Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity

ORED Professional Development Program

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I. BACKGROUND

Gaining Perspective
Qualities of a Leader*

► Self-awareness
► Integrity
► Commitment
► Competence
► Empathy and Understanding

* from Astin and Astin, Leadership Reconsidered …
COVEY’S Habit Number 5:

Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood
Metaphor for Learning Bias: **Fish is Fish**

Can also be a metaphor for how an uninformed persons view other cultures.
Imagine Birds

“Like what?” asked the fish.
“Birds,” said the frog mysteriously. “Birds!” And he told the fish about the birds, who had wings, and two legs, and many, many colors.

As the frog talked, his friend saw the birds fly through like large feathered fish.
“What else?” asked the fish impatiently.

Imagine Humans

“And people?” said the frog. “Men, women, children!” And he talked and talked until it was dark in the pond.
But the picture in the fish’s mind was full of lights and colors and marvelous things and he couldn’t sleep. Ah, if he could only jump about like his friend and see that wonderful world.
II. WHY?

Why Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity Matter
II. WHY?

1a. Changing Demographics of the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Year 2000</th>
<th>Projected for Year 2050</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic*</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>28.6% **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Hispanics of any race
** May be as high as 30.2%

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau
II. WHY?

1b. What if the World Were a Village of 100 People?

61 Asians
12 Europeans
14 Western Hemisphere
13 Africans

50 females
50 males
33 Christians
67 non-Christians
II. WHY?

2. The World Is Flat …

The changing world economy demands that we learn to compete in all markets and that we utilize a more culturally diverse workforce to be relevant in the various markets.
II. WHY?

3. Responsibility

Nondiscrimination

“Discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status is a violation of federal and state law and MSU policy and will not be tolerated.

Discrimination based upon sexual orientation or group affiliation is a violation of MSU policy and will not be tolerated.”
II. WHY?

4. Benefiting from Diversity

► Creativity is enhanced when we are exposed to different viewpoints. Better solutions to problems are achieved.

► We learn about the world from different people.

► It is boring when everyone is the same.
III. Culture and Diversity

What Is Culture and Diversity?
III. Culture and Diversity

1. What is Culture?

Culture defines the unique approach to living of a people with a common language and a common set of rules and models for behavior.

OR (in laymen’s terms) what we live everyday and bring to the workplace.
“Cultural Jeopardy”

From

The Texas Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse
Prejudice
Ethnocentrism
Stereotype
Sexism
Multiculturalism
Cultural Sensitivity
Ethnicity
Racism
Race
Discrimination
Heterosexism
Culture

The belief in the inherent superiority of one gender over the other and therefore the right to dominance.
Prejudice
Ethnocentrism
Stereotype
Sexism
Multiculturalism
Cultural Sensitivity
Ethnicity
Racism
Race
Discrimination
Heterosexism
Culture

The ability to be open to learning about and accepting of different cultural groups.
Prejudice
Ethnocentrism
Stereotype
Sexism
Multiculturalism
Cultural Sensitivity
Ethnicity
Racism
Race
Discrimination
Heterosexism
Culture

A belief that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.
Prejudice
Ethnocentrism
Stereotype
Sexism
Multiculturalism
Cultural Sensitivity
Ethnicity
Racism
Race
Discrimination
Heterosexism
Culture

A belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving over all others and thereby the right to dominance.
Prejudice
Ethnocentrism
Stereotype
Sexism
Multiculturalism
Cultural Sensitivity
Ethnicity
Racism
Race
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Heterosexism
Culture

To make a difference in treatment on a basis other than individual character.
The recognition and acknowledgement that society is pluralistic. In addition to the dominant culture, there exists many other cultures based around ethnicity, geography, religion, gender, and class.
Prejudice
Ethnocentrism
Stereotype
Sexism
Multiculturalism
Cultural Sensitivity
Ethnicity
Racism
Race
Discrimination
Heterosexism
Culture

An attitude, opinion, or feeling formed without adequate prior knowledge, thought, or reason.
Prejudice
Ethnocentrism
Stereotype
Sexism
Multiculturalism
Cultural Sensitivity
Ethnicity
Racism
Race
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Heterosexism
Culture

A body of learned beliefs, traditions, principles, and guides for behavior that are shared among members of a particular group.
As a biological concept, it defines groups of people based on a set of genetically transmitted characteristics.
Prejudice
Ethnocentrism
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Culture

To judge other cultures by the standards of one’s own, and beyond that, to see one’s own standard as the true universal and the other culture in a negative way.
Sharing a strong sense of identity with a particular religious, racial, or national group.
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY
Diversity

Diversity refers to characteristics that can vary from people to people. It includes many things such as culture, ethnicity, physical characteristics, age, etc.

You can have diversity in diverse audiences. For example, there are at least 14 groups that comprise American Hispanics with ties to North America, South America, and Central American, including the Caribbean.
Dimensions of Diversity

PRIMARY: aspects that we cannot change. All of these are physically visible (except sexual orientation), so people know these before we even speak. People are very sensitive about stereotyping based on the primary dimension.

