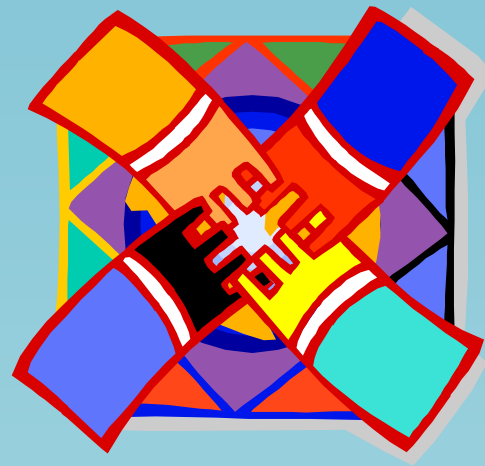


Understanding the Process of College Students' Interracial Friendship Development

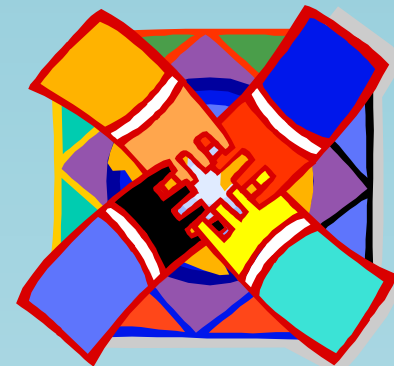


Tara D. Hudson

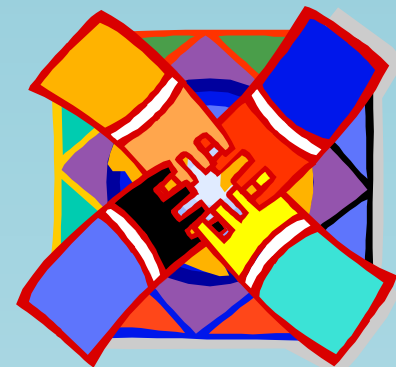
**Scholar-Practitioner Symposium,
April 23, 2014**

What We Know: The Diversity Rationale

- **Challenges to use of race in college admissions:**
 - *Grutter v. Bollinger et al.* (2003)
 - *Fisher v. University of Texas* (2013)
- **Campus diversity is an educational resource**

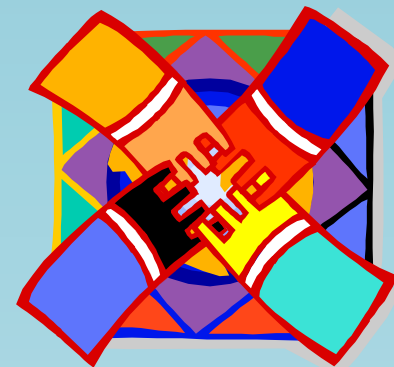


What We Know: Intercultural Interactions



What We Know: Student Learning & Development

- **Intercultural interaction:**
“conversational exchange between at least two racially/ ethnically different persons”
(Halualani et al., 2004)
- **Quality and quantity important for learning**
- **Close friendships: investment of emotion and time**



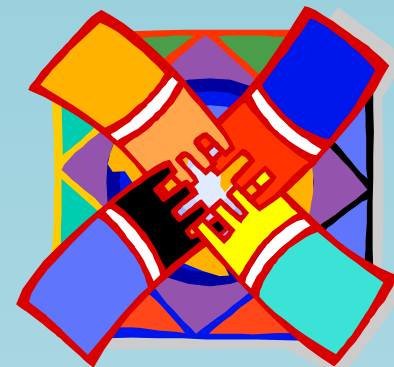
What We Know: Outcomes of Diverse Interactions

- **Individual-level outcomes:**
 - Academic and learning gains, psychological benefits, cognitive performance
- **Societal-level outcomes:**
 - Intercultural understanding, perspective taking, prosocial values, appreciation for pluralism/diversity, civic participation, prejudice reduction
 - Valued by employers and persist into adulthood



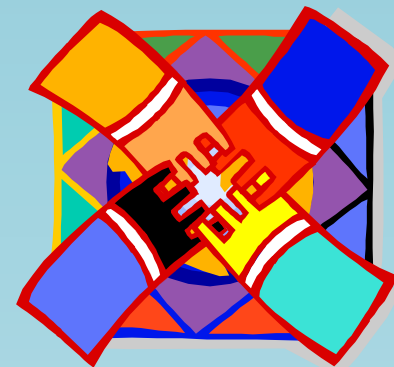
What We Know: Theories of Friendship Development

