

IF Diversity Course Assessment Report, June 2015

Introduction and Process

At the beginning of Fall 2014, SUNY, Buffalo State was mandated by The SUNY system as well as Middle States to assess 20% of all courses designated “DIVERSITY” in the spring of 2015. This task was given to the IF Diversity Oversight and Assessment Committee convened by Dr. Amitra Wall, Assistant Dean, Intellectual Foundations. Dr. Rosalyn Lindner was invited to address and answer any questions regarding assessment from the Diversity Assessment Committee at our first meeting on October 8, 2014. At this meeting Dr. Lindner and Dr. Kathy Wood, the administrative liaison to the committee, confirmed that 20% of the students in courses designated “Diversity” would be randomly selected to belong to the representative sample that would be assessed in the spring semester of 2015. At that time the spring semester was estimated to include 1454 student seats within the 37 courses.

Diversity is a local Buffalo State requirement, rather than SUNY system –wide requirement. The Chair’s first self- assigned task was to collect previous reports on diversity assessment, reviews from Dr. Lindner and /or the office of Equity and Campus Diversity. The following reports were collected:

- 2011 IF DIVERSITY REVIEW REPORT - Equity and Campus Diversity Office
- 2010 IF Diversity Course Assessment Report-President Council on Equity and Campus

- 2008 Diversity Course Assessment Report- President's Council on Equity
Campus

On the 10th of October, the Committee reviewed the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), the 2008, 2010, and 2011 Diversity Course Assessment reports and determined the best method to assess the Diversity category courses on the schedule for Spring 2015. The committee also agreed to collect all syllabi from the Diversity category. It was agreed that analyzing syllabi, similar to what the spring 2008 Diversity Committee had done, would, in some way, be a quick assessment of how diversity is valued and probably give another measure of assessment. The Student Learning Outcomes for diversity are as follows:

Students will:

- Examine the past, current and /or prospective contributions of diverse groups of American society.
- Analyze the ways in which social and institutional structures can contribute to privilege, social justice, or social injustice through stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination (critical thinking).

On the 22nd of October, 2014, the committee used the website “# generator random.org” to select the required 20% of the estimated total of 1454 students for spring semester. This yielded 291 seats. One class estimated at 55 students for the spring of 2015 was randomly selected as an alternative. The total sample for the spring semester was estimated at 312 seats and by this the committee anticipated to easily reach the 291-seat goal. This, it was believed, would be more than what was actually required for the 20% sample for the Diversity sections of spring 2015. After a lengthy discussion of different

strategies (Essay prompts, Reflections, Using Blackboard, etc.) the committee agreed to use Essay prompts. On the 5th of November, 2014, a workshop was conducted by the diversity committee and the following generic prompts were selected:

- Please explain what you have learned from this course about the past, current and/or prospective contributions of diverse groups to American Society.
- Based on what you have learned from this course, please explain the ways in which social and institutional structures can contribute to privilege, social justice, or social injustice through stereotyping, prejudice and/or discrimination.

These prompts are sufficiently generic to be administered to every diversity course and yet responses to the same prompts should generate specific in- depth answers where students can show their knowledge learned in each course assessed.

The prompts were distributed to the eight instructors of the randomly selected courses on November 25, 2014. In December, the chair of the IF Diversity Assessment Committee invited the randomly selected instructors to a “meet and chart” meeting. In February the committee met with 4 out of the eight randomly selected instructors for this “meet and chart” meeting to talk about the expected assessment. Also, later the committee designed a standard rubric (See Table 1, Standard Rubric.) which was distributed to instructors in March of 2015. At the February “meet and chart” with the Diversity Committee meeting, it was agreed that instructors would have the option of reading their students’ responses. However, all responses would be read by the committee. It was also agreed that the prompts would be administered during the CEP week or before the end of the spring semester.

Seven faculty from the IF Diversity Assessment Committee served as readers. The readers were:

Anselmi, Lisa Marie, Associate Professor and Chair, Anthropology

Hinderliter, Sarah B, Associate Professor, Fine Arts

Huang, Chenchen, Associate Professor, Hospitality and Tourism

Littman, Michael, Associate Professor and Chair, Business

McFarland, Diane S, Associate Professor, Communication

Paige, Susan, Lecturer, University College

Shandomo, Hibajene M, Associate Professor, Elementary Education and Reading, Chair of IF Diversity Committee

Findings/Results

There were 33 faculty, with a total of 37 sections, teaching Diversity courses in the Fall of 2014. In the spring of 2015, sections increased to 42 with 1484 students (See Table 4, Diversity Sections, Spring 2015).

Some instructors taught multiple sections of the same courses. In the fall of 2014, the total seats possible were estimated at 1454 for the spring of 2015. Of the 33 faculty, 19 were full time tenured or tenure track professors and 14 were registered as Adjunct in the spring of 2015. As already pointed out, during the fall of 2014, 8 (23%) of the 37 Spring 2015 sections/ classes were randomly selected to be in the assessment sample.

