

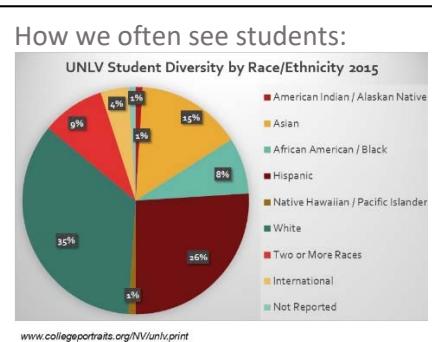
Approaching Intersections in the Classroom

Shelly Volsche, MA

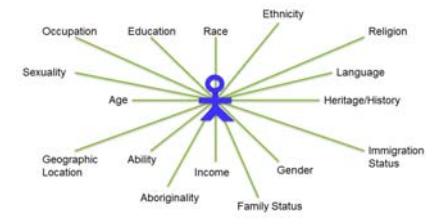
The teaching practice and the need it addresses:

Universities often discuss diversity in terms of demographics. However, students and faculty experience diversity as a mix of identity markers always intersecting to varying degrees based upon context. By approaching the classroom with an intersectional paradigm, faculty can view students as individuals, not demographic groups or student numbers. This facilitates the use of Transparency in Learning (see *Peer Review*, Winter/Spring 2016) to meet students in their current academic “place” while helping them reach their full potential.

This practice grows on the paradigmatic foundations set forth by Intersectional Theory (e.g., Castiello Jones, Misra, & McCurley, 2013) to embrace the idea that diversity is more than an external concept of variation. Instead, these varying identity components also interact with the self, providing each student with a unique set of knowledge and experiences that impact student engagement and success.



How students see themselves:



Evidence this practice benefits students:

By implementing this approach, I have encouraged neither a student-centered nor faculty-centered classroom. Instead, the classroom becomes a community of junior academics and a guide who grow together through questioning and understanding each other. The success of this approach is reflected in student evaluations as well as grading and growth.

Resources and where to find them:

Few address intersectional theory as a pedagogy in higher education. Examples include:

- Intersectionality & higher education: Theory, research, & praxis. Mitchell, D., Simmons, C., & Geyerbiehl, L. (Eds.) (2014).
- Using mixed methods to study intersectionality in higher education: New directions in institutional research, number 151. Museus, S., & Griffin, K. (2011).

How other FYE teachers might adopt this practice

Faculty can begin by identifying individual student needs as opposed to educational status by group (i.e., race or gender). Inclusion can also be applied via worksheets and class activities, as well as considering the varying life histories brought to the classroom by students (and faculty).

COLA 100E – Student Information Sheet

Section _____

Registered Name: _____ Daily Name: _____

NSHE #: _____ Pronoun: _____

RebelMail: _____ Major: _____

Favorite Band/Musician: _____

Last Book Read: _____

What is an academic issue that concerns you? _____

What is a world/cultural issue that concerns you? _____

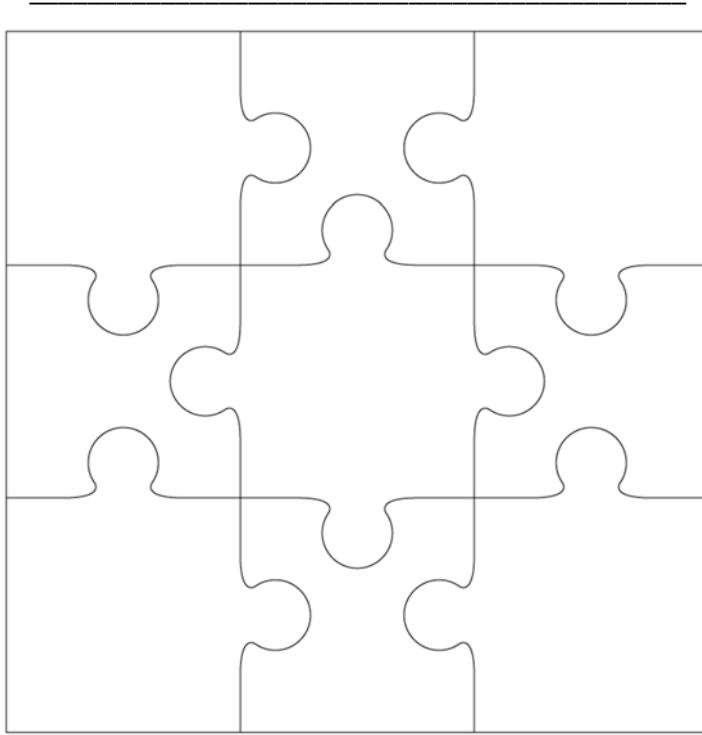
How do you keep your spirits up in difficult times? _____

Thank you for sharing!

