Class Activities

# Chapter 9: Embracing Diversity and Inclusion

## Guide to the Class Activities

Each activity is designed based on Fink’s Learning Taxonomy and is tagged with the following tags under the taxonomy’s learning and assessment structure:

1. Foundational Knowledge (F)
2. Application (A)
3. Integration (I)
4. Human Dimension (H)
5. Caring (C)
6. Learning How to Learn (L)

These activities may be used in either small-group or large-group settings, depending on class size and time available. Some may also be suitable as homework.

## Activities

### In-Group Privilege (A, H, C)

This activity can alternatively be used for chapter 10. The concept of white privilege was first proposed in 1935 and has since become a central concept of critical race theory. It relates to our consideration of inclusion because it conceptualizes racial inequality not just as disadvantages experienced by people of color, but also as advantages that white people gain from North American society simply by being in the dominant group. Many websites offer exercises on identifying white privilege, e.g. [www.culturesconnecting.com/docs/WhitePrivilegeExercise.doc](http://www.culturesconnecting.com/docs/WhitePrivilegeExercise.doc). This can be done as a written exercise, but is even more effective as a physical exercise of identifying with privilege or exclusion. Instructors can use existing lists of privilege or exclusion or create their own (see sample items below). Students are asked to stand and remain standing until an item is read from the list that applies to them; then they sit down. At the end, few students remain standing. An alternative is to have students form a line across the middle of the classroom. They should take a step forward if they identify with a statement of privilege that is read, or a step backward if they identify with a statement of disadvantage or exclusion that is read. At the end of the list, the class may be quite dispersed.

Inclusion questions can be formulated along different demographic lines (gender, ethnicity, age, physical ability, etc.). Some examples:

Gender: Ask students to stand up (sit down, or take a step backward) if…

You have ever been told to “act like a man”

You have ever felt forced to fight in order to prove your manliness

You have dieted or exercised to change your body weight or shape

You have ever pretended not to be as smart as a man

Ethnicity

You attended elementary or high school comprised mainly of students with the same ethnic background as yourself

You work in an office where most people share your ethnic background

Your supermarket stocks the foods from your culture

You can find make-up in shades suitable for your skin tone

Age

When speaking to you, people don’t assume you’re hard of hearing and raise their voice

You see people your age frequently represented in TV shows and movies

You’re not assumed to be technologically challenged

People don’t overlook you for job opportunities because they assume you’re

“Behind the times”

The exercise is best done without talking, so students can feel the accumulation of exclusionary experiences. After each statement is read, allow a few seconds for the class to look around and notice who has moved and how the composition of the class has changed. Students should be allowed to not participate or to pass on a given statement. After the exercise is complete, debrief in small groups: How did you feel participating in this exercise? What feelings arose for you? If you were not part of the demographic majority, how did you feel about the majority? If you were part of the demographic majority, how did you feel about the minority? How do cultural messages like these become entrenched in a society? As a leader, what steps can you take to become aware of your own privilege? What steps can you take to increase people’s sense of belonging in an organization?

### Global Snapshots (F, A, H)

As homework, assign students to research a country other than their own and report back to class. Have them explore cultural values/dimensions such as:

* Attitude toward age
* Gender equality?
* Attitude toward different ethnicities
* Average income
* Religions
* Main industries
* Food staples
* Attitude toward change

In class, reflect on the differences between countries and cultures. Which of the cultures might be hardest to connect with and understand, from a North American point of view? How does learning about others help us respect them, or break down cultural barriers?

### My World View (F, A, H)

In class, have students sketch out their multiple social identities using Table 9.1 as a starting point. This can be drawn in any way that students find helpful – as lists, Venn diagrams, icons, etc. In what ways do they exemplify the primary dimensions? The secondary dimensions? Are there other dimensions that may be relevant to them, such as birth order, or rural/city upbringing? Which dimensions are most salient for them currently? For example, would a student from the rural south be more aware of her identity as a southerner if she is attending a college in a northern city? Or would an adult learner be more aware of his age among a group of 20-year old students? How can the leadership class be more inclusive of these varied identities?

### Clarifying Concepts (F)

Chapter 12 contains many important concepts that are similar yet offer important distinctions. Create a worksheet for students and ask them to find the definitions for each term and give an example of it. These lists can then be referred to during class discussion and used as study guides for a quiz. The instructor can also create a Jeopardy style quiz to test student recall.

Diversity

Inclusion

Parity

Equity

Inequality

Ethnicity

Multiculturalism

Intergroup relations

Assimilation

Differentiation

Pluralism

Social identity

Ethnocentrism

Prejudice

Stereotype

Privilege

Systemic discrimination

### Campus Study (A, H, C)

Assign students in groups to research different aspects of their campus’s diversity efforts. Sample topics: Hiring and retaining minority faculty; hiring and maintaining minority staff; recruiting and retaining minority students; creating “safe” communication on campus; college policies regarding hate speech, etc. These reports can be presented in class. What are the challenges for *your* community? What successes can you celebrate? To add another layer of learning, ask students to interview campus leaders (administrators, student government representatives, board members, etc.) on their roles, challenges and accomplishments in this process.

## Writing Assignments

### Diversity, Inclusion, and Leadership (F, A)

Have students write a 1 page paper on why diversity and inclusion are “not usually discussed as core leadership concepts.” Do they agree that, historically, diversity and inclusion management should be “center stage” for organizational leaders? Why or why not?

### Millennial Leadership (F, A)

Assign students to read this report of a study by Deloitte and the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative on generational differences in defining diversity: <https://www.fastcompany.com/3046358/the-new-rules-of-work/millennials-have-a-different-definition-of-diversity-and-inclusion>

Select some of the questions below to address in the paper:

* How are millennials distinct from Boomers and Gen-Xers according to this review?
* How is the “millennial viewpoint” described? Do you agree?
* What is cognitive diversity? Can you give an example?
* How can leaders help millennials be engaged at work?
* What are some “narrow walls that surround diversity and inclusion” in organizations? How can they be broken down?

### Diversity Backlash (A, H, C)

An important, but challenging, topic to explore is the backlash to diversity efforts in U.S. society, as seen in anti-Muslim legislation, violence targeting mosques and African-American churches, a rise in expressed bigotry in schools, resistance to immigration, etc. Have students select a topic to explore, use at least 5 reputable sources, develop a thesis statement and at least three supporting arguments for it. The paper should be 3-5 pages long, to treat the topic in some depth.

### One Minute Paper Topics (F, A, I)

In a group, what is your ideal balance of being included vs. differentiating yourself from others?

How should managers be held responsible for the success of the minorities they hire?