



Excellence in Leadership Program

Communicating Difference Matters: Implications for Leaders

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Office of Diversity and Inclusion

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Communicating

- Sharing meaning
 - Explicit
 - Implicit
- Verbal, nonverbal
- Formal, informal
- Mediated
- Power-laden

Difference = Social Identity*

- Group oriented
- Membership (perceived by others and/or self)
- Meaningful to self and/or others
- Identifiable (labeled)
- Learned
- Assigned

*Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Why Difference Matters

- Population projections
- Globalization
- Persistent inequities
- Potential for + change
- Challenges to address

Challenges

- Denial
- False dichotomies
- Simplified categories
- Focus on “other”
- Difference = problem
- Diversity as separate issue

Why Higher Ed Matters

- Source of constructing identities
- Site where we encounter differences
- Context for change*

*Bowen, W. G. & Bok, D. (1998). *The shape of the river: Long-term consequences of considering race in college and university admissions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Regents' Policy 10-p
2. DESCRIPTION OF DIVERSITY

The University of Colorado is committed to building a community of students, faculty, and staff in which diversity is a fundamental value. People are different, and the differences among them are what we call diversity -- a natural and enriching hallmark of life.

Adopted May 13, 1999.

<http://www.cu.edu/regents/policy-10p-diversity>

A climate of healthy diversity is one in which people value a rich panoply of diverse ideas, perspectives and backgrounds, individual and group differences, and communicate openly.

**Accountability rests at
all levels of the university, including
administrative units and
academic departments, as well as
individual faculty, staff, and students.**

<http://www.cu.edu/regents/policy-10p-diversity>

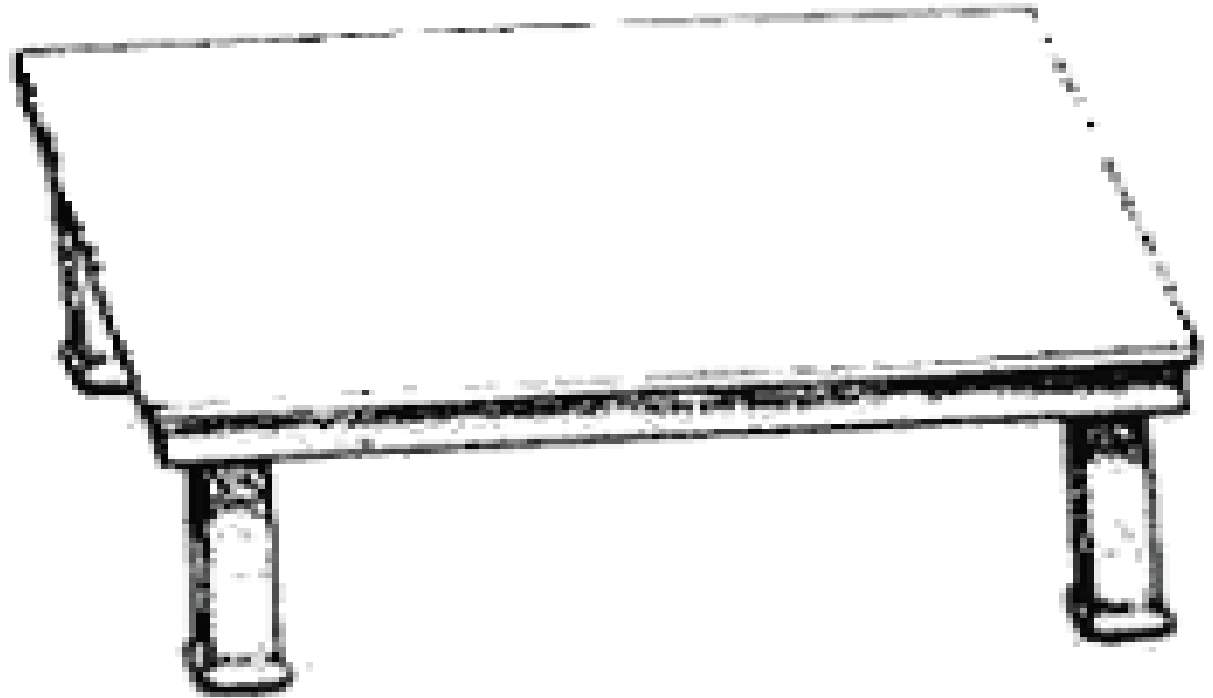
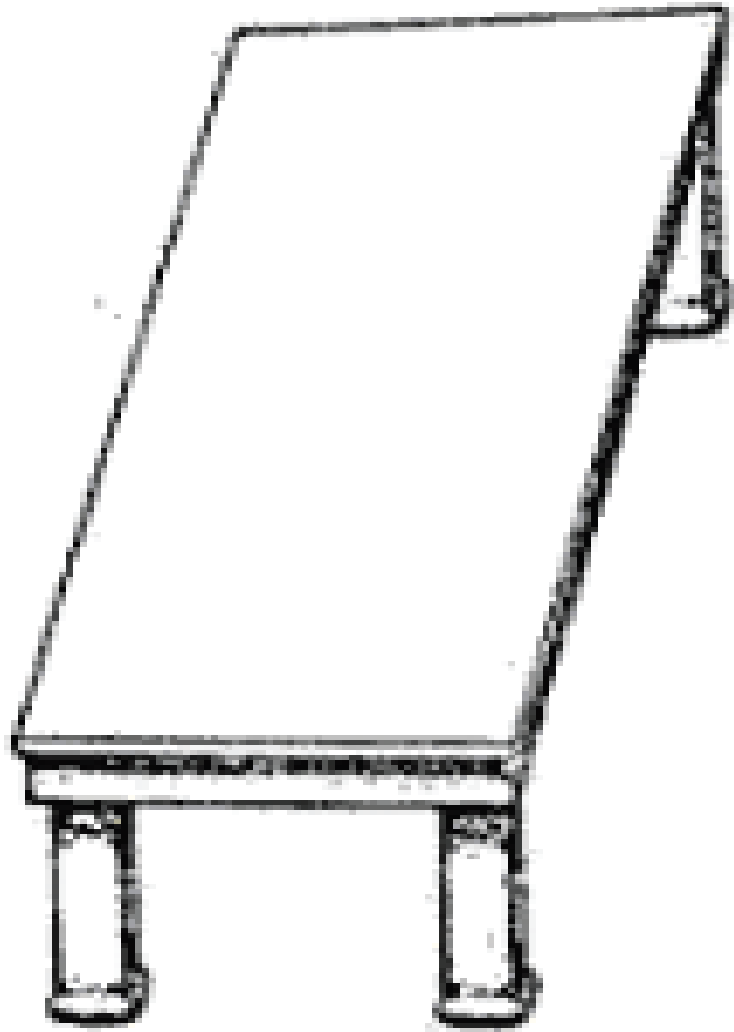
Challenges in Higher Ed