SECONDARY: elements over which people have some power to change. People can choose to disclose these or not. Consequently, people are less sensitive about these.
Primary and Secondary

Dimensions of Diversity

- Religious Beliefs
- Geographic Location
- Education
- Military Experience

- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Physical Qualities
- Age

- Income Level
- Marital Status
- Parental Status
- Work Background

from Loden and Rosener
Hoopes Intercultural Learning Steps

1. Ethnocentrism
2. Awareness
3. Understanding
4. Acceptance / Respect
5. Appreciating / Valuing
6. Selective Adoption
7. Multiculturalism
IV. Communicating Across Cultural Lines

Specific Examples from the book, Multicultural Manners
Statement of the Obvious

When going to a foreign country or an unfamiliar place, study the cultural traditions so that you do not look like an “obnoxious American” who presumes that his/her culture trumps everyone else’s.

Defer to your hosts or follow the example of those around you.
Example 1: High Five (p12)

Situation: a Caucasian leader of a professional session greets an African-American colleague with “Hey, bro’, how’s it going?” and with a high five.

Reaction: African American is insulted.

**Conclusion**

“Be careful when appropriating the jargon or gestures of other ethnicities, lest it be considered patronizing…”
Example 2: Signs of Affection (p19)

Situation: an American author is on board a cruise ship to autograph her new travel guide on Valentine’s Day: The Best Places to Kiss in and around NYC. While visiting tables of Americans and Europeans, they are delighted to meet her, but the Japanese passengers refuse to acknowledge her.

Reason: The book title suggested behavior of which they would not approve.

Conclusion

“Most Japanese … disapprove of public expression of affection by males and females.” Refrain from PDA in Japan and Asian countries and respect their opinion in our country.
Example 3: Greetings (p15)

Situation: a visiting cousin from Vietnam is greeted at the airport by her cousin and her American friends. One of the American guys innocently greets the visiting cousin with hugs and kisses. She pushes him away and bursts into tears.

Reason: The cousin is from a rural area of Vietnam where such a PDA is an insult. The “punishment” in her village was to kneel on the ground so that the rural villagers could spit and throw rocks at her.

Conclusion

“When establishing relationships with Asians, avoid body contact. The safest form is to nod and give a verbal salutation. Follow their lead …”
Example 4: Respect for Teachers (p 46)

Situation: a professor runs into a Taiwanese student outside of class, and the student bows to a startled professor who does not know what to do.

Reaction/Reason: Both parties are embarrassed. -- “In Taiwan, students rise when the teacher enters the room, and in chorus they say, “Good morning, teacher.” Teachers are highly revered. The term “Teacher” is a sign of respect and is often the preferred way to address a professor.

Conclusion

“If an Asian student bows to you, nod your head in response.” Be aware that some international students may react oddly to your behavior if you are casual.
Example 5: Potluck (p 75)

Situation: an ESL instructor asks her students if they like potluck dinners and their response is “no.”

Reaction/Reason: The students’ explain that “It means cheap, stingy.” outside of family members contributing to family meals, potluck is non-existent in many countries.

Conclusion

“Potluck and Dutch treat are unfamiliar concepts to many cultures outside of the U.S. Elsewhere hosts are expected to take complete responsibility for providing food and drink for their guests.”
Example 6: Food Taboos (p 77)

Situation: an American student takes an Indian student to dinner to a steakhouse, unaware of the Hindu prohibition of eating beef.

Reaction/Reason: The Indian student loses her appetite upon seeing a very rare steak.

Common Food Taboos

- Muslims and some Jews don’t eat pork.
- Hindus don’t eat beef.
- Jews don’t eat seafood without fins or scales.
- Seventh-Day Adventists don’t eat meat.
- Older Navajos don’t eat fish.
- Hindus, Mormons, Muslims, and some Protestant sects do not drink alcohol.
Example 6: Food Taboos (cont)

As an administrator or leader in charge of events with food, you should always inquire if there are any dietary restrictions of your guests.

Also be aware that Southern-cooked vegetables are often not acceptable to vegetarians because they contain animal fat, bacon, etc.
Example 7: Prayer (not in the book)

Situation: at an MSU Commencement Exercise, a Protestant minister is giving the innovation. At the end of the prayer, the minister uses the phrase: “… in the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.”

Reaction/Reason: About 95% of the audience think nothing of this practice, but there are non-Christians in the audience who do not pray in the name of Jesus. It conveys a lack of acknowledgment of the other religions.

Conclusions

Prayer in public assemblies, if necessary, should not be specific to any religion. An excellent practice is to observe a moment of silent prayer and reflection.
V. Take Home Message

Advice for Administrators and Leaders in Higher Education
Advice to Administrative Leaders

► Approach people in your job with empathy and understanding and always be a good listener first.

► Look for innovative ways to promote diversity in your unit, because it is not only the right thing to do, but it is the smart thing to do.

► When in doubt, defer to those in another culture to show you the proper manners and customs. Use humility when expressing your lack of knowledge.
References


References (continued)

