

U.S. Culture:Diversity(Minority Perspective/The Other)
August 2008 [DRAFT]

Definition

Diversity means much more than simply acknowledging and/or tolerating difference. Having a commitment to diversity involves a set of conscious practices that include:

- Understanding and valuing the interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment;
- Possessing and practicing respect for qualities, perspectives and experiences that are different from our own;
- Comprehending that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing;
- Recognizing that personal, cultural and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others;
- Building alliances across difference and working collaboratively to eradicate discrimination in its myriad forms.

Diversity involves knowledge, awareness, and a sense of self that allows one to relate to qualities, conditions, perspectives and experiences that are different from our own, yet are present in other individuals and groups. These include but are not limited to ethnicity, class, gender, age, abilities, race, sexual orientation, religious status, marital status and parental status. This also involves the disposition of intellectual empathy which is “the awareness of the need to actively entertain views that differ from our own” (Paul and Elder, 515).

Sources utilized include:

www.las.iastate.edu/diversity/definition.shtml (Iowa State University)

www.diversityweb.org (AACU)

Paul R. and Elder L., *Critical Thinking Press*

Rationale

Intercultural Knowledge and Competence is one of AAC&U’s Essential Learning Outcomes, one that is “anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges” [see *College Learning for the New Global Century*]. http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/GlobalCentury_final.pdf

Research on the *Bonner Scholars Program* has found that “contexts in which young adults cross thresholds of difference—such as those involving ethnicity, religion, culture, and social class—play a significant role in the development of sustainable commitments to civic, international, and social justice concerns.” [Cheryl Keen, “Engaging with Difference Matters: Longitudinal Outcomes of the Cocurricular Bonner Scholars Program.”] <http://diversityweb.org/Digest/vol10no1/keen.cfm>

Similarly, the *Preparing College Students for a Diverse Democracy* project found that curriculum where students interact with diversity foster the “development of complex thinking and socio-cognitive and democratic skills.”

- Students who enrolled in diversity courses scored consistently higher on interest in poverty issues, concern for the public good, and sense of the importance of making a civic contribution.
- Participation in intergroup dialogue (facilitated, extended discussions about diversity) was associated with increases in students’ perspective-taking skills, development of a pluralistic orientation, interest in poverty issues, and a belief that conflict enhances a democracy (rather than detracts from democratic ideals).

Sylvia Hurtado, “Research Shows Benefits of Linking Diversity and Civic Goals.” Also see Humphreys, “Diversity and the College Curriculum” (a review of research

literature). <http://diversityweb.org/Digest/vol9no1/hurtado.cfm>http://diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/curriculum_change/principles_and_practices/curriculum_briefing.cfm

Unfortunately, recent research finds that incoming students view “respect for people of other backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and lifestyles” and “expanded cultural awareness and sensitivity” as two of the *least critical* goals of their college learning. <http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-sufa05/le-sufa05leap.cfm>

Criteria for Approving Proposals

In *American Pluralism in the College Curriculum*, AAC&U recommends that “every college and university require as part of its general education program at least one comparative and relational course in United States pluralism.” Courses should “deal comparatively and historically with race, gender, ethnicity, class, religion, and other sources of inclusion and exclusion important in this country’s history.” Desired learning outcomes dictate that the courses will:

- “encourage extended and collaborative dialogue about the past, present, and future of United States democratic aspirations;
- cultivate awareness of the enriching aspects of cultural diversity;
- foster respect for the integrity of other peoples’ life experiences;
- and develop understanding of the multiple vocabularies with which students’ neighbors and fellow citizens interpret their lives.”

Second, the AAC&U recommends that courses include an “experience in the pursuit of justice,” or an “encounter – successful or unsuccessful – with the systemic constraints on the full flowering of the human potential” of a group. http://www.diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/campus_and_community/campus_community_partnerships/highered.cfm

Learning Outcome: Students will learn about and interact with differences within the United States that include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, wealth, religion, sexual orientation, or immigration status, with emphasis on experiences of underrepresented groups.

For a course to be designated a *U.S. Culture: Diversity* course, it should:

- Foster knowledge of and discourse about cultural pluralism and diversity in the United States
- Develop an appreciation for the struggle of underrepresented groups for legal and social equality
- Reveal the ways in which cultural diversity can both enrich our lives and create points of conflict
- Nurture development of intellectual empathy and a sense of otherness

Given the benefits of cross-cultural immersion experiences, it is recommended that a course:

- Give students a chance to engage or dialogue with individuals or groups whose experiences differ from the majority culture, using “pedagogies of engagement” like group reflection, speakers, cultural events, travel.

