problem, as people with prejudiced beliefs typically avoid interactions with those who have different social group identities. The students participating in IGD and focus group interviews have gone through several layers of selection bias that make results generalisable only to a certain extent. It is reasonable to assume that the students who take the IGD course and are willing to participate in focus groups are more likely to be open to learning about how to productively navigate divisive issues than the general population, and are more comfortable discussing issues about prejudice, justice, and injustice. Because prejudiced people are more likely to avoid programmes that are designed to reduce prejudice, it is questionable whether the responses of students taking IGD can be generalised to other college

students. Future studies using intergroup contact theory as a theoretical framework could focus on classes that are mandatory for all students.

Alternatively, studies could accept the generalisable limitations of results and explore the psychological processes of social group navigation, differences between knowledge and values acquisition, and inquire into what methods of social justice education are most likely to produce activism or social actions that might be considered as evidence of real life and social change impact (Frantell et al., 2019).

Although the results may not necessarily be generalisable to a larger population, this study examined IGD's effectiveness in motivating awareness about and actions in defence of social justice through dialogue. This study provides clarity around IGD as a tool for social justice, having examined areas that might be considered predictive of prejudice reduction; however, students reported their experiences as being ineffective to positive social change, personally frustrating, and even where prejudice reduction occurred, students also reported negative experiences resulting from IGD. This study proposes opportunities for research into how students navigate the many levels of unsaid social expectations contained within the IGD classroom, how students cognitively digest information and expectations that may impact on their relationships with family and peers, and to ascertain whether there is an actual gap between learning about intergroup relations and student feelings of efficacy in being able to be agents of positive social change. In Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory, there are four key conditions for reducing prejudice and promoting equity: equal status, intergroup cooperation, common

goals, and support by social and institutional authorities. The form and content of IGD are meant to meet these conditions and can be seen as USU's institutional support. In this study's focus group responses, we find evidence that students are forming their own insular communities in the classroom, where there are shared agreements for dialoguing across difference. The data reinforce research showing students felt that they grew by educating themselves about social justice issues and becoming aware of how members of other groups experience these issues (Miles & Mallinckrodt, 2017). In student responses, this growth appears to be effective on the personal, but not on the institutional or systemic level. Students did not identify social justice actions through IGD beyond interpersonal confrontations with family or peers, and they did not form or participate in social justice groups intended to effect social justice change on USU's campus or in society. Instead, the data revealed stories of students' understanding others' experiences on a personal level (Nadler & Schnabel, 2011). This is not surprising as IGD fosters an interpersonal understanding of broader concepts related to social justice such as power, privilege, and oppression dynamics through personal storytelling. Students listen to peer narratives of lived experiences and describe how others might feel experiencing social, personal, or institutional injustice. There is a commonality of language, of putting oneself in another's shoes, that is personal and affects students on a relational rather than ideological level (Nagda et al., 2004). These relationships begin building a community of shared agreements and because this community is interpersonal, we see students having conflicts with family and peers who are opposed to these shared agreements. Even though such a community is based upon ideas of

social justice and initially structured by IGD, it is a transitioning community whose agreements are being negotiated through dialogue. IGD has achieved limited success in that some students experienced a transformation of their perspectives and their frameworks changed enough so that they were willing to take risks with their family and friends. They had learned to dialogue within an interpersonal power and identity framework (Ziegahn, 2007). However, the CLP built into the IGD curriculum towards the end of the semester was not only gatekept and took too long to approve, but students did not have enough time in the semester to apply their skills to their project. Learning happened at the interpersonal level, but failed to move to the institutional level, and failed to gain any traction for social change.

