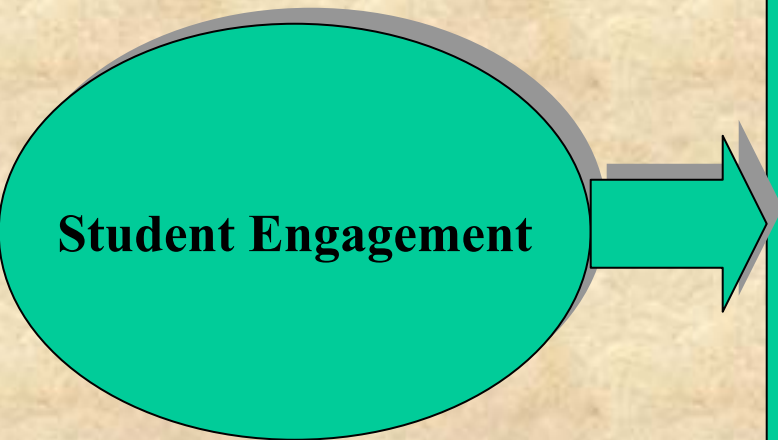# Campus Climate

©Stein, EthnoGraphics®

- **Defining Campus Climate**
  - **Frameworks**
  - **Components**
- **Impact on a student's adjustment to college**
- **Implications**

1

Engagement Matters

Student Engagement →

Outcomes

Gains in:

Persistence & Educational Attainment
- Cognitive Complexity
- Critical thinking
  - *Openness to new ideas and different points of view*
  - *Knowledge Acquisition & Application*
  - *Humanitarism*
- Interpersonal & Intrapersonal Competence
- Practical Competence

Preconditions for Engagement

- *Teaching practices*
- *Contact*
- *Curriculum*
- *Tolerance*

What is Tolerance?

"Tolerance is putting up with something you fear, do not like, or otherwise have a negative attitude toward; it involves support for the rights and liberties of *others* and not discriminating against those toward whom you have negative attitudes."

Vogt (1997). *Tolerance & education*. London: Sage Publications, p. 200.

4

A student of color group *perceives* its values and ways of behaving being rejected by the dominant campus group

