"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 Kluckholn, American anthropologist
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 & Terenzeni, 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
References

Cuseo, J. B., & Thompson, A. (2015). Humanity, Diversity, & The Liberal Arts: The Foundation of a College Education. Dubuque, IA:


