

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON EXCELLENCE THROUGH DIVERSITY INSTITUTE

Border-Crossing Bridge-Builders On The Move!
Building Crosswalks Among Campus Silos and Mingshafts
* Bridging Bridges Across "Diversity Dividgs" *

Excellence and diversity are intimately intertwined. Diversity, in its many dimensions and manifestations, is a necessary prerequisite for excellence. It remains fundamental for discerning and attaining tomorrow's best—Our Best Future. Why? For many reasons, but especially because it fires up and fuels creativity and innovation in education and business as well as other sectors of life and living. (See *When Sparks Fly: Igniting Creativity in Groups* for an elaboration of these ideas.)

The University of Wisconsin-Madison continues to expand its menu of sustained learning and networking opportunities for all members of the campus workforce--faculty, classified staff, academic staff and administrators. The Equity and Diversity Resource Center, in collaboration with the Office of Human Resource Development, continues to develop a multi-tiered menu of sustained cross-unit learning and networking opportunities. There are now four 9-month long campus workforce learning communities which provide multiple points of entre that require differing levels of time commitment and preparatory investment: the Leadership Institute, the SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Seminar, the SEEDED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity for Experienced Doers) Seminar and the Excellence Through Diversity Institute. They all ultimately aim to cultivate authentically inclusive and vibrantly responsive teaching, learning and working environments. All are guided by the core principle of SELF as responsive instrument and lifelong project-in-process. Embracing an inside-out/outside-in approach, they engage the "textbooks of our selves" while exploring the "textbooks on the shelves" as well as a wide array of other resources.

The Excellence Through Diversity Institute (EDI) is an intensive train-the-trainers/facilitators learning community and organizational change support network organized around responsive assessment at multiple levels. This dynamically generative pilot program started July 2002. As an intentional capacity-building community of practice, EDI strives for excellence through creating authentically inclusive and vibrantly responsive teaching, learning and working communities that are conducive to success for all.

TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

Participants serve as both learners and teachers using the "textbooks" of the self as well as those on the shelf. The Institute embraces curricular and pedagogical processes that honor both mirrors and windows: together, they reflect and resonate with one's own life journey as well as the diverse journeys of others. As dynamic co-creators and partners in this capacity-building initiative, EDI urges participants to support divergent as well as convergent dimensions of each others ongoing journeys toward intercultural expertise and educational excellence. The Excellence Through Diversity Institute's teaching and learning process strives to cultivate and support the following attributes.

❖ **EXCELLENCE-PRAXIS FOCUSED**

Engage in mindfully and heartfully reflective practice through iterative cycles of doing, reflecting on and improving our doing.

❖ **IMPROVISATIONAL**

Stay light-on-our-feet and responsive in making the path as we walk it. We spotlight the fact that no simplified maps or blueprints are available for understanding individuals in sociocultural context—no simplistic diversity cookbook recipes.

❖ **COLLABORATIVELY CO-CREATED AND ENLIVENED**

Seek out multiple realities, sustain meaningful tensions through resisting premature cognitive commitments and respectfully embrace the often challenging gifts of “creative abrasion” and conflict transformation.

❖ **DWELLING ON THE APPRECIATIVE EDGE**

Cultivate comfort with the discomfort of navigating and negotiating uncharted terrain, boundaries and borderlands—the complex and changing dynamics of salient “diversity divides.”

❖ **INTERDEPENDENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

Encourage ALL to proactively take joint responsibility for our individual and collective successes.

No passive consumers or disengaged spectators allowed.

In joining the Excellence Through Diversity Institute, participants receive a written welcome and overview document that includes the above statements. This document explicitly elaborates our expectations of participants in addition to specifying the EDI process and outcome promises.

FOUNDATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

- ❖ Come with committed energy, passion and enthusiasm for cultivating SELF as a refined instrument of progressive development and change: SELF as lifelong project-in-process.
- ❖ Come with an open and expansive mind, heart and spirit.
- ❖ Come with a readiness to dwell in the *stretch zone* and move out of your comfort zone.
- ❖ Come ready to honor and dynamically balance personal needs and interests with collective needs and interests.
- ❖ Come ready to engage in the delicate dance of dynamic multi-level scanning in order to mindfully, heartfully and regularly examine personal INTENT versus interpersonal IMPACT.
- ❖ Come ready to cultivate and sustain a safe “grace space” for oneself and others.
- ❖ Come ready to actively support and share in the learning and development of our co-journeers.
- ❖ Come ready to model and be the change we want to create:
Walking the Talk and Radiating the Light.
- ❖ Come ready to lift as you and WE climb: ready to proactively serve as border-crossing bridge-builders for the greater good of UW-Madison and the larger community.

We strive to work together at and beyond the edge—pressing the boundaries of our current knowledge of self and others as well as our current skills in order to put wheels under the vision for an authentically inclusive and vibrantly responsive world class educational institution.

CULTIVATING FOUR CORE DEVELOPMENTAL ELEMENTS

The Excellence Through Diversity Institute will cultivate connections among these elements to foster conceptual and experiential learnings that will help participants build capacity in others, as well as themselves, and promote organizational transformation for educational excellence. *This is a professional development opportunity for experienced practitioners.*

- **LIGHT-ON-FEET MULTI-LEVEL SCANNER**
 - Cultivate refined sociocultural “antennae” for dynamically monitoring, “reading” and facilitating the flow of relations among diverse peoples, settings and situations.
 - Become critically reflective and responsive assessors of self and others.
 - Refine micro/macro zoom-control powers and explore the importance of multilevel thinking/planning/processing: mindfully work the interface between and among individual, group and institutional change and development processes.

- **LIFELONG BORDER-CROSSING LEARNER**
 - Cultivate SELF as responsive instrument and lifelong project-in-process: expand understandings of self-in-context within power and privilege hierarchies and the contexts embodied in the self.
 - Cultivate knowledge, skills and orientations for accurately discerning salient *diversity divides*: social boundaries and borderlands—*differences that make a difference* in access, process and/or success. Proactively serve as border-crossing bridge builders.
 - Strive for Johari Window-grounded clarity and serenity regarding personal *intent* versus interpersonal *impact*. What ultimately matters is impact and not intent!
 - Maintain a meaningful tension between critical reflection and creative reflection.

- **SAVVY EVIDENCE CRAFTER**
 - Maximize the alignment, fidelity, congruence and validity of strategy vis a vis vision.
 - Discern and apply lessons learned for continuous improvement.
 - Make the case and tell a credible, compelling story: strategic image management.

- **PROACTIVE PROGRESSIVE CHANGE AGENT**
 - Guide practice with appreciative visions of provocative possibility for authentically inclusive and responsive community, social justice and educational excellence.
 - Co-Create Provocative Possibilities and Realities: Deconstruct and reconstruct for multicultural development at the individual, group and institutional levels.
 - Cultivate complementary interconnections among problem solving and appreciative inquiry approaches. Actively strive to discover and build upon generative life-giving forces and the positive core. Sit in the *both/and* tension in search of the *energy*.
 - Facilitate Empowerment: Systematically cultivate capacities to identify, “track and fan” emergent developments with potential for actualizing the EDI vision.
 - Walk the talk and model the vision: ***BE the progressive change envisioned.***
 - Broaden and deepen cross-campus connections and foster spin-off interventions and multiplier effects. Mindfully fuel the scale-up beyond direct participants.

DYNAMIC ROLE OF ONGOING ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

1. **EMBRACING RESPONSIVE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION: Perspectives, Strategies and Practices—*Making Them Work For US in Actualizing the Excellence Institute Vision***
Proactively work them as self-diagnostic resources for critical and creative reflection on the outcome promises and success vision, for empowered self-improvement and for strategic image management. They provide strategies and tools to inform, to improve and to prove: notably, for relevant knowledge creation, for continuous development towards excellence and for accountability compliance verification.

2. **AN INVITATION TO STEP INTO THE RIVER: CONTINUING THE LEARNING JOURNEY**
Grounded links to the past while looking towards our future together

3. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION: MULTIPLE LEVELS AND VENUES

❖ Self Assessment and Evaluation

Facilitators and facilitative colleagues are the crucial intervention resource and mechanism in campus workforce learning and networking communities and beyond.

- **CULTIVATING VIBRANTLY COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY-BUILDING CONVERSATIONS: Key Personal/Interpersonal Attributes**
 - Eloquent Listening
 - Multi-Sensory “below the waterline” listening with “Ting,” the Chinese ideograph—high context sociocultural approach
 - Suspend judgment and listen towards/for understanding
 - High Quality *Advocacy* ←o→ High Quality *Inquiry*
Dynamically, responsively and respectfully balance the search for and the sharing of information
 - Personal *Intent* ←o→ Interpersonal *Impact*
Discern, navigate and negotiate diverse interpretative filters and lenses and thus multiple realities—diverse meaning making/sharing processes
 - Cultivate relationship-building “glue”: Fuel the expansion of one’s capacity for trust, transactional trust and transformative trust (Reina Trust-Building Model)
- **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: Johari Window Communications Model**
Proactively and responsibly give and solicit feedback to reduce the “Hidden” and “Blind” Window domains. Through such reductions, one simultaneously increases the “Open Window” that results from more authentic border-crossing communications. This allows one to more effectively discern, navigate and negotiate salient “diversity divides.”
- **SELF-ASSESSMENT RESOURCES: Appreciative Authentic Leadership, Intercultural Development Inventory, Starfish Portfolio, Personal Action Plan, Kellogg Logic Model, University of Wisconsin Extension Logic Model**

❖ Peer Assessment (Practicum Participants: Leadership Institute Facilitators)

- “Looking-Glass” Co-Facilitator Partner Pairs
- 360 Degree Critically-Constructive Reflections and Affirmations: Self, Co-Facilitators, Partner Pairs, Leadership Institute Participants, Institute Directors