All students are expected to use the LARA method of communication when engaging in dialogue in the IGD classroom. The LARA method is an agreement of participating members that attempts to equalise the classroom power structure and promote mutual respect in dialoguing across difference and contentious topics. The overwhelmingly positive statements about the LARA communication method exhibits intergroup cooperation and the acceptance of equal status in the classroom. However, participation in IGD is not necessarily evidence of common goals. Instead, we see this evidence in statements of empathy, a desire to understand others' viewpoints, and a pluralistic interpretation that toleration of different opinions is a more fundamentally shared value than the professed opinions. There is a desire not to offend others, a degree of faith that the LARA method has the potential to provide the essential conditions of equal status, intergroup cooperation, and a

dialectic approach to negotiating common goals (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). However, human behaviour does not change easily. Students reported their perceptions of how IGD may have helped them gain deeper awareness of social inequities, but they reported little about actual changes in their behaviour as a result of this newfound knowledge and understanding, even within the limited domains of their interpersonal networks. Students were conflicted when confronted by family or friends that were hostile to socially just concepts. This transitioning between communities in and out of the classroom is most clear in students who identify positively with IGD and/or the LARA method, but nevertheless indicate that it has damaged some of their personal relationships as a result of conflicting frameworks for understanding inequality and privilege.

This common experience of having dissonance with old ways of thinking or people who express less tolerant viewpoints may have many potential explanations. Students may have gained a greater awareness of social issues and developed a sense of responsibility to society through the IGD course (Ellemers & Barreto, 2009). Students may have gained greater empathy towards others and diverged from people who seem not to share this empathetic concern (Nadler & Schnabel, 2011; Nagda et al., 2004). In using the LARA method, students may have agreed upon issues such as intergroup parity and dialogue on issues of bias, which in turn may have had the effect of their becoming more cooperative and forming a common goal of understanding (Nagda, 2006). When students have to apply the LARA method unilaterally outside of IGD, the data indicate that there is an inherent

disparity in power and/or a divergence in the goals of empathy and understanding others resulting in the conversation becoming competitive (Zuniga et al., 2012). The LARA method was not identified by most as an agent of external change, but rather of internal change. This may be in part an explanation for the paradoxical view that IGD was a personal benefit in terms of awareness, empathetic growth, and moral development, but ineffectual in producing shifts in non-IGD people's understanding of social inequality and injustices in USU's community. IGD can educate students about social justice issues, but it does not ultimately offer students opportunities to apply their skills in producing socially just changes, nor does it ensure that students will develop the commitment to attempt real-life solutions. The structure of the IGD class itself may be a contributing factor in preventing a shared desire to experiment in social justice change on campus. IGD accepts student definitions of social justice as deepening awareness and understanding of societal injustices, and where IGD is successful is in its dialogue practice and improved communications (Gurin et al., 2013). However, just because students have gained an awareness of difference and learned to listen more intentionally does not equate to gaining the requisite knowledge and skills to intervene so there is a shift in prejudicial views. The way IGD is structured is not conducive to encouraging this praxis, e.g., on account of the CLP, peer facilitators, and lack of time.

USU's IGD attempts to equalise power structures inherent in social identity groups and in doing so, does not try to convince students to think one way or another; USU's IGD does not attempt to shift power relations in any

meaningful way. If we look at intergroup dialogue as a social justice movement in higher education, it falls short of providing a critical framework that results in policy changes for equity and justice, unlike Black Lives Matter (BLM) for example (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/>). BLM is an example of a grassroots social justice movement that has gained momentum over several years of police brutality against black people in the United States and has recently seen progress through police reform policies (i.e., Justice in Policing Act of 2020, George Floyd Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act of 2020, Ending Qualified Immunity Act, Executive Order on Safe Policing for Safe Communities) and the conviction of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin for killing George Floyd in May 2020 (Levenson, 2021).

Through the lens of critical race theory, IGD is situated with the “idealists” who argue that attitudes, awareness, and stereotypes need to change first and then we will see policy shifts intended to equalise injustices and oppressive systems (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). On the other end of critical race theory, the “realists” hold that “racism is much more than having an unfavourable impression of members of other groups” and that “civil rights gains for communities of colour coincide with the dictates of white self-interest. Little happens out of altruism alone” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 18). All major concessions for racial justice have taken place along interest convergence moments. Realists say the only way we are going to change is if the interests of the elites merge with the interests of the oppressed. Attitude changes follow policy changes (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Kendi, 2016; Kendi, 2019). IGD does not appear to give students a critical lens around inequality and students

do not grasp power and social transformation as what is meant by social justice. Rather, they believe that having an understanding of difference or intervening in a bias incident is evidence of social justice. Social justice does not mean that all perspectives are valid. For USU, tolerance of different perspectives is welcome so long as there is no violence as a result of different perspectives, as evidenced in the institution's commitment to diversity (USU, 2019). However, on the robust end of social justice is the desire to transform the institution so as not to reproduce inequitable outcomes. Providing a sustained opportunity for students to dialogue across difference is a value the university is willing to support. But for those who are seeking a transformation of higher education and a society that is deeply divided politically, economically, and socially, dialogue is not enough. The limitations of what IGD can accomplish in its practitioners does not meet the threshold for socially just transformation of institutions and society.

