TEACHING AN ISSUES-BASED INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE: DIVERSITY IN MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

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The authors examine their experiences of coteaching an intensive, interdisciplinary elective course for MBA students: Diversity in Management and Marketing. They address otherness, dialogue, energy, and change within this course and clarify issues that can arise when coteaching interdisciplinary courses. The authors list implications for instructors of all business-related courses.

**Keywords:** interdisciplinary; diversity; dialogue; coteaching; part-time MBA; management; marketing

AACSB International (The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) has encouraged business schools to develop curricula that flow from their missions and integrate the business disciplines (*AACSB Accreditation Standards*, 2002). Part-time programs represent 58% of MBA enrollment among U.S. schools that are members of AACSB. Only 24% of students enrolled in AACSB MBA programs attend traditional, 2-year, full-time programs (*Management Education at Risk*, 2002, p. 8). Integration across disciplines can be a challenge in a part-time MBA program in which students who work full-time take courses in the evening and weekends in a flexible format rather than in a lock-step fashion with a cohort. One way to bring about curricular integration is to include issues-oriented elective courses that are addressed by two or more disciplines. We have cotaught one such course,
Diversity in Management and Marketing, for five summers. The course has consistently been evaluated by students as excellent, with an average rating of 4.5 on a 5-point scale. In this article, we explore what we have learned about the course, our coteaching, and ourselves. Much of what we have learned here about teaching and learning enriches our approach in other courses. We believe that this knowledge can be helpful to other instructors, as well.

The Course

We have cotaught MBA 568: Diversity in Management and Marketing, an interdisciplinary elective, in an intensive format for five summers. As we write this article, we are preparing to teach it for a sixth time. The class meets from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily for one 5-day week. During this week, typically 30 to 35 MBA students explore organizational policies and practices related to diversity in corporate strategy, management, and marketing. The major outcome objectives for the course are that students increase awareness of their own cultural assumptions and biases through learning about the cultures of others; recognize the importance of understanding diversity at work in relationship to suppliers and customers as well as coworkers, subordinates, and managers; and link organizational development and change, management, and marketing practice and processes to diversity issues. Lectures, team exercises, and course assignments, detailed below, are linked to these objectives.

Although we follow a basic syllabus, the course is different each time that we teach it, as we respond to the unique needs and interests of each group of students and the availability of guest speakers. We focus on processes and interactions with each other and students as well as on specific content. We include many perspectives and a variety of cultural points of view. A month before the first class meeting, we mail a letter to the students indicating how to locate the course Web site on Blackboard, where we have posted course materials, including a detailed syllabus. Appendix A is a representative syllabus that includes specific assignments and how they are graded.

We encourage students to complete all of the daily reading and writing assignments before the week of class meetings begins. Our rationale is that it is unlikely that they will be motivated to complete further coursework at the end of a day-long class. We offer choices for the major assignment and approve topics at least 1 week before class begins.

Although diversity can be addressed from many different perspectives, cultural diversity and its importance to corporate strategy, management, and
marketing make up the major points of our lectures and the texts that we have chosen. We use as a required text *Developing Competence to Manage Diversity: Readings, Cases & Activities* (Cox & Beale, 1997). We find that it is clearly written, the exercises and cases are relevant to our students, and the material remains pertinent. A suggested but not required text is *The Change Equation: Capitalizing on Diversity for Effective Organizational Change* (Norton & Fox, 1997). This book places diversity issues squarely in the center of organizational change and development and frames such change as a strategic issue. For this reason, we find it to be valuable to our MBA students, most of whom are employed in large corporations. Thus, although both books are more than 5 years old, they are valuable tools for framing our course. However, we do not rely solely on the texts as sources of information. We supplement their contents with our own lectures, guest speakers, field trips, and student projects. We also include on Blackboard links to relevant Web sites that students can use as they prepare these course projects. Some of these links are included in Appendix B.

