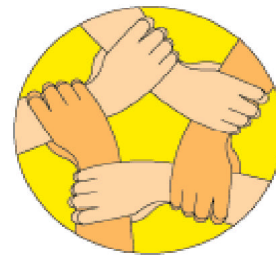




Diverse Issues



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Diversity in People: What Are You? No simple answer for bi-racial people.

A growing segment of our youth population does not fit easily into the neat categories that we, as a society, like to place people. These are the children of parents from differing racial groups. Children of differing racial heritage are often referred to as bi-racial, mixed, interracial, multi-racial, or legally as "other." Between 1970 and 1990, the number of children living in families where one parent is white and the other of a different race tripled from fewer than 400,000 to more than 1.5 million.

While all children have special needs and all must go through the process of identity development, bi-racial children have unique stress. Not only must they integrate personal identify and racial and ethnic identities, but they must also learn to bridge majority and minority cultures. This is further complicated by the fact that one of their identities may be more valued by society than the other. Since high levels of self-esteem are related to consistent comfort with one's racial identity (Okun, 1996), it is important that bi-racial children are able to accept and function in both cultures.

Yet, the question "What are you?" commonly asked of bi-racial children, presupposes an answer of either one race or another. In fact during adolescence, many bi-racial teens feel pressured to choose one racial group over another (Tatum, 1997). As social groupings become increasingly divided along racial lines during adolescence, where does the bi-racial adolescent fit? A number of factors may influence the decision. One's physical characteristics may identify the person more with the majority or minority group; the type of community/neighborhood environment (primarily white, primarily minority, or mixed) in which one was raised; and the identification the parents have encouraged a child to assume are just some of these factors. *(Continued to page 2)*



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Some bi-racial children may at times, feel like they do not belong to either racial group. They may feel as Rosato (1997-98) suggests, like a chameleon, with no color of their own. Some, at times, may feel rejected by both the majority and the minority populations. And neither parent can serve as a role model for a healthy bi-racial identity, because neither parent is bi-racial.

Until recently, many bi-racial people were likely to identify as belonging to the minority race since they were more likely to be identified by others as minority. To do so, however, almost forces the person to deny a part of him or herself, to deny one of their parents. Increasingly, parents are teaching their children to label themselves as bi-racial, thus owning and affirming both racial identities. As one young woman in a study of bi-racial students explained, "You have to accept everything about yourself, otherwise you're not going to like yourself." (Tatum, 1997, p 184).

Acknowledging the need to negotiate additional challenges that others do not, bi-racial children can and do develop healthy identities. Cauce and her colleagues at the University of Washington compared bi-racial adolescents with a matched group of adolescents that had two minority parents. They concluded that, "For both groups, all measures of psychological adjustment were in the normal range, suggesting that bi-racial adolescents can be as reasonably healthy and happy as other young people are." (Tatum, 1997, p 174.)

Educators and youth professionals are in a position to positively impact bi-racial youth with positive climates and accepting environments, thus creating a sense of belonging. The following are some considerations for creating such an environment:

1. Foster an atmosphere of trust and openness where bi-racial children can feel comfortable discussing racial identification issues. Sometimes children may fear discussing concerns at home due to the possibility of offending one parent.
2. Provide positive examples of diversity in the day-to-day activities of the group. Books and pictures that include many cultures and races are one example.
3. Examine your own personal attitudes about multiple racial heritages.
4. Allow and encourage children to self-identify their racial background, without forcing the child to identify more with one or the other part of their heritage.

References

Rosato, J.L. (1997-98). "A color of their own": Multiracial children and the family. *Journal of Family Law*, 36(1), 41-51.

Tatum, B.D. (1997). "Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" New York, N.Y.: Basic Books.

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"The greatest compliment that was ever paid to me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer."

Henry David Thoreau

Diversity Resource: Children Just Like Me

Children Just Like Me: [is] A Unique celebration of children around the world. This colorful book features real children from more than 30 countries. Each child was interviewed and has a story to tell. Learn about their families, food, clothes, favorite activities, and other aspects of their daily lives. Learn about their hopes and dreams, and ways of looking at the world. See their photographs and pictures of their homes and communities. They live in places as close as New York City and places as far away as Mongolia. They live in places as modern as Jerusalem in Israel to places as remote as the Amazon rain forest in Brazil. Learn how these children are both similar and different as they share their world.

