A revolutionary tool for corporate and academic trainers, *We’ve Scene It All Before*, harnesses the power of mainstream Hollywood film to enhance educational sessions about diversity and social justice. This resource manual offers practical guidance on how to effectively use the concept of difference as a starting point towards true inclusion. Seasoned and novice trainers will appreciate the suggested strategies and best practices on facilitating diversity dialogues, which are coupled with a set of twenty-five definitions that introduce and raise awareness of the personal and systemic nature of difference, discrimination, and power.

Workshops on human relations and workplace diversity must move beyond the superficial “celebration” of diversity to the dismantling of systems of privilege and oppression that create environments where members of the organization are disenfranchised and disempowered. Using clips from a variety of genres of mainstream film allows the trainer to make intercultural concepts visible and offers a way for us to challenge our own values and assumptions. Participants will enjoy the presentations more as they view some of their favorite films in a whole new way; using this familiar medium creates a common basis for entering the discussions all the while giving us the permission to talk about serious and often controversial subjects.

*We’ve Scene It All Before: Using Film Clips in Diversity Awareness Training* is a learning tool which will be tremendously useful in reducing resistance and increasing thoughtful cross-cultural dialogue.
We’ve Scene it All Before
TRANSGRESSIONS: CULTURAL STUDIES AND EDUCATION

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Scope
Cultural studies provides an analytical toolbox for both making sense of educational practice and extending the insights of educational professionals into their labors. In this context Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education provides a collection of books in the domain that specify this assertion. Crafted for an audience of teachers, teacher educators, scholars and students of cultural studies and others interested in cultural studies and pedagogy, the series documents both the possibilities of and the controversies surrounding the intersection of cultural studies and education. The editors and the authors of this series do not assume that the interaction of cultural studies and education devalues other types of knowledge and analytical forms. Rather the intersection of these knowledge disciplines offers a rejuvenating, optimistic, and positive perspective on education and educational institutions. Some might describe its contribution as democratic, emancipatory, and transformative. The editors and authors maintain that cultural studies helps free educators from sterile, monolithic analyses that have for too long undermined efforts to think of educational practices by providing other words, new languages, and fresh metaphors. Operating in an interdisciplinary cosmos, Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education is dedicated to exploring the ways cultural studies enhances the study and practice of education. With this in mind the series focuses in a non-exclusive way on popular culture as well as other dimensions of cultural studies including social theory, social justice and positionality, cultural dimensions of technological innovation, new media and media literacy, new forms of oppression emerging in an electronic hyperreality, and postcolonial global concerns. With these concerns in mind cultural studies scholars often argue that the realm of popular culture is the most powerful educational force in contemporary culture. Indeed, in the twenty-first century this pedagogical dynamic is sweeping through the entire world. Educators, they believe, must understand these emerging realities in order to gain an important voice in the pedagogical conversation.

Without an understanding of cultural pedagogy's (education that takes place outside of formal schooling) role in the shaping of individual identity—youth identity in particular—the role educators play in the lives of their students will continue to fade. Why do so many of our students feel that life is incomprehensible and devoid of meaning? What does it mean, teachers wonder, when young people are unable to describe their moods, their affective affiliation to the society around them. Meanings provided young people by mainstream institutions often do little to help them deal with their affective complexity, their difficulty negotiating the rift between meaning and affect. School knowledge and educational expectations seem as anachronistic as a ditto machine, not that learning ways of rational thought and making sense of the world are unimportant. But school knowledge and educational expectations often have little to offer students about making sense of the way they feel, the way their affective lives are shaped. In no way do we argue that analysis of the production of youth in an electronic mediated world demands some "touchy-feely" educational superficiality. What is needed in this context is a rigorous analysis of the interrelationship between pedagogy, popular culture, meaning making, and youth subjectivity. In an era marked by youth depression, violence, and suicide such insights become extremely important, even life saving. Pessimism about the future is the common sense of many contemporary youth with its concomitant feeling that no one can make a difference.

If affective production can be shaped to reflect these perspectives, then it can be reshaped to lay the groundwork for optimism, passionate commitment, and transformative educational and political activity. In these ways cultural studies adds a dimension to the work of education unfilled by any other sub-discipline. This is what Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education seeks to produce—literature on these issues that makes a difference. It seeks to publish studies that help those who work with young people, those individuals involved in the disciplines that study children and youth, and young people themselves improve their lives in these bizarre times.
We’ve Scene it All Before

*Using Film Clips in Diversity Awareness Training*

Brian C. Johnson

*Bloomsburg University*
This book is dedicated to every ordinary citizen who has taken up the charge in creating a better society. Keep loving; keep standing up; keep sitting in; keep speaking your mind. Your labor is not in vain.
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In an increasingly global and diverse society, it is crucial for citizens to learn about and express their emotions about issues relating to diversity, including race, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation and identity, ability, age, religion, and socioeconomic class. Many people internalize anger, fear, contempt, and guilt about these issues. As a result, people express them in unhealthy and unproductive ways in school and the workplace. Diversity training addresses these emotions and behaviors; it provides a place for them to ask questions, make mistakes, be confronted, corrected (if necessary), and overcome inappropriate actions. Enter the diversity trainer.

Diversity trainers and facilitators are integral parts of any group discussing diversity issues. They organize, arrange, and lead different activities, such as discussions or quizzes that explore the many facets of diversity and multiculturalism. Trainers focus the discussion on specific issues, clarify main ideas and points of disagreement, and ask probing questions to expand the group’s understanding. In addition, facilitators set and enforce ground rules to be followed during the discussion. By enforcing the guidelines governing the dialogue, they help determine the mood of the group and the overall effectiveness of the activities. The ground rules allow for more open and free communication of ideas and help participants feel more comfortable expressing themselves.