In our lectures, we use concepts from perceptual theory, social psychology, and anthropology, as well as from the business disciplines, particularly marketing, strategic management, and organizational behavior. Guest lectures and student presentations introduce specific issues related to diversity, such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. We describe some of these components in detail below. Many students have lived, worked, or visited abroad, or are from countries other than the United States. They bring these international experiences to class interactions.

Each assignment is linked to one or more of the three outcome objectives of the course. Because the success of the course is, in part, dependent on full participation by all students, attendance and participation make up 20% of the final grade for the course. Such participation helps students to increase their awareness of their cultural assumptions. The completion of five daily assignments, each worth 5% of the grade, supports participation. Each such assignment involves the preparation necessary for completing the team exercise for that day, such as reflection on one’s identification with particular social groups or the analysis of a case. In most years that we have taught the course, the remaining 55% of the grade has come from the completion by each student of a course project. Students choose from among an array of possible project types, ranging from oral presentations to the class, a research paper, a poster presentation, or a Web page. In-depth portrayals help students to recognize the importance of understanding diversity in relationship to suppliers and customers as well as colleagues. Most presentations link organizational changes in marketing and managing processes to issues of diversity. The last time that we taught the course, we included a team project worth
20% in which each small group of students explored a culture unfamiliar to them. In this instance, the individual project was 35% of the final grade. Major elements that lead to successful outcomes in the course are the diversity of the students and their willingness to be candid with one another.

Differences

The students are always a diverse group of people, a reflection of the diversity of the students in our College of Business Administration. Forty-five percent of the students in our MBA program are White Caucasian, 18% are African American, 13% are international students or members of other minority groups, and 24% do not identify themselves as members of any racial group. Women make up 31% of the MBA population. Almost all of the students are employed full-time, many in manufacturing or financial services.

_Differentiating individuals._ The first written assignment is a preparation for the introduction exercise on Monday morning. We ask students to write a short paper in which they complete three sentences: "I am . . . My place is . . . My people are . . ." This exercise is a modification of one based on Lakota practice led by TwoTrees (1997) at an Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference at Case Western Reserve University. We ask students to read what they have written as their introduction to fellow class members. We emphasize that they are in charge of what they reveal about themselves. Although we tell students to disclose only that with which they are comfortable, we also encourage those who are usually self-protective to stretch their personal boundaries related to self-disclosure.

The experience of this introduction is powerful, as each student completes these sentences in his or her unique way. In completing the sentence, "I am . . .," some give their full names; others enumerate social roles, describe their racial and ethnic backgrounds, list their values, or tell their religious beliefs. When finishing the second sentence, "My place is . . .," students respond in different ways: some with their place of residence, others with their country of origin, still others with roles. It is interesting that few mention the organizations for which they work. Students conclude, "My people are . . ." in varied ways. For example, one man told a story of how his great-grandfather sailed from China as a young man and met and married his African great-grandmother in Jamaica. A woman described her multiracial
Hawaiian heritage. Another man, who was born in Spain and grew up in New Mexico, informed us of roots in two Hispanic cultures. Others have listed their nuclear families or characterized their people as “all humankind” or “those who love me.”

We complete this exercise, as well, telling students more about ourselves than we would ordinarily at the start of most courses. One of us is the child of a mother whose parents emigrated from Hungary and a father whose English family has lived in North America since before the American Revolution. The other’s heritage is English and Scottish and she is now part of a large extended family with roots in Palestine. In addition to our backgrounds, we describe our families, research, and interests outside of our professional lives.

This exercise grounds each student in his or her uniqueness. Caucasian students have remarked at the end of this exercise that they never realized how much diversity exists among Blacks, whereas African American students have mentioned that they were surprised at the diversity among Whites. Students’ polarized racial perceptions begin to break into more differentiated categories or schemas.

