Chapter 7
Workforce Diversity Curriculum Design Considerations for Diversity Certificates and Study Abroad Experiences

Atoya Sims
University of Central Oklahoma, USA

ABSTRACT

Diversity is quickly increasing in the United States, which means the demographics of today's workforce are changing. Also, many companies are going global so there is a need for better cultural awareness and understanding. With the changes in the workforce comes the need for better interpersonal skills, knowledge, and cultural awareness for those who work with diverse individuals as well as those who manage diversity initiatives. Studies show that not only is there a need for better workforce diversity curriculum in higher education, but also for workplace diversity certificates. In addition, studies show the need for better design of study abroad experiences to help with cultural and social differences. This study examines diversity trends in various disciplines, as well as reviews workforce diversity-related courses and study abroad experiences. Based upon conclusions, suggestions are offered for designing curriculum for workforce diversity certificates and for designing study abroad experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Diversity is quickly increasing in the United States, which means the demographics of today's workforce are constantly changing. Also, many companies are beginning to conduct business globally so there is a need for better cultural awareness and understanding. With the changes in the workforce comes the need for better interpersonal skills, knowledge and cultural awareness for those who work with diverse individuals as well as those who manage diversity initiatives.

Employers are beginning to recognize the need for diversity education for their employees. Regardless of the organization or industry, companies need their employees to be able to work with a variety of people including other employees, customers, vendors, and clients (Kulik & Roberson, 2008). Diversity education can help with culture conflicts, decrease discriminatory practices, and help employees to make better decisions in the workplace due to their understanding and awareness of differences (Anand & Winters, 2008; Bell & Kravitz, 2008). Even though the benefits of diversity education have been made evident, unfortunately, there are not many courses, degrees, and certifications that focus on diversity, more specifically workforce diversity.

There are two critical areas for advancing workforce diversity which are through study abroad experiences and diversity certificates of completion. Both are important topics, especially since the U.S. population is becoming more culturally and ethnically diverse (Kulik & Roberson, 2008). Not only is there a need for improved workforce diversity curriculum in higher education, but there is also a need for a certification. Some degree programs may include a course or simply a session on diversity, but a credential that focuses on diversity in the workplace will better prepare students to work in diverse organizations, as well as fulfill newly created diversity-related positions. It is also necessary to enhance the design of study abroad experiences since these educational opportunities are optimal for helping students to understand differences.

The primary purpose of any diversity training, whether in a classroom or experiencing cultural differences in another country, is to evoke a change in the individual's attitude, knowledge or skills regarding differences in people (Kulik & Roberson, 2008). Faculty is tasked with many responsibilities, including designing curriculum that will provide students with the best opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge of a subject. Therefore, it is important to assist educators with the research-based criteria for developing quality educational content.

The problem is that adequate content related to diversity, especially workforce diversity, is lacking in higher education curriculum. In addition, study abroad experiences, which also aid in diversity learning, also are deficient in the design of immersion activities. This study examines diversity trends in various disciplines, as well as reviews workforce diversity-related courses and study aboard experiences. The purpose of this chapter is to identify activities currently being employed and offer suggestions for faculty designing curriculum for study abroad experiences and workforce diversity certificates.

First, a background of workplace diversity and study abroad experiences will be shared. Then, issues, concerns, and considerations regarding each will be discussed. From the research conducted, suggestions will then be offered for faculty in adding content and activities into diversity curriculum as well as study abroad experiences. Finally, suggestions for future studies will be offered followed by a summary of the chapter.

The objectives of this chapter are:

- To discuss previous and current trends in diversity and workforce diversity education.
- To provide a distinction between diversity and workforce diversity meanings.
- To explain the various types of diversity groups and characteristics.
- To recommend content and activities for workplace diversity-related curriculum and study abroad experiences.
- To provide examples of study abroad programs.

21 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/workforce-diversity-curriculum-design-considerations-for-diversity-certificates-and-study-abroad-experiences/182085

Related Content

Inclusive Practices in Higher Education and Workplaces Strategies for Empowering Women
Mustafa Kayyali (2024). *A Cross-Cultural Examination of Women in Higher Education and the Workplace (pp. 237-262).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/inclusive-practices-in-higher-education-and-workplaces-strategies-for-empowering-women/348682

Discourse Analysis for Intercultural Competence Development
Phyllis Bo-yuen Ngai (2021). *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education (pp. 17-30).*
www.irma-international.org/article/discourse-analysis-for-intercultural-competence-development/281659

A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Perspective on Organizational Socialization in the New Age of Remote Work
Seterra D. Burleson, Kristen D. Egglerand Debra A. Major (2022). *Multidisciplinary Approach to Diversity and Inclusion in the COVID-19-Era Workplace (pp. 15-34).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-perspective-on-organizational-socialization-in-the-new-age-of-remote-work/298075

Knowledge Sharing Practices, ICT, Information Literacy, and STEM Career Path Choices Among Girls at the Secondary School Level: Girls and STEM Education
Mercy A. Iroaganachi, Promise Ifeoma Ilo, Loveth Ekwuemeand Idarefame YoungHarry (2019). *Women's Influence on Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity in STEM Fields (pp. 227-252).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/knowledge-sharing-practices-ict-information-literacy-and-stem-career-path-choices-among-girls-at-the-secondary-school-level/228424

Beyond Incarcerated Identities: Identity, Bias and Barriers to Higher Education in Australian Prisons
Marcus K. Harmes, Susan Hopkinsand Helen Farley (2019). *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education (pp. 1-16).*
www.irma-international.org/article/beyond-incarcerated-identities/216370