**Perceptions
Of
Prejudice & Discrimination**
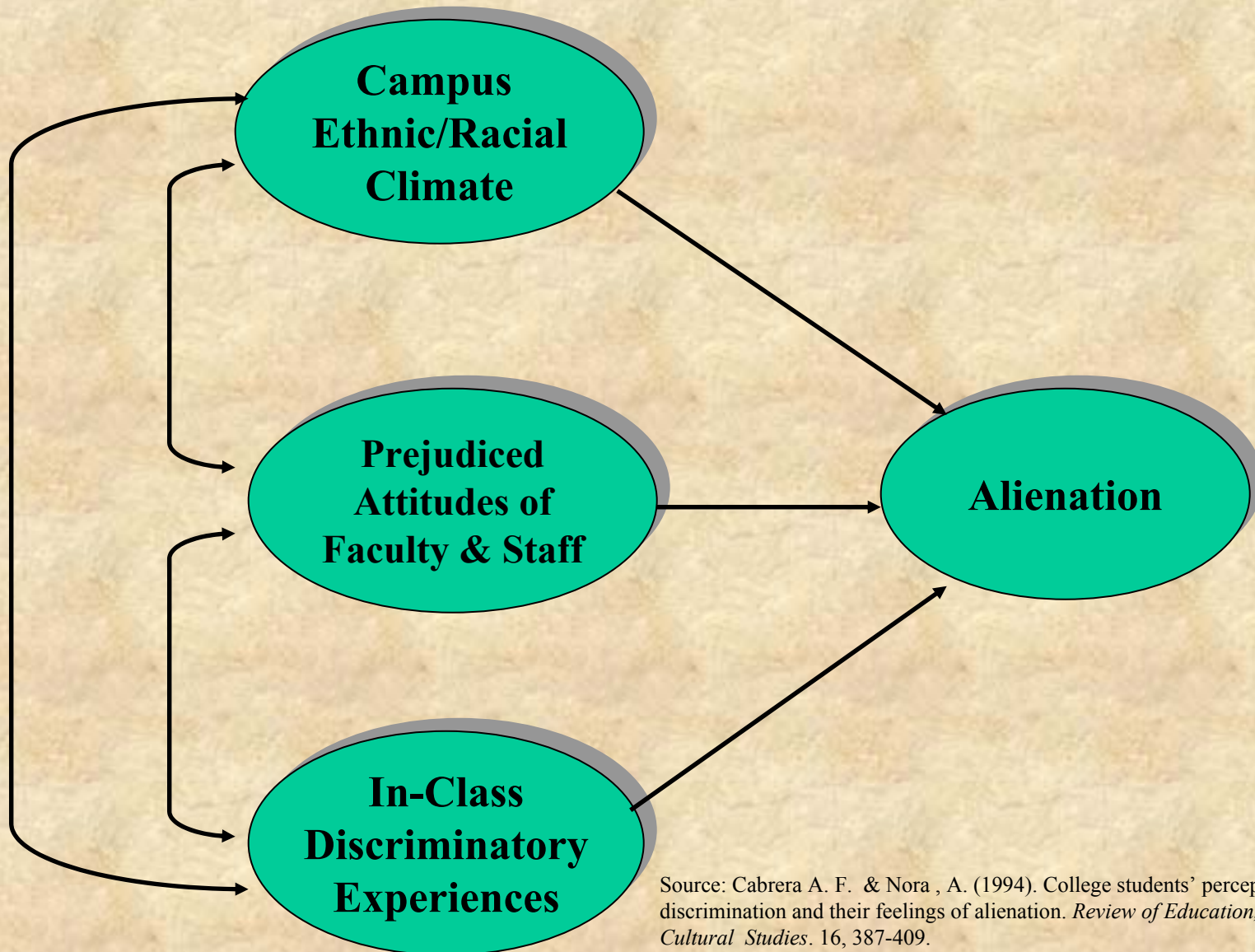
