

Diversity: What? So What? Now What?

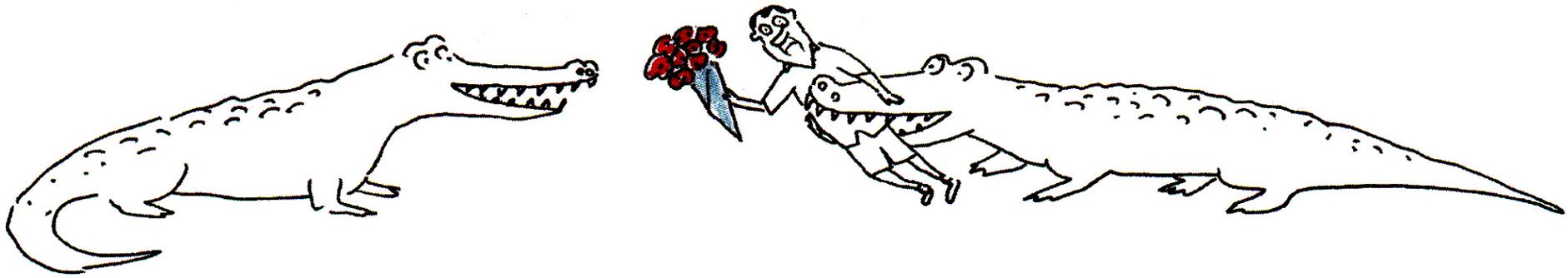
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"You're such a romantic."

Diversity: Thee Key Questions

1. What? (*What* is diversity?)
2. So What? (*Why* is diversity important?)
3. Now What? (*How* can we promote diversity appreciation?)

1.

What is Diversity?

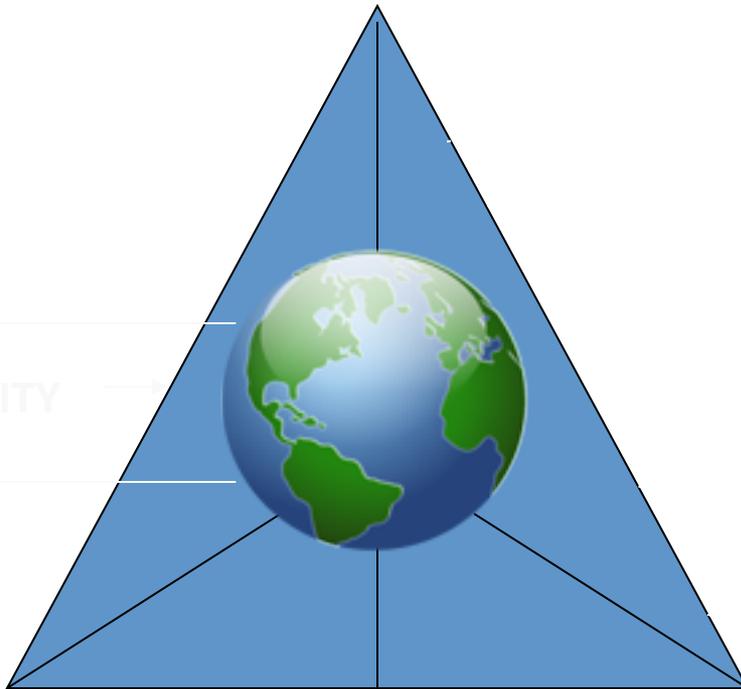
- Refers primarily to differences among groups of people, that, together, make up the whole of humanity.
- Involves commitment to recognizing and appreciating the variety of characteristics that make groups of people unique in a context that also celebrates individual and collective achievement.

“Every human is, at the same time,
like all other humans, like some
humans, and like no other human.”

— Clyde Kluckhohn, American anthropologist

Diversity Spectrum

SPECTRUM of DIVERSITY



Gender (male-female)

Age (stage of life)

Race (e.g. White, Black, Asian)

Ethnicity (cultural background)

Socioeconomic status (educational level/income level)

National citizenship (citizen of U.S. or another country)

Native (first-learned) *language*

National origin (nation of birth)

National region (e.g. raised in north/south)

Generation (historical period when people are born or live)

Political ideology (e.g. liberal/conservative)

Religious and Spiritual beliefs (e.g. Christian/Buddhist/Muslim)

Family status (e.g. single parent/two-parent family)

Marital status (single/married)

Parental status (with/without children)

Sexual orientation(heterosexual/gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender)

Physical ability/disability (e.g. able to hear/hearing impaired)

Mental ability/disability (e.g. mentally able/challenged)

Learning ability/disability (e.g. absence/presence of dyslexia)

Learning styles (e.g. visual, auditory, kinesthetic)

Mental health/illness (e.g. absence/presence of depression)

This list represents some of the major dimensions of human diversity, it does not represent a complete list of all possible forms of human diversity. Also, disagreement exists about certain dimensions of diversity (e.g. whether certain groups should be considered races or ethnic groups.)

Appreciating Diversity

- * Acknowledging differences: being aware of them.
- * Accommodating differences: dealing with them in a fair, non-prejudicial and non-discriminative manner.
- * Valuing differences: recognizing that all groups have contributed to the American experience and strengthened the nation.
- * Cultivating differences – capitalizing on diversity to enrich learning and enhance personal development.

2.

So What?

Why is Diversity important?

Numerous research studies point to an empirical link between student experiences with diversity and a variety of positive learning outcomes (Cuseo, Thompson, & Campagna, 2016).



Diversity Deepens Learning

Research consistently shows that we learn more from people who are *different* from us than we do from people similar to us (Pascarella, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzi, 2005).