Stretching perceptual boundaries. Our first guest speaker, on the afternoon of the 1st day, continues to help us to break through perceptual boundaries. She is a librarian and looks like the former professional ballet dancer that she is, willowy and agile. Her gray hair is cut short and she wears no make up on her fair skin. “I am a woman of color,” she begins in a quiet voice. She tells us that she is an Elder in the Ojibway tribe. She says that her brothers and sisters have copper-colored skin but she resembles her Scottish ancestors. For more than an hour, she holds the class spellbound as she tells what it is like to be a member of a minority group yet not be easily identified by others as such; to believe in many gods in the midst of a monotheistic culture; and to observe cultural practices and values that do not conform to mainstream mores. We listen to tribal music and receive the gifts that she distributes as part of a Giveaway. In her quiet yet powerful way, she softens boundaries, shifts perspectives, and encourages us to broaden our perceptions. Her self-disclosure and nondefensive responses to questions set a tone for dialogue during the rest of the week. Students’ responses to this guest speaker indicate to us that they are beginning to move beyond their usual comfort zones and customary perceptions of others. This shift influences their interactions throughout the rest of the week as they begin to engage in dialogue.
Interaction and Dialogue

Bohm's (1996) ideas about dialogue have been popularized in management by Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, and Smith (1994), Isaacs (1999), and their colleagues from MIT. Senge et al. (1994) defines dialogue as "a sustained collective inquiry into everyday experience and what we take for granted" (p. 353). Isaacs (1999) writes that dialogue is "a flow of meaning" and "a conversation in which people think together in relationship" (p. 10).

Others have written about dialogue from different points of view. Freire (1970), in particular, has explored the liberating quality of teaching and learning based on dialogue. In his view, teachers become learners as students teach them about their lives. Hazen (1987-1988), writing about dialogue in management education, lists the three essential elements of dialogue as mutuality, reciprocity, and coinquiry. Mutuality is an essential aspect of dialogue that takes place when each person in a relationship perceives the self and the other as a subject rather than object, a person who continues to grow, for whom change is always possible. Related to mutuality is reciprocity, which occurs when each person in a relationship knows that she or he learns from as well as teaches the other, regardless of roles. Coinquiry, a third aspect of dialogue, happens when each person in a relationship acts on the belief that only with the others in the relationship system can the system be understood. Each person in the relationship speaks the truth as she or he understands it and listens to the other (Hazen, 1987-1988).

Conditions that support dialogue in the course. Dialogue occurs in our diversity course as students grapple with real differences and deep social issues—including racism and sexism—in a way that broadens their and our understanding. One student, echoing a common theme in course evaluations, wrote, "The interactions among the class members" and "the safe and open environment allowed by the instructors" made this class a good learning experience. As all of us take part in dialogue, we learn more than what we would from only reflecting on our own experiences or reading a book or an article.

We base our relationship as coteachers on dialogue. We communicate with and learn from one another. Because we are each rooted in a separate discipline, one in marketing and one in management, we learn from our dissimilar approaches to the same problems and stretch our disciplinary boundaries. For example, we have both learned that the traditional silos of the business disciplines, while providing focus for study and research, are artificial when perceived from the perspective of suppliers, employees, and customers.
We have experienced surprisingly little conflict with one another. We attribute this to the compatibility of our teaching styles, our genuine interest in and connection with students, our mutual discomfort with confrontation, and the space that we each give the other to exert influence and show expertise. Furthermore, we together initiated the development of the course and sought faculty and administrative support, rather than being required to do so. We have been and are so passionately committed to this course and its importance to our students that it has superseded any minor conflicts that might have occurred.

We encourage dialogue among students in smaller group meetings. Preparation for each day includes the completion of a written assignment for an experiential exercise or case discussion that students complete in teams. We believe that the teams serve as anchors for each student to feel safe to interact in the larger class discussions.

