



# How a Sustainable Campus-Wide Diversity Curriculum Fosters Academic Success

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*The research is clear: student retention rates, college satisfaction, grade point averages, and intellectual and social self-confidence are higher at colleges and universities that value diversity. But this kind of educationally productive diversity does not happen by accident. It grows from institutional commitments and concrete policy changes (AAC&U, 1998).*

## Introduction & Purpose

I open this article with the above quote, which summarizes the research conclusion on the value of sustainable campus-wide diversity initiatives on college and university campuses. This article describes one institution's sustained effort to engage faculty across campus in curriculum transformation. The traditional canon for college and university and public school curricula in the United States has historically been deeply entrenched in Eurocentric paradigms that provide narrow views of history and social realities.

Instructional materials, pedagogies, and activities that students encounter have been narrow and limiting in their perspectives of the world, and in facilitating dispositions and cross-cultural competency needed for navigating and negotiating

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diverse social and cultural contexts. Unfortunately, today's college and university faculty do not have a choice but to prepare themselves to respond more boldly to the diversity phenomenon in their courses and pedagogy. The reasons are clear: trends in enrollment in higher education suggest that there is an increase in overall enrollment, and that the increase is mostly from ethnic minority groups.

Also, data suggests that between 2000 and 2015, the Latino American college-age population is projected to increase by 52 percent, Asian Americans by 62 percent, African Americans by 19 percent, and American Indian/Alaskan Natives by 15 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). More critically, there is an increase in the proportion of all high school seniors in minority groups who plan to continue their education at four-year colleges and universities after high school (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

This demographic reality demands that institutions respond accordingly, if they are to stay competitive and remain in business. Some institutions have begun to engage aggressively in efforts to become responsive to the diversity in their campus cultures, so that they can attract, recruit, and retain students and faculty from diverse background.

For example, it is common to see and experience diversity activities on various campuses—cultural festivals, multicultural celebrations, minority scholars in residence, ethnic cuisines in campus cafeterias, diversity sensitivity training,

and lecture series that bring to campus prominent scholars with expertise on diversity, particularly those of color. It is common to find programs on ethnic studies such as African American, Asian, Latino, Native American, and women's studies as evidence of a commitment to diversity. Further, many colleges and universities have revised their mission statements to reflect diversity and social justice.

While these efforts are great, they are insufficient to create and reflect true institutional transformation. A true institutional transformation must be targeted in curriculum offerings, classroom environment, and pedagogy, to provide for a sustained, systematic, and inclusive learning experience that prepares students for responsible and rewarding citizenship in a multicultural democracy and interdependent world.

As research suggests, in today's diverse world and workforce, students would need a range of competencies, including cultural understandings, open-mindedness, higher-order thinking, and relational skills for negotiating and navigating diverse cultural, social, and political contexts, and civic engagement for social change (Banks, 2005; Barber, 1992; Guarasci et al., 1997; Noddings, 2005; Sehr, 1997; Sleeter, 1996).

With a new "minority" majority on the rise (Rendon & Hope, 1996), institutions do not have a choice but to respond more responsively and responsibly to the challenge of diversity. Faculty and students from underrepresented groups are exert-

ing enormous pressure on institutions regarding issues of diversity, access, and equity. Today's ethnic minorities are more aware of issues of diversity, and seek institutions that support critical diversity programs, especially diversity-based curricular and classroom experiences. Some institutions, organizations, agencies, and scholars are contending that true institutional diversity transformation cannot occur without curriculum transformation (American Association of Colleges and Universities [AAC&U], 1999; American Council on Education [ACE], 1998; Barber, 1992; Guarasci et al., 1997).

Unfortunately, the traditional schooling of many faculty has not prepared them to respond to the diversity challenge within their disciplines, teaching, and student learning (DeMulder & Eby, 1999; Marchesani & Adams, 1992). Thus, for faculty who experienced a monocultural curriculum and so have a limited knowledge base on diversity, transforming curriculum to be more inclusive and to reflect diverse perspectives and issues does not come easily. Often, the requirement to do so can engender fear, threat, and resistance.

Thus, many faculty and college instructors continue to be complacent with monocultural curricula, while interacting with students from diverse racial, ethnic, gender, social, and linguistic backgrounds. To assist these faculty to embrace diversity curriculum infusion, it is critical to scaffold the process for them. This article describes one institution's sustained program that empowers its faculty across units, departments, and disciplines, to successfully engage in curricular and pedagogical transformation in a non-threatening, synergetic, collegial, and collaborative environment.

## Theoretical Framework

### *Defining Diversity and Curriculum Transformation*

The word "diversity" is often defined and interpreted in a myriad of ways by different people, which in a way contributes to the confusion and misrepresentation and misapplication of the concept in discourses and curriculum. It becomes important to have a clear understanding of the concept. Smith (1997) has offered a definition that is straightforward and appropriate for institutions such as colleges and universities.

Diversity on campus encompasses complex differences within the campus community and also in individuals who compose that community. It includes such important and intersecting dimensions of human

identity as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, and ability... [this] definition is closely related to patterns of societal experiences, socialization, and affiliation and influence ways of understanding and interpreting the world. (p. 7)

For the purpose of this article, I prefer to define what I consider "critical" diversity, which is the intersecting dimension of human differences that may serve as basis for differential treatment of individuals, with the potential to diminish their access to opportunity, equality, social justice, and fulfillment of their dreams. These dimensions include race, gender, class, language, nationality, sexual orientation, and exceptionalities. Thus, integrating diversity into the curriculum would mean representing multiple points of view about diverse human experience and competing constructions and understandings of social, historical, and natural phenomena when concepts, theories, paradigms, events, and issues are studied.