❖ Program Assessment and Evaluation

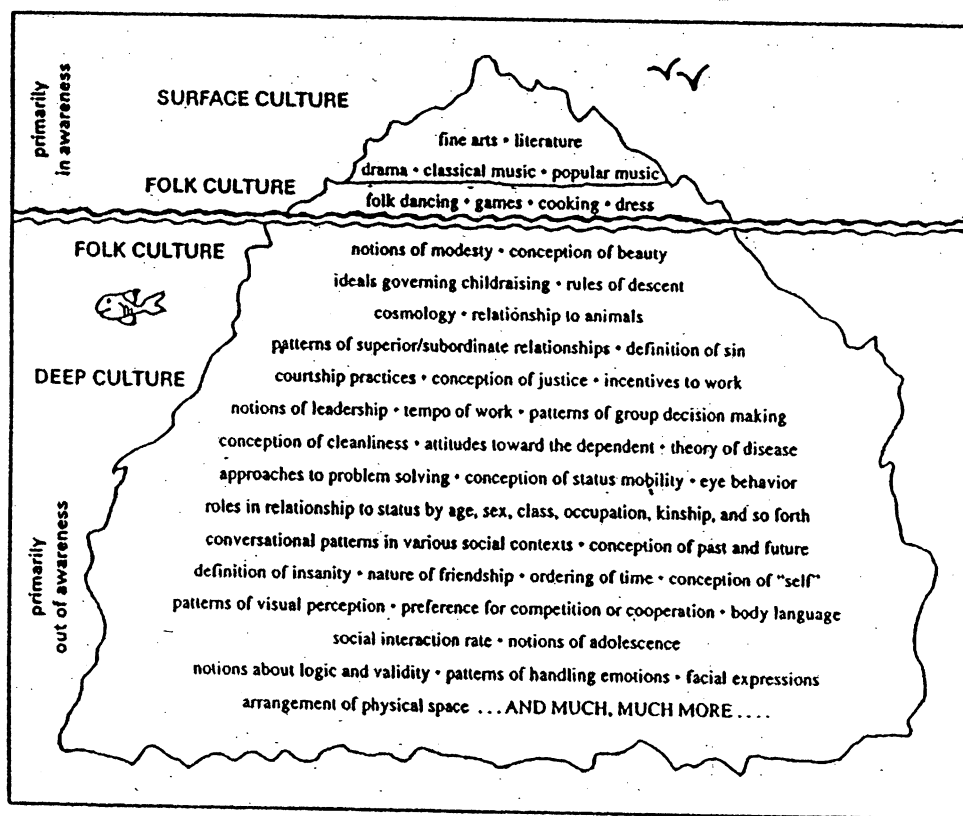
Inputs> Activities> Outputs> Outcomes

- **Institute Goals and Outcome Promises**
 - Mission- and vision-guided assessment and evaluation as a critically reflective, iterative and interactive process
 - Keep our eyes on the prize yet stay light on our feet and responsive: Programmatic Intervention Logic Models
- **Focusing Our Personal Agendas Assessment**
Synchronize our perceptions and expectations: *FastForward Visioning*
- **Honoring Diverse Voices and Perspectives: Why Bother?**
Essential roles of data collection, assessment and confidentiality
- **Mid-Course Check In Assessment: On the Right Track?**
Monitor and modify the Institute implementation process
- **Program Closing Assessment: Do Better? Next Steps?**
Soliciting lessons learned regarding what worked, what we could do better and possible ways to restructure, improve and refine the Excellence Through Diversity Institute and the Leadership Institute.

DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY. An important Excellence Institute resource is the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) and the evaluative assessment instrument based upon that model--the *Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI), now in version 2.

(<http://www.intercultural.org/idi/idi.html>). The DMIS was created by Milton Bennett as "a framework to explain the reactions of people to cultural difference. In both academic and corporate settings, he observed that individuals confronted cultural difference in some predictable ways as they learned to become more competent intercultural communicators." He organized his observations into "six stages of increasing sensitivity to cultural difference"--with each stage indicating a particular cognitive structure that is expressed in particular configurations of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. Extensive detail on this model is available in an article by Bennett, "Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity" in R.Michael Paige, *Education for the Intercultural Experience*. Throughout, the EDI community strives to maintain semi-permeable boundaries in order to model, nurture and maximize inclusion. Most importantly, the Excellence Institute will not become another IN-Group-On-High but rather a catalytic resource for campus climate transformation, enrichment and development.

Cultures are dynamic, organic and multifaceted--many potential "diversity divides."



Source: Jerome Hanley, "Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg: Five Stages Towards Cultural Competence," *Reaching Today's Youth*, Winter 1999.

THE POTENT POWER OF 1

- One song can spark a memory
- One flower can waken dreams
- One tree can start a forest
- One bird can herald the spring
- One smile can start a friendship
- One handclasp can lift a soul
- One star can guide a ship at sea
- One speech can set a goal
- One vote can change a nation
- One sunbeam can light a room
- One candle can erase the darkness
- One laugh can chase the gloom
- One step must start each journey
- One word must start each prayer
- One hope can raise the spirits
- One prayer can show you care
- One can make a difference
- And that one is you
- Individually and collectively
- You can! You do!

"Anonymous but passed along with respect by the SEED network of folk seeking educational equity & diversity - who ask that readers own more of their own power-of-one as they remember to listen & respect where others' powers are located."

---Emily Style, SEED CoDirector

★★ *None of Us is Born Multicultural, so We are All Projects-in-Process!* ★★

We must deliberately learn to be multicultural in order to transcend our ethnocentric mindsets and stereotypes. Systemic processes--socio-cultural and socio-political-- lead us to think and feel the way we do without even knowing *why*. Stepping outside our ethnocentric comfort zones demands a conscious and a conscientious resolve to be and become lifelong learners with a reflective beginner mindset. Being and becoming an effective diversity practitioner requires intensive and accurate awareness of ourselves--our capacities, our blindspots and our blankspots. In this work, the SELF is our most crucial instrument.



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