

Exploring Diversity & Intersectionality

The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

Overview:

This workshop is about exploring and understanding different aspects of diversity and intersectionality. Participants will engage in intentional exercises that will get them to reflect upon the influences of diversity upon their own identity, as well as apply their knowledge to their engaged work in the communities in which they serve and belong. These exercises include developing a working definition of diversity and intersectionality, exploring personal identities and aspects of diversity through an interactive, prompted discussion, and concluding with reflections on how diversity and intersectionality play an essential role in civic and community engagement. In this workshop, diversity will include exposure to many different types including ability, class, ethnicity/race, gender, nationality, political parties (or views), religion, and sexual orientation.

Category:

Diversity, Intersectionality, Reflection, Civic Engagement, Identity

Level:

Introductory. The material presented in this workshop includes introductory concepts about diversity and intersectionality, which may be helpful for first-year students, though not at all limited to underclassmen.




First Year Students

Recommended

Bonner Connections: Recommended for students in the first year of the Bonner developmental model. It is written to be conducted at a first year cohort-based meeting, but it can easily be adapted to an

All-Bonner meeting or mixed class meeting as well. This session is meant to serve as the introduction to the Dialogue Across Diversity and Inclusion 4x4 model, Stage 1: Exposure.

Dialogue Across Diversity and Inclusion 4x4 Student Developmental Model			
Stage 1: Exposure	Stage 2: Understanding	Stage 3: Application and Discussion	Stage 4: Adaptation
			

Focus or Goals of this Guide:

The focus of this workshop is to introduce participants to the depth and breadth of diversity. This includes understanding that the term 'diversity' encompasses a wide range of categories, as well as comprehending that the effects of diversity can be felt on a personal level and within a community. Additionally, there is a specific focus on intersectionality, an important concept to understand while discussing issues of diversity.

The goal of the workshop is as follows:

- Participants will have a working definition of diversity and intersectionality.
- Participants will have a deeper understanding of how diversity affects themselves and their community.
- Participants will have the tools to reflect and be able to identify ways that diversity plays an essential role in their work on campus and in the community.

Materials:

- Large, open space for participants to easily move around
- Understanding Definitions: Diversity and Intersectionality handout (page 11-12)
- Printed copies of the Eight Categories of Diversity (page 13-20)
- Markers/Writing Utensils

How to Prepare:

In order to be fully prepared to facilitate this workshop, please complete the following steps:

- Print out the *Understanding Definitions: Diversity and Intersectionality* handout (page 11-12).
- Print out the *Eight Categories of Diversity* (page 13-20). Each sheet has a word printed on it, with a short definition below. Tape these eight sheets of paper around the room, with space around the sheet for participants to gather around it.
- Read through the trainer guide and familiarize yourself with the terms defined.
- Think about issues that might arise based on the composition of your group, current events, or areas of diversity that are less represented. Make a plan to handle these challenges if they should arise.

Brief Outline:

This workshop will begin with a light icebreaker that gets participants familiarized with each other and the ways that they are unique. After being exposed to differences amongst those in the room, they will transition into defining diversity and intersectionality. During this section, participants will also become exposed to eight categories of diversity, which will be the focus for the main exercise. Participants will be given prompts that require them to choose one category of diversity. They will discuss in groups the influence of diversity on their conception of identity and their work in the community.

The outline has the following parts:

Total time: 75 minutes

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Introductions | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 2) Ground Rules | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 3) Definitions | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 4) Understanding Diversity | suggested time 40 minutes |
| 5) Reflection | suggested time 10 minutes |

Your Plan

Part 1) Introductions

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Welcome participants to the session. Introduce yourself, and thank everyone for joining you today.

Briefly introduce the workshop:

“Today we have come together to explore and better understand the concepts of diversity and intersectionality, as well as their influences on our lives and communities. Before we dive into our session, I’d like to begin with a quick and light icebreaker.”

Ask each participant to introduce themselves and one thing that they believe makes them unique. These can be light and humorous (e.g. My name is Corella, and I love pizza more than anyone I know). Begin with yourself to provide an example.