This book is was produced in association with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The authors are Barnabas and Anabel Kindersley. The publisher is DK Publishing Company of New York, NY. The publishers maintain a website where children can talk to other children around the world and to the authors of the book through the e-pal club. The address is <http://www.dk.com>.

Test Your Knowledge of Sports



Draw a line to connect each sport with it's country and date of origin.

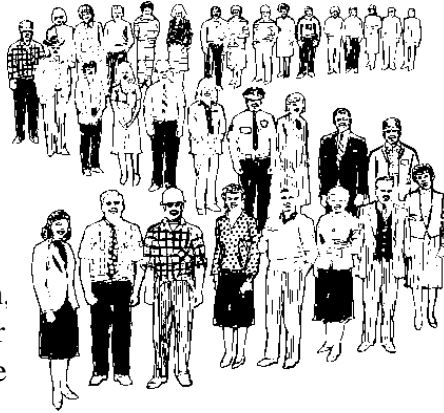
- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1. Basketball | a. Canadian Indians, Mid 1800's |
| 2. Tennis | b. Scotland, based on a Roman game Paganica, 1100 |
| 3. Karate | c. American, Eastern United States, Mid 1800's |
| 4. Baseball | d. French, 1100's or 1200's |
| 5. Hockey | e. England, late 1800's |
| 6. Lacrosse | f. American, Springfield Massachusetts 1891 |
| 7. Football | g. China, 400 B.C.; Romans, 200 A.D. |
| 8. Ping Pong | h. Canada, 1865 |
| 9. Golf | i. India, 400 B. C.; Later Japan, 1600's |
| 10. Soccer | j. England; Originally a game called "Rounders," 1600's |

Adapted from: Grevious, S. C. (1993). *Multicultural activities for primary children*. Center for Applied Research in Education, N.Y.

Answer Key: 1.f, 2.d, 3.i, 4.j, 5.h, 6.a, 7.c, 8.e, 9.b, 10.g

Diversity in the Workplace: Recruiting A Diverse Workforce

From the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics we hear that by the end of the decade, the majority of new people entering the workforce will be women and minorities. In addition, many of those 55 and older are going back to work after retirement. The workforce composition is changing.



How will your organization attract top talent in a shrinking work pool? An important strategy will be “cultural networking,” extending your reach to meet and cultivate relationships with people who may be demographically different from yourself. Who you know is not only important for job seekers, but for employers as well. This may be especially true for those looking to hire talented diverse people from groups where the employer has few contacts.

Expand your database. Develop individual relationships with people from diverse backgrounds, building a large human resources bank to call upon when needed. Get leads for recruits from your network. Perhaps someone in your resource bank will refer you to the one person you would really desire to interview for that hard-to-fill position. Perhaps someone in your network will function as a source of information, allowing you to comfortably ask questions regarding diversity related issues.

Use the following checklist to evaluate your current networking skills. Check statements that reflect what you are currently doing, and highlight areas for consideration.

1. ____ I belong to professional or social groups where the membership is very diverse.

2. ____ I consciously attend group functions where I am an “outsider,” where I don’t know any people, and where some of them are different from me (e.g. gender, ethnicity, race, religion, age).

3. ____ I create collegial relationships, partnerships (both short-term and long) or arrangements at work with people who are different from me.

4. ____ At business meetings, social functions, and professional conferences, I make it my business to expand my contacts with people from diverse groups.

5. ____ I attend various support groups at work even though by background I am not a member of many of these networking groups.

6. ____ I attend community functions, lectures, art exhibits, or holidays that celebrate diverse cultures.

7. ____ I join civic groups apart from work where I have a chance to broaden my contacts.

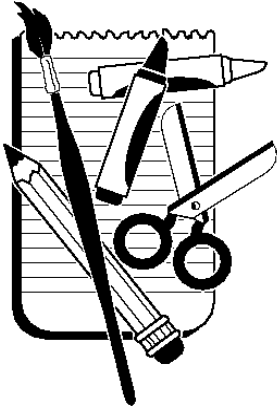
8. ____ I have hosted a networking party where I invited people from diverse backgrounds and asked them all to bring a friend or colleague.

9. ____ I keep nurturing the relationships I have already developed so that my base of contacts grows.

10. ____ I have joined an organization or currently subscribe to a publication whose top priority is cultural diversity.