- **Propinquity**
- **Similarity-attraction (homophily)**



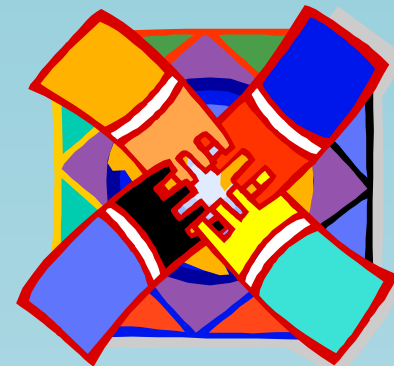
What We Need to Know: Unanswered Questions

- **Yet these theories do not explain:**
 - Why some college students are able or willing to look beyond cultural differences for friendships
 - How we can encourage *all* college students to look beyond cultural differences for friendships



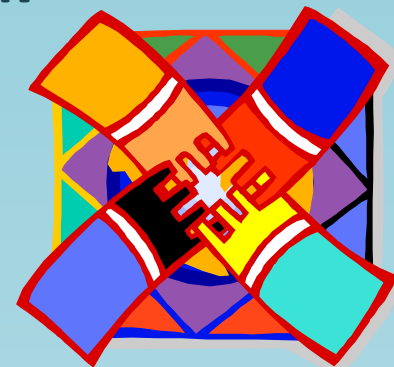
What We Need to Know: Unanswered Questions

- Current empirical research is “macroscopic”
- Focus on predictors and outcomes can’t answer:
 - What is the **process** by which college students develop and sustain interracial friendships?
 - How can colleges/universities **intentionally** facilitate and support meaningful interaction (and associated learning)?



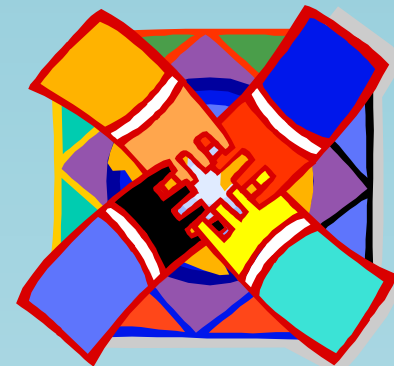
Understanding Interracial Friendship Development

- My research question:
 - How do interracial friendships develop among undergraduate college students, and how are they sustained?
- Goal of this research:
 - To generate a **substantive theory** of how and why college students develop interracial friendships



Understanding: Methods

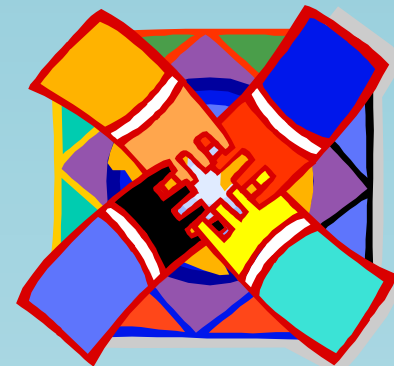
- A substantive theory:
 - **Explains** (“how”, “why”); doesn't describe
 - Incorporates **context** (“where”, “when”)
 - Has **practical utility**



Understanding: Methods

**Grounded
Theory
Method of
Inquiry**

- Inductive analysis
- Generates substantive theory with practical utility



Understanding: Methods

**Constructivist
Paradigm**

- Multiple realities
- Social construction of knowledge
- Participants' experiences & meaning making
- Researcher positionality