The goal of this light opener is for participants to start talking about the ways that they are unique and different, which will feed into the rest of the workshop, discussing diversity and how to embrace the myriad of ways that people differ.

Part 2) Ground Rules

Suggested time: 5 minutes

This section is meant to establish a safe space for the workshop by offering ground rules for all participants to abide by.

Read these rules aloud, and/or write them on the board. Be sure to ask if any participants have any other rules to add or if there need to be modifications to the ones shared.

Ground Rules to Establish a Safe Space:

- Be respectful of every individual in the room and what their differing backgrounds may be.
- Agree to come into this with an open mind and the goal of understanding; do not attempt to persuade others.
- Be curious and open.
- If you want to be heard, be sure to listen.
- Realize and accept that we may leave this room without a resolution to problems that may arise.
- Ask questions and use "I" statements to draw from personal experiences. Do not try to represent larger groups.
- Consciously move beyond stereotypes and assumptions.
- Share speaking time.

Thank everyone in advance for their adherence to these guidelines. Now we are ready to begin our workshop.

Part 3) Definitions

Suggested time: 15 minutes

The focus of this section of the workshop is to introduce participants to the terms that they will be discussing the remainder of the workshop. These terms include diversity, intersectionality, and eight different categories of diversity (ability, class, ethnicity/race, gender, nationality, political parties (or views), religion, and sexual orientation).

Ask participants for a few suggestions as to a definition for diversity. Participants can volunteer words, phrases, full definitions, examples, etc. Write these onto the board. This will also serve to pulse the room in regards to their initial thoughts on diversity, which can be helpful context for you as the facilitator. It can show if the participants are on a more introductory, moderate, or advanced level when it comes to diversity and intersectionality.

After some suggestions, read the following definition aloud:

"Diversity is a broad concept that refers to the variety of group experiences that result from the social structure of society. It is influenced by social factors including, but not limited to race, class, gender, age, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, and region of origin."¹

Acknowledge that diversity is a broad term, and this definition may not be all-encompassing. However, for our purposes, it is a commonly agreed upon working definition that we will use.

Next, introduce eight of the social factors mentioned, which will be referred to as Eight Categories for Diversity in this workshop. This is a good time to reference the printed Eight Categories of Diversity sheets (page 13-20) that should be taped around the room.

- **Ability:** the capacity for one to do or act based on one's natural or developed skills²
- **Class:** a group of people who generally share political attitudes, lifestyles, consumption habits, cultural interest, and ways of surviving and/or getting ahead³

¹Anderson, Margaret L., and Howard Francis Taylor. "Developing a Sociological Perspective." *Sociology: Understanding a Diverse Society*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2008. 9. Print.

²"Ability." *Dictionary.com*. Dictionary.com, n.d. Web. 24 July 2017.

³Keller, Bill. "Shadowy Lines That Still Divide." *Class Matters*. New York: Times Henry Holt, 2005. 8. Print.

- **Ethnicity/Race:** Ethnicity refers to a group of people with shared cultural practices, perspectives, and distinctions. Race refers to shared biological traits deemed by society to be socially significant.⁴ The National Institutes of Health Research Guidelines categorize subjects into two ethnic categories (Hispanic or Latino or Not Hispanic or Latino) and five racial categories (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and White).⁵
- **Gender:** Social or cultural distinctions associated with being male or female.⁶
- **Nationality:** the status of belonging to a particular nation by origin, birth, or naturalization⁷
- **Political Parties (or Views):** an organized group of people with roughly similar opinions on issues affected by the government, that seeks to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office⁸
- **Religion:** a collective name for a personal set or institutionalized system of attitudes, beliefs, and practices often associated with devotion to God(s) or the supernatural⁹
- **Sexual Orientation:** patterns of emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people that exists along a continuum, with exclusive attraction to the opposite sex on one end of the continuum and exclusive attraction to the same sex on the other¹⁰

"The terms we just defined will be instrumental in the work that we do in the rest of the session, but also in our work on campus and in the community. It is especially important to note that it is absolutely necessary when speaking of diversity to also speak of intersectionality.