A discussion on the role of the diversity trainer should examine the etymology of the word “trainer.” Its origin means “to drag” or “to pull” (Bee, 1998, p. 1). Certainly this conjures up a familiar image for those who have been involved in company-sponsored, mandatory (oft called “strongly encouraged”) diversity training programs. Generally speaking, few employees fancy attending required programs no matter the professional development benefits; when the topic is diversity, the push, pull, drag, or tow analogy becomes quite vivid. This phenomenon, in part, results from reactionary diversity education—programs that are offered only after a problem or incident has occurred in the workplace. Those directly involved in the incident become the targets of the ire of the entire group as they get blamed for the mandatory meeting. Another scenario is more personal—sides are drawn as the friends of the perpetrator and victim divide the room and the facilitator becomes arbitrator rather than educator or trainer.

For the better part of the last two decades, businesses and other corporations have attempted to quell cultural disagreements in the workplace by offering diversity training. These often mandated programs offered little more than platitudes about sensitivity, and after that hour or two (or even a full day if there is a progressive
organization) nothing had changed, except employees could check off that they had attended.

The diversity trainer was often unskilled at the art of facilitation, especially related to engaging difficult conversations and heated moments which had been raised by the conflicts and tensions of diversity engagement. This person often faced snarls, eye rolls, disrespect, and other methods of non-compliance. There were three types of diversity presenters; the first were those who were generalists in human resources and had little experience with real workplace diversity issues other than compliance with AA/EEO guidelines. Their typical program focus was to make it all go away. The second trainer was a hired specialist who came to the organization as an invited know-it-all dignitary who had some type of canned program that was rarely useful to the organization. The third, and probably most dangerous and ineffective, was the person who was selected simply for “being” diverse; this token individual was often angry and weary and whose in-your-face approach was simply to make persons from majority identities feel badly. For too many years organizations have relied on the diversity trainer to simply fix the issues surrounding issues of difference, rather than strategizing with the members of the workplace to enhance the inclusivity of the workplace.

Fortunately, there has been a paradigmatic shift from mere diversity training to more education around issues of systemic organizational change that both raises awareness and competencies, but also focuses on increasing opportunities for cross cultural dialogue skills development which leads to genuinely diverse and hospitable working atmospheres. This cultural shift, then, requires diversity trainers to become masterful at facilitation, which includes the skills of inclusion, communication, refereeing, and designing learning outcomes. Trainer-educators must have multiple methodologies to engage participants, and the primary objective of this resource is to provide the tools necessary to utilize the medium of mainstream Hollywood film as a part of instructional pedagogy.

Film is a useful vehicle for creating opportunities for participants and learners to discuss important topics. For many years, educators and other human services professionals, pastors and Christian educators have used movies in classrooms and other areas. Titles such as Cinemeducation: a Comprehensive Guide to Using Film in Medical Education (Alexander, Lenahan, & Pavlov, 2005), Videos that Teach (v. 1-5) (Fields & James, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2006 ) Seeing Anthropology: Cultural Anthropology through Film (Heider, Blakely, & Blakely, 2006), Movie Clips for Kids: Faith-Building Video Devotions (Cartwright, Cory, Kershner, Lavender, & Halasz, 2001), Movie Based Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching (Larson & Zahn, 2003), and Reel Diversity: a Teacher’s Sourcebook (Johnson & Blanchard, 2008) reflect the power of this medium for instruction. The corporate arena has picked up on the value of using film in professional development programs; titles such as Energizing Staff Development Using Film Clips: Memorable Movie Moments that Promote Reflection, Conversation, and Action (Sommers & Olsen, 2005), Our Feature Presentation: Management (Champoux, 2003), 101 Movie Clips that Teach and Train (Pluth, Wheeler, & Majeres, 2007), Reel Lessons in Leadership (DiSibio, 2006), and Movies to Manage By (Clemens & Wolff, 1999) have attempted to bring film into the corporate training venue; each has stressed film’s values of convenience,
audience familiarity and engagement, flexibility of usage, and the ability to capture real-life images in a timely manner.

FACILITATION SKILLS

During diversity programs, the facilitators should incorporate all participants of the group, as best as they are able. This includes allowing for disparate opinions that may seem antithetical to the gathering. Establishing a comfortable and trusting atmosphere allows people to openly express their thoughts, beliefs, and values. By asking questions about these thoughts, the trainers bring the group to the next level of understanding. Trainers must react to group members with empathy, compassion, and sensitivity.

Trainers must remain neutral during the discussion and refrain from expressing beliefs and opinions (this is a challenge sometimes). They must be aware of their areas of expertise, the limits of their knowledge, and their strengths and weaknesses as a leader as well as how these characteristics may influence their neutrality. During moments of conflict, tension, and controversy, facilitators must keep themselves calm and not take remarks personally. They must place the needs of the group before their own.

Checklist for Facilitators

1. Remain neutral and calm, while keeping personal opinions to you.
2. Set and enforce guidelines and ground rules for the group.
3. Focus and determine specific goals for the discussion.
4. Ask probing questions to expand the understanding of group members.
5. Show empathy and compassion to participants by acknowledging and validating their feelings.
6. Incorporate the use of activities and other techniques to engage group members.
7. Summarize key topics, points of conflict, and areas of agreement.
8. Put the needs of the group before your own.
9. Correct any misinformation.