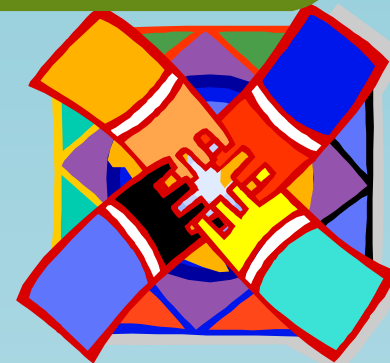
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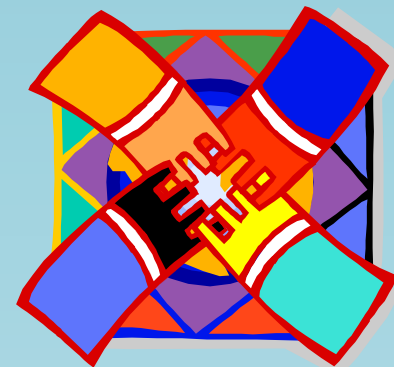
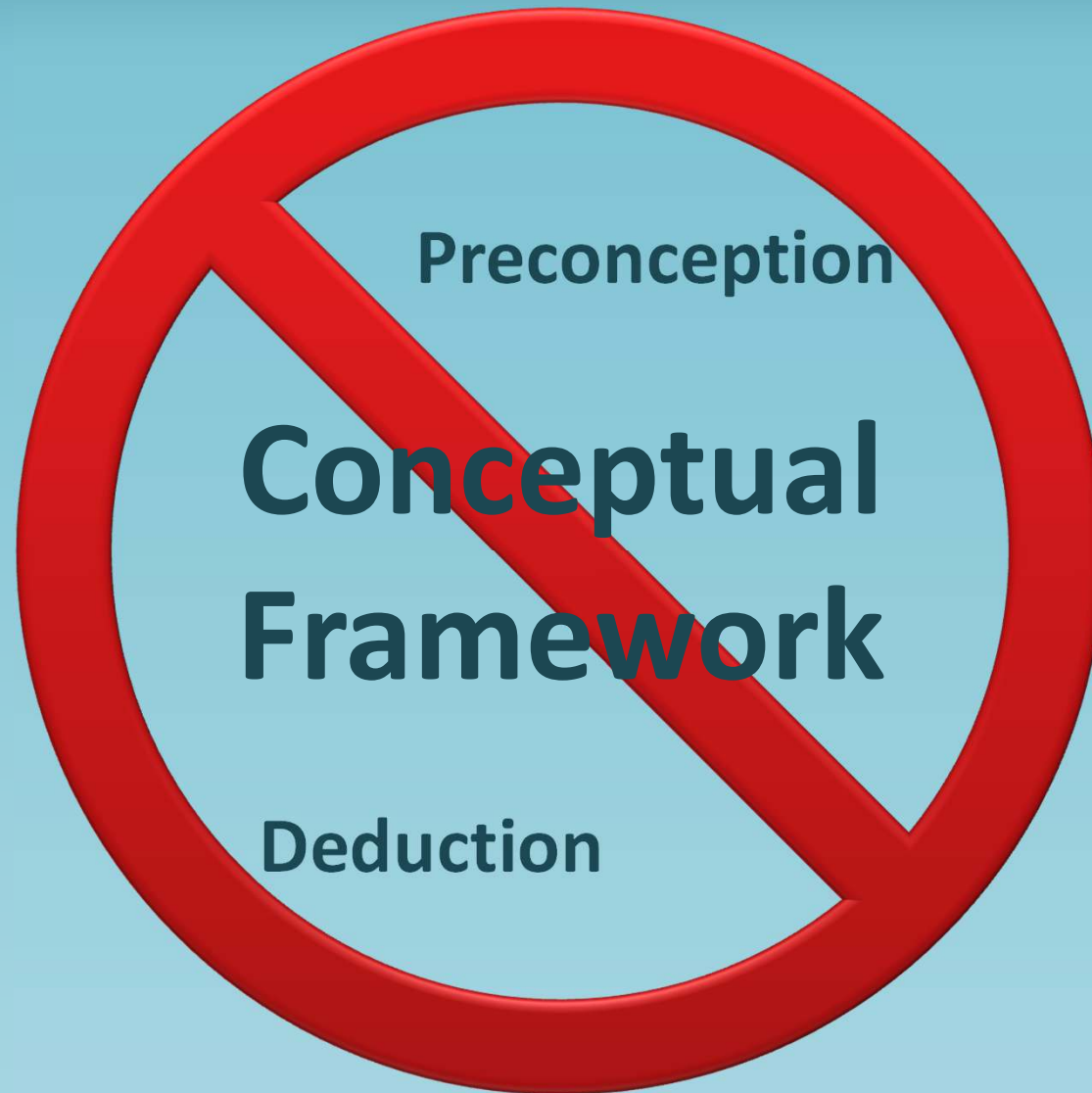


