



Excellence in Leadership Program

*Communicating Difference Matters:
Implications for Leaders*

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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

Why Difference Matters

- Population trends and projections
- Globalization
- Persistent inequities
- Potential for positive change
- Challenges to address

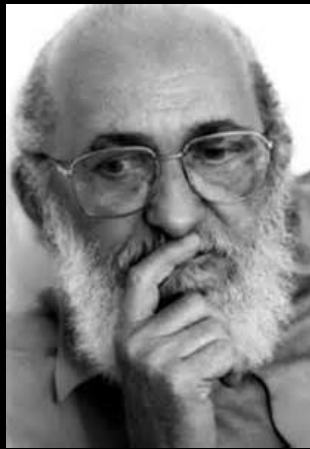
Challenges

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

Why Higher Ed Matters

- Primary 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.



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.

Paolo Freire (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

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. 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.

Adopted May 13, 1999.

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

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 diversity responsibilities to
 - particular individuals or groups
 - specialized units
 - certain disciplines/areas of study
- Polarize diversity and quality
- Perpetuate institutional –isms
- Tend to be reactive rather than proactive

Promising Practices

- Visible and sustained commitment of leaders
- Diversity as everyone's responsibility
- Diversity and inclusion strategic planning
- Ongoing professional development initiatives
- Multiple forms of assessment
- Varying systems -- rewards and accountability
- Proactive organizational development
- Holistic approaches to diversity

Implicit Association Tests

Unconscious Bias

[video]

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fL9__gD88xk

Why focus on UB?

- Can influence attitudes and behavior
- Often incompatible with conscious values
- Significant to many decision-making processes
- Relevant to diversity efforts
- Can be managed and reduced

UB Recommendations

- Remember that **we all** have biases.
- Commit to reducing your UB, and others'.
- 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.

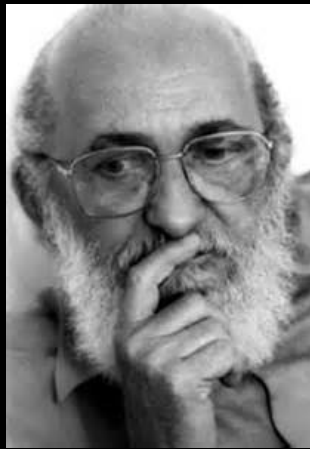
UB Recommendations

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

Search Committee Scenario

DM Recommendations

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



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Resources

Washington State University Search Committee Best & Promising Practices

<http://advance.wsu.edu/Content/Files/advance/the%20complete%20search%20process%20tips%20and%20tactics.pdf>

University of Wisconsin's Reviewing Applicants: Research on Bias and Assumptions brochure

http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/BiasBrochure_2ndEd.pdf

Harvard Implicit Associations Test

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit>