



Diverse Issues

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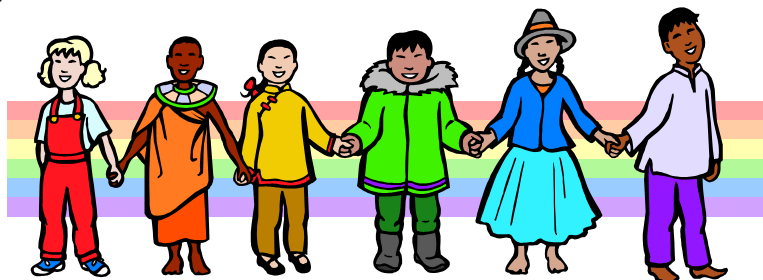
October - December 2002

Diversity in People: What Do We Mean By Race?

At a conference on the topic of diversity, people were asked to break up into two groups: whites and people of color. Our colleague Marya Munoz, who is from Puerto Rico, reported her personal confusion. Which group did she belong in? Marya has white, white skin, far whiter than that of 99 percent of those who were going to the white group, strawberry blonde hair, and green eyes. She comes from an old Puerto Rican family of Spanish ancestry, however, and considers herself Hispanic. Finally, she decided to join the people of color, but her dilemma suggests some problems with this term.

Esty, Griffin & Hirsch, 1995, p. 33

Americans have traditionally tended to classify people into one of three races: Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid. This system was developed in Europe and North America in the 1700's. Until the mid-20th century, most researchers assumed that so-called "pure races" once existed. The belief was that racial traits are inborn, inherited, and given by nature. It was thought that most human beings could be assigned clearly and unambiguously to one racial group (Talvi, 2002). The notion of race as a fixed, rigid construct meant that race was supposed to determine not only a person's appearance and skin color, but also his or her intellectual, moral, character, athletic, and physical traits and capacities.



We now know that modern humans arose in Africa less than 200,000 years ago, and the great migrations took place less than 100,000 years ago. As humans moved into new climates, environmental pressures such as sun, wind, and hot or cold temperatures produced different physical appearances, including slightly different physiques.

(Continued on next page)

Does Race Exist?

According to most anthropologists, biologists, and geneticists today, races are mostly arbitrary categories invented by people and do not exist in reality. Even recent advances in the sequencing of the human genome suggest there is no biological basis for racial categories. Genetically, we are all 99.9 percent alike. In February of 2001, Celera Genomics CEO Crag Venter commented that it was not possible to distinguish at the genome level between people who were African-American, Chinese, Hispanic, and white (Graves, 2002).

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Skin color provides an excellent example. Too much sun causes sunburn and skin cancer. Too little deprives the body of Vitamin D needed for strong bones. Melanin, a dark brown substance, acts as a shade, regulating how much sun can get through the skin.

People whose ancestors have lived a long time in the tropics have more melanin and dark skin. In the tropics the sun is so strong that enough gets through dark skin to make all the vitamin D a person needs. At the same time, the melanin protects the skin from sunburn.

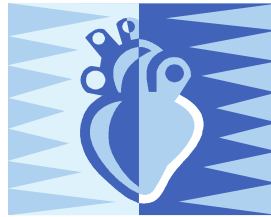
The farther people lived from the equator, the lighter their skin. Less melanin allows more of the limited sun to get through the skin. Dark skin is not an advantage in cold climates; light skin is a disadvantage in tropical climates.

Even southern Europeans usually are darker than northern Europeans. In Africa, the darkest skins are near the equator, but at the north and south ends of the continent, the skins are lighter. In southern India, many people are as dark as the blackest Africans, while northern Indians are about as light as southern Europeans. Also, many “Negroid” people living in sub-Saharan Africa today have skin no darker than that of many Mediterranean people such as the Spaniards, Italians, and Greeks.

Hair type, nose shape, fold of the eyelid, and thickness of the lips have all been used to sort and classify people into the appropriate racial category. Did you know that straight hair holds heat to the scalp, while tightly curled short hair gives off heat? Consider that people native to colder or drier climates tend to have longer, more beak-shaped noses than those living in hot and humid regions. This is because the nose’s job is to warm and humidify air before it reaches the sensitive lungs. The longer the air’s path to the lungs, the warmer and more humid is the air.

Yet, many differences beneath the skin do not correspond to racial categories. There is, in fact, more genetic variation within given “racial” groups than between them (Weller, J. 2002). If you need a blood transfusion, you

should not be concerned whether or not you and the donor share the same race; you want someone who shares the same blood type as you. The same is true for organ transplants. Your closest genetic match for a donated kidney, for example, could easily be somebody of another “race.” A black man and a white man from Manhattan are likely to be more genetically similar than a black man from Manhattan and a black man from Nigeria (Balko, 2002).



Who Belongs to What Race?

In addition to the lack of scientific evidence of different races, arbitrary decisions are made to change the racial classification of people from time to time. During the mid-20th century, people from India with skin darker than the skin of African Americans were classified as white. Today, they are classified as Asian. The people did not change, the classification assigned to them changed.

And when Jews, Italians, and Irish workers were allowed to immigrate into the U.S. from the mid-1880’s to the early 1900’s (before immigration limits for these groups were capped radically), they were not given standing in the white race. They were said to have had their own races, and were treated accordingly. Later, each of these groups was reclassified as white. Clearly, skin color and hair type do not determine one’s race.

And where do Native Americans fit? Until the year 2000, the U. S. Census considered American Indian or Alaskan Native an official racial category of its own. With the 2000 Census, the U.S. added two additional racial categories: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Additionally, people are free to indicate two or more separate races or name a race not listed. And with the increase in interracial marriages with children, it seems that the ability to classify each individual clearly and unambiguously into one race will become increasingly difficult. A growing percentage of our population belongs to multiple combinations of “races.”

Race or Ethnicity?

A shift from the language of race to the language of ethnicity has been suggested. Ethnicity defines groups with similar cultural characteristics such as customs, traditions, religions, and language, but not necessarily biological or physical characteristics. Italians, Jews, Poles, Greeks, Irish, Chinese, Japanese, and Hispanics are examples of ethnic groups. Although less rigid than race, the concept of ethnicity is still imprecise. Even within relatively well-defined ethnic groups, there are considerable differences in people (e.g., class, level of education, sense of ethnic identity, etc.).

However, even if race has become meaningless to scientists, it is very real to practically everyone else. Even though the concept of race has been socially constructed, many Americans still believe there is some biological legitimacy to racial categorization. And in our current society, racial classification serves some purposes. Racial data has been used by the federal government, civil rights groups, and others to try to remedy inequities and unfair practices in law enforcement, housing, employment, and health care. It is not likely that use of racial classification will end any time soon.

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Diversity Activity: My Best Self

This activity can be used with youth or adults.

Part of creating an atmosphere that encourages an appreciation of uniqueness is providing experiences for each person to have a chance to feel really good about whom he or she is. A healthy self-concept is a necessary stepping stone towards positive understanding and acceptance of others that are different from ourselves. This activity is designed to give everyone's self-concept a chance to soar!

Ask participants to form groups of no more than four or five. Each participant will have one blank self-sticking tag for each member of his/her group and a writing implement. Taking turns, each participant will complete orally the following types of sentence stems (the leader may add, delete, or change these as desired):

- _____ I am sad when...
- _____ I am happy when...
- _____ Things I do best are...
- _____ The best thing that ever happened to me...
- _____ When I grow up...
- _____ If I had three wishes, they would be...
- _____ I wish I were better at...
- _____ My favorite TV shows are...
- _____ If I had \$1,000, I would...

While one group member responds to these sentence stems, the others in the group write on one of the tags a minimum of three one or two-word positive comments they think describe that individual. The comments must be positive; no negative statements will be accepted. When the one participant finishes the sentences, the others in the group read what they have written about him/her and then place the tags on the person. After everyone has had a turn, each person should be wearing three or four tags with at least three positive comments on each one. Allow some time for everyone in the group to mingle and talk and show off their "best self." Don't be surprised if some decide to wear their tags the rest of the day!

Adapted from an exercise by Edwina Epps, Teacher, Ford Greene Elementary School

Diversity in the Workplace: The ABC's of Generation "X"

In this ever increasingly diverse workplace, many are faced with the "X-Factor." Teenagers and twentysomethings are changing the face of the work environment. Those who have been in the workplace and are from different generations are sometimes at a loss for how to interact, understand, and embrace this facet of diversity.

However this, like any other dimension of diversity, is just a matter of recognizing the lenses through which we see the world and not allowing them to stifle any component of either a diverse workplace or diverse marketplace. It always begins with the basics. So I have compiled this list as a starting point. Every great journey begins with a single step. Reading and implementing these strategies are the beginning of a great journey to an easing of the recruitment and retention issues involving Generation "X." The following is a list of issues that should be considered:

<p>A - Acceptance Once the person has been hired, they have already demonstrated that they have the potential to fulfill your company's needs. Accept who the individual is. Don't allow a nontraditional appearance to influence how you view individual performance.</p> <p>B - Buy In If you want this individual to buy into you and your company, you and your company must buy into them. Demonstrate that this individual's lifestyle and needs are respected and celebrated.</p> <p>C - Compensation This individual feels cheapened by small meaningless raises. It serves to reevaluate one's position and worth and can initiate thoughts of getting that better paying job. This is a fatal blow to your company in the talent war.</p> <p>D - Dependability If you promise this individual something, DELIVER. If you do not, it will be remembered and subsequently affect morale, performance, and retention.</p> <p>E - Equality Don't allow others to get away with unacceptable behavior that this individual is chastised for. This person has very little respect for the 'old boy' network and is rarely willing to wait for his/her seat.</p> <p>F - Foster Creativity This is the generation of creativity. If there is a more efficient, easier way, this individual is all for it. This person will attempt to think outside of the box with little or no provocation.</p> <p>G - Goals Share company goals and exactly where this individual fits in. This person wants to be an integral part in the realization of your organization's goals, but he/she is not willing to stick around if there is no perceived light at the end of the tunnel.</p>	<p>H - Help Help this person in their tasks when necessary, but by all means <u>do not</u> micromanage. This is seen as a lack of trust and a hindrance to the individual. However, be available for help both in time and approachability.</p> <p>I - Individuality This is the generation where in many instances all parents worked and/or this individual was a 'latch-key kid' handling many tasks as an independent part of the whole. This is what they are used to. This individual sees 'babying' as condescending and rarely appreciates it as a nice gesture.</p> <p>J - Joyful This person desires a fun, working environment. He is willing to work just as hard and usually harder with and for those with whom he can play. They are his friends and he feels more allegiance to them.</p> <p>K - Keep Stress Down This generation has seen ulcers and nervous breakdowns for minimal return. This individual is not willing to go into stress overload with every 'big' project or visit from a higher up.</p> <p>L - Lack of Organization This individual does not respect authority or an organization based solely on name or title. Proof of organizational capabilities and a structure that earns respect and admiration is absolutely necessary.</p> <p>M - Model If you want this employee to exhibit certain behaviors, you must walk the talk. This individual is more willing to challenge any perceived hypocrisy. This person has much less respect for the 'do as I say, not as I do' model.</p> <p>N - Nice This person is much less productive in response to yelling and perceived 'mean' behavior. This is the generation of the underdog and loathes bullies.</p>
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O - Objectives

Objectives that can be set, obtained, and celebrated are wonderful steps to actually keep a 'keeper'. This individual needs to see victorious battles along the way and will work much harder for victorious wars.

P - Perspicuity

This individual needs clarity and is more willing to challenge nebulous directions. The day of 'work harder' is over for this individual. Specific tasks, specific issues, specific areas of improvement, and specific rewards and disciplines help the individual be more productive.

Q - Qualitative rewards

This individual is less willing to work for a company who rewards with things and events that are of no interest. This individual wants performance rewards that they really want.

**R - Reviews**

This individual requires regular feedback and performance reviews. There is little patience here for the "ignore and chastise" management style.

S - Sincerity

This individual is quite unimpressed with the insincere thank you and

often is angered by it. This person would almost rather hear a sincere 'your work stinks' than a phony pat on the back and total rework or scrapping of ideas and projects that she has worked on.

T - Technology

This person is less afraid of technology. In fact this person sometimes has less respect for organizations with sub-par technology.

U - Understanding

This individual values a work environment that is understanding of ability and responsibility levels, and will offer training and other supplementary devices to foster excellence.

V - Validation

This person is much more willing to stay and be more productive when opinions and ideas are heard, respected, and fairly evaluated.

W - Work for Them

This person will work for a boss who works for them. If a customer is behaving in a grossly unacceptable manner toward the employee, a boss gains loads of respect by diplomatically standing by the employee. If those with more seniority are acting in an unacceptable manner, the supervisor will usually get a more productive employee by working for him.

X - Xenophobia

This person is less uncomfortable with the 'strange' or 'foreign.' This individual respects these qualities in a company. Judging the individual for musical or stylistically tastes in a performance-oriented environment often forms more of a rift and communication suffers. Embrace the unique and your organization will be more innovative.