Feelings of Alienation
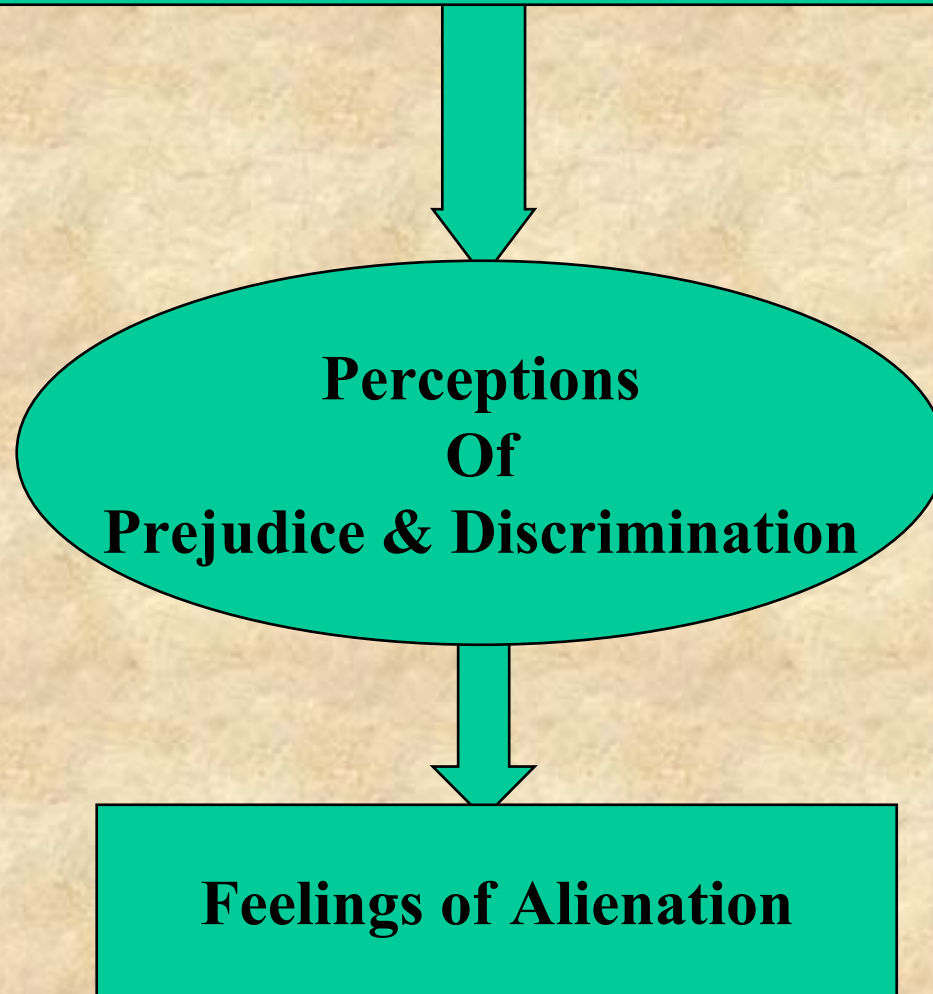
Framework for Understanding Campus Climate

