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Training College Students as Race and Race-Relations Facilitators

Abstract

This session introduces a "train the trainer" model on preparing college students to serve as race-relations facilitators. Pedagogical framework shares how students from different "affinity" groups can explore forms of racial conflict and promote racial unity in a safe way. Highly charged race-related content areas will be covered.

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One of the most challenging issues confronting America is the elimination of racism and oppression. As microcosms of the greater society, University campuses are experiencing a resurgence of divisive racial attitudes. There are increases in the number of racial incidents between students and a deepening despair of silence. Universities are in debate around the nation as to the need and merit of paying attention to race and race-relations amongst their students. Primary among these arguments is the level of preparedness of students to address highly charged race issues in a safe and productive way. As more diverse students are entering into the academy, for many, it's their first "intimate" exposure to other diverse students. Students with limited sustained exposure to diverse peers are forced to examine their basic assumptions about diverse people. For those students where social and racial diversity is new and unfamiliar, multivariate racial experiences could likely produce contradictory expectations. Thus, students ought to have a forum designed with intimate and meaningful encounters across racial lines. Providing students from different cultural racial backgrounds with deliberate opportunities to interact, intersect and debate ideas is likewise, in keeping with the claim that Universities are founded on such premises.

Premise for Presentation

- Universities require a diverse student body that ultimately reflects the global mainstream.
- Students come to universities at a critical time in their development faced with unfamiliarity and newness.
- For many students college is their first sustained exposure in a diverse environment that encourages debate of ideas.
- Higher education is especially influential when its social milieu is different and more complex than the environment from which the students come.
- Diverse Universities bring complexities which encourages intellectual experimentation, deeper and purposeful thinking and dissonance.
- Complex thinking occurs when students encounter situations for which they have no script and for which the environment demands more than their current script provides.
- The intersection of students across racial and race-related lines is central in producing the conscious mode of thought (conflict and debate of ideas) that educator's demand from their students.

Overview

The Training College Students as Race and Race-Relations Facilitators program is designed to equip diverse students on college and university campuses with dialogue and facilitation skills on how to deal with tough controversial issues in a way that builds bridges between diverse student groups.

It provides a structured venue and forum for students to address and listen to opposing positions on issues of race and race relations and to encourage students to interact and come together through meaningful encounters across racial lines.

Objectives

- Students will become familiar with the basic concepts related to race issues and social justice.
- Students will explore various forms of racial conflict among affinity groups and means of conflict resolution.
- Students will gain understanding of how race differences influence personal feelings, assumptions and interpersonal and intergroup relations.
- Students will understand their own racial identity and how it may influence their ability to facilitate diverse groups.
- Students will understand theoretical information regarding the impact of social identity, oppression and privilege and power influence intergroup relations.
- Students will gain strategies and skills for facilitating dialogues across cultural and racial lines.
- Students will acquire a set of teachable skills to extrapolate facilitation and dialogue on other controversial diversity issues.

Structure of Presentation for People of Color in Predominately White Institutions Conference

This session introduces how to prepare students for facilitating dialogues on race relations and social justice issues through interdisciplinary reading, discussion and experiential activities. This session will also explore the psychological, systemic and historical contexts in which interpersonal and intergroup race relations occur on college campuses. The goal of the session is to provide a programmatic design to create a forum for different and in some cases opposing, perspectives to be shared between students in safe, supportive and academic environments. The training course is designed for participants to acquire skills on how to increase the dialogue and engagement of college students with diverse perspectives. An additional goal is to provide participants with tools for students to become competent in facilitating intergroup dialogues on issues of race and race-relations. These tools will not only help students clarify and understand their own identities and perspectives, but will also demonstrate how their views might impact their ability to relate and work with others from different races and cultural backgrounds. Course topics covered include: program design and implementation, basic group facilitation skills on race and race-relations, power, privilege and ally activism and pedagogy on dismantling race-related oppressions on college campuses. An evaluation tool and service learning plan will also be shared.

Presenter

Eureka C. Daye is the Assistant Vice Provost of Diversity at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina where she researches, designs, consults and presents diversity programming university-wide.

She has given over 100 campus presentations, has written several papers on diversity and is well known for her expertise and public presentations in both the areas of diversity and mental health.

She is a Licensed Mental Health Practitioner, Professional Counselor and Marriage and Family Therapist. She is also a trained conflict resolution and group facilitation mediator, trained in critical incident debriefing as well as a trainer of cultural competency.

She previously was the Director of Organizational Development at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, has been in private practice, has taught special education and was past Clinical Director and Assistant CEO of psychiatric hospitals in both Nebraska and California.

Daye holds degrees in psychology, counseling psychology and education from Pepperdine University, The University of San Francisco and National University. She has consulted with both the public and private and educational sectors on issues of diversity.