Training sessions typically consist of three sections. During the beginning part, group members to one another, and provide background information on the specific topic to be discussed during the group. The middle section of the training or discussion consists of the “meat” of the program where material and information are disseminated. Facilitators should summarize key points and action items for future development.

Assessing Risk

Important to the learning process for participants is the ability of the facilitator to assess risk of the activities. Risk can be defined as the amount of tension and anxiety that the participants experience, which can fluctuate during the session. Different exercises require the participants to reveal different opinions and values,
which may make some people feel uncomfortable. As the risk level increases, more discomfort may increase the likelihood of conflict within the group. Therefore, one major component to designing and facilitating a group involves controlling for and monitoring the risk level of the activities.

During the initial part of the session, try to keep the risk level at low. Participants may be unfamiliar with one another or are unsure of what to expect from the group (risk may be low, but anxiety may be slightly elevated). They may not be willing or comfortable to disclose personal information or opinions surrounding sensitive issues because they do not trust one another. To build this confidence, trainers use introductions and emotionally non-attached activities designed to foster a sense of community.

The overall risk level increases in the middle portion of the group session when the group focuses on the main goal or objective. Activities broach the subject at low risk to introduce the topic, but risk and discomfort increases as the topic is further explored. By this point in the session, group members share a sense of community and some degree of trust in each other. As a result, although the risk level is higher, they are more willing to express their true opinions and beliefs.

At the conclusion of the dialogue or event, the facilitator reduces the risk level by summarizing and debriefing. The trainer calms emotions and brings a sense of empowerment to the group. Any tensions or conflicts are reduced or aired. Experienced facilitators understand the importance of resolving tensions before the conclusion of the program for two reasons: 1) the attendee will have positive psychological resolution, and 2) encourages additional learning.

Beginning a Training Session

**Guidelines** The first step in conducting a discussion or activity on diversity establishes the rules or general principles that shape the conversation. To keep a discussion from escalating to a high staked emotional debate or from falling into a rut of non-personal discussion, participants must listen to one another, be honest, and approach topics with an open mind. To help foster this type of environment, the ground rules build a framework for trust and camaraderie between the participants.

A list of suggested guidelines is included later in this manual. However, some groups may feel the need to add or remove rules. The list should reflect the needs and values of the participants. Because groups differ, the ground rules are individualized and specific to each session. In addition, during the activity, feel free to revise the list to accommodate for unforeseen needs. The list is not static, but rather a constant evolving basis for discussion.
Facilitators distribute copies of the guidelines to all individuals in the session; or, they may also hang up a copy of them in a centrally located position to remind participants what they are. The rules are read, discussed, explained if necessary, and revised. Clarify any questions from group members. The group comes to mutual agreement to abide by the guidelines.

During the session, facilitators must enforce the guidelines and directly address behaviors or events that do not abide by the rules. If participants break the rules, trainers use their judgment to address either the individual or the group. Usually, if the offense involved one or two people, trainers should approach the people on an individual and private basis. However, if the behavior influenced the majority of the group, then facilitators address the issue with the group.

**Ice Breakers**

Icebreakers provide group members a chance to get to know each other and build a sense of trust and camaraderie between individuals. In some groups, the participants may not know or have limited knowledge of each other. In some cases, talking specifically about diversity concepts and issues reveal unknown ideas or facts, even between individuals who have long term relationships. To create a trusting and honest atmosphere, which is necessary for effective dialogue, trainers provide activities for individuals to meet and greet each other.

The goal of these initial activities maximizes interaction among the group members. Wearing name tags allows people to respectfully communicate with each other, even if they do not know who they are. Introducing oneself in front of the group also helps people to attach names and faces. Another technique commonly used is to place people in dyads or triads. In these groups, the participants exchange names and one or more facts about themselves. For example, a person might reveal an affinity for playing the trumpet. Facilitators may ask the groups questions about defining diversity, the prevalence of one of the negative –isms, or a topic directly related to the topic of the day. Also, individuals may ask questions of the other people in the group to try to gather more information about them.

Following the small group interactions, the participants reconvene in the larger group. In some sessions, each group introduces themselves, tells about the other people in the group, and answers the questions posed by the facilitator. This technique ensures that the people in the group truly listened to one another, provides everyone with more information, and keeps the risk level relatively low.

**Information**

Because group members have varying levels of interest, experience, and knowledge about diversity, facilitators must provide information to the participants to establish a common foundation of understanding. Facilitators may present the objective or main focus of the group discussion by asking participants to read recent media articles about the topic. In addition, definitions or discussions to clarify definitions
of ideas such as diversity, prejudice, etc., allow participants to enter into the discussion with common information.

Trainers often provide news articles, current events, or statistics to educate participants on the topics to be discussed. Also, definitions and terminology are stated and clarified through discussion or word-lists.

Facilitators also set goals for the dialogue group. These goals may range from increasing awareness of certain populations in a region, reducing interracial hostility, devising plans to combat classroom prejudice, or other topics. According to Ronald Hyman in *Improving Discussion Leadership* (1980), there are five types of discussions:

1. **Policy Discussion.** Examine and develop perspectives on a policy question, such as affirmative action.
2. **Problem-Solving Discussion.** Try to find answers to some problem.
3. **Explaining Discussion.** Analyze the causes and logic of a situation.
4. **Predicting Discussion.** Try to predict possible repercussions of a situation.
5. **Debriefing Discussion.** Examine and think about information gained from some activity.