Another factor that supports dialogue is that many of the students who register for the course have had one or both of us as instructors for core courses in the MBA program. We know them and they know us and are familiar with the ways that we teach. Many students know one another. They come into the class with a sense of trust. This context helps to create a safe space to talk honestly about topics that are not often talked about: differences among people in social class, race, gender and gender orientation, age, ability, and ethnicity. The openness between us as instructors, among students, and between students and us is often surprising. We think that some of this occurs because of our willingness to reveal personal information and listen respectfully to others. We model for students a way to be self-disclosing, manage personal boundaries, and learn from one another.

The topic approval process for major assignments, completed in person, by e-mail, or by telephone before the class meets, invigorates the dialogue that occurs during this course. Our experience the first time that we taught the course, when we did not approve topics, was that many papers and presentations were repetitive, boring, and did not portray the chosen topic in depth. We now work with students to narrow their question so that they can explore a subject with some intensity. This strengthens their learning as well as that of the others in the class. If it seems that no one is interested in portraying an aspect of diversity that we think is important to address, we suggest that individual students consider it. We also encourage students to integrate concepts or applications from both management and marketing theory and practice. These practices have resulted in wider, more perceptive, and more interesting coverage of issues related to diversity. Student presentation topics have included “Outsourcing to Minority Suppliers in the Automotive Industry,” “Focusing on the Hispanic Market in Personal Care Products,” “Expec-
tations of Employers Based on Age and Generation of Employees,” “Corporate Advertising: Gay and Lesbian Initiatives,” and “Minority Automobile Dealerships.”

**Turning points.** Guest speakers and students initiate dialogue, often in the context of a presentation. Although many of the presentations have been excellent, some stand out for us not only because of the quality of interaction that occurred but also for what we have learned from them.

When we first taught the course in 1999, one student wanted to change her presentation topic shortly before the class began. She had seen on television an exposé of harassment in the workplace toward a homosexual man and felt so strongly about the injustice that it portrayed that she wanted to talk about it in class. She began her presentation by pointing out that although it seems that many members of minority groups can be recognized as such, gays and lesbians cannot be so identified. “You assume that because I am wearing a diamond ring on my left hand and told you that I recently got married, that I am straight. You cannot know that this is true.” She gave several similar examples, ending with the statement, “You can know if someone is gay or lesbian only if he or she tells you.” She played videotape of a news report that depicted such cruel behavior in the workplace toward a gay man that we were stunned. Most of the class members were shocked to discover that in most parts of the United States, such discrimination against gay men and lesbians is not illegal. As instructors, we went away from the thoughtful and thought-provoking conversation that followed not only enlightened but also inspired that we could address with courage and compassion potentially controversial or uncomfortable topics in our MBA courses.

The 2nd year that we taught the course, a young White man said that he wanted to present to the class a discrimination case: A young engineer was assigned by his manager to troubleshoot a tense situation during a stressful vehicle launch at a plant where the plant manager was notoriously tough and “old school.” At a meeting at which there were 50 people, including suppliers, the manager asked the young man a question. He replied as completely as he could without revealing proprietary information to outsiders, with a respectful answer that the plant manager did not like. In front of the whole group, the manager responded angrily and with profanity, humiliating the young engineer. When he returned to his home office, the young man reported the incident to his manager. Her immediate response was to support him to file an age discrimination complaint against the plant manager.

The student presented this information to the class. He asked what they would do if they were the young man and led them in a discussion about it. Most of the students in the class worked in a manufacturing environment.
Many of the students said that this kind of behavior is common and you just have to learn to tolerate it, even if you do not like it. Some students believed that such behavior should be confronted. At the end of the discussion, the presenter revealed that he was the young man and that he did file a complaint against the plant manager. What he wanted—and what he won—was a public apology by the manager in front of the same large group of people and a promise to them that he would not again humiliate others by the public use of profanity.

We learned many things from this presentation, not the least of which was that an affirmation of one’s dignity, a demand for respect, and a stand for justice are important, even (or especially) in situations that others perceive as unchangeable. This student served as a role model for each of us in the following months, as we navigated our own complex work situations with colleagues.

