

Mixed Methods: Words by Multiracial Gen Z College Students

Thesis & Purpose

The goal of the *Mixed Methods* publication and multimedia digital exhibit is to shed light on the narratives and experiences of multiracial, Gen Z college students in the Southern California area. While the US becomes more multicultural year after year, multiracial people continue to be erased from conversations in all areas of public life. UC Irvine and many other college campuses in Southern California are home to many multiracial students, and while ethnic diversity is celebrated at these universities, multiracial students continue to feel alienated by the lack of societal understanding and acceptance of their existence. Whether through on-campus classes, resource centers, or student organizations, there is still a limited amount of materials that help students, professors, and faculty in higher education to understand the needs of multiracial students.

As a biracial college student myself, I often find myself continuously advocating for the visibility of multiracial identity in different academic settings, especially within ethnic studies courses. Out of the 10 ethnic studies courses I have taken at UCI, Dr. Julia Lee's course in "Asian American Popular Culture" was the only space where the conversation of multiracial identity was encouraged and welcomed. The experience of self-advocacy can be unsettling because there is not a long-term solution to encourage the discussion of what it means to live in a multi-ethnic society. Public discourse can be challenging to have because racialized communities are rarely seen by the "mainstream," and different multiracial people construct their narratives individually. However, I believe that there is an urgent need for self-written stories where multiracial students define what identity means to them, and how they want to be understood by others. As multiracial populations continue to grow, especially in Southern California which has one of the most ethnically-diverse populations in the world. *Mixed Methods* aims to uplift the voices of multiracial students and their unique experiences navigating identity politics, societal and familial expectations, and what it means to be part of the most diverse generation yet. There has yet to be a creative initiative on campus like this.

Objectives

Students find it challenging to find the words to describe their experiences because the nation tends to think of race in monolithic terms. I hope to explore and answer how multiracial artists and writers express themselves without the limiting structures of academic concepts, and learn how they would describe their experiences to the best of their abilities through artistic expression. The contemporary discussion of multiracial people feeling "a part of two worlds" and not being accepted in the homogenous society continues to be a limiting binary. I hope to offer a space for students to think about what it means to be part of several cultures/races, and how it can affect their lives. Many students may face difficulties of not being able to have access to one side of the family, which can result in challenges of how they view themselves and even result in an identity crisis. Many first-generation Americans students have also experienced what it means to be a "third culture kid," defining the experiences of a person who has spent a significant part of their developmental years outside the parents' culture.

Additionally, I would like to examine the topic of hybridity and the historical challenges of mixed race people. One example of the racist ways that race has been constructed is the blood quantum rule that the federal government imposed on Native Americans to determine citizenship status. Similarly, the "one

drop rule” from the Jim Crow era permeates today’s understanding of race — a single “drop” of Black “bloodpushed people with mixed ancestry into the subordinate class. Hiding Blackness was critical in order to survive. Thus, in a world that is anti-Black and colorist, being white-passing is seen as a privilege given that race is often based on physical appearance. I plan to provide a historical background for how mixed-race identity was quantified in the past, and how individuals are reclaiming the way they present and define themselves today. I hope to discover how their self representation can be influenced by their family and culture, politics, geographic borders, war, history, social media, entertainment, and/or radical movements. I believe it will be insightful to learn how individuals are redefining history and contributing to multiculturalism of the US through creative expression.

There has been great interest in the discussion of multicultural artists and performers. Most recently, mixed Asian Americans won several accolades at the 2022 Grammys, and many audiences expressed interest in how the singers incorporate cultural influences into their work. While film and television continues to fall behind on its commitments to multi-racial and interracial diversity, I believe that literature and publications are providing a creative and fulfilling outlet for writers and poets to share their stories. As the Editor-in-Chief of the digital magazine for Her Campus Media and the student blog for UCI Admissions, I have met many multiracial students who seek to find a community of other multiracial artists and writers to have these conversations and have their voices heard. I was informed by many of the writers and their interest in contributing to *Mixed Methods* already.