Before discussing curriculum transformation, it is necessary to define what is meant by curriculum. Schwab (1983) explains curriculum as what teachers convey to students in different forms using appropriate materials and actions. Cornbleth (1988) sees curriculum as the day-to-day interaction of students, teachers, knowledge, and the milieu. But more importantly, Cornbleth describes curriculum as a contextualized social process. Hollins (1996) writes about the way the curriculum legitimizes knowledge, perspectives, values, and interactions and relationships among people and institutions. In particular, she explains three types of curriculum: (1) the overt curriculum that is intentional of what is legitimated, (2) the implicit curriculum, which is indirect and transmits certain legitimated values and practices without planning and thought, and (3) the null curriculum that consists of knowledge valued by marginalized groups but omitted from the curriculum as a matter of routine (pp. 1-2).

At the college and university level, faculty make decisions about what curricular experiences are deemed essential. Who faculty are, their worldviews, and their knowledge bases often play an important role in what knowledge they choose to convey and how they convey it to students. Given that the traditional curriculum has exclusively reflected European-and male-centric perspectives, curriculum diversification aims to foster content and delivery that is fair, balanced, and accurate (Banks, 2001; Takaki, 1993).

Curriculum transformation involves

expanding the traditional canon to include "other" voices that have been silenced and marginalized in scholarship and theory, as well as the pedagogies, activities, and questions that are used to help students understand, investigate, and determine how implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed (Banks, 2005; Gay 2000; Nieto, 2005). A transformed curriculum eliminates the hegemonic content embedded in an exclusive curriculum and creates one that acknowledges new knowledge based on the perspectives, experiences, and worldviews of traditionally marginalized groups.

A transformed curriculum is empowering, liberating, and ushers in "new ways of thinking and incorporates new methodologies so that different epistemological questions are raised, old assumptions are questioned, subjective data are considered, and prior theories either revised or invalidated" (Marchesani & Adams, 1992, p. 15). More critically, curriculum transformation involves pedagogical transformation or new ways of teaching and learning, especially student-centered pedagogy (Border & Chism, 1992; Butler, 1991; Curtis & Herrington, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

### **Why Curriculum Transformation?**

Proponents of curriculum transformation contend that such an initiative promotes balance, equity, and social justice and reduces marginalization. Transforming curriculum results in important practical and educational benefits for the campus, especially for students (AAC&U, 1998; ACE, 1998; Smith, 1997; Wilson, 1996). Smith (1997) reviewed the benefits of diversity on students in higher education, and found that diversity initiatives positively benefit both minority and majority students on campus, especially in improving attitudes and feelings toward intergroup relations. Also, he found that comprehensive institutional change in teaching methods, curriculum, and campus climate benefit both minority and majority students, especially majority students who have had less opportunity for such development.

Further, Smith found that critical engagement of issues of diversity in the curriculum and in the classroom has a positive impact on students' attitudes toward racial issues, fostering opportunities for interacting in deeper ways with diverse perspectives and cognitive development. In a multicultural democracy and an interconnected world, curriculum transformation is not only an academic responsibility; it is a

moral imperative and social responsibility. Scott (1994) explains:

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. They want more inclusive course content throughout the education 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. (p. 67)

Connell's (1997) work has raised a critical question about education and faculty teaching when he asks: "How do we respect diversity? Does the curriculum respect the multiple knowledges and life experiences of learners from diverse backgrounds?" While some institutional changes such as affirmative action and celebratory activities such as ethnic festivals permeate college and university campuses, and are helpful, they don't begin to address the substantial work needed to achieve the goals of diversity education.

Real changes can only manifest when students are able to experience transformational learning where they are able to "transform taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, [changeable], and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 5-8). This transformation will not occur by engaging in shallow, celebratory activities that do nothing to challenge students and faculty cognition about how they have constructed their world and meaning making (Dewey, 1963; Mezirow, 1997). In other words, real change toward an inclusive society, equity, and social justice can best be achieved when students have opportunities to engage in critical curricular and scholarly inquiry, and develop a reflective multicultural knowledge base.

### **Why Faculty Have Not Embraced Curriculum Transformation**

Research suggests that many faculty, especially those of European ancestry, resist diversity curriculum infusion because of their oppositional and philosophical ideology. Carl Grant (1994) refers to this as "myths and misconceptions about curriculum transformation." Grant explains that resistance to multicultural curriculum transformation occurs because of the

misconception that: (1) it is for "minority" students only, so if you don't have minority students, don't infuse diversity; (2) it only applies to the arts and humanities and not to mathematics and the "hard sciences; and (3) it waters down knowledge and is poor scholarship (Grant, 1994).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, multicultural curriculum reform became heavily debated on many college and university campuses as well as in the popular media, in what became known as the "culture wars" (Asante, 1987; Banks, 1988; Berman, 1992; Bloom, 1987; D'Souza, 1991; Hirsch, 1987; Waugh, 1991). At the heart of this debate was the legitimacy of curriculum transformation or the myth of Westernness.

On one hand, proponents of curriculum transformation argued that the curriculum for preparing students for a diverse society ought to reflect the diversity or the pluralistic nature of the larger society—the different perspectives, realities, cultures, and histories of all individuals and groups. That is, there is no one "model America" (AACTE, 1975; Asante, 1987; Banks, 1988; Nieto, 2000). More importantly, they argued that a diversified curriculum is the legitimate curriculum for developing students' higher order thinking skills and perspective consciousness for a multicultural democracy.