Clearly stating the objectives of the group and explaining that the exercises and information used in the group support these efforts gives the group a unifying theme and focus. Therefore, all participants enter the group on a more common footing.

The Meat in the Middle

*Address Main Focus* Once the goals and objective of the discussion or session are in place, conversation and activity begins. Maintaining a focused and progressive discussion requires careful monitoring and intervention. Timing is very important to the effectiveness of a discussion. The most controversial of topics should only be addressed after the participants build trusting relationships with each other and feel comfortable with one another. In addition, when these topics are presented, they need to be placed in context so that individuals are not caught off-guard.

While there are many techniques and structures for discussions, trainers must evaluate the risk level and applicability of each method in the group. Using high-risk exercises, such as presenting pornographic material to display the exploitation of women, should not be used in the beginning of the discussion because participants may feel uneasy about the material and refrain from participating in the discussion. Some exercises may be more useful in certain groups than others. For example, a trainer may decide to use the pornographic material in a group of college students, but not high school students or professional colleagues. Finally, the most effective dialogues begin with individual experiences, and then move outwards into community issues and the world around us.

One way to begin a discussion involves question and answers about the group members’ personal experiences. Trainers pose open-ended questions that participants easily understand but that require multiple answers. However, to avoid catching the participants off guard, initial questions should keep the risk level low and slowly build up. For example, if discussing racial privilege, a facilitator might ask the
group, “If you are left handed, what are some of the implicit disadvantages that a left-handed person faces? What are some of the privileges to being right-handed?” Using the topic of dominant-handedness maintains a low risk level while introducing the topic of privilege. Afterwards, the facilitators raise the risk level by posing the question, “What are some of the understood privileges of being white?” Tapping into racial identities, the trainer elevates the risk level and brings the group further into the dialogue.

During question/answer sections, trainers should pay close attention to the interactions between participants. They make sure that all participants have the opportunity to speak, that one or two individuals do not dominate the conversation, and that any misinformation or stereotypes are pointed out and corrected. Facilitators often probe learners for more information into their perspective by asking them to clarify, explain, or provide more specific examples. This helps group members understand different perspectives.

Another lower risk technique used in dialogues involves storytelling. Everyone has a story to tell—a variety of anecdotes from their history that they can feel comfortable and safe to contribute to group discussions. Sharing personal stories allows individuals to control the amount of information they reveal to the other group members while increasing the trust and camaraderie between the participants. People can identify with different components of the story and experience similar emotions as the storyteller. In addition, because diversity work requires people to address their own views about topics and to possibly rethink these perspectives, personally connecting with stories brings abstract ideas into reality and practicality.

Stories about childhood, school, religious practices, social and work situations, and families expose other group members to different behaviors and cultural practices. It allows the participants to compare their lives and reactions to similar situations to the person telling the story. Vocalizing and discussing these comparisons either as a large group or in smaller subunits provides individuals with exposure and knowledge about culture. Participants can ask questions about practices they do not understand or need further explanation.

Activities such as handouts, quizzes, videos, etc. may also be used. However, both before and after using these materials, facilitators should apply them to the dialogue topic. Each activity should be contextualized and its relevance explained. For example, if viewing a film, trainers should give a brief introduction about what the film depicts, point out key issues for group members to pay attention to, and pose questions for the group to keep in mind while watching the film. Afterwards, trainers often summarize the objective of the film or ask participants to identify the main idea of the film. Any questions initially posed are discussed. In addition, facilitators provide students with the opportunity to discuss any interesting or poignant issues from the film. By framing the film and giving the group direction, trainers increase the effectiveness of the activity in addressing the discussion topic.

Checklist and Tools for Main Topic Focus

1. Keep the discussion focused on the main objective and be ready to redirect the conversation.
CHAPTER 1

2. Evaluate the timing, risk level, and appropriateness of each method used.
3. Ask probing, open-ended questions that allow students to further explore topics.
4. Use storytelling to engage all participants.
5. Use question and answer methods to investigate different perspectives.
6. Use films, videos, or other multimedia presentations, discussing their relevance to the topic both before and after the presentation.
7. Use quizzes and other handouts to further explain or induce conversation.
8. Provide participants with activities that involve individual work, small group work, and the group as a whole.

Hot Moments

Hot moments are times within the discussion when emotional tensions peak and conflicts occur. Some stereotypes and assumptions spark these moments. Because the diversity dialogues explore sensitive personal opinions and identities, people often become defensive and personalize comments. Hot moments are inevitable; however, by carefully managing them, facilitators turn the conflicts into learning opportunities. Some trainers view these uncomfortable times as the turning point in the group when the most work and learning occurs. They open up areas in the discussion that were previously avoided or overlooked, allowing a more in-depth examination of the relevant topic.

At the first sign of offensive remarks and hot moments, facilitators must stay calm and take leadership of the situation. By appearing un-shaken, facilitators provide a sense of stability, reaffirming the safe atmosphere of the group and allowing the students to explore the topic. In addition, remaining calm provides the group members with a model for their reactions and behaviors.

Facilitators acknowledge the tension in the group and address it immediately. Many trainers find it helpful to pause for a moment or two, allowing the participants to process the conflict and logically reason it out. Silence also provides the trainers with an opportunity to collect their thoughts on the issues, to distance themselves from the situation and take an objective viewpoint, as well as to try to understand the student’s opinion or bias. In some situations, participants are unable to articulate their true emotions and opinions. Trainers look for the underlying meanings and subtext of people’s comments to focus on the true conflict being encountered.