Puzzle Pieces of My Self

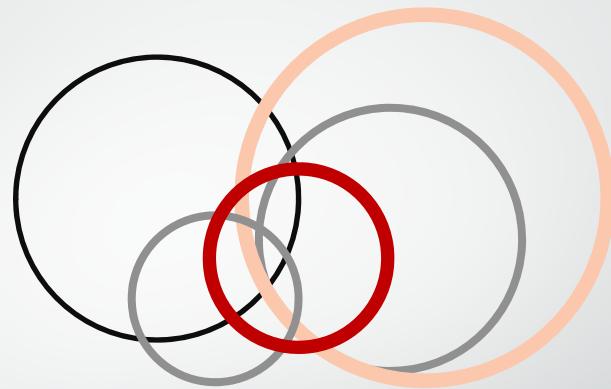
The purpose of this activity is to begin to think about how different pieces of identity fit together to make the whole person. Like pieces of a puzzle, each identity we embrace takes on a unique shape that locks into other pieces for a total self.

Write your name in the provided line at the top of the puzzle. In each puzzle piece, provide different identities with which you associate. This can include anything: your ethnic heritage, your gender, family roles, country of origin, hobbies, parental status, religion, etc. Think about your broad and narrow identities.



1. Fill in each puzzle piece with one of the many identities you hold.
2. Form groups (2-3) to answer the following questions together:
 1. Which of these identities are you most proud of? Why?
 2. Which of these identities have you ever been ashamed of? Why?
 3. Describe a stereotype associated with one of your identities and explain how that is not consistent with who you are. For example?

I am (a/an) _____ but I am NOT (a/an) _____.



Approaching Intersections in the Classroom

Shelly Volsche, MA

UNLV Academic Success Center

36th Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience

February 13, 2017

Outline

- **Purpose:** To discuss how the intersectional paradigm can function as a pedagogical lens for faculty and staff of diverse universities to “see” individual students.
- **Tasks:**
 - Brief Lecture
 - Activity
 - Discussion
- **Criteria:** You feel empowered to perceive and communicate the multiple identities at play within your students – and within yourself.

About UNLV

- 2nd Most Diverse Campuses in the Nation
U.S. News & World Report, Campus Ethnic Diversity, 1 of 5 colleges
- MSI & HIS status
- Emerging AANAPISI
- And this is only ethnic diversity!

About UNLV

UNIV UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

≡ About UNLV

Student Statistics

Fall 2015

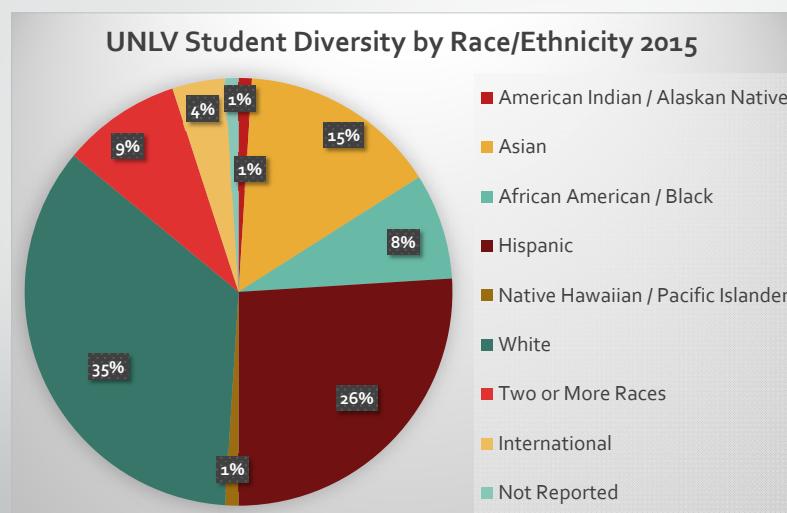
Total Headcount	28,600
Undergraduate	23,801 (83%)
Graduate	4,819 (17%)
Men	12,552 (44%)
Women	16,048 (56%)
Minorities	15,868 (55%)
Resident	24,000 (84%)
Nonresident	4,601 (16%)

Source: UNLV Analytics Enrollment Census - Official Fall 2015 Preliminary; Office of Decision Support, 05-OCT-2015

About Me

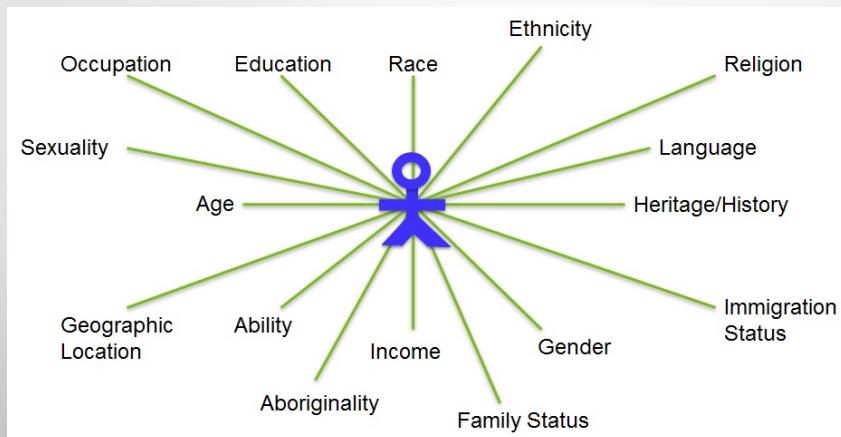
- Cultural Anthropologist by training
- Family variation to love and marriage, China and back
- FYS Instructor for 2 yrs
- Collector of stories