Reflections, assessment essays and/or discussions prompts (for the online courses) from 204 students were read by the committee. This number represented 14% of the 1,484 total number of students registered for the Spring semester of 2015. The results of the ratings from the four outcomes (See Table 3, Outcomes.) were as follows:

Outcome #1. Critically examine the past current or prospective influences of diverse groups on American Society.

	N	N-Total	Combined
Exceeds the standard	36 (17.48%)	204	Exceeds/meets/ Approaches 166.00(81.37%)
Meets the standard	70 (34.31%)		
Approaches the standard	60 (29.41%)		
Below the standard	38 (18.45%)		Below 38 (18. 63%)

Outcome #2. Project/ Identify/Visualize the past or potential contributions of diverse groups to American Society.

	N	N-Total	Combined
Exceeds the standard	24(12.50%)	176	Exceeds/meets/ Approaches 138 (78.41%)
Meets the standard	54 (30.68%)		
Approaches the standard	62 (35.23%)		
Below the standard	36 (20.45%)		Below 36 (20.45%)

Outcome 3. Identify & explain the ways in which social and institutional structures (stereotyping, prejudice and/or discrimination) can contribute to privilege.

	N	Total	Combined
Exceeds the standard	22 (12.50%)	176	Exceeds/meets/ Approaches 138.00 (77.27%)
Meets the standard	54 (30.68%)		
Approaches the standard	62 (34.09%)		
Below the standard	38 (21.59%)		Below 38 (21.59%)

Outcome 4. Identify & explain the ways in which social and institutional structures (stereotyping, prejudice and/or discrimination) can contribute to social injustice.

	N	Mean	Total	Combined
Exceeds the standard	21 (11.93%)		176	Exceeds/meets/ Approaches 135.00 (75.57%)
Meets the standard	53 (28.93%)			
Approaches the standard	61 (34.66%)			
Below the standard	41 (23.30%)			Below 41 (23.30%)

The responses of the students varied from a few words to a full page, two pages and in some cases many pages. Some responses were typed. Others were clearly hand written while some were poorly hand-written and difficult to read. Some responses seemed to be take home assignments. One instructor included a discussion forum for one of the prompts.

Examples of the responses that met or exceeded the standards were as follows:

I have thoroughly enjoyed this course. It gave me a lot of insight and understanding of other cultures and ethnic groups. It is very important to remember and never forget the struggles and advancement of other ethnic groups in order to ensure that these mistakes and injustices don't repeat themselves. Diverse groups and cultures are the fabric of our nation. They are what makes America great and interesting. Learning from, and respecting other cultures and groups expands our knowledge and understanding of where they came from and why they are here. America would be a very boring white land without culture and ethnic groups

Throughout the course of my education on Diversity, I have never had such in depth or well explained look at Diversity as I have had in this course. Specifically this course has taught me that just because a country seems to be succeeding economically does not mean that all demographic groups are succeeding. For instance, in the U.S. women and minorities still make less than white men do. Another thing I have learned in this class is that when a certain demographic group receives less pay on average or is employed less than their counterparts, it hurts the economy as a whole. It would be more beneficial for the economy if all groups had equal opportunity for employment.

We live in a very diverse society, in which our differences help to define who we are as individuals. These differences often times lead to issues regarding privilege, social justice and injustices through stereotyping, prejudice and/ or discrimination where our differences can be a gift or curse in our interactions. The criminal justice system is one such entity that contributes to privilege, social justice and injustices through stereotyping, prejudice and/ or discrimination. The criminal justice, through the police and court depict how our differences influence the treatment metered out to some among us. Violence against women has been called the most common and most invisible human rights violation in the world (Belknap, 2015). Females report a higher fear of crime and are more likely to be victims of sexual assault and intimate partner abuse, as such abuse is gendered....Previously there was a reluctance by police to answer calls pertaining to domestic violence and even make arrests... Minority women and poor white women are more likely than their white counterparts to be victims of domestic violence and treated as offenders... Research conducted in New Jersey by student observers cited multiple times when officers treated poor white or black citizens with outright hostility and suspicion, noticing a difference between the officer's attitudes towards them and "upstanding" citizens (Miller, 2005). Furthermore, victim blaming came into play where officers "believed" that domestic violence occurred more in "bad" neighborhoods since so many residents are without jobs and stay close to home"(Miller, 2005).

Others were below the standard such as

I learned from this class that diverse groups contribute to the overall growth of society. The different types of ideals and thought processes bring new and innovative things to the table.

In this class I have learned how to use the appropriate label to call kids with disabilities without discrimination and social injustice.

What I have learned so far is that jobs which were strictly just for men or strictly just for women are now becoming mere mixed of both men and women. In the past you saw nurses and teachers be predominantly women and today it is a little more common to see men being teachers and nurses.

The past diverse groups that came to America have contributed to this country in so many ways to emerge one unique culture.

Syllabi with Diversity Designation

Syllabi were collected from all 33 instructors. The analysis included the following categories (See Table 2, Syllabi.)