Source Information on Similar Requirements at other Good Schools

- Calvin College, *Cross-Cultural Engagement* (an interesting example for the types of experiences that could fit this learning outcome, although Calvin combines the U.S. and Global Diversity goals into one category.) This requirement can be met by CCE courses, selected off-campus semester or January term programs, and CCE-designated Independent Study courses involving cross-cultural engagement. See more information at <http://www.calvin.edu/admin/registrar/core/courses/cce/>.
- Dickinson College, *U.S. Diversity*. “To prepare students to function effectively in civic life and to help them gain a broader understanding of the commonalities and differences among cultures and values in the context of the making of American society, the college requires one course with a focus on U.S. diversity. U.S. diversity is a comparative course that focuses on the history of cultures based on race/ethnicity, gender, class, religion and/or sexual orientation.” <http://www.dickinson.edu/bulletin/requirements.html>

- Bethel University, *Cross-cultural Experience* (“Z category”). Students must have a significant off-campus cross-cultural experience. This requirement can be met by taking a course with a Z-tag or by participating in an approved, non-credit experience. Guided pre-experience and post-experience processing with faculty supervision are essential to all outcomes. <http://cas.bethel.edu/catalog/acadinfo/curric/gened-pillars.html>
- James Madison University, *The Human Community: Cluster Four – Social and Cultural Processes*. Cluster Four courses help students develop to become critical thinkers about their own societies and the larger global community. These courses examine the key social and cultural processes and structures that shape the human experience. Cluster Four consists of two courses that may be taken concurrently or in any order. Students must take one course from both the American Experience and the Global Experience areas of Cluster Four, and the two courses must be from two different disciplines. <http://www.jmu.edu/gened/cluster4.html>
- Marymount College, *Developing Diversity Through Learning Communities Program*. Learning communities model the habits of mind necessary to promote respect for diversity and to explore difference in non-pejorative contexts. These conscious, intentional curricular structures support collaborative, multi and interdisciplinary explorations of large issues and commonly held problems. Both content and process promote and support collaboration among disciplines, faculty and students; learning communities break down traditional boundaries and encourage the development of multiple perspectives. By building community among constituents and across disciplinary lines, learning communities help participants explore new frontiers and provide a safe environment for difficult dialogues. Students and faculty in learning communities are given time together to interact around substantive issues and communicate across significant differences. They thus have the opportunity to acquire the breadth of vision necessary to move beyond the narrow, unexamined assumptions that separate people in any number of ways. http://diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/faculty_staff_development/teaching_strategies_practices/developing_diversity.cfm

Examples of Classes

See the innovative sample courses in the “General Education Requirements,” “Advanced U.S. and Global Pluralism Courses,” and “Transformed Courses within the Disciplines” sections at the *Diversity Web: Curriculum* page below.

This would likely include most current CS6 classes, but would also include expanded and enriched classes.

Teaching Resources/Pedagogical Sources (many from diversityweb.org)

Association of American Colleges and Universities [AAC&U], *Diversity Web: Diversity Innovations: Curriculum Change*. http://www.diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/curriculum_change/index.cfm

Lelwica, “Religious Diversity: Challenges and Opportunities in the College Classroom,” in *Diversity and Democracy* 11:1 (2008). <http://www.diversityweb.org/DiversityDemocracy/vol11no1/lelwica.cfm>

Ukpokodu, “A Sustainable Campus-wide Program for Diversity Curriculum Infusion,” (good discussion of faculty workshops) in *Diversity and Democracy* 10:2 (2007). <http://www.diversityweb.org/digest/vol10no2/ukpokodu.cfm>

EdChange is dedicated to equity and justice in schools and society. Their Mission: We act to shape schools, organizations, and communities in which the full diversity of people have opportunities to live, learn, and thrive free from oppression. www.edchange.org

Tolerance.org is the website of *Teaching Tolerance* sponsored by the Southern Poverty Law Center. It is designed to combat hate crimes by outlining methods of prevention. This site offers various classroom activities that help students to uncover hidden biases and deconstruct biased language. <http://www.tolerance.org>

The Southern Poverty Law Center, which publishes *Teaching Tolerance*, seeks to combat hate, intolerance, and discrimination. Teaching Tolerance spotlights educators, schools, and curriculum resources dedicated to promoting respect for differences in the classroom and beyond. The magazine also provides educators with activities and resource recommendations. To reach this site, you must click the icon for Teaching Tolerance from the Southern Poverty Law Center's homepage. <http://www.splcenter.org/index.jsp>

Creating Inclusive College Classrooms, by Shari Saunders and Diana Kardia, was written for the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan to examine five aspects of teaching that can promote or hinder an inclusive classroom, such as classroom climate, course content, and teaching materials. http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/P3_1.html

Annotated Bibliographies on Multicultural Teaching, Learning, and Faculty Development. This list of annotated bibliographies was developed for participants at the University of Michigan's "Summer Institute '98: Building Multiculturalism into Faculty Development." It includes books and articles relevant to promoting diversity in the classroom. <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/multiteaching/multibiblio.html>