Diversity by Demographics



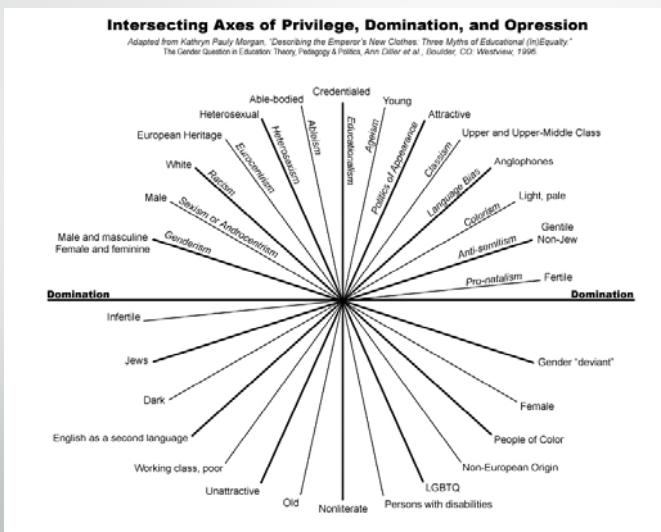
www.collegeportraits.org/NV/unlv.print

Diversity from the Student Perspective



Source: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women

Intersectionality



Intersectionality as a Pedagogical Paradigm

- It's a growth mindset¹
- See individual students, not student #'s
- Enhance community building
- Transparency in Learning²

¹Dweck, C. (2007). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

²Winkelmes, M., Bernacki, M., Butler, J., Zochowski, M., Glanics, J., & Harris Weavil, K. (2016) *Peer Review*, 18(1/2).

Application

Student Information Sheet

COLA 100E – Student Information Sheet

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Name: _____ Preferred Name: _____

NSHE #: _____ Preferred Pronoun: _____

RebelMail: _____

Favorite Band/Musician: _____

Last Book Read: _____

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What is a world/cultural issue that concerns you? _____

How do you keep your spirits up in difficult times? _____

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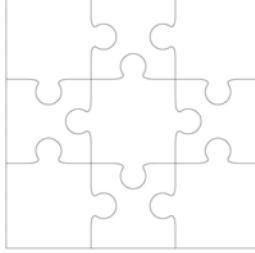
Application

Identity Puzzle

Puzzle Pieces of My Self

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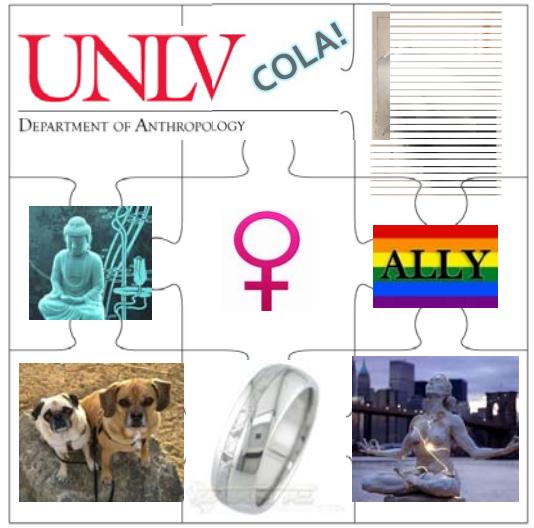
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Volsche 2015

Identity as a Puzzle

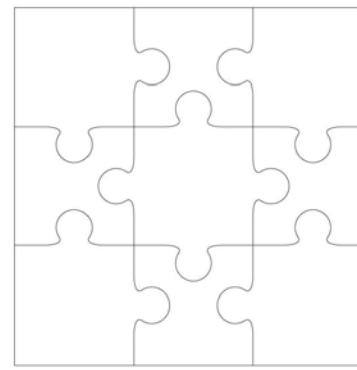
For the Handout!

You are **not required to share beyond your comfort** level, but you are encouraged to share if it adds value and learning to the conversation.



Your Turn!

Identity Puzzle



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Thank you!

Questions? Let's talk about it!

- Academic Success Center
 - Dr. McDonough
 - Dr. Gianoutsos
 - Dr. Ervin
 - And the rest of the Academic Transitions team!
- Anthropology Doctoral Advisory Committee
 - Dr. William Jankowiak, chair
 - Dr. Peter Gray
 - Dr. Jiemin Bao
 - Dr. David Dickens, outside member
- Graduate College Teaching Program



ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

Contact Information:
 E: Shelly.Volsche@unlv.edu
 P: 702-774-4620