After recognizing the tensions, facilitators bring the issue to the forefront of conversation. If a particular group member made an offensive comment, the trainer takes the focus away from the student and generalizes the offense. For example, a facilitator might respond to a racist comment by saying, “Many people think this way. Why do they believe this? What causes them to think this way? On the other hand, why do other people not think this way?” This strategy tries to prevent personal attacks on the individual who made the comment and encourages other students who may feel similarly to anonymously express their views.

To resolve or to reduce the conflict during hot moments, information and perspectives on both sides of the issue must be presented. Often, tensions result
from ignorance or miscommunication. Talking about why people hold certain beliefs and practices and exploring the motivations behind them raises awareness and understanding. Trainers sometimes have students listen to the other point of views on issues and then restate or defend the main idea of the argument that they originally disagreed with. This technique, effective for the most sensitive subjects, forces students to truly listen and comprehend what the other person says as well as process it for themselves before restating it in their own words.

In situations where participants are visibly shaken and upset, trainers provide the participants with the option of leaving the room to take a break. However, in any event where a person leaves the group, facilitators talk with the individuals privately outside the room. Through one on one interaction, the facilitator shows empathy and concern for the participant, validating her/his feelings. In addition, the trainer helps the person to learn something about self, other people, or the topic in general.

When hot moments and conflict arise, as they inevitably will, trainers directly confront the issue or offensive remark. Trainers think rationally, remain neutral, and find teaching opportunities in the occurrence. However, if a trainer cannot find a workable position in the conflict, s/he recognizes it but puts it to the side for later possessing. The deferment allows both the facilitator and the participants to calm down and plan strategies to effectively confront the topic. Before the end of the session, the group returns to the moment and deals with it, exploring the differing viewpoints surrounding it.

*No Hot Moment is Ignored or Not Discussed*

**Trainer’s checklist for dealing with hot moments**

1. Acknowledge and either immediately confront the hot moment or agree to return to it later.
2. Stay calm and think rationally to find the learning opportunities in the conflict.
3. Take a few minutes to reflect on the moment and allow participants to process the tension.
4. Look for the underlying meanings of people’s comments to find the focus of the issue at hand.
5. Enforce the ground rules to prevent personal attacks on participants.
6. Take the focus off the individual by generalizing her/his statement.
7. Have group members present differing viewpoints and the rationales behind them.
8. Have group members restate and defend conferring perspectives.
9. Talk with upset students individually.

*Action*

At the end of diversity training groups, participants often feel empowered and want to take action on a more community-based, broad level. Facilitators provide individuals with resources, ideas, and possible tools that they can use to continue
their work on diversity issues. Arming learners with the techniques necessary to continue their work increases the likelihood of action.

For example, by providing a list of web sites related to the topic discussed, participants have the chance to further examine the dialogue topic, looking at new points of view. Many trainers also provide a suggested reading list with titles of relevant books, magazines, or journal articles that participants can read to further their understanding about diversity.

**Ending a Training**

*Summarize and Debriefing*  Before the conclusion of the discussion group, facilitators involve the group in a final summation and wrap-up of the discussion’s events and findings. Bringing together the key points and highlighting the progression of the group’s views causes participants to feel the discussion was effective and productive. When individuals feel that their efforts were valuable, they are more likely to continue to participate in diversity discussions as well as to work to raise awareness about issues.

During this time, any deferred hot moments are addressed, last questions are answered, and materials distributed. Facilitators closely monitor both the verbal and nonverbal communication signals of the group to identify any unresolved tensions, ambiguities, or emotions. Participants should leave the session without anger or unairied conflicts. Trainers debrief and assist individuals in calming down any emotions by allowing them time for final reflection, either in small groups or as a whole unit. In addition, some facilitators find it helpful to have groups identify and write about what they felt was important about the session or what they learned from it.

The role of the facilitator for diversity engagement is not an easy one, but with the right tools, facilitators and trainers can be quite successful in helping organizations and individuals in their strategic endeavors for planning, preparing, and promoting diversity and inclusion. In the later chapters, we will examine the film medium as one of these tools. Chapters will explore some core concepts of media literacy that are requisite to using this method, and best practice skills diversity education, cross cultural development, and inclusionary practice. The highlight of this resource is the chapter detailing scenes from feature length mainstream Hollywood films which provide visual example of twenty five terms which are essential to raising awareness of difference in the workplace.
BEST PRACTICES IN DIVERSITY EDUCATION

Tried and True Strategies

As a professional, are you committed to the development of a culturally inclusive work environment where the cultural identities of its constituents are affirmed? Do you endeavor to work at an institution where each community member feels liberated to be a whole person and has the freedom to critically explore and examine their own and others' opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and identities in a supportive environment? Do you uphold a firm commitment to diversity and recognize that there are multiple dimensions of diversity including, but not limited to, culture, race, ethnicity, nationality, geographical locations, age, sexuality and sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status, gender, class, linguistics, and religion? Are you equally committed to the values of social justice and creating equity and access for underrepresented and marginalized groups?