In another summer, a turning point occurred not with a formal presentation but an assertion by one African American man that other students, especially White men, were “walking on eggs” during discussions about race. This low-keyed confrontation awakened all of us, giving people permission to speak frankly. Somewhat guarded conversation shifted to more open dialogue, as students began to speak from their own experiences of and feelings about race. Our sense is that dialogue-based learning, as described earlier in this article, occurred as they genuinely listened and responded to one another and surfaced issues that are usually unspeakable between Blacks and Whites in the United States. Such attention to dialogue allows us to respond to the needs of students and to initiate change in the course not only from summer to summer but within each week of class meetings.

Change and Fluidity

Movement, fluidity, and change are essential to the ongoing success of the course. The course changes from year to year, although we retain the same learning goals and objectives. We change, too, as instructors, learning more each year about related topics and how to teach them. The changes in the course reflect our needs for professional development and challenge. They are also student driven, from the presentation topics to the issues that we discuss in depth.

Coteaching. From the beginning, we developed this course to be co-taught as an interdisciplinary course. It grew out of a successful experience with one another coteaching a Women in Business course as an experiment
one summer. Although that course was open to both women and men, more than 30 women and only 1 man registered. Teaching this course was an overwhelmingly positive experience for both of us. We enjoyed working together, the content of the course, and our contact with the students. When we asked to teach this course the following summer, our dean invited us to broaden our emphasis from women in business to diversity, to include a broader range of students and issues. We agreed to do so. Teaching the diversity course together the first time was both enjoyable and successful and we wanted to continue working together across disciplines.

The first syllabus evolved over an initial discussion at lunch about the focus and learning goals for the course. This was the first of many meetings in which we further refined our course plan. We chose the texts that most closely matched our objectives for content and pedagogy, slotted in supplementary lectures in our respective areas of expertise, then sought guest speakers to further enhance the topics. We left room in the schedule for student presentations and discussions.

After the first time that we taught the course, we sought and gained formal approval from the college faculty to include the course in the graduate catalog. We developed a generic syllabus for this approval process and have used it as a template for later sections of the course. Each year, 6 weeks before the course is scheduled to begin, we meet for a long lunch, laptop computers in hand, and modify the syllabus based on previous course evaluations and our sense of what worked and did not work in the previous summer.

For example, we noticed, after the first and second times that we offered the course, that students who handed in research papers tended to have lower grades than students who chose to give class presentations. We assumed that this might have happened for a number of reasons: MBA students are not skilled in writing long research papers; students who chose to write papers did so because the due date for papers was after class concluded, rather than during the week of class meetings and so were busier or less motivated to do well; or students who wrote papers did so only because they had not chosen a topic early enough to gain one of the limited number of presentation slots and thus were not as interested in writing a paper as they might have been in making a presentation. Consequently, we made various changes in the major assignment. We gave the paper earlier due dates and we offered more options, including a poster presentation session and Web page design. Fewer students chose to write papers and more information about diversity was shared among class members because of students choosing to present posters and Web pages. The quality of the work improved, as well.

We have developed a style of teaching with each other that works for us and our students. We confer on a variety of topics and look for new ideas and
approaches that are relevant for this course. We easily switch the roles of leader and support person from one to the other. We interact with our students in the classroom, by e-mail, and in the halls of our college. Because we are open to new ideas and willing to experiment, the way in which we teach together is fluid. In a typical comment, one student noted, “They are both very open-minded about controversial issues and facilitated the discussions in a controlled learning environment.” We continue to be challenged as we plan for the next summer’s class, staying current with regard to diversity issues in the world of work. During the school year, we think and talk about how we might approach a specific issue.

