

Diversity Corner

I. Diversity Awareness for Dec
<http://www3.kumc.edu/diversity/December.html>

II. December's Diversity Activity:

ASSESSING YOUR COMFORT WITH DIVERSITY

Directions: Think about each dimension of diversity and rate the degree comfort you feel in dealing with people different from you in that dimension.

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	HOW DISCOMFORT SHOWS ITSELF
Age				
Gender				
Sexual Orientation				
Physical Ability				
Ethnicity				
Race				
Geographic Location				
Different socio-economic status				
Personal Habits				
Recreational Habits				
Religion				
Educational Background				
Appearance				
Parental Status				
Marital Status				
Role of Women				
Ethical Values				
Family structure/practices				
Treatment of elders				
Relationship to Authority				

Role of work in life				
Personal health/hygiene				
Language differences (accents included)				
Leisure time activities				

Adapted from *Diverse Teams at Work*, Lee Gardenswartz and Anita Rowe, Irwin Professional Publishing, 1995.

[Click here to download this activity.](#) 

Objectives:

- To identify areas of personal discomfort in dealing with diversity
- To gain understanding about what triggers that discomfort

Intended Audience: **Time: 30 - 45 minutes**

- Participants in a diversity training session
- Members of a work team or task force

Materials:

- Copies of Assessing Your Comfort with Diversity worksheet
- Pens/pencils
- Easel and chart paper optional

Processing the Activity:

- Facilitator begins with brief lecture mentioning that diversity is an inside job and acknowledging the role of individual perspectives and experience in determining comfort level across various diversity dimensions. Facilitator can use self as an example.
- Facilitator distributes the worksheet and asks participants to respond to each category with either a high, medium, or low score. Where there is low comfort, participants can write in the box "How discomfort shows itself."
- Facilitator then asks people to discuss either in pairs or small groups. The number of participants and the level of trust influence the size of the discussion group. Where there is little trust, groups of 2 or 3 are preferable. If high trust exists, groups can be larger.
- The facilitator gives the small groups approximately 15 minutes for discussion.
- Facilitator then conducts discussion with the whole group, focusing on areas of greatest discomfort, reasons for that discomfort and noticeable change, in either becoming more comfortable or less in any area.

Questions for Discussion:

- Which areas have high comfort levels? Which have the lowest?
- To what do you attribute the differences?
- Where has the comfort level changed, either getting more or less comfortable?
- What has brought about the change?
- What is the consequence to your relationships and career opportunities if no change is made?
- What can you do to increase your comfort in places where it needs to increase?

Caveats, Considerations and Variations:

- Where you are trying to build trust and push people to go deeper in relationship building and personal awareness, this probably is not a good first step. Wait till the group demonstrates honesty and openness before pushing people to go deeper.
- This is a useful tool at a more superficial level to introduce the breadth of diversity and help all people see their connection to the topic.
- This tool is adaptable in that it can really open people up and help them see their short-comings, but it can also be used as beginning level awareness in a non-threatening way.

III. An introduction to diverse terminology

December term of the month

Rankism

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Rankism is a term coined by physicist, educationalist and [citizen diplomat Robert W. Fuller](#). Fuller has defined rankism as: "abusive, discriminatory, or exploitative behavior towards people who have less power because of their lower rank in a particular hierarchy"^[1]. Note this definition does not mean that rankism is a form of [social discrimination](#) since it does not make a distinction between:

rank assigned on the basis of class or category and rank assigned on the basis of individual merit.

Fuller claims that rankism also describes the abuse of the power inherent in superior rank, with the view that rank-based abuse underlies many other phenomena such as [bullying](#), [racism](#), [sexism](#), and [homophobia](#). Fuller asserts that rankism involves:

exploiting one's position within a hierarchy to secure unwarranted advantages and benefits, without regard to the deprivation of people deemed to be inferior;

illegitimate use of rank (e.g., abusive parent or priest, corrupt CEO, bully boss, prisoner abuse, etc.);

treating rank as a shield that permits one person to insult or humiliate others with impunity;

using rank to perpetuate position long after it can be justified while quashing talented people who might challenge that position;

exporting rank achieved in one sphere of activity to claim superior importance as a person;

use of rank illegitimately acquired or held (as in situations resting on specious distinctions of social rank such as [racism](#), [sexism](#), etc.). Fuller has also written that:

victims of rankists may find themselves publicly humiliated or ignored and treated as invisible.

society facilitates the rankist liberty to insult when whole groups are stereotyped as weak and vulnerable^[2]. The opponents of rankism believe that position and power should be used to serve the group over which one holds authority.

IV. Diversity Resource Material:

Campus Wide Activity

Participants are split into 5 groups. Groups are asked to respond to five visions of transformation regarding diversity on campus by providing their own interpretation, benchmarks, or other indicators that would point to progress toward a more inclusive, diverse, and welcoming environment.

Section 1

Vision: **“Where students, faculty, and staff are conversant with a diverse society and have knowledge, understanding, and respect for difference”**

Section 2

Vision: **“Where diversity is inclusive and infused throughout the institution’s activities/ events”**

Section 3

Vision: **“Where the education and understanding of diversity by all constituents (faculty, staff, students, alumni, leadership) is a priority”**

Section 4

Vision: **“Where educational diversity is promoted as value-added and enriching to the lives of all”**

Section 5

Vision: **“Where a diverse society is understood and celebrated”**

V. Monthly Diversity Article: **Voters Ban Affirmative Action-**

The struggle continues over affirmative action in Michigan and in other parts of the country.

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061107/NEWS99/61107060/-1/BUSINESS07>

VI. Campus Diversity Speak Out:

Include your thoughts here and they will be shared as a part of the next Diversity Corner. Please limit your thoughts to one paragraph.

If you tried any of the activities, please let us know how it went via email.

There are many people who indicated an interest to joining the informal group. If enough people are able, let's try to have a meeting; we can meet the second or third week of DEC. in room H 345. Once I have enough people I will email you with the day and time. If you are interested in participating but have not let us know, please send an email to hpayne@qcc.cuny.edu or call ext. 6391.