- Relegate responsibility to particular
 - individuals or groups
 - units
 - disciplines/areas of study
- Polarize diversity and quality
- Perpetuate institutional –isms
- Tend to be reactive

Promising Practices

- Visible, sustained commitment
- Diversity as everyone's responsibility
- Strategic plan
- Multiple assessments
- Varying rewards and accountability
- Proactive organizational development
- Holistic approaches
- Ongoing professional development

Implicit Association Tests



Shepard, Roger (1990). *Mind sights: Original visual illusions, ambiguities, and other anomalies*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.

Unconscious Bias

What is Unconscious Bias?

- Form of rapid cognition
- Well documented, pervasive
- Replicates the social hierarchy

Why focus on UB?

- Influences attitudes and behavior
- Often contradicts conscious values
- Affects decision making
- Informs diversity efforts
- Can be managed and reduced



Unconscious Bias



**The average height of a US president
has been
slightly under six feet since 1900.**

Ninety percent of CEOs are of above average height.

A photograph of a violinist in a purple sleeveless top, seen from behind, playing a violin in an orchestra. The violinist is in the foreground, and other musicians and sheet music are visible in the background. The lighting is warm and focused on the performer.

**Orchestrating Impartiality:
The Impact of 'Blind' Auditions
on Female Musicians**

Resume Research

Black Sounding Names

DeShawn Jefferson

DeAndre Washington

Ebony Booker

Aaliyah Jackson

White Sounding Names

Cody Baker

Jake Kelly

Claire Kruger

Amy Rasmussen

An examination of racial discrimination in the labor market for recent college graduates : estimates from the field.

John M. Nunley, Adam Pugh, Nicholas Romero, and Richard Alan Seals, Jr.

[Working paper series / Auburn University, Department of Economics](#) 2014

He Dropped One Letter In His Name While Applying for Jobs, and the Responses Rolled In



The Huffington Post | By Cate Matthews
Posted: 09/02/2014 2:43 pm ED

Cognitive, Cultural, & Contextual Factors

UB Recommendations

- Strive for consistency.
- Clarify criteria.
- Allow sufficient time on task.
- Be accountable for decisions.
- Gather examples (best practices; worst cases).
- Debrief processes and revise as needed.

UB Recommendations

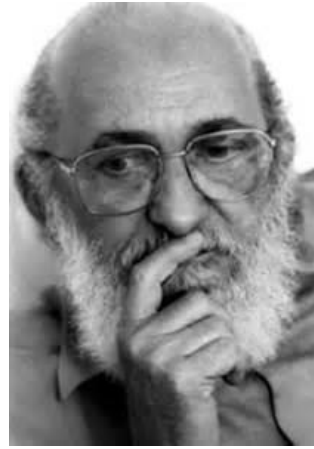
- Remember that we all have biases.
- Commit to reducing your UB.
- Be mindful of T.U.I.*
- Establish guidelines for interaction.
- Foster inclusive communication contexts.

*Thinking Under the Influence (Allen, 2011) . *Difference matters: Communicating social identity*. Waveland Press.

Search Committee Scenario

DM Recommendations

- (Re)Commit to difference matters
- Engage in self-reflexivity
- Be proactive
- Become more informed
- Work within your sphere of influence
- Identify and apply best practices
- Gather and share resources
- Other ideas?



Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

**Paulo Freire (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
New York: Continuum International Publishing.**