On the other hand, opponents, mostly conservative educators and historians, as represented by William Bennett, former Secretary of Education, Diane Ravitch, former Assistant Secretary of Education, Chester Finn, former Assistant Secretary of Education, E.D Hirsch, a University of Virginia professor emeritus, Dinesh D' Souza, author and analyst, Lynne Cheney, former chair[wo]man of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Allen Bloom, a former University of Chicago professor, to mention a few, argued that a diversified curriculum that integrates issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, and class does not promote unity in diversity, and instead, makes the curriculum vulnerable to a variety of social agendas that politicizes it (Ravitch, 1990; Finn, 1990).

Also, they argued that a multicultural curriculum waters down the curriculum; that it is not serious scholarship worthy of inquiry. Further, they argued that multicultural curriculum only makes minority students feel good; that making students feel good is not the role of schools but that of church, synagogues, and other worship centers (Ravitch, 1991). Instead, they insisted that a legitimate curriculum for all American students is one that emphasizes the superiority of the civilizations and

cultures of Europe that have influenced American institutions, mores, and values. George Will (1989) puts it as follows:

Eurocentric is right, in American curricula and consciousness, because it accords with the facts of history, and we—and Europe are fortunate for that. The political and moral legacy of Europe had made the most happy and admirable of nations. Saying that may be indelible, but it has the merit of being true and the truth should be the core of curriculum. (p. 3)

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the various points of arguments related to the debate on multicultural curriculum (see Asante, 1991; Bloom, 1987; Ravitch, 1990).

Whether these debates may have influenced faculty's resistance to curriculum transformation is questionable. However, in recent years, new insights have surfaced regarding faculty resistance to curriculum transformation. It is increasingly evident that many college and university faculty are interested in diversity curriculum transformation and want to transform their courses, but, because they have not been grounded in multicultural education in their years of university training, they shy away from engaging in the process. As Clark (2002) explains:

The problem is that few know how to go about doing it. Until recently, few, if any, doctoral programs included coursework on how to teach one's discipline, much less how to teach it from a multicultural perspective. (p. 37)

### **Models of Curriculum Transformation**

Over the years, a few models of curriculum transformation have been proposed (Banks, 2005; Butler & Schmitz, 1991; Grant & Sleeter, 2005; McIntosh, 1995). Generally, these models have followed a stage-based approach that proceeds from monoculturalism to transformationism. James Banks (2005) has developed two models that have been popular in the literature.

The first model describes levels of multicultural curriculum development that includes: the *contributions approach*, commonly known as the "heroes and holidays" approach, in which educators integrate content about ethnic and cultural groups during special heritage recognitions such as African American History month, Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, and Women's History month; the *additive approach*, which adds a topic or book about a cultural/ethnic group to the existing curriculum structure; the *transformation approach*, which involves changing the structure of the curriculum

by using a theme-based approach so that multiple perspectives and complexities can be viewed and analyzed; and the *social action approach*, which is the highest form of transformation, in that it moves students beyond mere knowledge construction and acquisition to studying critical social issues and making decisions on a course of action to bring about change.

Banks' second model, which describes dimensions of multicultural education, consists of five elements: *content integration*, which is a deliberate approach to integrating content about diverse groups throughout the course; *knowledge construction*, which recognizes that knowledge is a social construction and moves educators and students to question and examine events and issues from multiple perspectives but more importantly to question the biases, misconceptions, omissions, and distortions inherent in materials and classroom discourse but more critically, employs the use of multiple texts or supplemental materials that provide divergent perspectives on the course; *prejudice reduction*, which involves the integration and interrogation of beliefs, values and biases that are due to cultural socializations and social positionalities as paradigms, theories, and concepts are studied; *equity pedagogy*, which refers to teaching strategies, delivery methods, communication, and interactional styles, assessment activities engaged in during the process of teaching and learning.

This second model includes knowledge of students' learning styles, such as auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactile (Dunn, 1995), and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1984), that necessitates varying instructional strategies to accommodate diverse learners. For instance, the traditional method of teaching college classes is the lecture mode, which alienates ethnically diverse learners who have been researched to benefit mostly from cooperative and collaborative learning (Irvine, 1990; Dunn, 1995).

Most importantly, equity pedagogy involves issues of power relations and dynamics between faculty and students and among students, and raises questions such as: whose voice is heard? Who is challenged and given attention? Who has opportunity to learn? Who is silenced, and how? Lastly, *empowering school culture* refers to policies and practices promoted throughout the program and the larger university community. At the classroom level, this involves the "hidden curriculum"—rules and procedures that reflect mainstream values (McLaren, 1988), classroom dynamics, and how ethnically diverse learners are empowered or disempowered in the course

through openness or lack of openness to their perspectives when issues and themes are discussed, affirming their dignity, etc.

Carl Grant and Christine Sleeter's (2005) *Turning on learning: Five approaches for multicultural teaching plans for race, class, gender, and disability* is a practical book that focuses on specific lessons and units in different subject areas including mathematics and hard sciences, and integrates issues of race, gender, class and disability into courses. It uses the "before" and "after" approach that shows a lesson/unit plan with and without infusion, and explanation for the differences and changes.

### **UMKC Diversity Curriculum Infusion Program (DCIP)**

#### **Background and Context**

For decades the University of Missouri-Kansas City has been a predominantly White institution. Although located at the heart of a metropolitan community comprised of African American, Latino American, Asian American, the working poor, immigrant, and migrant populations, the University has been segregated and exclusionary—literally closed to minority populations. The ethnic composition of the student and faculty body has been minimal. The university has had a negative reputation in the eyes of the urban community for non-responsiveness to its needs.