Y - Youth = ?

"Young fellow, little lady, boy, little girl" are all phrases that are condescending to the new Gen. 'X' employee. This is rarely perceived as positive. Many of these individuals have acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities by that age that many in previous generations did not fathom at that age. Be open to the possibilities.

Z - Zealousness Must be Fed

If you want passion and commitment from this individual, you can get it. It must be fed like a seed. This can be your next Great Oak, if you tend to it properly.

Although we may think of these issues only relating to Generation "X," the irony is the fact that these "ABC's" are truths for all generations.

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Diversity Resource: Two Key Extension Diversity Web Sites

The following Web sites are diversity focused and designed specifically for extension administrators and educators.

Change Agent States for Diversity Home Page

<http://www.casd.cornell.edu/>

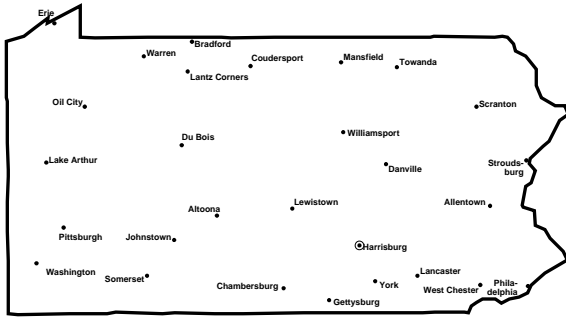
This Web site contains relevant diversity resources, upcoming diversity-focused conferences, tools for change, promising practices, links to other diversity Web sites, and more.

National Virtual Diversity Center

<http://natldiversity.extension.oregonstate.edu/index.htm>

This Web site is sponsored by the National Subcommittee on Extension Diversity. This site contains information related to employing, staff development, reaching audiences, organizational change, and more.

Diversity Around the State: The Cautious and Cultural Cook



*Submitted by Laurie Weinreb-Welch
4-H Youth Development Agent*

The Extension Team of Laurie Weinreb-Welch, Bobbie Jo Simcox, and Patti Smith conducted a three-part program, “The Cautious and Cultural Cook,” for low-income youth ages 8 -14. This educational program focused on basic food safety; ethnic dishes and their origin; and how to plan and prepare healthy meals and snacks. The program was conducted in an outdoor park setting during the summer of 2002. Each component of the program was approximately two hours in length.

Over 350 youth, across 12 community park sites within the county, participated in the program. Youth were enrolled in the Keystone Central School District’s Summer Recreation Program. Additionally, fifteen youth ages 8-14 who attend the Yost Community Center’s (low income housing community center) summer activities program participated.

“The Cautious and Cultural Cook” had three main goals:

- To teach youth basic food safety prevention methods
- To introduce youth to a variety of ethnic dishes and their origins
- To teach youth how to read a recipe and prepare healthy meals and snacks through hands-on activity

Program Activities were designed to meet each of the three program goals. Youth were taught basic hand washing techniques by demonstration, and a hands-on activity using glitter. Key concepts covered: proper cutting boards, washing thoroughly to avoid cross-contamination, proper food temperatures, and storage techniques.

To meet the cultural foods component, youth learned the origins of 12 various breads (pita, pumpernickel, tortilla, etc.) and then taste tested and rated each type of bread. Many of the youth had never seen or tried many of the breads.

Youth reviewed the basic components of healthy recipes and talked about how to use the food pyramid to plan healthy snacks. Participants prepared healthy trail mix and constructed and ate “tomato spiders” using all components of the Food Guide Pyramid, except the fats and sweets categories. The youth also sampled “new” fruits such as mango, kiwi, Crenshaw melon and Ugli fruit. A Food Guide pyramid relay race provided an opportunity for youth to construct their own food pyramids, label the categories, and team relay race to place the food into the proper categories.

A post-test survey and evaluation was conducted by the youth counselors at each of the 12 park sites. Eight of the twelve surveys were returned. The survey revealed that:

- Eating and taste testing the food was the favorite part of the program, while youth also enjoyed helping to prepare the food and participating in the Food Pyramid Relay race.
- Youth learned the components of the food pyramid and the origins of many types of bread.
- Youth demonstrated post-test knowledge in the area of the food guide pyramid, healthy snack preparation, and hand washing techniques.
- More than one youth thought pumpernickel bread was chocolate bread due to the rich brown color.
- Most youth had eaten only white bread and English muffins prior to the workshop.
- Many youth had never tried a kiwi or mango fruit. Most who tried them, liked them.
- Most youth and counselors were unfamiliar with an Ugli or Crenshaw melon. Most who tried them, liked them.
- Youth enjoyed the program and would like extension to come back and continue education in the area of nutrition for next year.