1. Institutional Context
2. Structural Diversity & Its Impact on Students
3. Psychological Dimension of Climate & Its Impact on Students
4. Behavioral Dimension of Climate & Its Impact on Students

Hurtado, S., Milem, J. F., Clayton-Pedersen, A.R., & Allen, W.R. (1998). Enhancing campus climates for Racial/Ethnic diversity. *Review of Higher Education*, 21(3), 279-302.

# *Perceptions of Prejudice & Discrimination Model*

Source: Cabrera A. F. & Nora , A. (1994). College students' perceptions of prejudice and discrimination and their feelings of alienation. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*. 16, 387-409.

7

Why Should You Care?

- **Campus contexts or climates can affect the cognitive & affective development of the student.**

- **33% of science, technology, engineering and math Women who transferred into other fields cite 'chilly climate' and poor teaching for their decision.**

- **African Americans and Hispanics more prone to dropout from college.**

Dropping-out: African-Americans and Latinos enrolled at 4-year institutions are 22% and 13% more likely to dropout within six years than their white counterparts.
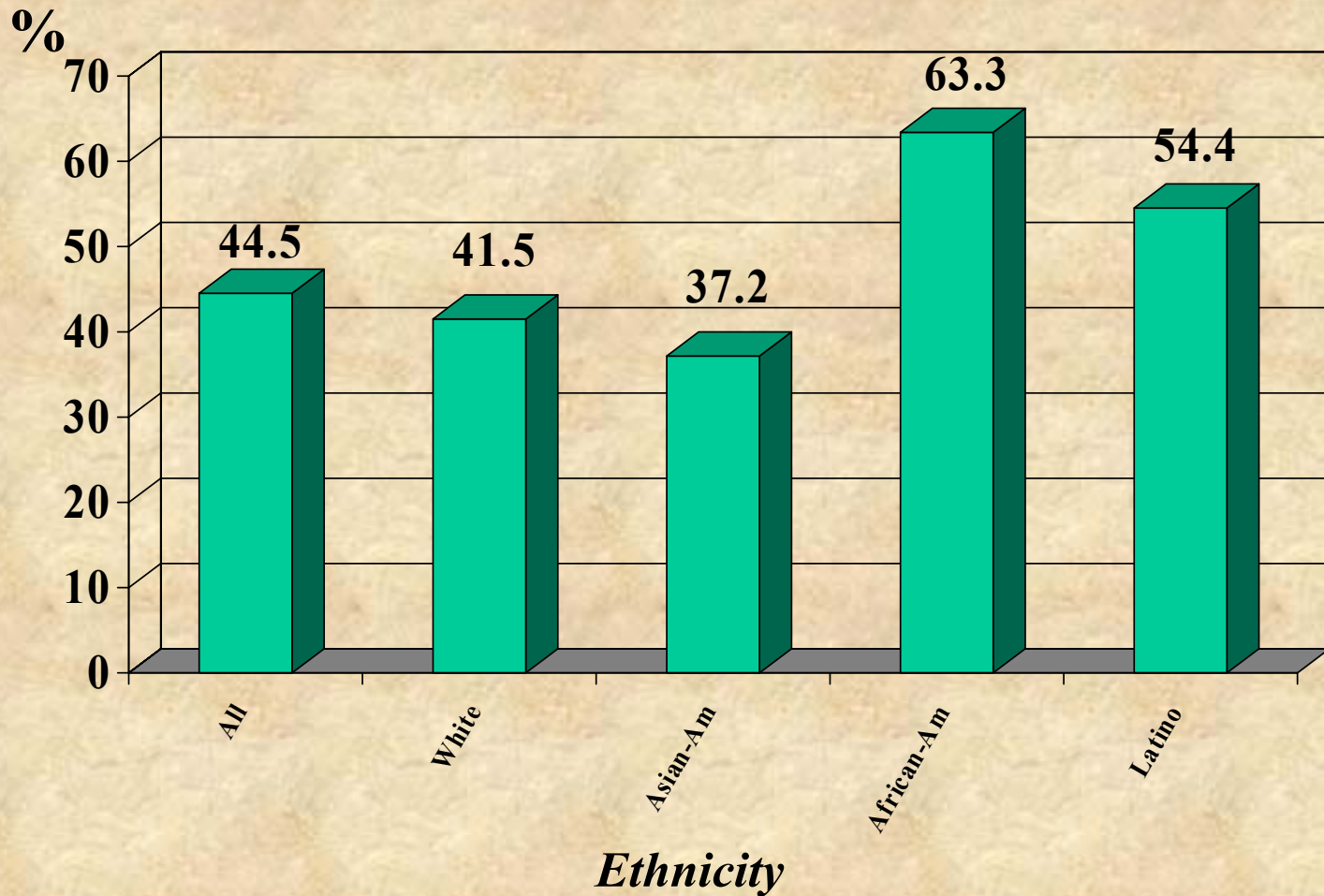
Source: **High School Class of 1980 (Porter, 1990).**

9

Three main assertions as to what matters for students of color to succeed in college.

Assertion # 1: Academic Preparedness

Academic preparation for college is one of the main explanatory variables that accounts for differences in persistence rates among students of color (SOC) and White students.

Research Findings

- Students of color do enter college with lower academic readiness.

- Academic ability does not exert a stronger effect among SOC than it does among whites.

- For both students of color and White students, academic ability plays a significant role on academic performance in college.

- For both SOC and Whites, academic ability plays an indirect effect on persistence.

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Assertion # 2: Breaking Away

Adjustment to college involves severing ties with family, friends, and past communities.

Research Findings

- Attachments to significant others are key for the transition of the student to college.

- For both SOC and Whites, parental support and encouragement exerts a positive effect on:
  - *Students engagement with the academic and social domains of an institution;*
  - *Academic and intellectual development;*
  - *Academic performance, and;*
  - *Commitments to both completion of a college degree and to the institution.*

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Assertion # 3: Prejudice & Discrimination

Four components of this assertion:

i. Exposure to a climate of prejudice and discrimination lessens the adjustment to college and commitments to college completion and to an institution.

ii. Perceptions of prejudice & discrimination are present only among students of color and women.

iii. Maladjustment to college is the main factor accounting for differences in persistence rates between students of color and whites.

iv. Exposure to prejudice detracts the cognitive and affective development of students of color.

Research Findings:

Both Students of Color and Whites perceive negative campus climates.