However, with a new leadership in 2000, the campus, as well as the urban community, was invited to participate in conversations that would bring about transformation of the university's culture. The goal was to move the university toward assuming leadership in "defining the standards in higher education." Several faculty, staff, and community members of diverse background came together to engage in a series of conversations about the university's cultural transformation.

Among other things, the diversity "breakthrough" project emerged, which would be the first of its kind in the history of the university. More importantly, diversity became one of the core values of the university's culture and the Office of "Diversity in Action" (now Office of Diversity, Access, and Equity) was established. As one of the major contributors to the "diversity breakthrough" project, I seized the opportunity to promote my interest and passion—curriculum transformation.

In 2003, I submitted a proposal to the Coordinating Board on Diversity (CBOD), an advisory body to the Office of Diversity in Action, to initiate the diversity curriculum infusion project—creating a forum

where faculty from across campus would learn to develop the knowledge base, skills and dispositions necessary for successfully infusing diversity into courses. The Director of the Office of Diversity in Action was pleased with the idea and approved the proposal.

Besides my passion for campus diversity initiatives, one critical factor that motivated my drive for the curriculum transformation concerned my frustration with preservice teachers' resistance in the cultural diversity course I taught at the University. Before my employment at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, I had taught previously at another university located in a rural community. Many of the preservice teachers at this previous institution were predominantly European Americans, who were monolingual, low-middle class, and from rural, farming communities that knew no racial diversity. I experienced tremendous resistance from these preservice teachers who felt they did not need the multicultural "crap" because they would be teaching in communities where there was "no" diversity.

After five years at this institution I moved to the University of Missouri-Kansas City, a metropolitan urban university, with the expectation that I would not only have a diverse group of students, but European American students who were culturally aware. Unfortunately, I met with the same resistance and frustration as I had experienced at the rural university. Although these students would have completed all their general education courses before entering my multicultural education course, I found that many of them had limited exposure to issues of race, gender, class, language, sexual orientation, etc.

Each time I taught the course I experienced tremendous resistance from students who felt "guilty by association" and experienced cognitive dissonance (Howard, 2006). Most of the students displayed feelings of guilt, anger, hostility, frustration, and resistance (Ahlquist, 1998; Brown, 2004, Howard, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1991; Ukpokodu, 2003). Consequently, I redesigned my course to include a field experience in which students shadowed a culturally different person in multiple contexts (home, school, worship center, recreational centers, etc) for an entire semester to gain critical awareness and knowledge about diversity (Ukpokodu, 2004).

Although the students appreciated the experience and talked about learning a lot about diversity and dispelling preconceived notions they held about those different from themselves, many complained that it was too little, too late. The students

became painfully aware that they had been shortchanged by their general education preparation. The following comments shed some light.

One thing I wanted to mention and that is not part of this reflection [paper], but I turned into while completing it, is that I don't feel that this is a subject [cultural diversity] that can adequately be covered in a semester-long setting. While I haven't taken classes in the School of Education save this one, I have taken almost all of my general education requirements. One of the things that bother me now is that nearly all of those courses, except for a literature course, have been from a Eurocentric point of view. I was required to take a Western Civilization class, but not have any knowledge of other cultural groups. I feel that there is a need to have a multicultural curriculum in all courses. Even in the literature class I took, there was an expectation of reading only ONE non-Eurocentric book. What I am trying to say is that while [this course] may be a step in the right direction, I'm wondering if it's a big enough step. (*Female, Caucasian*)

It seems like every semester I try and take a course that will relate to my own personal experiences and after a little while it tends to slide in one way. I rarely get to discuss issues from a nonwhite perspective. I mean, let's talk about issues about diverse people and Third World Countries. Let's talk about how other segments of the population are living. (*Female, African American*)

### Goals of DCIP

The goals of DCIP are: (1) to develop a cadre of faculty committed to transforming courses to reflect diversity—diverse perspectives, issues and social justice; (2) to encourage faculty who had successfully gone through the program to serve as mentors for their colleagues and lead workshops and seminars on curriculum transformation and development in their respective units and departments; and (3) to encourage faculty engagement in diversity-related scholarship in their disciplines.

Today, the program has become a visible and integral professional development for faculty at the university. Since its inception, four cohorts of the program have been successfully facilitated. Using compelling data from the literature and the university's goals and existing realities, especially those relating to diverse student and faculty recruitment and retention, I made presentations to the Deans Academic Council, Faculty Senate, and the Provost, and received unanimous support.

### Diversity Curriculum Infusion Institute (DCII)

The Diversity Curriculum Infusion Institute (DCII) provides a forum for facilitating the four whole-day monthly workshops. Faculty participation requirements include: (a) submission of an application and the syllabus to be infused; (b) participants must be full or part-time faculty; (c) participants must be enrolled in the Diversity Curriculum Infusion Institute (DCII) and attend four whole-day monthly workshops in the fall semester; (d) participants must revise and implement the revised course the following winter semester; and (e) participants must make a presentation of the revised course and the implementation experience at the culminating and celebratory forum.

### First Workshop

The first workshop is the orientation and introduction to the diversity curriculum infusion process. Mostly, participants are engaged in experiential activities, in partnerships and small groups. Some activities involve sharing stories about their experiences with diversity in and outside of the academy; engagement in "the level playing field" activity that raises participants' awareness of how they may or not have been privileged by the traditional curriculum and pedagogy; performing a skit on the rationale for curriculum transformation; and working in small groups to define diversity and curriculum transformation.

