

Drop the Mask! Defacing What We Know about Classroom Diversity and Inclusion as We Face New Challenges in the Covid-19 and Black Lives Matter Movement Era

Abstract

Many new challenges concerning diversity and inclusion have surfaced over the past year and half causing the college experience to change dramatically. Events magnified by the advent of COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement have led to a surge in aggressive behavior targeting minority campus populations, including Asian, Indian, Hispanic, and African American students. As pointed out by our conference theme, unprecedented new challenges for administration, staff, and faculty have emerged. In this presentation, the facilitators will discuss innovative and collaborative approaches for managing and mitigating these sensitive issues. Real-life experiences will be shared as well as strategies to begin a conversation that will bring session attendees together to offer a clear path forward. Effectively dealing with unique situations of discrimination, whether on campus, or in online and face-to-face classroom settings. Attendees will leave the session having learned new and innovative methods that incorporate values-based execution strategies. Faculty, administrators, and staff who seek an effective, practical, and peaceful approach to handling student diversity and inclusion during times of civil unrest are welcome to attend.

Introduction

As America confronts its own racial injustices in the wake of last year's events, including the murder of George Floyd, we have seen a shift in the learning environment on college campuses. Minorities in the U.S. have long experienced prejudice, which is nothing new. However, today these prejudices have increased dramatically toward international populations from African Americans to Hispanic, Middle Eastern, and Asian people. As a result, university students and faculty have experienced increased tensions in the classroom. What used to be suppressed has now become quite overt among those students who feel superior. This shift has caused minority students to be bullied, to feel unsafe in the learning environment. A number of Black students are choosing to attend [HBCUs](#). Some students are choosing to switch to all online classes to avoid these stresses while others, especially our international students are deciding not to come back to the United States at all. Many international students have expressed that they feel Americans do not want them here. They do not feel welcomed anymore; many of them fearing for their own safety.

In this presentation, three experienced professors will deface what is currently known about dealing with diversity and inclusion. We will share our real-life experiences with these issues and share new perspectives and strategies for handling the unique challenges (that have included verbal and physical aggression) experienced during the Black Lives Matter Movement and COVID-19 era. We will discuss obstacles and challenges, collaboration among faculty, staff, and students, including student feedback. Additionally, we will engage in a round-table discussion directed toward instructors/professors who are interested in learning new perspectives/strategies and sharing their own experiences and best practices for dealing with these unprecedented challenges.

Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications

A study published in the Journal of Management Education by Amoroso, Loyd & Hoobler (2010) discussed the diversity education dilemma within the framework of the status characteristics theory. The diversity education dilemma posits that minority students disproportionately carry the burden of not belonging, based on their status group membership and teacher expectations (Amoroso et al., 2010). The discrimination and violent behavior experienced toward black and ethnic populations during the Black Lives Matter Movement and COVID-19 era, exacerbated and accelerated this problem by lowering their perceived status group membership as many students were made to feel unwelcome and threatened. This, combined with a lack of an understanding of the true meaning and purpose of the Black Lives Matter Movement lowered teacher expectations even further.

Research finds that student outcomes are worse when expectations are low (McKnown and Wenstein, 2003). However, Amoroso and colleagues found that minority group members benefit from being around others of the same group, if they suffer from stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995) in a certain context, such as Black low-income students taking classes with Black professors who openly talk about overcoming their financially disadvantaged backgrounds to become a professor, the Black students may be better able to overcome the negative stereotypes associated with their group. However, during the Black Lives Matter Movement and COVID-19 era, it is important that all faculty, regardless of race or ethnicity, overcome the stereotyping that is too often associated with misconceptions and misunderstandings. This may be best accomplished through becoming educated about the movement and learning new strategies of dealing with these issues

Our session contributes to effective teaching and learning in the field of management by providing a new framework and lens for approaching challenges experienced during the Black Lives Matter Movement and COVID-19. Moreover, through our round-table discussion, new experiences and approaches shared by each participant will help benefit the collective whole and bring these issues into sharper focus.

Session Description

We believe this session will be best organized as a 60-minute round table discussion.

The first 10 Minutes will be used to give a brief overview of the current climate of Diversity and Inclusion, specifically during the Covid-19 Pandemic and Black Lives Matter Era.

Facilitators will then spend the next 20 minutes sharing their real-life experiences and strategies used in class and on campus to combat challenges of Diversity and Inclusion during these times.

The following 25 minutes will be used for the facilitators to draw from the audience. Attendees will be given the opportunity to offer up a scenario or experience for which the facilitators or other attendees can offer up successful strategies for addressing that issue by providing a solution for implementation. We believe this will lead to a very energetic and meaningful conversation.

The last few minutes will be used to debrief the session. What did we discover during this session? What do we know now? And most importantly the session facilitators will offer all attendees a working list of strategies and programs which can be developed to overcome Diversity and Inclusion challenges in their own classrooms.

References

- Amoroso, L.M., Loyd, D.L. and Hoobler, J.M. (2010). The diversity education dilemma: Exposing status hierarchies without reinforcing them. *Journal of Management Education*, 34(6), 795-822.
- Lederer, A.M., Hoban, M.T., Lipson, S.K., Zhou, S. and Eisenberg, D. (2020). More than inconvenienced: The unique needs of U.S. college students during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Health Education & Behavior*, 48(1), 14-19.
- Kennedy, Bud. 2020. "Texas Is Third in Hate Incidents Against Asian Americans Amid Coronavirus, Group Says." *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 15. <https://www.star-telegram.com/opinion/bud-kennedy/article242027911.html>
- Bishara, Hakim. 2020. "Korean-American Artist Attacked in Manhattan." *Hyperallergic*, July 9. <https://hyperallergic.com/575900/kate-bae-artist-attacked/>. Bishara, Hakim. 2020. "Korean-American Artist Attacked in Manhattan." *Hyperallergic*, July 9. <https://hyperallergic.com/575900/kate-bae-artist-attacked/>.
- McKown, C., & Weinstein, R. S. (2003). The development and consequences of stereotype consciousness in middle childhood. *Child Development*, 74, 498-515.
- Oriel, Christina. 2020. "SoCal Fil-Am Family Speaks out after Man Tells Them 'Trump's Gonna f You' in Viral Video." *Asian Journal*, July 7. <https://www.asianjournal.com/usa/northerncalifornia/socal-fil-am-family-speaks-out-after-man-tells-them-trumps-gonna-f-youin-viral-video/>.
- Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African-Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 797-811.