These are the central questions for the preparation, practice, and promotion of diversity and inclusiveness in your workplace. As you develop interactive diversity workshops, challenge the participants to understand the organizational and community benefits of a climate of critical multiculturalism (May, 1999; Goldberg, 2009; Steinberg, 2009). This includes the notion that creating a multicultural organization is an important component of any business enterprise, as it helps to build critical thinking and decision-making skills, and it provides opportunities for intercultural and cross-cultural interactions and relationship building. Having a diverse organization does not mean lowering standards or expectations, nor is it being concerned with being “politically correct.” In fact, critical multiculturalism welcomes the vantage points of all members of the community and only seeks to ensure that minority groups have the equitable opportunity to be full-fledged members of the community.

Organizations often use the phrase “cultural competency” when referring to engaging difference. Cultural competence can be defined as a composite set of tailored actions, behaviors, and attitudes which enable a person or institution to function with efficacy in cross-cultural environments. (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989; Isaacs & Benjamin, 1991). In plain usage in the workplace, cultural competences allows for the appropriate delivery of services to all constituents and stakeholders. The word culture is used as it includes a person or groups’ total way of life including thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions. The word competence is used because it implies having the capacity to function in a particular way: the capacity to function within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior defined by a group. Being competent in cross-cultural functioning means learning new patterns of behavior and effectively applying them in the appropriate settings.
One of the challenges for institutional change, at least when it comes to diversity, is the development of personally impacting initiatives that ultimately drive institutional change. There is a diversity of opinions about diversity, and as such, making individual inroads is essential to multicultural organizational development. Day-Vines (2000) indicates that in order for systems to create truly inclusive, multicultural acceptance in the workplace, classroom, or community placement, there must be a personal commitment to “recognize, validate, and affirm” (p. 3) individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Day-Vines continues with a discussion on various multicultural competencies that educators and social service professionals should possess, including a commitment to: examining personal biases; the recognition of social realities, racism, oppression, power and privilege; and learning factual knowledge about different cultures.

Each person who enters the organizational community impacts and influences the academic and social experience of others. Each of us brings a wealth of experience, heritage, values and beliefs, traditions, and customs that enrich our community in myriad ways. Every one of us is diverse; we have each experienced the world from a unique perspective that has been shaped by the intersections of gender, race, socioeconomic class, religious tradition, sexual orientation, age, geography and nationality, language, and so many more factors. The differences that we each bring to the community, then, have the potential to richly benefit the working and learning environment. These benefits can be life-long, providing the mechanisms to foster and bolster engagement across levels of difference.

Beginning with the level of personal engagement with these issues, diversity awareness programs should invite participants to become reflective about their own cultural orientations—the ways each of us has been socialized to believe and think the way we do. This reflection includes:

- **Cultural Identity Development.** We each should embark on a journey of self-discovery of our own cultural identities and how these impact our relations with others. I recommend developing a personal race, class, gender, and sexuality analysis where we acknowledge our own dominance and minority statuses.

- **Understanding My Own Cultural Complexity.** It is also important for us to recognize the ways in which we each create meaning through our own multiple identities. Each of us lives at the intersections of our cultural identities, and we need to understand this multiplicity to be truly grounded in our own selfhood.

- **Finding Common Ground.** We should stress the importance of recognizing that we all “put our pants on one leg at a time.” Diversity does not build community; diversity by itself divides. Friendship and camaraderie are born out of similarity and common purpose.

- **Devilifying Majorities.** If inclusion is ever to be a reality, Whites, Males, Heterosexuals, Americans, and Christians need to be welcomed to the “diversity table.” We must recognize that without allies in power groups, little change can occur.

- **Coalition Building.** The connections we make between groups of people can make or break the success of our initiatives. Let’s not forget that when we work together, we learn together.
BEST PRACTICES IN DIVERSITY EDUCATION

One can talk about diversity and why it is so important; the goal of professional development regarding diversity is to really understand the benefits and opportunities of a diverse education and community. For this to happen, diversity education must be integrative and experiential. It is when we actively engage in long-term relationships with those who are from differing walks of life that we find out the most about ourselves—our beliefs and values—when we participate in activities that push our boundaries and limits, we find that there are multiple paths and solutions to life’s challenges. Institutional priorities should include creating “global citizens” who possess vast knowledge of complex multicultural competencies. Below is a developmental process which will help trainers devise frameworks for multicultural education that minimize diversity resistance and maximize learning of diversity skills.

Stage One: Experiment

Experimental programs can be described as one-time events that are more about personal cultural awareness, such as ethnic dinners, cultural festivals, and special celebratory events—what Lee (1998) might terms the heroes and holidays approach.

Stage Two: Engage

Programs that engage are more academic in nature; participants learn in traditional classroom formats or the content is focused on cognitive, fact-based data and information.

Stage Three: Explore

At this more reflective level, trainers require students to be more introspective and reflective about self and society and to challenge assumptions and beliefs.

Stage Four: Experience

Programs that fit this profile require active, long-term participation. These types of programs often involve intercultural teamwork and problem solving activities. Service learning and volunteer work programs often fit this type of educational offering.

By repositioning diversity education to active, experiential student learning focused on citizenship skills development, we can help prepare workers to be informed, educated leaders in society who demonstrate courage and integrity, and who have an honest commitment to addressing community problems and broader social issues through the linking and appreciation of the ideas of political astuteness, community involvement and empowerment, and social and moral responsibility to self and others. Trainers should endeavor to develop learning goals that speak to the importance of developing our workforces to be prepared to actively meet the challenges of a global marketplace. Producing citizens who can actively engage
with persons from all walks of life is a primary goal of the liberal learning imperative. (Longerbeam & Sedlacek, 2006).