Approach & Responsibility

I plan to have a multimedia approach to the project, one being a publication consisting of written poems, essays, media reviews, monologues, and short stories, that I plan to curate and edit. I would like to create both physical and digital copies of the publication so it is accessible to students at UC Irvine and around the country. Secondly, I plan to create a digital exhibit with submitted digital artworks such as digital art, graphic design, short films, and video projects. If there are physical objects such as paintings, jewelry, clothing, or mediums that require an exhibit space, I will create space for the items to be shown to the public during the launch party. At the end of the academic year in May, I plan to host a launch party to celebrate the completion of the book, as well as to give space for contributing writers and artists to perform and discuss their work. I would like to book a venue at UCI where video works and open mics can be exhibited, and communicate with guest speakers and performers of what they would like to cover.

I will dedicate time each week to complete the project, and regularly meet with [Redacted] for direction and guidance on the different projects. I have a wealth of experience, skills, and knowledge to manage and develop a publication. I have edited over 300 articles and blogs, and have written essays, articles, and creative works on topics ranging from race, gender, identity, to culture. My intersectional approach to my independent research will greatly benefit me in this project.

There will be three set times of calls for submissions throughout the academic year. I will edit and provide feedback to writers on a rolling basis. After reviewing all submissions and deciding on which works I would like to include in the publication and digital exhibit, I would like to award artists and writers with gift cards and merchandise, such as stickers, to thank them for their contributions. I will be in charge of all publication and website development and production, and will be responsible for all finances. I will keep a database of all the submissions, artist bios and headshots, and receipts of all the bills, such as for printing physical copies and editing software subscriptions.

Timeline

June 2022

- Create graphics of “call for submissions” and share amongst undergraduate college students throughout the Southern California colleges and universities

July 2022

- Continue to spread the word for submissions with deadlines at the end of the month and information regarding awards
- Begin going through submissions and select written works that need to be edited

August 2022

- Begin editing processes of written submissions and provide feedback to the writers/poets
- Begin going through digital media submissions
- Come up with a design plan for the website and sign up for domain and hosting

September 2022

- Finish editing the first round of written submissions
- Edit artist bios and headshots for the website

October 2022

- Create new graphics for “call of submissions” for the second round
- Begin going through submissions and select written works that needs to be edited

November 2022

- Continue to spread the word for submissions with deadlines at the end of the month
- Begin editing processes of written submissions and provide feedback to the writers/poets

December 2022

- Make final selections of submitted works
- Begin designing the layout of physical copy and ebook

January 2023

- Create new graphics for “call of submissions” as the third and final round
- Continue to spread the word for submissions with deadlines at the end of the month
- Begin uploading digital media onto the website and finalize design plan

February 2023

- Upload all final digital projects onto the website and make final edits
- Begin planning book launch event for May
- Email potential guest speakers and performers

March 2023

- Book event venue on campus
- Finalize all editing of physical copies and ebook
- Share with Dr. Lee for final review and feedback
- Identify which physical items will be in display at exhibit

April 2023

- Make an order of all physical copies
- Ship out all physical copies and merchandise to contributing artists and writers
- Confirm performers and guest speakers for launch event
- Make catering orders
- Confirm performance and screening equipment

May 2023

- Prepare interview questions and schedule for launch event
- Arrange and display physical art pieces and exhibits
- Host launch event mid-May

Itemized Budget

\$200 - Editing software, including a Grammarly annual subscription
\$200 - Website builder software including domain and hosting costs for at least three years
\$100 - External hard drive to store all digital content
\$700 - Awards to contributors for submission included in the final book and website
\$400 - Printing costs for physical copies of books, stickers, and other merchandise
\$400 - Booking of event space and catering for launch event
= \$2000

References

Banks, Taunya Lovell, Personal Identity Equality and Racial Misrecognition: Review Essay of

Multiracials and Civil Rights: Mixed-Race Stories of Discrimination (December 29, 2020). 34

Journal of Civil Rights & Economic Development 13 (2021), Forthcoming, Available at SSRN:

<https://ssrn.com/abstract=3757052>

O'Hearn, Claudine C., ed. *Half and Half: Writers on Growing up Biracial and Bicultural*. New York:

Pantheon Books, 1998

Senna, Danzy. *Caucasia*. New York :Riverhead Books, 1999.

Other

- Mixed Asian Media <https://mixedasianmedia.com/>
- Middleground <https://www.middlegroundmagazine.co.uk/>
- Raise Magazine <https://raisemagazine.com/category/parenting/mixed-race-families/>