Teaching for Cultural Fluency, a monograph created by Mount St. Mary's College, helps students and teachers interested in becoming culturally fluent. Visit Mount St. Mary's Institutional profile, to read more about their own Teaching for Cultural Fluency Center. http://diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/faculty_staff_development/teaching_strategies_practices/mt_st_marys.cfm For more information contact: □ Joy Jacobs, Assistant Director of Public Relations □ Mount St. Mary's College □ 12022 Chalon Road □ Los Angeles, CA 90049-1599

Ways to Teach Diversity on a Largely Homogeneous Campus

Notes from Academe: Senegalese Scholar Focuses on Race in American Society by Carolyn J. Mooney
Dr. Ndongo is an associate professor of American literature at Cheikh Anta Diop, the larger of Senegal's two public universities, and he began thinking about how to teach racism to Africans last year when he was a Fulbright scholar at the University of California at Irvine. One day, at a seminar on teaching slavery, he says, "I realized that slavery in the American context was quite different. In Senegal, people associate slavery with economic and social factors, not skin color." Dr. Ndongo developed the course on racism to help his students -- many of whom are studying English in hopes of landing a better job -- to understand the complexities of race in American society. http://diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/faculty_staff_development/teaching_strategies_practices/senegalese_scholar.cfm

What Does it Mean to Teach Diversity in Rural Minnesota by Anne J. Aby, Worthington Community College
Aby reports that, "diversity issues dealing with race, class and gender are now represented in many of our course offerings even at this fairly racially homogenous college located in a demographically changing region." As she describes the changes she has seen in WCC courses and ways of making diversity visible to students, she concludes, "while many might assume that the region lacks, then, even racial/ethnic diversity, diversity is, in fact, all around our campus." http://diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/faculty_staff_development/teaching_strategies_practices/rural_minnesota.cfm

Ways to Teach in Diverse Settings

"Diversity in the Classroom" Home Page, Arizona State University
Coordinated by the ASU's Intergroup Relations Center, this site offers a set of resources for faculty and teaching assistants to help manage classroom diversity and achieve desired educational outcomes including critical thinking, cultural awareness, intergroup understanding, global awareness, cross-cultural understanding, personal and social identity development, decrease in prejudice and discrimination, empathy, development of a broader worldview, and intercultural friendships. <http://www.asu.edu/provost/intergroup/resources/facresources.html>

Tips about Teaching that Address Diversity: Ohio State University, Fisher College of Business

These teaching tips require readers to go beyond addressing issues of diversity or multiculturalism and ask them to become aware of how students are treated as well as how they treat each other. Spanning disciplines and professions, these issues are important in all classes whether the format is lecture, discussion or team projects. Susan L. Josephs emphasizes that each class, regardless of format or discipline, offers the opportunity to increase awareness of diversity and multicultural issues. <http://www.cob.ohio-state.edu/diversity/teach/htm>

Building Creativity and Collaboration in Diverse Classrooms by Jose Calderon, Associate Professor in Sociology and Chicano Studies, Pitzer College □ Professor Calderon describes the use of creative cultural media in his sociology classes to connect the theoretical with the practical and build collaborative learning and cooperative ethnic relations.

http://diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/faculty_staff_development/teaching_strategies_practices/building_creativity.cfm

Experiential Learning in Courses

Program on Intergroup Relations, Conflict, and Community at the University of Michigan

The Intergroup Relations, Conflict, and Community (IGRCC) program links formal education course work to the social experiences of the students outside of the classroom. Site includes information on Intergroup Dialogues and Alternative Spring Breaks. <http://www.igr.umich.edu/>

Learning Communities

Intercultural Studies Project: A Living/Learning College, St. Lawrence University

The Intercultural Studies Project is a living/learning center devoted to engaging faculty and students in the study of cultural diversity and the critical practices which promote it. This project imbeds intergroup dialogue pedagogy within a diverse living/learning center called the Intercultural House. Students who live in The Intercultural House are enrolled in Introduction to Intercultural Studies (CE 150). This course will engage students in an interdisciplinary study of U.S. cultural diversity in a global and comparative context. <http://it.stlawu.edu/ce150>

Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Residence Program, University of Michigan

The WISE residence program brings together over 120 first year and sophomore women to live together in an academically supportive living-learning community where women with similar academic interests and educational and career goals can learn from as well as with one another. This residence program stems from the larger Women in Science and Engineering Program (WISE), whose goal of increasing the number of women students who choose majors, advanced degrees, and careers in science, engineering and mathematics is achieved by offering a variety programs and resources for K-12, undergraduate and graduate students. <http://www.wiserp.umich.edu/>

Assessment Resources and further reading

Association of American Colleges and Universities [AAC&U], “American Pluralism and the College Curriculum: Higher Education in a Diverse Democracy.” Review of curricular recommendations: http://www.diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/campus_and_community/campus_community_partnerships/highered.cfm.

Association of American Colleges and Universities [AAC&U], “The Drama of Diversity and Democracy: Higher Education and American Commitments.” <https://www.aacu.org/publications/pdfs/DramaofDiversity.pdf>

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