Although we have different styles of teaching, we have similar values about learning and shared expectations of students. Each of us is willing to learn from the other and to modify her perceptions or practices in response to a suggestion from the other. We were at first surprised to discover how closely we agreed on grading decisions. Each of us grades each assignment independently, and then we compare grades and discuss differences, which are usually no more than one or two percentage points. For example, one of us is skilled at presenting well-organized, detailed lectures, with PowerPoint bullet points that serve as launching pads for models, examples, and stories, whereas the other has used experiential learning as the foundation for her courses for years. We have each broadened the repertoire of competencies that we bring to the classroom as we have observed and learned from each other. We have integrated some of these pedagogical changes into our other courses—one of us presenting more organized and detailed lectures, and the other incorporating more group interaction and experiential exercises into all classes. We continue to consult each other on various approaches when we are puzzled or stuck with any challenging class or student.

We also appreciate that if something is not working in the course or if there is a problem with a student, we can confer with one another and mutually trust our judgment. We are willing to rearrange planned activities midcourse to discuss a specific topic in depth. For example, when the students were confronted about “walking on eggs” in their discussion about race, we initiated an unscheduled exercise that allowed students to surface and safely share their perceptions with one another. Each student wrote a list of stereotypes for each of four groups of people, all of whom were well-represented in the class: Black women, Black men, White women, and White men. We collected and compiled the lists, then used the results as the basis for an open exchange of ideas. Students could explore ideas about stereotypes without owning any of them as their own. Furthermore, members of the group about whom stereotypes were being expressed could respond to them.
Students sense our openness to one another and to them. They remain connected to us and what they learn as they approach us singly and collectively with ideas, topics, and approaches for this course before, during, and after they have taken it. They encourage other students to register for the course.

**Reflection.** We remain aware of students' needs and interests by building into the course opportunities for students to comment on the content and the process of each class meeting. At the end of each morning and afternoon session, we schedule 15 minutes for reflection. During this time, each student writes and hands in comments about what she or he has learned during that half-day, what interactions and activities were positive and supported learning, and what we might change in the future. We read and talk with one another about all of the comments before the next class meeting. (Yes—this means we work through lunch!) This practice allows us to track what is happening with students and make immediate changes when necessary.

This course works consistently well. Overall, the course is fun. We enjoy teaching and learning in the context that we have created and students report that they also have fun as they learn. This sense of pleasure and enjoyment sustains our energy through the week.

**Energy**

The level of energy among class members seems to increase from the first "I am . . ." exercise through our week together. Although we at first anticipated that we would be exhausted by the end of the week—and students report this initial expectation, as well—we have discovered that this is not so. We believe that the compressed class meeting time in this intensive format adds to the energy of the participants. There is time for the class members to develop as a group and form close, nourishing bonds.

**Varied pace.** We schedule an assortment of activities and interactions and vary the pace throughout the day. During any one day-long meeting during the week, one or two guest speakers talk about the practical effect of understanding diversity in the workplace; students complete experiential exercises or discuss cases in teams; instructors and students present theories, concepts, and applications related to diversity in management and marketing; and students write reflections on what they have experienced in class. For example, speakers have outlined corporate diversity policies and practices, talked about expatriate experiences, and described generational or ethnic marketing strategies. Team exercises have included developing a definition of diversity.
(Cox & Beale, 1997, pp. 26-27) and a philosophy for managing corporate diversity (pp. 308-310). One of the cases for discussion that we have used regularly is, “Is the Plaintiff’s Social Scientist Off the Wall?” (pp. 139-140).

After a lecture on perception, culture, and stereotyping, we watched “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” and discussed how this movie illustrated the various concepts set forth in the lecture. The movie was a humorous change of pace and provided outstanding examples of cultural artifacts, stereotypes, and behaviors influenced by perceptual screens shaped by assumptions. It would be difficult to show an entire movie in a regularly scheduled course, and being able to do so is one advantage of the intensive, day-long format. We have recently discovered a video in which Meyerson (2002) portrays her ideas about tempered radicals evolving change from within an organization. We will show it the next time that we teach the course.