This activity is highly engaging and interactive, as participants discuss their views and understanding of diversity and each group sharing their collective ideas. The activity also is a crucial eye-opener for many participants, as they listen to commonalities and differences embedded in the definitions. Generally, each group tends to name the critical categories of diversity—race, gender, class, language, sexual orientation, abilities, etc. Following the group discussion on diversity, Smith and Associates' (1997) definition is presented and discussed:

Diversity on campus encompasses complex differences within the campus community and also in the individuals who compose that community. It includes such important and intersecting dimensions of human identity as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, and ability...these dimensions influence ways of understanding and interpreting the world.

Next, participants are engaged in discussing what diversity curriculum infusion entails, and why transformation is necessary. I define diversity curriculum infusion

as a process whereby the concepts and perspectives of cultural pluralism are integrated into the curriculum, and involves the content, pedagogies, activities, assessment, resources, and questions that faculty use to help students understand, investigate, and determine the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline, as well as how they influence the ways with which knowledge is constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed (Banks, 2005).

Following the preliminary activities, much of the remainder of the first workshop is focused on the presentation of processes and strategies for infusing diversity into the curriculum. This involves six areas of infusion:

#### 1. Course description and objectives:

The syllabus of a transformed course should explicitly provide a description that reflects the concepts and goals of diversity and social justice. The course description should signal to students that they will be encountering diverse perspectives and issues in the course, aimed at helping them to think critically about diversity. The following fundamental questions can be extremely helpful in developing course description and objectives that reflect diversity: (a) How does my discipline help prepare students to live and work in today's culturally diverse, democratic society, in an interdependent world? (b) How does my course empower my students to develop diverse perspectives about the paradigms and concepts of my discipline? and (c) How does my course help students understand the global goal of education in a culturally diverse society, and develop the skills and dispositions for reconstructing society for social change?

**2. Content Integration:** James Banks (2005) explains content integration to mean incorporation of content from multiple perspectives and the use of examples and illustrations that reflect cultural perspectives, global perspectives, issues of equity and social justice, activities, and assignments that allow students to engage in exploring diverse perspectives about the discipline and specific content studied. The idea of diversity curriculum infusion is to ensure that diverse perspectives permeate the entire course, rather than follow a tokenistic approach in which there is one topic or week of study on diversity that often is placed toward the end of the course, and runs the risk of not being taught due to time constraint.

This gives students the impression that the diversity topic is marginal and

unimportant rather than an integral part of the course. It is critical to strive to represent diversity while integrating it into important concepts throughout the course. Also, the attempt to infuse diversity into courses should be carefully considered. Oftentimes, because of the desire to bring in diverse perspectives, there is the tendency to go to the other extreme of presenting topics and materials primarily from one ethnic background.

For instance, in a literature course, this may involve studying the ethnic topic in isolation, from the perspectives of authors of color exclusively. The goal of curriculum infusion is to ensure balance, fairness and accuracy. It is critical to ask: What topics have I infused? What is missing? What and whose perspectives have been infused? Is diversity integrated throughout the course or just added? What issues of diversity, social justice and civic engagement are infused?

**3. Instructional Resources and Materials:** This involves texts selection that is inclusive of diverse content or topics, and evaluating them for accuracy, balance, and fairness. Ask pertinent questions: What texts/materials am I using in the course? Have I critiqued such materials for invisibility, linguistic bias, stereotyping, imbalance, unreality, fragmentation, and cosmetic bias (Sadker & Sadker, 1992)?

**4. Faculty and Student Worldviews and Learning Styles:** This involves the faculty examining and understanding his/her worldview about teaching and learning, and, most importantly, considering students' learning styles and the imperative to use an array of delivery strategies instead of the lecture-only approach. It is critical to ask, as you plan to revise the syllabus: Who are my students? What are their learning styles? Have I considered diverse students' learning styles? What strategies will effectively meet their learning styles and needs?

**5. Delivery strategies:** This involves changing teaching strategies and classroom dynamics to make it more culturally responsive. Unmasking the curriculum and pedagogy in college and university classrooms to meet the needs of diverse student populations means rethinking the way curriculum and instruction are carried out. Since research shows that most instructors engage in traditional pedagogy that is dominated by lecture, where students engage in unhealthy competition, instructors must rethink this pedagogy and work to diversify their instructional strategies. They must learn to create and foster a learning community

where students feel autonomous, a sense of belonging and competence (Deci & Ryan, 1992; Freire, 1970; McLaren, 1988; Shor, 1992).

Integrating diversity into courses means that the faculty will be creating conditions that engender cognitive dissonance or disequilibrium in students. Students who have learned one truth or one version of truth will find new perspectives not only disturbing, but unsettling. It is important to anticipate possible classroom dynamics and conflicts and how to handle them when they surface.

Asking pertinent questions is helpful: How do I create space (s) in my classroom for student engagement in diverse and conflicting experiences and perspectives? How do my students and I learn to engage effectively in creative controversy, constructing multiple points of view on issues? How do I assist my students in developing openness to multiple perspectives and the lived experiences of others?

Changing one's teaching format can help alleviate the potential for conflict. This can involve creating safe spaces for students to debate, take a stand, discuss, and to support their views and encourage critical thinking and expansion of views. In addition, using online threaded discussions is extremely powerful in engaging students in exploring and discussing critical issues of diversity.

