

**Warwick Integration Summit**  
**6 May 2014**



# **Promoting Integration: Guiding Principles from Research**

**Helen Spencer-Oatey**

# Overview



## Promoting Integration

- University-level aspirations
- Classic theories
- Recent research



# University-level Aspirations

# University-level Aspirations



## University of Bristol:

*“a diverse student body from multiple cultures and societies, which enriches our intellectual environment.”*

Internationalisation & the University of Bristol

# University-level Aspirations



## University of Warwick draft strategy:

Objective: *“To ensure that the University is an accessible and welcoming place for students from all backgrounds and cultures and to continually identify novel ways to help students overcome barriers to participation.”*

Route: ??????



# University-level Aspirations



## University of Warwick draft strategy:

Objective: *“To ensure that the University is an accessible and welcoming place for students from all backgrounds and cultures and to continually identify novel ways to help students overcome barriers to participation.”*

Route: ??????



We will: *“Increase the global mobility and awareness of students through our international partnerships so that we can offer more international opportunities and placements as integral elements of degrees.”*

# University-level Aspirations



## University of Glasgow:

*“Being an internationalised university is concerned with the development of a multicultural community of students and staff.”*



## Objective and goal:

*“to enhance the student experience at Glasgow by offering a culturally diverse learning environment that prepares students for global employment and citizenship.”*



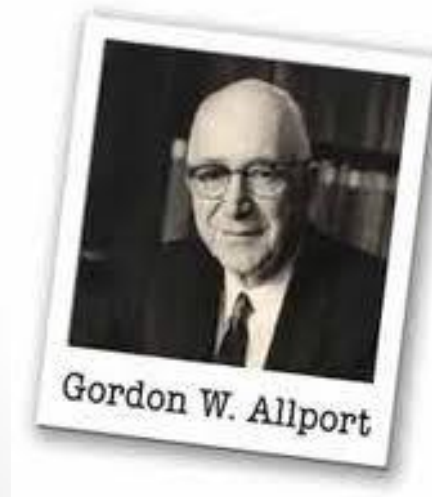
# A Classic Theory: The Contact Hypothesis



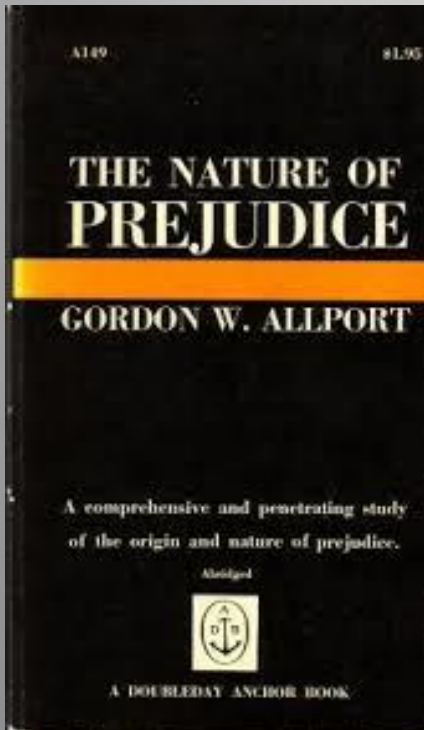
# Contact Hypothesis

## Allport's (1954) Classic Theory: Background

- In 1930s & 1940s social psychology was emerging as a sub-discipline;
- Race riots in USA in 1940s raised interest in racial conflict;
- Increased number of studies into the impact of contact (segregation/desegregation)



# Contact Hypothesis



## Allport's (1954) Classic Theory: The Nature of Prejudice

- Intergroup contact has variable effects:
  - Sometimes reduces prejudice
  - Sometimes exacerbates prejudice

# Contact Hypothesis



## Interconnected Characteristics of Contact & Prejudice Reduction (Allport 1954)

- **Equality:** If members of different groups have equal status, contact is likely to reduce prejudice. AND

# Contact Hypothesis

## Interconnected Characteristics of Contact & Prejudice Reduction (Allport 1954)



- **Equality:** If members of different groups have equal status, contact is likely to reduce prejudice. AND
- **Goals:** If members of different groups have common goals, contact is likely to reduce prejudice. AND