In another lecture, we tell students that artifacts are the most easily perceived aspects of any culture. Artifacts are integrated into patterns of behavior that represent values and beliefs. From artifacts, beliefs, and values, we infer underlying basic assumptions (Norton & Fox, 1997). We think that the artifacts of music, games, and food are among the most interesting ways to begin to learn about and appreciate another culture.

_The potluck lunch._ Trying new recipes and cooking for others are activities that energize each of us in our personal lives. We have woven this personal interest into the diversity course by initiating a potluck lunch on Friday, the last day of class. In the syllabus, we ask students to prepare for this event by thinking early about what they will bring to represent the cultural traditions of their families, including mementos, clothing, games, music, and food. As enthusiasm and energy increase, students begin to organize for this multicultural celebration. Because the metropolitan area in which we teach is teeming with diverse groups of people and subcultures, the Friday party is always a wonderfully rich blend of great food and music.

One year, a group of men organized to grill hamburgers and hotdogs in the parking lot, with some bringing meat, grills, and charcoal whereas others brought rolls, beverages, and condiments. This group included both African American and White men and was formed shortly after the “walking on eggs about race” discussion. Students have found ways to refrigerate (coolers) and heat (crock-pots and electric frying pans) food in the classroom. Every year, students involve grandmothers, mothers, wives, husbands, girlfriends, boyfriends, and children in purveying food for our celebration.

An hour or so before the final preparation, each class member tells about what she or he has brought. People bring photo albums of family reunions, wear special clothing, or show family heirlooms. They bring music, too—
Brazilian, Soul, Polish, and more. Students tell stories about why they have made certain dishes. We have eaten great soul food—corn bread, macaroni and cheese, sweet potato pie, and sweet potato muffins. We have had English trifle by way of India, Irish stew, Scottish shortbread cookies, and Bailey’s Irish Crème Pie; Polish stew, Liptauer cheese, and hot German potato salad; Middle Eastern tabbouli, hummus, pita, and baklava; Brazilian flan; and Italian frittata, cannoli, and tiramisu. Regional specialties have included Caribbean peas and rice, slumgullion, red velvet cake, chicken enchiladas, and tres leches cake. One student said that because both of his parents’ families had lived in the state as long as anyone could remember and had no ethnic identity or traditions, he brought his favorite foods—Ho Hos and Doritos! All of the dishes come with a story and some with recipes or local addresses for specialty food stores or bakeries.

We think that this ending feast, like the beginning exercise, represents the attention to the individual person, appreciation of differences, and delight in learning with and about one another and the world that flourish during the course. It offers all an opportunity to tell part of our stories and histories and engage in dialogue using all of our senses. For 2 years, we have invited other business school faculty and staff members to share in this abundance of food. In tangible ways, our students and we begin to create ties between our personal lives, school, and the workplace as we develop a deeper understanding of diverse workplaces and markets.

Discussion

Teaching an interdisciplinary, issue-focused course such as Diversity in Management and Marketing is one way to integrate the MBA curriculum and build community in a part-time program in which students are not members of a cohort taking classes in a lock-step fashion. Below, we distill the essence of what we have learned from our reflections on teaching this course together. We have incorporated many of these practices into other courses that we teach individually. In this list, we summarize the major points of this article and review measures that other faculty members can take to extend their professional boundaries and enliven their practice of teaching.

- Team teaching an issues-focused, interdisciplinary course, such as Women in Business or Diversity in Management and Marketing, is one way to continue to develop professionally. Such work outside of disciplinary knowledge breaks down functional silos prevalent in many business schools.
- Mutual trust is an essential element of coteaching. We believe that this is more easily developed when both or all instructors initiate coteaching. Trust is built in
small steps, as instructors together develop a course and construct a syllabus. It continues in the classroom and beyond as the course is taught and instructors share leadership.

- Instructors who bring to the classroom their own experiences, backgrounds, interests, dilemmas, values, and feelings, as well as professional knowledge, permit students to engage in self-disclosure, as well. Within this context, relationships and dialogue can flourish, which are especially vital in a diversity course.