It is critical to recognize that teaching courses infused with diversity, demands a different learning environment. A learning community must be in place, which means that the faculty and students must work together as co-learners, to establish classroom norms that nurture autonomy, belonging, and most importantly democratic values and attitudes, such as respect, compassion, collaboration, kindness, and civility.

**6. Diversified Assignments and Assessment:** This requires creating alternative activities and assignments for students to demonstrate what they know and have learned, other than the traditional assessment format in which students can only choose the "right" response without the opportunity to explain their thinking. More critically, this involves openness to students' divergent thinking and problem solving skills. Diversified assessment activities should include oral examination, individual and group projects, research, self-assessment, reflective journal writing, open-book and take-home examination.

Also, it is very important to create assignments that allow students to apply diversity-related concepts and skills that have been emphasized in the course

which allow them to explore the connections between course content and their own interests and experiences. Pertinent questions to ask are: What assignments have I required? How diversified are the assignments? Do the assignments allow for divergent thinking? Am I open to students' divergent thinking?

### Second Workshop

The second workshop focuses on *self-transformation*. To engage in diversity curriculum infusion is not as simple as just adding multicultural content into an existing syllabus. First, it means that the faculty must explore his/her commitment to the philosophy of diversity by examining his/her beliefs, values and assumptions about schooling and society. As Nieto (2000) explains, to be a multicultural educator is first to become a multicultural person. Howard (1999) also emphasizes that before we can effectively engage in curricular transformation, we first need to transform ourselves.

As already stated, many college and university faculty were not disciplined in the area of diversity and multicultural education. Also, many faculty have been mostly influenced by behavioristic theoretical perspectives and thinking that emphasize the traditional concept of teaching and learning which views the professor as the all-knowing and students as passive learners. Further, many faculty have also functioned mostly in encapsulated personal and professional environments, where they have not been challenged about their provincial beliefs, biases, assumptions and values.

Thus, faculty would need opportunities to engage in critical diversity discourses in non-threatening environments, where they are able to build a knowledge base on diversity, and confront their own values and beliefs about diversity, diversity scholarship, before they can successfully engage in diversity curriculum infusion. In fact, they would need to experience what Howard (1999) calls "La Tierra Transformativa" before they can transform and successfully implement diversity-infused courses.

Teaching is a human activity, and as such, faculty project their beliefs, values, experiences, expectations, and standards onto their students and the courses or content they teach. Simply, faculty teach who they are. As Palmer (1998) explains, as [we] teach, [we] project the condition of [our]soul onto [our] students, the subject, and our way of being together (p. 2). Lisa Delpit (1995) echoes the same thought when she explains, "we all carry worlds in our heads, and those worlds are decidedly

different (p.xiv). Teaching is a passionate activity. It is impossible to teach passionately about what we do not believe in.

Faculty must first clarify their biases, beliefs, values, and assumptions about diversity, diverse “others,” more importantly confront their racial/cultural identity before they can effectively engage in diversity curriculum infusion and pedagogy. They must know who they are as socio-cultural beings and the impact of their socialization and learned beliefs on their interaction and communication with students with different racial, ethnic, cultural, language, class and sexual orientations. If they do not know who they are, they cannot know and teach their subjects, at least “not at the deepest levels of embodied, personal meaning” (Palmer, 1998, p.2).

Hence the second workshop focuses on self-transformation. Participants read and discuss the book *We can't teach what we don't know* (Howard, 1999). Discussing *We can't teach what we don't know* often generates heated discussion and debate about the ideas of racial identity, White dominance, privilege, and racism. Generally, the discussions are enlightening and mostly collegial.

To move toward self-transformation, faculty would need to seriously reflect on who they are, how they have viewed the world, knowledge and their philosophy and commitment to diversity. They would need to ask fundamental questions: What is my perspective on diversity and its scholarship? What are my beliefs, values, and assumptions about a pluralistic society and diverse “others”? What knowledge have I constructed, and how has it influenced my thinking and action? What issues do I have with diversity and its scholarship? How do I reconcile them?

### **Third Workshop**

The third workshop is devoted to presentation of participants' preliminary draft of course revision. Each participant provides an overview of the pre-infusion syllabus, and new ideas to be infused. Upon the completion of each presentation, all participants are invited to provide constructive feedback and to raise questions that open up new perspectives. Personally, this is the highlight, the most enlightening and exciting aspect of the institute. For one, it generates a synergy of collaboration and scholarship, as participants provide great ideas, even when they may not be familiar with the subject.

Following the presentation of the preliminary draft of the syllabus revision and the constructive feedback, participants

revise the course and implement it the following winter semester.

### **Fourth and Last Workshop**

The fourth and last workshop is the culminating and celebratory experience in which each participant presents the pre- and post-syllabus diversity infusion and the implementation experience. This is another enlightening and exciting experience, as participants share their stories and reflections of the project. The presentations are often elaborate, some with multimedia presentation of projects, assignments students were engaged, and the classroom dynamics that transpired. But more importantly, participants share personal reflections regarding the strengths and challenges they encountered, ideas and plans for further improvement.

### **Resources and Compensation**

During the institute participants are provided three books—*A different Mirror: A multicultural history of America* by Ronald Takaki (1993 that documents the immigration experience of groups from different shores; *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multicultural schools* by Gary Howard (2006), which explores issues of social dominance and self-transformation; and *Turning on learning: Five approaches for multicultural teaching plans for race, class, gender, and disability* by Grant and Sleeter (2005), which is a guide for integrating diversity—race, gender, disability into all subjects including science and mathematics—into courses. Additional materials including Internet resources are also shared.