(Findings based on a Midwestern Urban Institution)
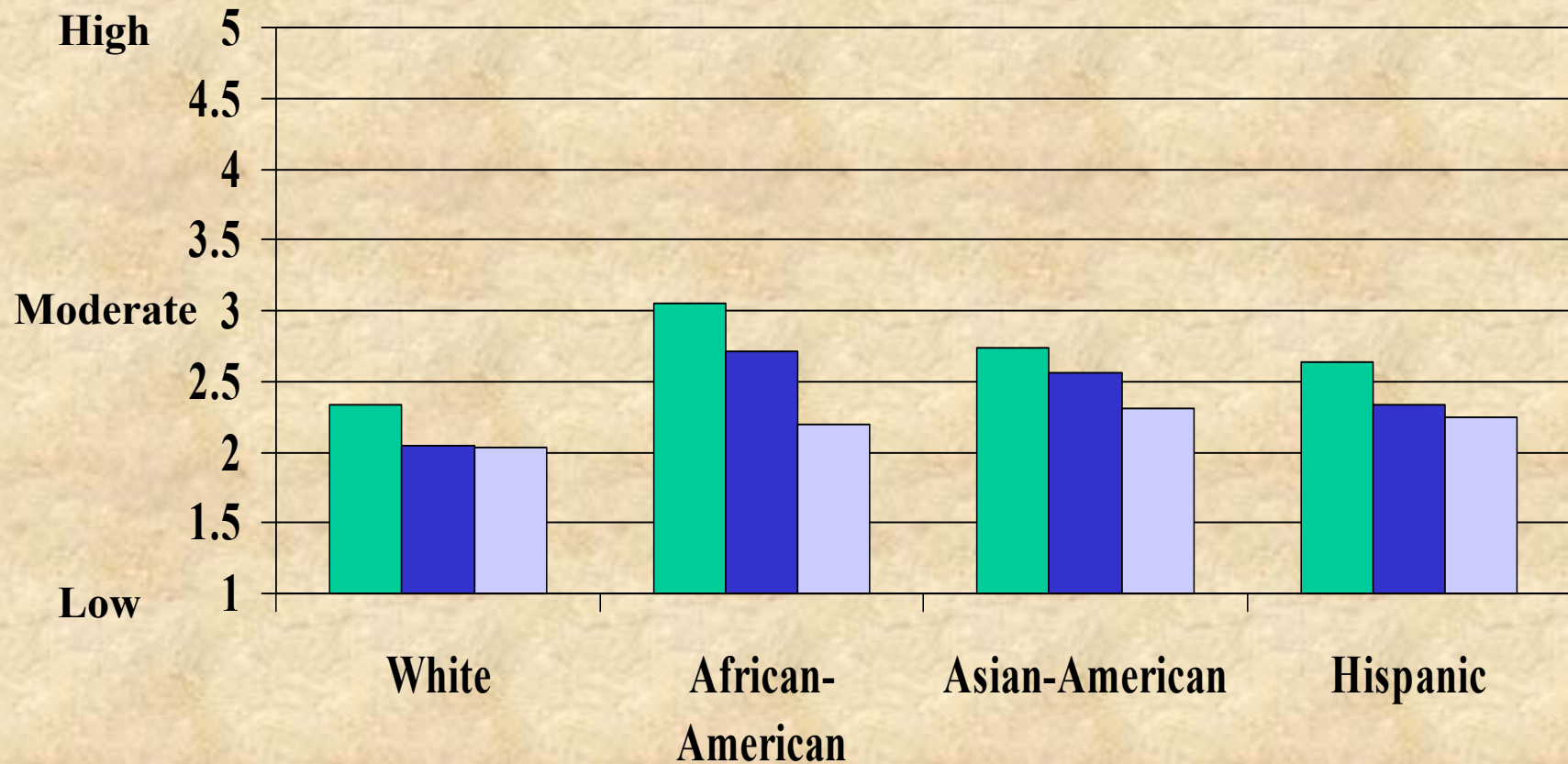
Assertion # 3: Research Findings (*Cont.*)

- Performance in college, encouragement, and positive experiences with faculty and peers are more influential on students of color's persistence decisions than are exposure to prejudice and discrimination.

- However, first-year students who felt singled out or treated differently in the classroom experienced a higher sense of alienation.