Intersectionality is a term coined by American civil rights activist, Kimberle Crenshaw, to describe the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and

⁴ Schiebinger, Londa et al. "Race & Ethnicity." *Gendered Innovations in Science, Health & Medicine, Engineering, and Environment*. Stanford University, 2011. Web. 24 July 2017.

⁵ "Racial and Ethnic Categories and Definitions for NIH Diversity Programs and for Other Reporting Purposes." *National Institutes of Health*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 8 Apr. 2015. Web. 24 July 2017.

⁶ Little, William. "Chapter 12: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality." *Introduction to Sociology*. 1st Canadian Edition ed. N.p.: B.C. Open Text, 2012. N. pag. Print.

⁷ "Nationality." *The Free Dictionary*. Farlex, n.d. Web. 25 July 2017.

⁸ "Roles and Definition of Political Parties." *Parties and Candidates*. ACE: The Electoral Knowledge Network, 2002. Web. 25 July 2017.

⁹ "Religion." *Merriam-Webster*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 25 July 2017.

¹⁰ "Sexual Orientation." *Psychology Today*. Sussex Publishers, 2017. Web. 25 July 2017.

gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage."¹¹

To better understand diversity and intersectionality, pass out the Understanding Definitions: Diversity and Intersectionality worksheet (page 11-12). Give participants ~10 minutes to review the definitions and complete the exercise.

"Intersectionality informs us that we cannot just discuss separate categories of diversity and not address that they are also interdependent. Therefore, as we continue into the next segment of our workshop that focuses more on the eight categories of diversity, also think about the ways that they intersect."

Part 4) Understanding Diversity

Suggested time: 40 minutes

In this exercise, participants will have the opportunity to reflect upon how diversity and intersectionality have influenced their conceptions of personal identity and community work.

Be sure that each of the Eight Categories of Diversity sheets (ability, class, ethnicity/race, gender, nationality, political parties (or views), religion, and sexual orientation) are posted in visible sight around the room (page 13-20). Ensure that this is complete before introducing the activity.

Feel free to read or modify this script to introduce the activity:

"Now that we've had a chance to discuss the wide range of intersecting identities that the term 'diversity' can encompass, we will now explore how diversity has affected our conception of personal identity and community engagement. Though we are speaking of social factors that affect diversity in particular, you are encouraged to speak of the intersectionality between these factors as well during this exercise."

I have a series of prompts that I will read, one at a time, that will ask you to choose one of the eight categories posted around the room. After each prompt, you will walk over to the diversity category that answers the prompt for yourself and discuss your reasoning with the other participants that chose that diversity category as well. Share as much as you feel comfortable, keeping the ground rules that we discussed earlier in mind."

¹¹ Crenshaw, Kimberle () "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8.

Read each of the prompts (listed below), one at a time. After reading a prompt, give participants **5-7 minutes** to choose the category that answers the question and discuss their reasoning with peers who chose the same category.

- For categories that only have one participant, have them partner up across categories to discuss their reasoning. You, as a facilitator, could also discuss with them.
- For categories that have many participants, have them split into smaller groups of 5-8 individuals to discuss.

There is an option to have one or two individuals share out regarding their discussion after each prompt. However, this may be omitted to save time. Participants will have time to share out during reflection.

Understanding Diversity Prompts:

- The part of my identity that I am most aware of on a daily basis is _____.
- The part of my identity that I feel others most often identify with me is _____.
- The part of my identity that I feel gives me the most privilege is _____.
- The part of my identity that I feel empowers me the most is _____.
- The part of my identity that makes me feel uncomfortable at times is _____.
- The part of my identity that I feel I am least aware of is _____.
- When serving in the community, the part of my identity that I am most aware of is _____.

The prompts may be modified, or you may add prompts as well.

Part 5) Reflection

Suggested time: 10 minutes

This concluding segment of the workshop is meant to provide a space for students to share their thoughts on the Understanding Diversity exercise, as well as reflect how the knowledge they gained will be useful in their work on campus and in the community.

In a group of 25 participants or below, conduct this reflection session as a large group. This option is encouraged, if possible, because there is great value in having a forum where all participants can share their experience and insight.