Generally, faculty who successfully complete the program receive an incentive in the amount of \$1,000 for professional development and program completion certificate. Of course, there is the free lunch at each workshop.

### **Program Outcomes and Analysis**

Since the inception of the program in the 2003-2004 academic year, four cohorts of faculty have participated, with a total participation of 120 from eighteen departments and units that include engineering, English, education, history, computer, pharmacy, nursing, medicine, civil & mechanical engineering, economics, dentistry, business, law, communication studies, sociology, music, geosciences, and social work. Demographically, there have been 81% European Americans and 19% faculty of color. Forty-seven percent of the participants have been males and fifty-three percent female. Fifty-three were

assistant professors, 32% associate professors, 7% full professors and 8% lecturers.

Among the participants, 87% indicated that they had not infused diversity into their courses prior to participating in the program. Thirteen percent had infused some sort of diversity, but these faculty teach courses in sociology, education, history, human development, and family law which naturally embed diversity issues. However, these faculty, also acknowledge that they knew little about the scope of the diversity curriculum infusion. Sixty-six percent of the participants indicated that they did not have knowledge of diversity let alone how to infuse it into their courses. Twenty-nine percent indicated that they had some knowledge of diversity, and 5% indicated that they were knowledgeable about feminist epistemology and pedagogy.

Analysis of the “before” and “after” course syllabi revealed that 93% of the participants had engaged in some level of diversity infusion although mostly at the *additive level* (Banks, 2005). Most changes or revisions were in the area of projects students were engaged such as service learning and modifying teaching strategies and diversifying assessment activities. Most participants documented moving beyond the traditional lecture method and fostering student-based learning. Overall, most participants noted that, although the process was challenging they had learned from the experience and gained new ideas for improving their courses and found the effort most rewarding and energizing.

## **Strengths and Challenges of the Program**

### **Strengths**

Like every new adventure, the DCIP has its strengths and challenges. A major strength of the program is that curriculum transformation has become a visible event at the university. In general, there is evidence of faculty interest in the program. Participants often encourage and help recruit their colleagues for the next round of participation. Participants are generally committed to the workshops and make efforts to attend all of them, even if it meant leaving to go to teach a class and then returning to the workshop.

More importantly, the synergy and collegiality that is generated is a humbling experience. Participants tend to value and appreciate the opportunity to be engaged with and interact with colleagues across campus, in a supportive and collegial environment, and especially learning about their perspectives and views about diversity issues and the curriculum infu-

sion process. Most participants are generally honest about sharing their fears, admitting their sense of inadequacy in a new territory. Most importantly, for me, the synergy, the collegiality, and the collaborative learning or learning together that evolves is incredible and rewarding.

Most faculty have commented that they have never had opportunities to engage in these kinds of “hard” issues in the academe. At the completion of the institute, some faculty request more or advanced workshops. Another evidence of the strength of the program is that faculty have become more motivated not only to revise their existing courses but to also create new courses on diversity to enhance their programs. This is particularly so with the Nursing and Social Work programs. In addition, some faculty are re-titling their courses to reflect diversity.

For example, one faculty member changed a course that was originally titled “Integrated arts for elementary schools” to “Integrated multicultural arts for elementary schools.” Further, the program has aroused faculty interest in the scholarship of diversity, and has created opportunities for new area of research within their disciplines. Recently, some faculty have made presentations at major conferences about their analysis and reflections on their diversity-infused courses.

Overall, participants have expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be empowered and challenged in a new way; to dialogue about diversity and curriculum infusion with faculty from different departments and across units; for raising their consciousness of diversity and its enrichment in the curriculum; for energizing their teaching; increasing their knowledge base on diversity; for learning new teaching strategies, and becoming aware of diverse learning styles. The following comments also offer some insight:

This project has been great. I genuinely enjoyed sharing ideas with faculty across disciplines. It is very interesting to hear how others have tackled these very important and complex issues. The workshops were informative and really energized me, particularly at the start of the semester. Overall, this project has served to strengthen my commitment to diversity. (Male, European American)

This project has reinforced my commitment to diversity and teaching from a diverse perspective. The positive student response and the “charge” in the class that I experienced this year was, I believe, directly attributable to the changes I made as a result of this project. I appreciate the opportunity to have been involved and

look forward to continued conversations. (Female, European American)

This workshop has raised my consciousness of diversity and its manifold enrichments to our curriculum. I have recruited two colleagues for next year’s institute. The best ingredient was the cross-campus comparisons with my colleagues in the Institute, in all sorts of disciplines at all levels of instruction. Dialogue and sharing were maximized. I have broadened my definition of diversity beyond my traditional triad of race, gender, class. (Female, European American)

Even though I am a faculty of color and knowledgeable about issues of diversity, this project helped me to broaden my understanding of diversity issues and diversity curriculum infusion. Oftentimes, it is assumed that faculty of color naturally have knowledge of diversity and the diversity curriculum infusion process. I realize from this project how little I knew. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to dialogue with faculty across campus about diversity discourse, which is very rare. (Female, African American)

### Challenges

Like any new adventure, conceptualizing and implementing the Diversity Curriculum Infusion program comes with challenges. First, seeking support and buy-in can be challenging. As we know, most college and university campuses have engaged in the “culture wars” and, yes, there are faculty who support curriculum transformation and those who defend and insist on maintaining the status quo, the traditional canon.

Anyone wanting to initiate and facilitate this program must first establish a critical mass of faculty committed to diversity with whom to network. It is extremely important to gain the support of the provost. Curriculum matters belong to academic affairs, and the provost is extremely important in this regard. What I discovered is that it is important to develop a sound rationale for why it is important, especially as it relates to student academic development and achievement, and the recruitment of students and faculty from underrepresented background.

