Social Justice for Gifted Populations: the Intersectionality of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE TEACHING

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ExaInInG ClaSS aNd RACE: aN exerCise aDapTed frOm MaRtIn CaNo

bY PAUL KiVEL

http://paulkivel.com/resource/examining-class-and-race/
Diversity

Includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. **It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued.** A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used — but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. **It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.**
Vocabulary

- **Equity:**
  - The guarantee of *fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement* for all students, faculty and staff, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

- **Inclusion:**
  - The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel *welcomed, respected, supported and valued* to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate *embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.*
# The Unequal Opportunity Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System or form of Oppression</th>
<th>Race Oppression</th>
<th>Gender Oppression</th>
<th>Class Oppression</th>
<th>Ability Oppression</th>
<th>Sexual Oppression</th>
<th>Age Oppression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumed norm:</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Male-bodied</td>
<td>Middle-upper Class</td>
<td>‘Able’-bodied</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s considered to be marginal</td>
<td>ALANA (Asian, Latino, African-American, Native American), Bi-Racial</td>
<td>Female-bodied, transgender, transsexual, intersex</td>
<td>Working class, Poor</td>
<td>‘Disabled’ people</td>
<td>Homosexual, Bisexual, Queer, Asexual</td>
<td>Children, Youth and Elderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>‘Race’ and racism in the West developed during European colonialism (1492 onwards) and the advent of capitalism.</td>
<td>There are different accounts of how gender oppression developed. Some attribute it to the beginnings of capitalism and private property.</td>
<td>The development of capitalism and private property in Europe. There are varying dates for this.</td>
<td>Tied to the development of modern medicine (1800s) when ‘disability’ was medicalised as an illness.</td>
<td>In the European context: 1800s when modern medicine named the homosexual.</td>
<td>The term “ageism” was coined in 1969 by Robert N. Butler, M.D when there was apprehension about moving elderly poor to Chevy Chase, MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of discrimination</td>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Sexism, Transphobia</td>
<td>Classism</td>
<td>Ableism</td>
<td>Heterosexism, Homophobia, biphobia,</td>
<td>Ageism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of discrimination: Racism, Sexism, Transphobia, Classism, Ableism, Heterosexism, Homophobia, Biphobia, Ageism.
Diversity Self-Assessment

- What is my definition of diversity?
- Do the students in my classroom come from diverse cultural backgrounds?
- What are my perceptions of students from different racial/ethnic groups? With language or dialects different from mine? With special needs? With a different sexual orientation?
- What are the sources of these perceptions and how do I respond to my students based on these perceptions?
Diversity Self-Assessment

- Have I experienced others’ making assumptions about me based on my membership in a specific group? How did I feel?

- What steps do I need to take to learn about the students from diverse backgrounds and ensure an inclusive classroom?

- In what ways can I make my instructional program responsive to the needs of the diverse groups in my classroom?

- What kinds of information, skills and resources do I need to acquire to effectively teach from a diverse and inclusive perspective?
- Recognize any biases or stereotypes you may have absorbed...
- Treat each person as an individual and respect the student for who he or she is...
- Do your best to be sensitive to terminology that refers to specific ethnic and cultural groups as it changes...
- Get a sense of how youth feel about the cultural climate in your classroom...their comfort level...
- Introduce discussions of diversity at department meetings...
Diverse & Inclusive teaching

- Become more informed about the history and culture of groups other than your own...
- Convey the same level of respect and confidence in the abilities of all your students...
- Select texts and readings whose language is gender-neutral and free of stereotypes...
- Bring in guest lecturers to foster diversity in your class...
- Give materials that recognize a person’s diverse background and special interests!
Why Diversity Curriculum Integration?

- We have an academic responsibility and a moral obligation to provide students with an inclusive education that will enable them to deal with the contingencies of living in a diverse world.

- Research shows that when students are taught from an inclusive curriculum they are eager to learn; they are more engaged in the teaching/learning process.

- Faculty who are involved in integrating diversity into their curriculum report that their teaching is revitalized, their student evaluations improved, and their overall job satisfaction increased.

- It benefits both minority and majority students, especially in improving attitudes and feelings toward intergroup relations.

- Has a positive impact on students’ attitudes toward racial issues, fostering opportunities for interacting in deeper ways with diverse perspectives and cognitive development.
Diverse and Inclusive Curriculum

- **Course description and objectives** that reflect diversity—How does my discipline help prepare students to live and work in today’s multicultural democracy and interdependent world?

- **Content integration** that includes multiculturalism—What *issues* of diversity, social justice, and civic engagement are infused in my course curriculum and how?

- **Instructional resources and materials**—How inclusive are my selected materials?

- **Faculty and student worldviews and learning styles**—How do student and faculty worldviews, learning styles, and teaching strategies match, and how are my students’ learning styles accommodated?

- **Instructional strategies**—How diversified are my strategies for facilitating instruction and classroom dynamics?

- **Assessment diversification**—How do assessment activities accommodate my students’ learning styles?
Humans are by nature egocentric and sociocentric as well. We believe that the groups we belong to are right, privileged, special. We systematically deceive ourselves into thinking that we are right, we avoid recognizing our biases and treat people and groups without due consideration and respect, even when there is clear evidence to refute our point of view. (Elder, 2004).

Through this unit, I hope to teach students to be aware of, and to guard against, their native egocentric and sociocentric tendencies. Otherwise these tendencies will keep them from reasoning well through diversity issues.

INTRODUCING DIVERSITY IN THE SCIENCE CLASSROOM

- A Diversity, Epidemiology and social justice unit was incorporated into the Physiology and Disease curriculum in Fall 2016.
- PAD is a Biology elective for juniors and seniors at IMSA that deals with changes in homeostasis in the human body and its outcomes, as well as pathophysiology of disease formation.
- The diversity unit was integrated into the nervous system unit because this seemed to be the best fit in the curriculum.
Students were given diversity topics and were provided with an introduction, rationale, recent events and a list of readings for these topics.

Students were required to synthesize the information with recent events and create a short presentation building specific case studies for discussion with their peers.

Emphasis was placed on discussions dissecting the ethics and moral dilemmas of recent events in the light of the background provided.
Students were given instructions on the assignment and were provided with one 100 minute class to complete their presentations.

Two sections of 20 students each were provided with background information and asked to present.

Many interesting discussions were held as a result of student research into their topics.

Students brought up many interesting views but were united in their thinking and this was very noteworthy considering the fact that they were all from different backgrounds and diverse cultures.
Some of the topics discussed included:

- Brain preferences in terms of diversity
- Social and cultural influences on Diversity Thinking
- Diversity Development in the Brain
- Early development of diversity thinking
- Social justice and epidemiology and
- Selective Treatment in Hospitals Based on Race
Students independently incorporated cases of social injustice against people of color into every single topic discussed.

Students brought up many interesting points regarding causes for social injustice such as disparity in income, lack of education, and lack of tolerance toward people of other races.

An example of their case studies includes identical twins brought up in different environments, one tolerant and the other not toward people of color, and followed their path through adolescence and adulthood.

Their discussions brought forth many aspects of diversity that enhanced their learning by integrating real life experiences.
DIVERSITY ACTIVITIES

- Connect the Dots
- Alphabets Game
NEXT STEPS

- The success of this project has set the stage for development of diversity curriculum for other disciplines and other schools in the state of Illinois.
- The ease of inserting this unit into an advanced biology course is encouraging and suggests that incorporation into other disciplines should be a smooth transition.
- Students greatly benefit by relating to and thinking about diversity with respect to their learning.
- Steps are under way to further develop this curriculum and train other educators to do the same in their academic institutions.