- Read out each reflection question periodically, or write them on the board for the group to reflect and discuss.

In a group of 26 participants or more, conduct this reflection session in small groups of 10-15 participants.

- Read out each reflection question periodically, or write them on the board for each group to reflect and discuss.
- After five minutes, have one participant from each small group share a brief summary of their group discussion to the larger group.

Reflection Questions:

- What was one insight you gained from your discussions in the previous session?
- Why is it important to address and understand diversity and intersectionality?
- What role does diversity and intersectionality play in civic and community engagement?
- How does understanding the way that diversity affects you, help you be better equip to serve your campus and community?

To conclude the workshop, encourage participants to always remain intentional and thoughtful about the way that the many elements of diversity intersect and affect themselves and their communities.

Note that the eight categories of diversity covered in this workshop are the basis of the topics covered in the Bonner Foundation's Dialogue Across Diversity and Inclusion Student Developmental 4x4 Model. These topics will be covered more in-depth in the training calendar over the next few years. [Reference the 4x4 model on the Bonner wiki here.](#)

Credits:

Developed in 2017 by Samantha Ha, Program Associate at the Bonner Foundation. Materials have been sourced from:

- *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics* (1989) by Kimberle Crenshaw
- *Describing the Emperor's New Clothes: Three Myths of Education (In)Equality* (1996) by Kathryn Pauly Morgan
- *Sociology: Understanding a Diverse Society* (2001) by Margaret L. Anderson and Howard F. Taylor

Followed by Handouts:

- Understanding Definitions: Diversity and Intersectionality handout (page 11-12)
- Categories of Diversity (8)
 - Ability (page 13)
 - Class (page 14)
 - Ethnicity/Race (page 15)
 - Gender (page 16)
 - Nationality (page 17)
 - Political Parties (or Views) (page 18)
 - Religion (page 19)
 - Sexual Orientation (page 20)

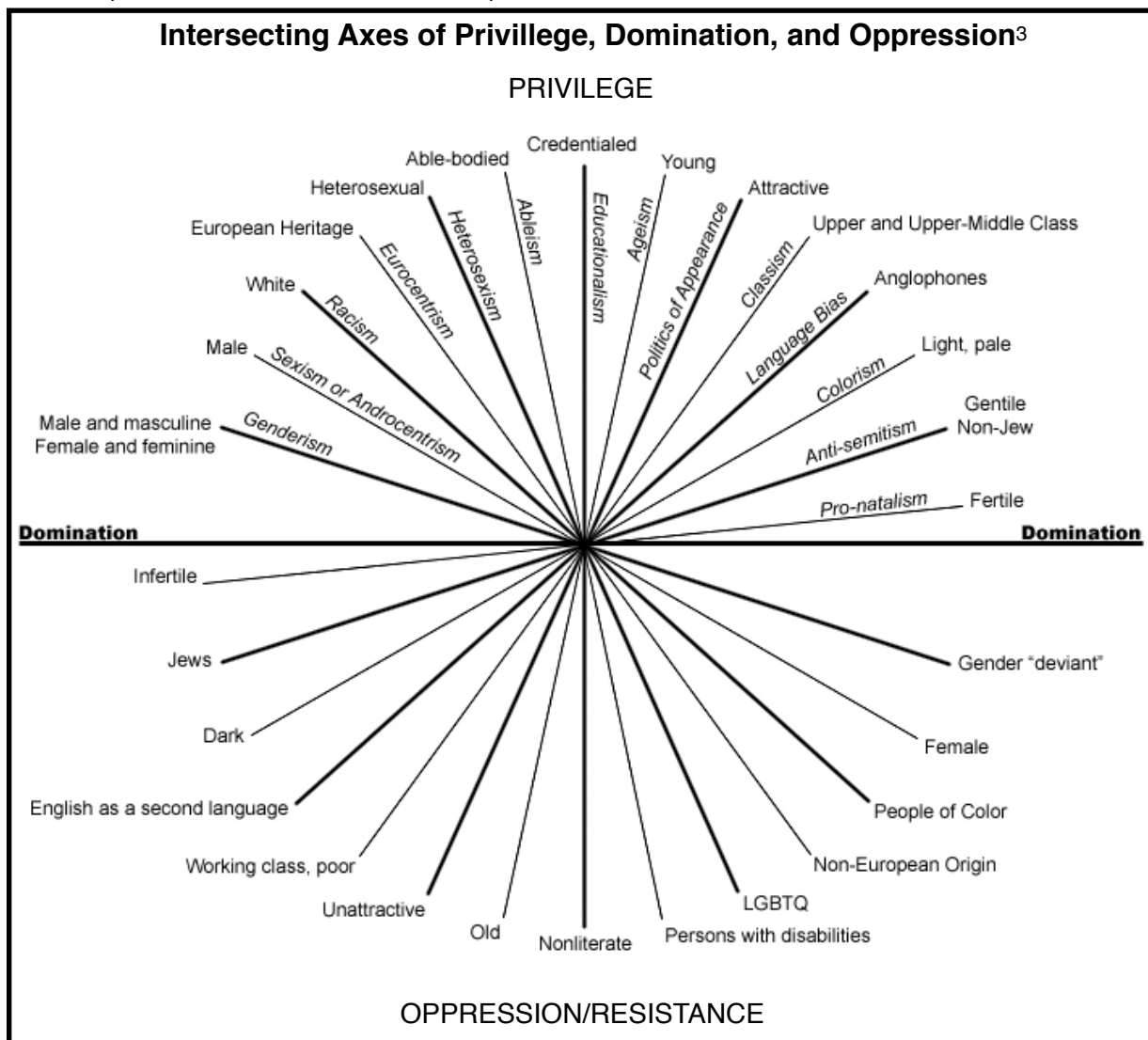


Understanding Definitions: Diversity and Intersectionality

Diversity is a broad concept that refers to the variety of group experiences that result from the social structure of society. It is influenced by social factors including, but not limited to race, class, gender, age, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, and region of origin.¹

Intersectionality is a term coined by American civil rights activist, Kimberle Crenshaw, to describe the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.²

The graphic below shows a visual representation of intersectionality:



Using a writing utensil, preferably a colored marker or pencil, shade in where you fall on each axis. This is an exercise that calls upon your own personal judgment on where you stand in each category/axis listed. It is also worthwhile to note that not all social factors are included in this graphic.

After shading in the graphic, answer the following questions:

1. How does the graphic represent intersectionality?
2. What does shading in the intersectionality graphic tell you about yourself?
3. Does shading in the intersectionality graphic help you better define and understand the terms of diversity and intersectionality? If so, how?
4. What questions do you still have?

The concept of intersectionality is meant to illustrate that social categorizations are interconnected and that people struggle daily with inequalities and privileges that come with their multi-faceted identities. It does not, however, dictate that individuals are any more or less diverse.

¹Anderson, Margaret L., and Howard Francis Taylor. "Developing a Sociological Perspective." *Sociology: Understanding a Diverse Society*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2008. 9. Print.

²Crenshaw, Kimberle () "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8.

³Kathryn Pauly Morgan, "Describing the Emperor's New Clothes: Three Myths of Education (In)Equality." *The Gender Question in Education. Theory. Pedagogy & Politics*, Ann Diller et al., Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996.

Ability

the capacity for one to do or act based on one's natural or developed skills

Class

a group of people who generally share political attitudes, lifestyles, consumption habits, cultural interest, and ways of surviving and/or getting ahead.

Ethnicity /Race

Ethnicity refers to a group of people with shared cultural practices, perspectives, and distinctions. Race refers to shared biological traits deemed by society to be socially significant.

Gender

Social or cultural distinctions
associated with being male
or female

Nationality

the status of belonging to a particular nation by origin, birth, or naturalization

Political Parties (or Views)

an organized group of people with roughly similar opinions on issues affected by the government, that seeks to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office

Religion

a collective name for a personal set or institutionalized system of attitudes, beliefs, and practices often associated with devotion to God(s) or the supernatural

Sexual Orientation

patterns of emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people that exists along a continuum, with exclusive attraction to the opposite sex on one end of the continuum and exclusive attraction to the same sex on the other