- Instructor: tenured/tenure track or Adjunct
- Diversity course indicated on course syllabus
- Diversity Outcomes included on course syllabus
- Activities to show how students will demonstrate diversity objectives on course syllabus
- Catalogue description includes diversity objectives on syllabus

Instructor: tenured/tenure track or Adjunct

There were 33 faculty teaching Diversity courses in the Spring of 2015. Of these 19 were full time tenured or tenure track instructors and 14 were Adjuncts.

Diversity course indicated on course syllabus

Of the 14 syllabi offered by adjunct instructors, no (100%) syllabus indicated the diversity course designation on course syllabus. Of the 19 syllabi from tenured/tenure track instructors 7 (37 %) indicated the diversity course designation on course syllabus. The rest 12, (63%) did not (See Table 2, Syllabi).

Diversity Outcomes included on course syllabus

Of the 14 syllabi from adjunct instructors, 8 (57%) included diversity outcomes on course syllabi and 6 (43%) did not. Of the 19 syllabi from tenured/tenure track instructors 9 (47 %) indicated diversity course student learning outcomes on course syllabus. The rest, 10 (53%), did not (See Table 2, Syllabi).

Activities to show how students will demonstrate diversity objectives on course syllabus

Of the 14 syllabi from adjunct instructors, 6 (43%) showed Activities to show how students will demonstrate diversity objectives on course syllabus, and 8 (57%) did not. Of the 19 syllabi from tenured/tenure track instructors 7 (37 %) showed activities to show how students will demonstrate diversity objectives on course syllabus. The rest, 12 (63%), did not (See Table 2, Syllabi).

Catalogue description includes diversity objectives on syllabus

Of the 14 syllabi from adjunct instructors, 6 (43%) showed catalogue description that included diversity objectives on syllabus and 8 (57%) did not. Of the 19 syllabi from tenured/tenure track instructors 5 (27%), showed catalogue description that included diversity objectives on syllabus and 14 (73%) did not.

Of the 33 syllabi, 3 (9%) had all the four items (Diversity course indicated on course syllabus, catalogue description, diversity outcomes, and brief description of activities to show how students will demonstrate understanding of implementation of diversity course objectives (See Table 2, Syllabi).

Improvements suggested as a result of this assessment

Selection Pool for Assessment

In spite of the Committee's plan to exceed the 20% sample size, from the diversity seats of the Spring 2015 semester, we discovered that courses did not meet full enrollment. We believe that a future assessment should be done over a full academic year and planning should begin during the spring semester of the prior academic year. The selection pool would be increased to include all diversity sections taught in the spring and fall semester, instead of spring semester only. Consequently, the selection pool of students would be increased and the analysis could be spread over a longer period of time. This would also catch diversity courses that are only offered in the Fall. In addition, perhaps to get 20% of the student population for a future review, the committee should collect assessment material such as essays, reflections, etc. from at least 50% of the total student population.

Attach a Grade to Diversity Assignments- Our data clearly indicate that the return from classes that attached a grade to the material yielded deeper and richer reflections from students. We recommend that instructors make the diversity assessment material a course assignment for class credit. Perhaps a specific length ought to be assigned for the main assessment, otherwise students seem to not try or leave the prompt blank. A specific

length could guide students to appropriate in-depth responses where they can show their knowledge.

Potential for more flexibility in Assessment- Course instructors could take an existing assignment and relate it to the diversity component and submit both data for analysis. We suggest the potential for more flexibility in the assessment material.

All Course Syllabi for IF Diversity Courses should clearly identified (a) the Diversity designation for the course, (b) the course description, which includes suitable references to diversity issues and (c) diversity student learning outcomes.

Similar Content for Same Sections-We recommend that courses that carry an IF Diversity designation with same prefix (e.g. SOC 240, ENG 231) should have similar objectives and content across sections. This is an observed issue with sections that are taught by different faculty members, whether they are adjuncts or tenured/ tenure track.

Online courses- Online courses will increase in number, hence there is need to consider a different method for gathering the diversity data. We recommend that discussion forums only be used to generate the exchange of ideas about diversity because systematic analysis of this data is difficult. Once the discussion is complete students can complete a graded assignment for the data collection. A specific rubric should be developed for Blackboard for all online material assessment.

Assessment not to be a “stand –alone assignment”

Perhaps this assessment should not be a “stand –alone assignment”, which makes it less effective. Some students seem to have spent little time on these prompts. Others even left one of the prompts blank, while some students, particularly, those who did this as a class assignment, reflected deeply and meaningfully and seemed to understand the value of diversity.

Actions to be taken in addressing these assessment findings (Action Plan)

The committee requests that Departments Chairs with Diversity courses discuss the findings of this committee in one of their faculty meetings.

Departments that do not have a template for IF diversity courses could solve some of the issues spelled out in this report by having a template for the department. We believe, for example, that it - is not too much to require that every syllabus should have a catalogue description, diversity outcomes, and brief description of activities to show how students will demonstrate understanding of implementation of diversity course objectives. These should be among the common elements agreed upon by a department.

Respectfully submitted by Hibajene Shandomo on June 19, 2015

IF Divesity Review committee

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