In order to become diverse in population and thought, multicultural in actions, beliefs, and attitudes, and inclusive in governance, curriculum development, decision-making, policy building, and community development, members of the organization must learn and be willing to critically engage each other on the issues of diversity and inclusion. Through facilitated discussion and other activities, participants can learn how to individually, departmentally, and institutionally develop practices that support each other’s personal, social, cultural, and academic development as they engage with these important issues.

For engagement with diversity and inclusiveness to work, such engagement must be integrated into the mission, vision, and daily functions of your entire workplace or organization. There are three imperatives of diversity engagement: strategic (those individuals and organizations who are poised to navigate a global marketplace and citizenry will be ahead of the pack as population demographics shift in the next fifty years); moral (righting the wrongs of the past and protecting against future harm and underrepresentation of disenfranchised groups); and educational (increases factual knowledge about specific group needs as well as the mechanisms for societal change). Understanding how each of these mandates impact and influence the working and learning community allows participants to build their capacities for cross-cultural engagement. Doing so allows for the development of a set of skills that help in dealing with the tensions created by diversity and for strategies in creating diversity-mature people who take personal responsibility for their attitudes and actions.

Part of being a culturally competent person is the understanding that individual identity development is impacted by interpersonal relations and societal norms. At the same time, individual identities also influence others and society. To that end, we must learn about the intersections of self and society and how understanding this plexus is important for multicultural interactions; this involves building relationships and communication with people who have divergent beliefs and values. Traditional conversations and programs about diversity are often messy, sensitive, and, for many, downright scary. How can we build effective personal relationships across (and in spite of) differences when people are afraid and unable to talk to each other? Learning outcomes for educational programs about diversity should help to expand relationship building skills by becoming more culturally self-aware, finding common ground, and by harnessing the benefits of living, working, and learning in community with others.

APPLICATION

This section highlights tried-and-true best practices gleaned from years of leading diversity initiatives. These principles have been developed from past experiences (the best and the worst) as a diversity trainer, educator, and administrator. The following strategies will assist you and your company in going to deeper levels of community engagement and cultural understanding.
Create a Common Lexicon

Most people who are inexperienced with cross-cultural engagement withdraw from these types of conversations because they are afraid of “saying the wrong thing” and thereby being labeled an—ist (racist, sexist, homophobe, etc). Those who plan diversity programs should keep in mind the importance of leveling the playing field; the more people share common definitions, the easier it will be to communicate with one another.

Later, we will highlight a set of definitions that can prove valuable for your diversity education and training programs.

Talk About the Systemic Nature of Oppression

Exclusion is encoded into the fabric of American life and society (Johnson & Blanchard, 2008); we have made major strides in civil and human rights, yet many people still are not afforded the “inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Younger generations see footage of the terrible atrocities of slavery, the Holocaust, exclusion and internment, and believe that “things are so much better now.” Yet, we live in a social system that works to the advantage of those who hold power in subtle and even unconscious ways. The unfortunate truth is that racism and other inequalities persist in 21st century America. Subtle (and not-so-subtle) manifestations of racism, classism, Anti-Semitism, heterosexism, and Ableism persist in education, employment, housing, and criminal justice. School re-segregation is occurring at alarming speeds. Some have been desensitized to the everyday examples of oppression such as name calling, telling ethnic and sexist jokes, and the use of phrases like “that’s so gay.” Diversity programs need to be conscious of the dynamics inherent when differing cultures interact.

Far too many people who find themselves “different” believe that their perspectives are not taken seriously; that when they speak from their own particular vantage point, they are snubbed, opinions slighted, and the complaints rage—“Oh, here we do again…why do they always have to talk about race (sexual orientation, etc)?” Or, “Why are they so hypersensitive?” Another common belief is the presumption that minorities were “given” their employment or scholarship because of affirmative action, but those non-minorities earned their way through a meritocracy.

In his book Overcoming Our Racism: The Journey to Liberation, Sue (2003) speaks about the pervasiveness of what he terms “micro-invalidations” and “micro-aggressions.” These acts are generally innocuous and easily overlooked in a single occurrence; e.g., a person of color is asked to explain hair styles (“Can I touch your braids? It feels like Velcro or steel wool”). This happening on a single occasion probably means little, but when asked for the tenth or hundredth time over a period of years, the simple and subtle become bothersome. Think of the numerous times we heard how candidate Obama was “so articulate.” On the surface this comment seems complimentary except for the supposition that he was so unlike other minorities. What makes matters worse is the underlying attitudes and feelings of superiority that make the “different” seem exotic; consequently, these behaviors undermine inclusiveness, organizational harmony and efficacy, by causing feelings
of being unsure, unwanted, useless in those who fail to detect and deflect them. Additionally, members of agent groups find it difficult to comprehend the sensitivity to these daily occurrences.

**Focus on Issues and Principles Rather than Identity Politics**

Make creating a better community the priority instead of playing the “my group” versus “your group” game of division. An example of this phenomenon is the “It’s a Black thang, you wouldn’t understand” that was made popular in the late 1980s. When rap and hip hop were in its fledgling stage, it was considered “black music.” Those urban youth who listened to the beats began wearing t-shirts and gear reading that statement, which was meant to purposely exclude whites. The slogan became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

All models of racial, ethnic, and sexual psychosocial identity development include an immersion stage where an individual becomes grounded in their own cultural identity by surrounded only by markers of that group (Torres, Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2003). This is often seen as the “pride” stage—persons wear the buttons and placards, attend the meetings and rallies, and hang out only with like-kind affinity groups.