- ***Exposure to a climate of prejudice and discrimination affects all students***.

Schooling Related to Tolerance
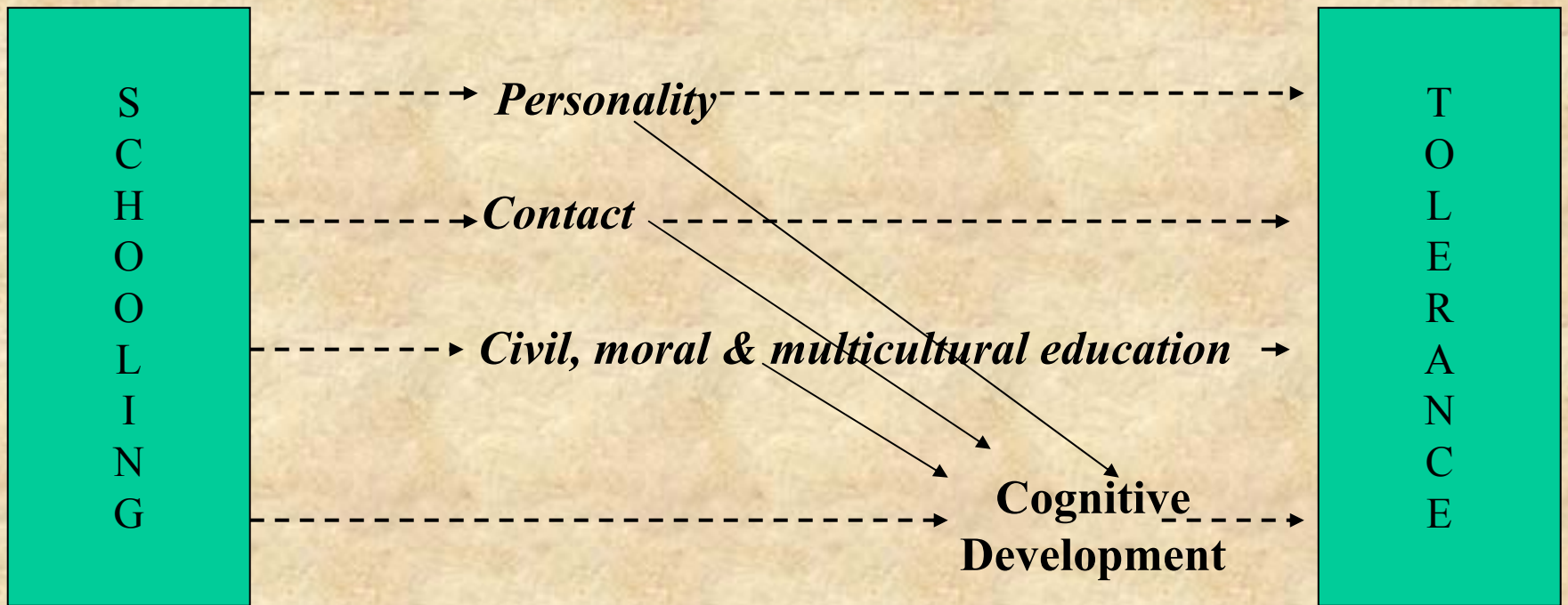
Source: Vogt (1997), p 243.

Implication Areas

I. Improvement of Classroom Practices

- Regardless of ethnicity, in-class experiences were found to lessen commitments to the institution the most among all factors.

- In-class experiences are elements that are under the control of the faculty member and of the institution.

- Feelings of being singled out in class and treated differently can be reduced via instructional practices that reward collaboration and cooperation in the classroom.

Implication Areas (*Continued*)

II. Curriculum Development

- Multicultural education can modify stereotypes associated with people of color and enhance openness toward diversity.

III. Faculty Development

- Faculty can be trained to recognize differences in learning styles and in pedagogy that foster tolerance.

- Rewards can be established for faculty that concern themselves with enhancing the quality of classroom experiences.

IV. Reinforce campus practices that enhance openness to diversity.

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