It is possible that higher educational institutions do not want to encourage the shift from awareness to action because that would make the campus a prime setting for student initiatives for social justice movements and change. This in turn, challenges the mission of higher education to include all students regardless of political affinities or persuasion. Yet, higher education must be inclusive of all people who undoubtedly have very different perspectives on inequality and justice. But it is challenging to be inclusive of all people and at the same time support social justice praxis institutionally. If the university supported social justice praxis, it would open itself up increasingly to critiques as well as fostering social antagonisms among its students. The

contradictions in IGD's pedagogy illustrate these broader paradoxes in higher education. The focus on the interpersonal outcomes limits IGD's ability to strengthen intergroup relations both on campus, in communities, and in society. This may be intentional on behalf of the university. IGD seeks to promote and strengthen social justice by operating on the individual level, yet rarely tackles the institutional and systemic levels that would be required for extensive meaningful change beyond the classroom.

Kendi (2016, 2019) proposes arguments for dismantling systems of oppression such as systemic racism through power and policy changes that would create a culture of antiracist ideas and recreate institutions, so they are made up of antiracist policies. Education and empathy alone do not change, (nor have ever changed in the past) these ingrained systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Kendi (2016, 2019) details instances in United States' history that have produced socially just shifts with widespread high impact change; policy change must precede common social change. When practiced successfully, intergroup dialogue has the ability to change individuals and these individuals have the potential to improve intergroup relations within their spheres of influence. The data support potential for improved communication, empathy, perspective-seeking, but less potential for finding shared goals of social justice. Educational programmes such as IGD support the development of socially conscious individuals, but educational programmes alone fail to address and change oppressive policies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Moral suasion and education focus on convincing people to change through calling to their moral consciousness. IGD uses testimonials,

personal narratives of lived experiences that highlight injustice, oppression, privilege, and power to persuade students that their peers have sometimes vastly different understandings of the world, as a result of differing social identity groups and resultant positions in the social hierarchy.

Writing about antiracism specifically, Kendi (2019) argues:

Moral and educational suasion breathes the assumption that racist minds must be changed before racist policy, ignoring history that says otherwise. Look at the soaring white support for desegregated schools and neighbourhoods decades after the policies changed in the 1950s and 1960s. Look at the soaring white support for interracial marriage decades after the policy changed in 1967. Look at the soaring support for Obamacare after its passage in 2010..." (p. 208).

Kendi (2019) goes on to propose that:

The original problem of racism has not been solved by suasion. Knowledge is only power if knowledge is put to the struggle for power. Changing minds is not a movement. Critiquing racism is not activism. Changing minds is not activism. An activist produces power and policy change, not mental change. If a person has no record of power or policy change, then that person is not an activist (p. 209).

Pettigrew (1998) recognises that individual difference and societal norms help determine the effects of intergroup contact. Intergroup dialogue alone does not have the power to unilaterally change intergroup relations. Systemic policy

change is necessary to influence societal norms that will improve intergroup relations in a significant way. IGD helps students gain the requisite communication skills to have meaningful dialogue, first, to begin to empathise and understand the perspectives and experiences of people from different social groups and, second, to discuss topics that often cause these disparities between social groups. While these dialogic skills were gained and intergroup relationships were established in USU's IGD classroom, students did not explore impactful ways of progressing from dialogue to action. Likewise, the final objectives of intergroup dialogue, which include establishing capacity for sustained communication, forming, and maintaining intergroup relationships, and translating the skills and empathy students gain to actual and intentionally driven social change (Zuniga et al., 2007), were not realised by USU's IGD. This goal was not met as the study's data lacked evidence that students are perceiving a change in the campus community, and data did not indicate that students are empowered to help enact this change.