Another challenge to expect is faculty resistance. You will encounter some faculty who will experience and feel overwhelmed by cognitive dissonance as their world reality is challenged by the presentation of new critical perspectives or if they are challenged to do things differently and responsibly. As we all know, faculty are not easy to deal with, when it comes to academic matters. As one participant perceptively observed,

I was impressed by how hard it is to teach a group of people (academics) who tend to assume they/we know everything already. This [institute] was a much needed humbling experience for me.

As we know, we faculty can be very territorial! Sometimes you will experience faculty who will resist and even make racialized comments, and you have to be extremely careful how you respond. You want to respect participants and at the same time be tactful in challenging their inappropriate comments without alienating them. But most faculty are generally very humble, respectful and appreciative of the experience. As with working with our students, patience is extremely critical.

Some ways I have used to deal with resistance in the program are to invite conversation and dialogue. Rather than react to a participant’s disturbing or racialized comments, I invite others to dialogue about the comment. This strategy often opens the door for sharing diverse perspectives that enlighten and challenge the person to rethink his or her position or comment. Frequently, a participant may remark, “oh, I did not think of it that way.”

One major source of resistance I encounter from some participants comes from the book discussion *We can’t teach what we don’t know* by Gary Howard (2006). Some participants react strongly to the content of the book, especially to issues of race, white dominance, white privilege, racial identity, and inequities and social injustice.

Resistance also comes from some participants’ reaction to comments/feedback raised during their presentation. As the facilitator of the institute I encourage other participants to raise questions or provide constructive feedback to participants’ presentations. As a member of the learning community and facilitator, I also participate in raising questions or comments about participants’ presentation, and suggest ideas for improvement.

Some participants appreciate questions raised or feedback provided, but some do react negatively to such questions or feedback. While I strive to be respectful of participants’ efforts I find it responsible to raise questions or comments to further their development. Another source of resistance I encounter comes from the submission of documents, especially the revised syllabi for review.

Like the experience with students in our classrooms, participants’ level of commitment varies. There are participants who embrace and truly commit to the experience, and the revised syllabi reflect it. On the other hand, I have been challenged by a few participants who struggle



with the process and whose works do not reflect the expectation. Overall, I commend participants who have braced themselves to undertake the project. Curriculum transformation is not an easy task; it can be daunting to say the least. The idea of diversity and curriculum transformation can be threatening to faculty. As Schoem, et. al (1993, p.5) well noted:

[It] forces them to acknowledge that their insights and knowledge are limited, that they have studied the world from a narrow perspective, and that even they, the supposed experts, must retool, go back to study, review their life's work, and face difficult challenges in content and pedagogy in their classrooms. It will also mean that they must share some power.

### Summary and Conclusion

The scholarship on curriculum transformation at the college level is sparse. Hopefully, this article will contribute to this area. In a multicultural democracy, a legitimate curriculum is one that enables students to study about events, paradigms, people, issues and problems in a comprehensive, systematic, and reflective way. The rationale for transforming curricular experiences and pedagogical practices is to ensure that all students are adequately prepared for participation in a multicultural democracy and an interdependent world.

But more importantly, it makes curricular experiences culturally responsive to students from diverse cultural backgrounds who often are underserved by institutions that are premised on Eurocentric and patriarchal hegemonic ideologies and canon. The college attendance and graduation rate of students from minority backgrounds is not at par with students from majority backgrounds. A society that neglects a segment of its population is shortchanging itself. Given the trends and projection in demography, minority students will compose a significant proportion of the nation's schools.

It is noted that individuals from minority backgrounds too often are not entering critical fields such as mathematics, science, engineering and technology (Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI, 1998). This is a serious concern, as the nation will not have the human resources needed to effectively participate in an economically competitive world. The National Research Council (NRC) echoes this concern as well, when it states that "the underrepresentation of the generation of minorities leads to further underrepresentation in the next, yielding an unending cycle of mathematical poverty."

Imperatively, college and university

faculty must take on the challenge to ensure that they are culturally responsive and responsible for the diversity inherent in their disciplines, courses, pedagogy and student learning. While this challenge may seem daunting to institutions and their faculty, the program described in this article provides inspiration. Based on observation and conversations with faculty participants, it is my belief that many faculty are interested and committed to diversity curriculum transformation. They only need encouragement and a supportive environment to learn the tools needed to engage in the process.

This demands a concerted and sustained effort on the part of the institution. The offices of the provost and diversity are extremely instrumental in this process. The provost, in particular, must send a bold message to faculty that curriculum transformation is a priority in the collegial experience of students. The deans and department heads must also be committed to the process and encourage and support their faculty to participate in the Diversity Curriculum Infusion program. Faculty or staff desiring to undertake this kind of program must learn to be patient and resilient. It is a challenging yet a valuable and rewarding experience.

Finally, it is important to recognize the essential goal of curriculum transformation. In an increasingly diverse and interconnected world with unprecedented challenges, higher education must prepare students to embrace the moral and ethical responsibility to confront and wrestle with the complex problems they will encounter in today's and tomorrow's world. True institutional transformation that reflects diversity will not occur without curricular and pedagogical transformation.

Our hope for a better, more humane, and socially just society and world depends on how well our graduates are prepared to cultivate the competencies, including cultural understandings, open-mindedness and perspective consciousness, needed to navigate diverse cultural, social and political contexts and effect social change. In this regard, curriculum transformation cannot be more relevant and urgent.

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