Count your checks. The more checks you have, the greater access you have to that illusive talent pool you may be trying to reach. Target one or two of these ten items to improve upon as a beginning point to expanding your cultural network.

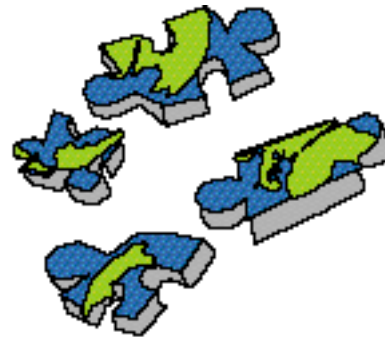
Diversity Activity: Create Your Own Diversity Word Search



Word Searches can be fun as well as educational for youth and adults. Create your own word search to focus on various aspects of diversity. Identify a topic and list 10 to 15 words related to that topic. Create a puzzle grid similar to the one below. Write your words in the boxes. Fill in blank boxes with various letters of the alphabet. Vary the skill level required to complete the puzzles for different groups. For easier puzzles, write all of your words from left to right, but vary their placement on the lines. For more difficult puzzles, write some of your words backwards, from top to bottom, from bottom to top, and diagonally across the grid. Again, fill in the blank spaces with various letters of the alphabet.

POSSIBLE TOPICS MIGHT INCLUDE:

- Different languages spoken around the world
- Different dimensions of diversity
- Different religions of the world
- Countries of Asia
- Countries of Africa
- Jobs appropriate for males *and* females



EXAMPLES OF WORD LISTS:

Languages Spoken Around the World

- English
- Russian
- Spanish
- French
- Hebrew (Jewish)
- Swahili (African)
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Arabic (Middle East)
- Portuguese
- Tagalog (Philippines)
- Maori (New Zealand)
- Yu'pik (Alaskan Eskimo)

Dimensions of Diversity

- education
- income
- race
- religion
- occupation
- physical ability
- ethnicity
- language
- gender
- marital status
- age

Jobs appropriate for Males and Females

- teacher
- police officer
- nurse
- doctor
- plumber
- pilot
- car mechanic
- ballet dancer
- secretary
- CEO
- firefighter

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Diverse Issues is available on the Web

Web Address:

<http://www.cas.psu.edu/docs/casdept/familyliving/pi/pimenu.html>

Diversity Around The State: Retumba Y Truena - It Rumbles and Thunders

Forty migrant youth in Kennett Square, PA engaged in CHARACTER COUNTS! activities as they focused on building character and contributing to community. Caring, trustworthiness, and citizenship, three of the six “pillars of character,” were highlighted in this summer program. Laurie Szoke, 4-H/Youth Agent in Chester County, worked with the Mary D. Lang Elementary School and the Chester County Migrant Education Program to plan, organize, and conduct this activity. Materials from the Exercising Character curriculum were translated into Spanish by Dr. Anamaria Varela.

A special highlight of this Character Counts program was the involvement of Juan Avila, a local musician and composer. Juan is the son of Mexican migrant workers who now live in the Yucatan region of Mexico. Juan is committed to music and to helping people to accept and to honor their roots. Mr. Avila used a unique process to help the children compose a song. While Juan Avila was playing background music on his guitar, the students were asked to stop and write down a phrase in English or in Spanish that held meaning for them. There were no limits imposed on their creativity.

These words were written on three by five cards and placed in a box. They were then sorted and arranged into themes and verses. *Retumba Y Truena* (It Rumbles and Thunders) was chosen as the chorus by all of the students because it

touched a familiar chord in their lives. According to Laurie Szoke, “*Retumba Y Truena* exemplifies the heart of humanity, the love of family, the need for friends, the longing for acceptance, the hope for a world without violence, the quest



for a sense of belonging, and the right for the chance to dream.”

Further, Szoke states that, “The purpose of this project was to give the students a tool that they could use throughout their lives to solve problems by expressing their feelings.” Audio Visions of Wilmington, Delaware came to Lang School and recorded the song on site. The program ended with an exciting performance of *Retumba Y Truena* on stage at the Henderson High School in West Chester. All participating students received a copy of the cassette tape. This program helped to build a sense of community among all involved. The musical production is available on cassette tape. For more information contact Laurie Sicko-Szoke at (610) 869-5709 or (610) 695-3500.

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