Freire (1970) proposes that critical pedagogy is centred on moving people's thinking through three stages: 1) intransitive (acceptance of inequity, without attempt to change, as being correct); 2) semi-transitive (an awareness of inequity as injustice, but without attempting to change social dynamics or thinking that change is possible); 3) critical consciousness (educationally acquired understanding, motivation, and empowerment to produce greater social justice). The intergroup dialogue stage model loosely borrows from this and proposes the following design: Stage 1: Forming and beginning relationships; Stage 2: Exploring differences and commonalities of

experiences; Stage 3: Exploring and discussing hot topics; Stage 4: Action planning and alliance building (Zuniga et al., 2007). It is questionable whether IGD employed critical pedagogy as USU's IGD fell short in achieving stage 4.

However, IGD has an opportunity to foster critical consciousness towards social justice praxis in a reimagining of the CLP assignment. As a second semester follow up course to IGD, students could work in groups on a social justice action plan that would be researched and implemented where students apply the IGD knowledge and skills learned in the first semester IGD class to community stakeholders as they attempt to enact meaningful social justice policy and/or structural change with a community or campus partner. The focus of a second IGD course would be on Stage 4: Action planning and alliance building (Zuniga, et al., 2007).

The extent that dialogue across identity differences can be used in higher education to motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice is limited. Evidence from this study shows intergroup dialogue's ability to motivate awareness about social justice issues, but intergroup dialogue falls short when it comes to promoting actions in defence of social justice. Promoting actions in defence of social justice begins with personal behaviour change, but IGD pedagogy lacks the cultivation of behavioural intention, determined by attitude and personal agency. Further, knowledge and applicable skill building in the IGD classroom are inadequate to facilitate participants implementing the behavioural intention outside of the IGD classroom (Glanz et al., 2008).

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge around effectual initiatives that create more just and equitable organisations and communities and which exposes those initiatives that are ineffectual so practitioners can learn from inadequate programmes and avoid repeating unsuccessful outcomes. The national reckoning with systemic racism in the United States has prompted not only institutions of higher education, but also corporations, government agencies, and various organisations across industries to attempt to support more socially just business practices (Brooks, 2020; Chen, 2020; Maidenberg, 2020; Ward, 2020). This includes implementing various diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies and trainings for employees that often do not have a tangible impact or positive outcomes. Numerous studies over several decades indicate that unconscious bias training, for example, does not decrease bias, change behaviour, or influence the workplace culture (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). As more data become available on the efficacy of these attempts, this study contributes to the body of knowledge around effective and ineffective efforts to promote equity, justice, and mitigate oppressive, problematic, and biased behaviours and organisational practices (Chang et al., 2019). The relationship between dialogue and institutional and systemic policy change should be considered in future studies. When institutions enact policies that equalise outcomes for all groups while simultaneously providing intergroup dialogue educational courses that encourage a deeper awareness and understanding of systemic oppression, the seemingly intractable issues of social inequality in higher education and American culture may begin to be remedied.

This study provides clarity around IGD as a tool for social justice and more clearly defines IGD's limitations. IGD shows promising results on the individual level, facilitating deeper awareness and understanding of social injustice while results are more limited on the interpersonal level. IGD does not seem to have an influence on supporting social justice at the institutional, structural, and systemic levels. This study's question over the extent to which dialogue across identity differences can motivate awareness about and actions in defence of social justice may be a foundational step towards social justice praxis but needs to be adjusted to bridge the gap between awareness and practice. A move toward social justice suggests a specific understanding of systemic inequalities, a political orientation, the building of cross-group alliances, while engaging in struggles for policy and institutional change that is lacking in USU's pedagogical approach and structure of intergroup dialogue. IGD would need to be restructured to better integrate these components. Yet, this raises the question of whether in doing so, it would lose its institutional support. The study in many ways raises the question of whether universities really want to be sites for social justice praxis, given that this would likely make higher educational settings increasingly vulnerable to critiques of institutional inequities and political antagonisms.

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