# Contact Hypothesis

## Interconnected Characteristics of Contact & Prejudice Reduction (Allport 1954)



- **Equality:** If members of different groups have equal status, contact is likely to reduce prejudice. AND
- **Goals:** If members of different groups have common goals, contact is likely to reduce prejudice. AND
- **Cooperation:** If members of different groups have cooperative attitude, contact is likely to reduce prejudice. AND

# Contact Hypothesis

## Interconnected Characteristics of Contact & Prejudice Reduction (Allport 1954)



- **Equality:** If members of different groups have equal status, contact is likely to reduce prejudice. AND
- **Goals:** If members of different groups have common goals, contact is likely to reduce prejudice. AND
- **Cooperation:** If members of different groups have cooperative attitude, contact is likely to reduce prejudice. AND
- **Policy Support:** If institutional authorities support intergroup contact, contact is likely to reduce prejudice.

# Contact Hypothesis



## Subsequent Research

- Numerous studies conducted to test Allport's hypothesis;
- Very mixed findings;
- Contact generally has a positive effect, BUT seem to be many influencing factors.





# Recent Research



# Insights from a ‘Border University’

## Border Universities

*“In border universities, students from two (or more) neighboring nations meet and study together.) Often such universities have been created to improve students’ understanding of the values, lifestyles and cultural practices of the countries in question.”*



(Groepel-Klein et al. 2010: 254)



# Insights from a ‘Border University’

- 7-year longitudinal study at a ‘border university’ near the German-Polish border.
- Measured:
  - Mutual perceptions
  - Interaction: e.g. *‘I often spend my spare time in groups made up of Polish and German students’; ‘In class I usually sit next to students from the other country.’*
  - Openness: e.g. *‘Learning foreign languages helps us to understand foreign cultures, and that can enrich our lives.’*



# Insights from a ‘Border University’

## Findings

*“Contrary to expectations at the time the border university was established, we find that:*

- mere exposure to each other does not lead students from different nations to have fewer differences in mutual perception.*
- Mere exposure is also insufficient to cause interaction between such students on diverse campuses.”*

(Groepel-Klein et al. 2010:265)

# Insights from a ‘Border University’



## Findings

- *“Students with a high level of individual cultural openness report significantly higher levels of interaction than students with a low level of cultural openness.”*

(Groepel-Klein et al. 2010:265)

# Insights from a 'Border University'



## Implications

- The concept of 'meeting points' is inadequate;
- Cultural openness is a critical factor.



# Diversity & IC Understanding

## Belgian study

- 2 year study with nearly 3000 late adolescents;



- Compared classes with high and low levels of diversity for degree of ethnocentric prejudice.

Dejaeghere et al. (2012)



# Diversity & IC Understanding



## Belgian study: Implications

- Need to try to influence quality of interaction.



Dejaeghere et al. (2012)





# Understanding the 'negative'

## Home Students' perceptions of 'threats' from international students:

- Quality of their learning experience
- Comfort levels in interaction
- Self-esteem
- Social competence
- Identity and belonging



Harrison & Peacock (2010)



# Understanding the 'negative'

## Factors affecting Home Students' perceptions of 'threats' from international students:

- Level of English proficiency;
- Culture-specific background knowledge;
- Fear of being looked down on for their behaviour, e.g. drinking;
- Fear of initiating conversations with international students who stay in groups;
- Fear of peer-pressure censure if cross cultural boundaries.

Harrison & Peacock (2010)

# Understanding the 'negative'



- How can we overcome these perceptions of 'threats'?





# Guiding Principles

# Guiding Principles



- **Contact is necessary but insufficient** for true integration and growth in intercultural understanding;
- **Openness in attitude** is vital;
- **Positive interaction experiences** are vital;
- **Negative interaction experiences** need to be minimised.

# Next steps



- Fight against the myth that contact is all that is needed;
- Explore ways of promoting openness in attitude;
- Understand the factors that can affect the positive/negative nature of interaction experiences.

# Next steps





Any Questions?