Unfortunately, this stage also decreases one’s sensitivity to the needs of other groups; what emerges is what can be called “the oppression Olympics.” Immersed individuals or groups will compare whose group has had it the worst. Blacks will argue that 400 years of slavery trumps Japanese internment, while Jews decry the atrocities of the Holocaust as more significant than those who are gay and lesbian whose “sexual preferences” prohibit them from simply getting married. These disparate groups are so busy fighting one another; they fail to see their common enemy—oppression.

**Include the “Majority” Perspective**

Criticism of diversity and multiculturalism is often centered on the thought that minority groups take something that is owned by or deserving to majority groups or individuals. Persons in cultural, racial, religious, or sexual majority groups need to identify their complicity in systems of power and oppression and how unexamined dimensions of their own identities may limit their ability to effectively engage with disempowered groups. Training programs must examine the nature of dominance, including the structural and societal implications and personal dimensions of race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, language, ability, sexual orientation, religion, as well as the intersections of the above concepts. Deconstructing predominance is a mechanism to better explain the minority experience.

Persons in majority groups (see definition for in-group in chapter 3), in particular, have difficulty approaching the topics because they have been left out of the dialogue for so long. Diversity has been a predominantly minority-based discourse, and majorities feel like they are encroaching on a territory that is not their own. What we have, then, is an opportunity to demonstrate that to have a minority means to
have a majority—opening the access to a dominance discourse that is so necessary in truly engaging the issues of difference. The vantage point of the majority group then becomes the authoritative context by which we come to understand socio-cultural issues.

For example, in a discussion on how race is lived in America, most conversations center on “people of color” (Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans). Whiteness, though, is the canvas upon which people of color experience life in society; they are judged for not being White. The standards of goodness and beauty in American society are White (open most beauty magazines for proof). To have a healthy and robust discussion on matters racial, whiteness must be discussed. Ignatiev (1993) suggests removing whiteness from the central core of our racialized society to allow all persons the same access and equity to resources, education, and economics—in a way, applying the same scrutiny to whiteness as has been given to the actions and attributes of minority groups for centuries.

To shine a light on whiteness is to bring to light the advantages of predominance. It also helps students understand how puritanical whiteness has been elevated in our society, mainly through the notions of ethnocentrism, the belief in the superiority of Whites, and in the argument of having “earned our way” through meritocracy (Johnson & Blanchard, 2008, p. 46).

The same is true for all agent groups: men must be included in discussion of gender; heterosexuals should understand their own sexual orientation and how heterosexuality operates in society; Christians should explore religious identity strictures; Americans must understand themselves as participants in the global society instead of the greatest superpower (and what it means to be a superpower); those from affluent financial means should seek to understand how their own socioeconomic status affects their own worldview and how they see the working class and the poor.

Value Open, Respectful Dialogue

Leave fear at the door. Good communication is at the heart of community. For many, communication is a lost art in our society. This is especially true of conversations about politics, religion, race, sexual orientation, and other points of departure. Our communication is typically one-way; we like to tell people “my opinion” but we rarely listen to one another. We have difficulty traversing cultural divides in our conversations; we even talk about cross-cultural dialogues (while we operate mostly in monologues). This is exacerbated by our two-sided coin juxtapositions; we assume only two positions (for/against, black/white, us/them, liberal/conservative) as if there are only these poles. Our adversarial positions continue to divide rather than bring together.

We prefer to “communicate” (the very term requires two-way understanding) through myopic “my way is the only way, the right way” exclusivism, or hyperbolic intellectual dishonesty, or emotional and aggressive hysteria. Rarely do we challenge ourselves and others to share balanced views of our facts (including the limitations
CHAPTER 2

and weaknesses of our own arguments, let alone the validity and strengths of others’ (Merchant, 2008).

Having difficult dialogues is a necessity; diversity can be a “dirty word” and we need to be able to be real with one another in order to get beyond surface diversity issues. Establishing ground rules that honor open dialogue is essential.

**Asking the Right Questions**

We’re all egocentric; ask questions that invite people to share their stories and heritages. Diversity conversations that focus on people’s lived experiences, personal belief systems, and personal cosmologies often get to deeper levels than those centered only on data, personnel issues, and policy. We need to develop effective inquiry-based skills that empower each of us to participate fully in discussions on diversity. Inquiry skills center on a seeking of multiple explanations and information through questioning. Inquiry implies involvement that leads to understanding. Furthermore, involvement in learning implies possessing skills and attitudes that permit you to seek resolutions to questions and issues while you construct new knowledge”, these become essentials to sustained and affirming diversity discussions (Heron, 1996).

Effective inquiry is more than just asking questions. Cultural competencies that have been derived from a complex inquiry method allow individuals to convert information and data into useful attitudes and behaviors—what has been called multicultural tailoring (Goldberg, 1997; Rotheram-Borus, 1993). Useful application of inquiry learning involves several factors: a context for questions, a framework for questions, a focus for questions, and different levels of questions. Designing diversity and multicultural education programs should include opportunities for critical inquiry that exposes, interrogates, and explores—holding the expectation and opportunity to substantiate opinions – without being condescending or disrespectful.

Imagine the questions that can be spurred when using clips of mainstream Hollywood films. The interdisciplinary nature of film creation, dissemination, and consumption provide great fodder for discussion. Furthermore, the cyclical nature of film’s impact on the individual outlook and the societal view offers the trainer additional opportunities to engage the audience while giving lively examples of the curriculum being taught.