Diversity Develops Higher-Order Thinking Skills

Research demonstrates that first-year students who experience the highest level of exposure to different dimensions of diversity (e.g. participating in multicultural courses and events on campus; interacting and forming friendships with peers of different races) report the greatest gains in:

- * *Complex* Thinking – ability to think about all parts or sides of an issue (Gurin, 1999),
- * *Reflective* thinking – ability to think deeply (Kitchener et al., 2000),
- * *Critical* thinking – ability to think logically (Pascarella et al., 2001),
and
- * *Creative* thinking – ability to think “out of the box” (Leung et al., 2008).

Diversity Magnifies the Power of Liberal (General) Education

- Developing *global awareness* and a *global perspective* require understanding of diversity.
- The growing diversity in the U.S. and increasing global interdependence make “*intercultural competence*” – the ability to value cultural differences and to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds – an essential 21st-century liberal learning skill/outcome (Cuseo & Thompson, 2015).

Diversity Enhances

Career Preparation & Performance

- Whatever career path students choose to pursue today, they will likely find themselves working with employers, employees, co-workers, customers, and clients from diverse cultural backgrounds (Thompson & Cuseo, 2014).
- Successful career performance in today's' diverse workforce requires sensitivity to human differences and the ability to relate to people from different cultural backgrounds within the U.S. [domestic diversity] and across different nations [international diversity] (National Association of Colleges & Employers, 2014; Smith, et al., 1997).

3.

Now What?

How Can We Promote Diversity Appreciation?

1. **Personal Validation:** acknowledging/affirming each student's identity and experiences
 - * Learning our students' names
 - * Learning about our students (e.g., "student information sheet")
2. **Social Integration:** building rapport with our students and connecting students to one another
 - * Out-of-class contact with students
 - * "Icebreakers" (Community-Building) Experiences

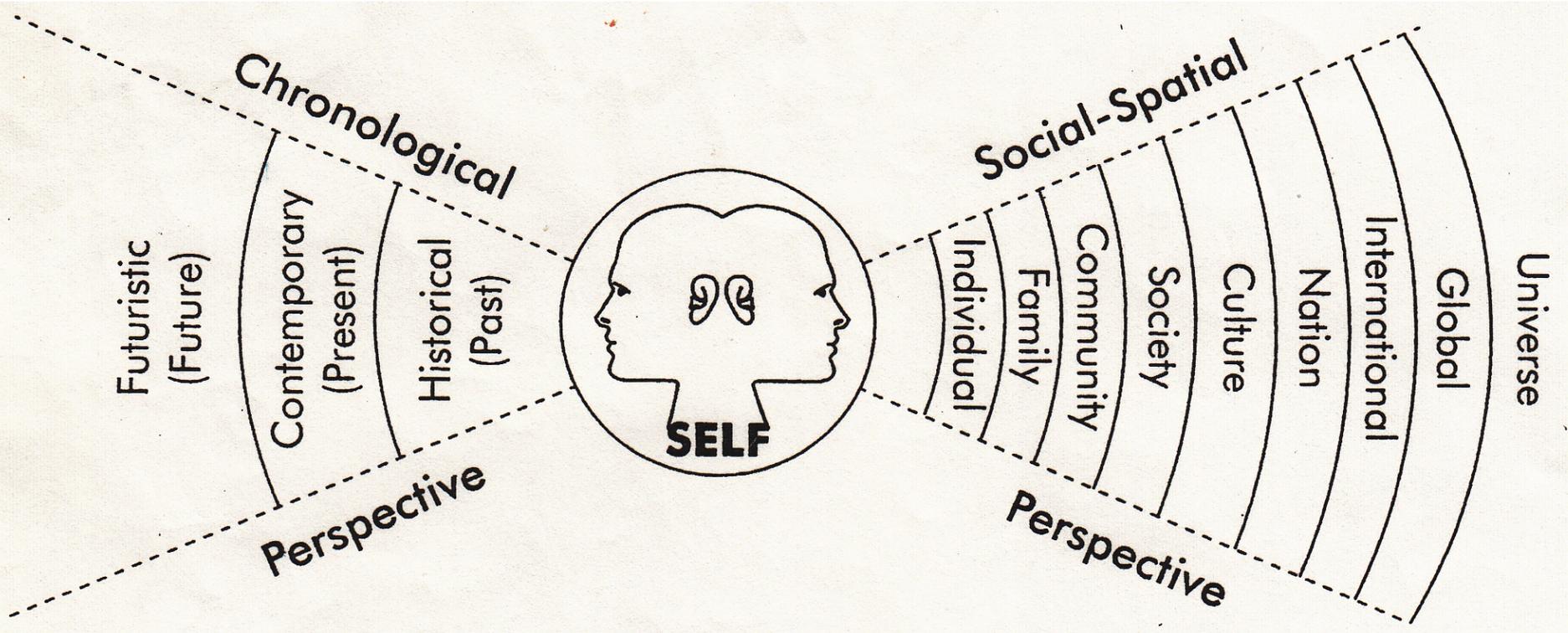


3. **Inclusive Pedagogy**: educational practices that promote equal and simultaneous student engagement (i.e., all students participate at the same time)

4. **Intentional Group Formation**: deliberately designed learning groups comprised of diverse students

5. **Transforming Group Work into Teamwork**: teammates assume interdependent roles and collaborate to pursue a unified goal (common work product)





Culture: Key Perspectives

- * Linguistic
- * Nonverbal
- * Aesthetic
- * Science/Technology
- * Gender Roles
- * Philosophy
- * Spirituality/Religion



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