DIVERSITY AS ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Independent Education
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Earliest Memories

Think about the first time you interacted with someone who was different from you. How did you feel and what about the experience stood out for you?
What are you hoping to gain from our time together?
Diversity vs. Multiculturalism

• Diversity is quantitative

• Multiculturalism is qualitative

Equality vs. Equity

• Equality gives everyone the same thing

• Equity asks us to give community members what they need to be successful
The Scope of Diversity: The Big “8”

- Ability
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Race
- Religion/Spirituality
- Sexual Orientation
- Socio-Economic Status/Class
Researchers at the University of Michigan completed two longitudinal studies that measured the outcomes of racial and ethnic diversity on campuses across the United States. They looked at informal interaction among African American, Asian American, Latino/a, and White students as well as classroom diversity. Their purpose was to measure the effects, if any, of racial diversity on academic and social growth.

They found that all four groups of students were positively impacted by both informal and classroom interaction with racially diverse peers.

The researchers found that informal interaction with racially diverse peers had the greatest effect on learning and democracy outcomes, confirming the value and necessity for racially diverse student populations. The most consistent effects were found for White students. Both classroom diversity and informal interaction were significantly related to intellectual engagement for this group.
Interaction with diverse peers was more consistently influential than classroom diversity for the learning outcomes of African American students. This indicates the importance of peer interaction but also probably reflects the fact that for African American students, classroom content on issues of race and ethnicity provides a less novel perspective. They have grown up in communities and in a society where the pervasiveness of issues related to race has given them non-academic knowledge of these issues.

There was also evidence that having close friends of the same race was related positively to two learning outcomes for African American students. Those African American students whose close friends were also African American felt that education at Michigan had been more intellectually engaging. African American students in the national study who had close friends of the same race were more likely than other African American students to value general knowledge in their early post-college years.

Together these findings on the learning outcomes of African American students reveal the influential role of interaction with diverse peers and the particular role of interaction with peers of the same race, indicating that peer interaction must be considered in more complex ways for African American students. These findings suggest the supportive function of group identity for African American students, and the potentially positive effects of having sufficient numbers of same-race peers, as well as opportunities for interracial interactions on diverse campuses.
Overall, the learning and democracy outcomes for all four groups were positively affected by interaction with racially diverse peers both in and out of the classroom setting. Thus, a diverse student body is clearly a resource and a necessary condition for engagement with diverse peers and for the attainment of academic goals.
Isolated Initiative:

- Increase racial/ethnic diversity of student body

Catalyst for Educational Excellence:

- Increase racial/ethnic diversity of student body as part of comprehensive plan to make excellence inclusive
Making Excellence Inclusive, AAC & U

- Curricular Implications: All students should have well-designed opportunities to explore:
  1. Experience, identity, and aspiration
  2. US pluralism and the pursuits of justice
  3. Experiences in justice seeking
  4. Diversity, equity, and justice issues in the major field
The threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype. Everyone experiences stereotype threat. We are all members of some group about which negative stereotypes exist, from white males and Methodists to women and the elderly. And in a situation where one of those stereotypes applies—a man talking to women about pay equity, for example, or an aging faculty member trying to remember a number sequence in the middle of a lecture—we know that we may be judged by it.
Aversive Racism

- A subtle form of bias characteristic of many white Americans who possess strong egalitarian values and who believe that they are not prejudiced. But many also possess negative racial feelings and beliefs they are unaware of, or that they try to dissociate from their images of themselves as non-prejudiced.

- The ambivalence involving the positive and negative feelings that aversive racists experience creates psychological tension that leads to behavioral instability. So, unlike the consistent pattern of discrimination that might be expected from old fashioned racists, aversive racists sometime discriminate (manifesting their negative feelings) and sometimes do not (reflecting their positive feelings).

- Because aversive racists endorse egalitarian values, they will not discriminate against people of color in situations in which discrimination would be obvious to others and themselves.

From *The Subtlety of Racism* by John Dovidio
Manifestation of Aversive Racism

“Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities.”

“A regular dose of these psychological slings and arrows may erode people’s mental health, job performance and the quality of social experience”
Microassault — “verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the attended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions.” Example — “oriental” or serving a white person before the person of color in line.

Microinsult — “communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage or identity. Subtle snubs, frequently unknown to the perpetrator” Example — Failing to call on a student of color in class.

Microinvalidation — “communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color.” Example- “I don’t see race” or “You are so articulate”
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