**Constructivist
Grounded
Theory**
(Kathy Charmaz)

- Focuses on how participants experience the process of study

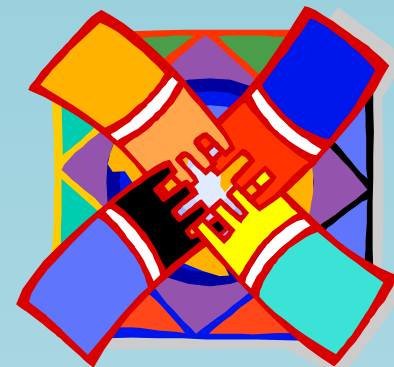


Understanding: Methods



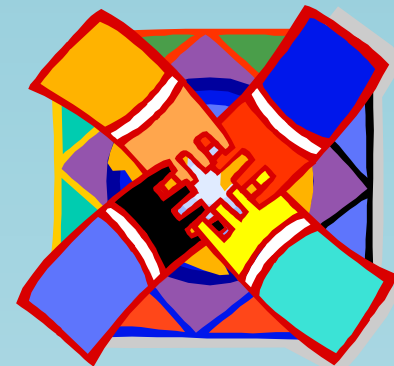
Understanding: Data Generation

- **Primary: Interviews**
- **Secondary: Solicited journals**
- **Supplemental: Documents, reflection**



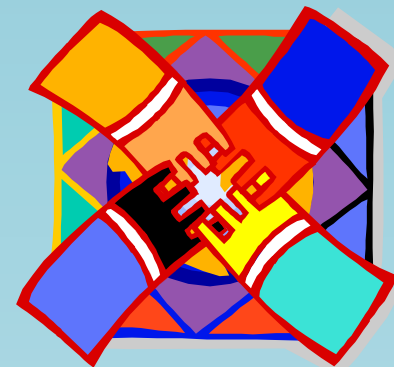
What Have I Learned? (so far...)

- **Very preliminary findings:**
 1. Living-learning communities and living on campus
 2. Shared interests and shared experiences (especially music and food)
 3. Cultural events don't develop intercultural competence



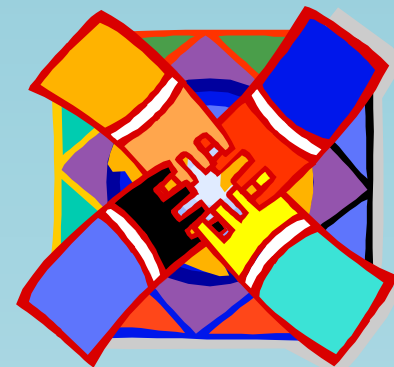
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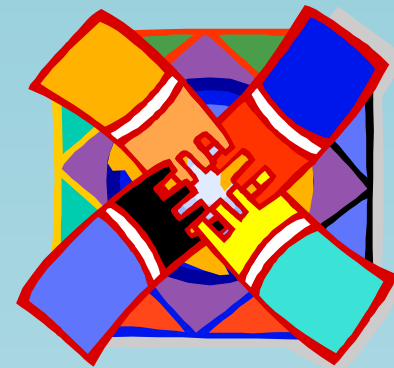
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Why Is This Important? Practical Significance

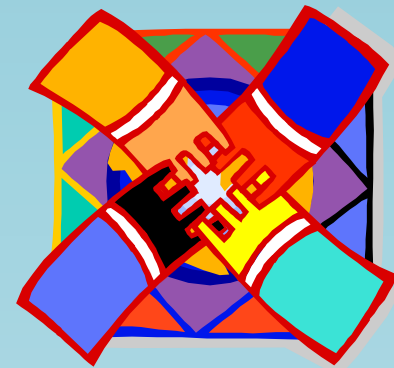
“Scholars need to provide institutions with better, **actionable insight** into the dynamics of diverse student interaction and its outcomes”

(Clarke and Antonio, 2012, pp. 40-41)



Why Is This Important? Theoretical Significance

- **Qualitative approach**
 - Moves beyond the current focus on predictors and outcomes
 - Focuses on students' experiences
- **Grounded theory approach**
 - Understanding the process and context of interracial friendship development
 - Illuminates the “how” and “why”



“What is the price of *not* creating the conditions under which students can thrive and reap the benefits of diversity?”

(quote adapted from D. G. Smith, 2009, p. 16)

