



BULLETIN

What is Diversity?

Diversity has various definitions and thus cannot be easily defined. The term often refers to the great variety of distinctions that exist between persons and groups, yet the ambiguity of these distinctions entail an exhaustive list of attributes. The following quotes demonstrate a few of the numerous definitions of diversity:

“Diversity is differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practice, and other human differences.” – *Kathy Castania*

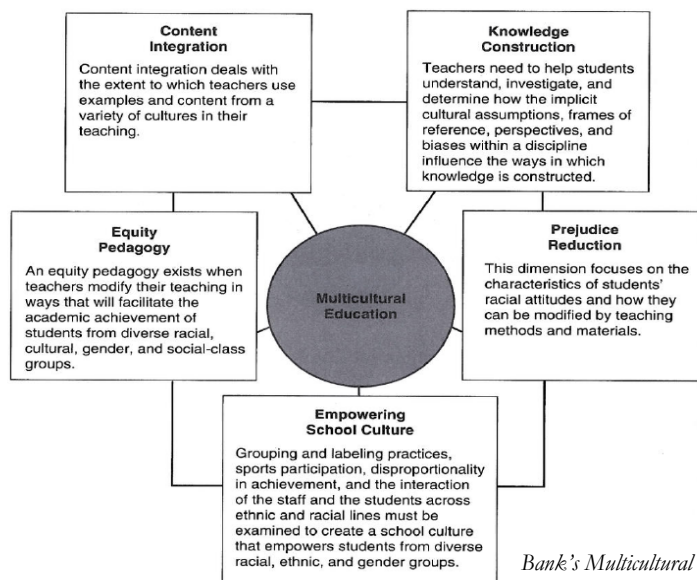
“[Diversity] means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.” – *Office of Equity and Inclusion Oregon Health Authority*

“‘Diversity’ as used here [in this sentence] refers to human attributes that are different from your own and from those of groups to which you belong.” – *The University of Michigan*

By considering these definitions, we acknowledge only a few of the various attributes associated with diversity. In a more general sense, these attributes may differ in particular environments such as academia, healthcare, or the workplace.

Diversity in Academia

Academic institutions throughout the nation consider diversity knowledge imperative to student success. Academic scholar James Banks contributes to diversity understanding through developing an educational model comprised of five dimensions: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture. This model, known as the Multicultural Education Model (depicted below), encourages teachers to acknowledge the importance of diversity in the classroom.



Bank's Multicultural Education Model

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STATE

Issue 1: Summer 2013

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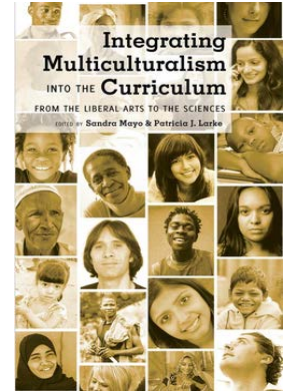
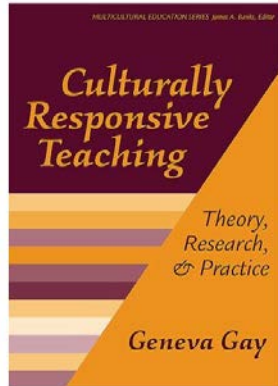
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Diversity in Academia Cont'd

Other initiatives to promote diversity in academia are evident in Geneva Gay's *Culturally Responsive Teaching*, a publication recognizing "the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning" (Ladson-Billings 2004). A more national initiative known as 21st Century Skills seeks to prepare students of the 21st century for the various demands of today's global economy. Furthermore, Dr. Sandra Mayo of Texas State University and Dr. Patricia Larke of Texas A & M University recently edited the text *Integrating Multiculturalism into the Curriculum* which advocates the recognition and appreciation of diversity as it relates to each college and school department.



TEXAS STATE

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Diversity in Healthcare

The increased heterogeneity of modern American culture demands healthcare services reflect a diverse patient base. The immediate need for healthcare professionals to recognize and accommodate diverse populations is widely known as cultural competence. Salisbury (2006) defines cultural competence as a "defined set of policies, behaviors, attitudes and practices that enable individuals and organizations to work effectively in cross-cultural situations."

Diversity in the Workplace

Today, numerous employers require candidates to be diversity competent. A study conducted by American Progress (2012) affirmed diversity in the workplace stimulates economic growth, broadens the consumer market, and allows businesses to operate at full potential. As a result, many contemporary vacancies mention diversity as a necessary attribute for prospective applicants. Careers such as protective service occupations, management occupations, community and social service occupations, and education, training, and library occupations are just a few services acknowledging the importance of diversity in the workplace.

Diversity Manager
 Chief Diversity Officer
 Diversity Recruiter

Diversity Consultant
 Global Diversity Strategist
 Workforce Diversity Director

Diversity Trainer
 EEO Specialist
 Diversity Analyst



"Diversity is the range of ways people differ. I subscribe to a broad definition that goes beyond race, ethnicity, and gender—the groups we often think of when the term "diversity" is used; to include age, religion, disability, veterans status, sexual orientation along with socioeconomic status. I also consider different ideas, values, and perspectives as components of diversity."

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