Diversity Calendar

January 2003

- 1st *New Year's Day* - International. *Shogatsu* (New Year's Day) - Japan. Most significant and elaborate event in Japan.
Emancipation Day - U.S. African American. Commemorates President Lincoln's 1863 signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.
- 5th *Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday* - Sikhs. Celebrates the birth of the 10th Guru of the Sikhs.
- 6th *Epiphany* - Christian. Commemorates the visit of the three wise men to baby Jesus.
Three Kings's Day - Christian, International. Time of gift giving and the end of the Christmas season.
- 14th *Makar Sankrat* - Hindu. Hindu and South Indian winter solstice marking the beginning of the Pongal festival.
- 15th *Seijin no hi* (Adult's Day) - Japan. Honors those persons who have turned age 20 in the preceding year.
- 17th *Tu B'Shevat* (sundown) - Jewish. Israel's New Year celebration for trees and fruits.
- 19th *Epiphany* - Eastern Orthodox Christian.
World Religion Day - Baha'i. Observance to emphasize that the goals of religion are to create unity among people, ease suffering, and bring about peace.
- 20th *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day* - U.S. Commemorates the life and accomplishments of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- 21st *Altagracia Day* - Dominican Republic. Religious holiday, also known as Our Lady of High Grace Day.
- 27th *Duarte Day* - Dominican Republic. Celebrates the birthday of Juan Pablo Duarte, one of the fathers of the country.



February 2003 - Continued

- 10th *Wakuf: Day of Arafat* - Islamic. The most important day during the Hajj pilgrimage when Muslim pilgrims ask God for forgiveness and mercy.
- 11th *Eid Al-Adha* (sundown) - Islamic. Commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to God.
- 12th *Darwin Day* - U.S. Commemorates the birth of Charles Darwin and his significant contributions to science and humanity.
- 14th *Race Relations Day* - U.S. Day to encourage understanding of all races.
- 15th *Lantern Festival* - China, Taiwan. Marks the end of the Chinese New Year and the appearance of the first full moon of the new year.
- 17th *President's Day* - U.S. Celebrates the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.

March 2003

Women's History Month

Irish American Heritage Month



- 1st *Maha Shivaratri* - Hindu. Honors the Lord Shiva with vigil and fasting.
Martisor - Bulgaria, Romania. Celebrates ending of winter and arrival of spring.
- 4th *Shrove Day* - Christian. Day to confess sins.
Muharram - Islamic. First day of the first month of the Islamic year.
- 5th *Ash Wednesday* - Christian. First day of Lent, period of penitence and self-examination.
- 17th *St. Patrick's Day* - Ireland, U.S. Commemorates the patron saint of Ireland, who converted the island to Christianity in 432 C.E.
- 18th *Holi* - Hindu, Sikh. Celebration of spring throughout Northern India.
- 20th *Naw-Ruz* - Zoroastrian, Baha'i. New Year celebration, commemorates the end of a long fast.
Shubun no hi - Japan. National holiday celebrated on the vernal equinox. The central day of Higan, a seven-day Buddhist memorial service.

Sources:

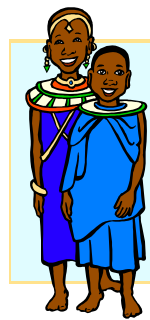
Honoring Differences: Professional Development Group, Inc. 2002.
The National Conference for Community and Justice, 2002.



Remembering

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
January 15, 1929 - April 4, 1968

February 2003 African American History Month



- 1st *Lunar New Year* - International, Asian. Observed during the first three days of the first lunar month. Known as Shul in North and South Korea, Tet in Vietnam, and Chinese New Year.
- 2nd *Candlemas* - Christian. Commemorates the presentation of the baby Jesus at the Temple of Jerusalem.
Groundhog Day - U.S. The length of winter is determined by whether or not the groundhog sees its shadow.
- 3rd *Setsubun* - Japan. National Shinto holiday.
- 6th *Vasanta Panchami* - Hindu, Sikh. A festival of spring, honoring the goddess of learning, wisdom, and fine arts.
- 8th *Nirvana Day* - Buddhist. In the northern tradition, this is the anniversary of the Buddha's passing away.

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