- Relationships in the classroom based on mutuality, reciprocity, and coinquiry support dialogue among students and instructors, as everyone learns about one another and the issues on which a course is focused. In dialogue, each person has a voice, is allowed to change, has something to teach as well as learn, and creates knowledge with others.

- Reflection by students at regular intervals on what and how they are learning reinforces their knowledge. Consideration of their responses by instructors facilitates midcourse corrections and changes that support learning.

- An intensive course format increases a sense of learning community among students and instructors. Even in courses that are taught in more conventional semester or quarter formats, using teams, varying teaching methods, and responding to students’ needs help to build a sense of community.

- Topics approached in a spirit of risk and playfulness generate learning. Reaching outside of disciplinary or role boundaries that are comfortable (and perhaps boring) can aid in discovering new ways of being, relating, learning, and teaching.

Appendix A
Sample Syllabus

Diversity in Management and Marketing
MBA 568 (3 credit hours)

Prerequisites: MBA 525: Leadership and Organizational Processes or the permission of the instructors

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading:

Course Description:

In this course, we explore the relationships of diversity to organizational change and development, effective management practices, and successful marketing methods. Students will develop an understanding of and behavioral competence in recognizing the importance of diversity relative to suppliers, fellow professionals, employees, managers, and customers.

Overview:

The topic of diversity is a broad one with many different facets, including differences among people in race, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical ability, sexual orientation, cognitive styles, and so on. We acknowledge the importance of these differences. We understand the concepts related to cultural diversity to be overarching and will focus our attention on related theories and ideas. We will broaden our perspective to include other areas of diversity in discussion and cases. We invite students who wish to address specific aspects of diversity more thoroughly to do so in their course projects.

Outcome Objectives:

Students who successfully complete the course will develop cognitive knowledge and behavioral competence in the areas listed below. They will

- increase awareness of their own cultural assumptions and biases through learning about the cultures of others;
- recognize the importance of understanding diversity at work in relationship to suppliers and customers as well as coworkers, subordinates, and managers; and
- link organizational development and change, management, and marketing practice and processes to diversity issues.

Instructional Methods:

Teaching and learning methods include reading assignments, lectures, case analyses, discussion, reflection, and individual and group exercises. Students are also expected to complete a course project to be presented to the whole class. Three choices are available: an oral presentation, a poster presentation, or a Web page, including links to relevant sites.

Evaluation:

100 points, distributed in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>5 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course project</td>
<td>35 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case analysis, exercises</td>
<td>5 @ 5 points = 25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Project</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grades are awarded in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>95-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>90-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>80-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>73-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>65-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Because this is a cotaught course, each instructor independently grades each assignment and then together the instructors agree on a grade.
- We expect you to hand in assignments on the dates that they are due. While in special circumstances, we will accept late assignments, they will be more rigorously evaluated and lateness could affect the grade. We offer no opportunities for extra credit for this course.

Expectations:

- We expect you to attend every class for the entire day.
- We expect you to register for the course on the Blackboard Web site and check the site at least once before the start of the course and daily during the week that the class is meeting.
- We expect you to complete all reading and written assignments on the day that they are due. We recommend that you complete them before the start of the week that class will meet.
- You must hand in all written work on time, that is, on the date noted in the syllabus. Plan ahead! If you feel you have a serious emergency, please talk to one of us about it.
- You must complete all written work using word processing software. It should be double-spaced and readable. You must include correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Use a software package to check your spelling and grammar; ask a friend or classmate to proofread your work; refer to *The Elements of Style* (Strunk and White) or any good writing handbook.
- We expect you to participate fully in class and group discussions, case analyses, and exercises.
- We expect that all work will be essentially your own. We encourage you to talk with others and us in the class about your project. Please see the academic integrity statement in the Graduate Catalog (page 20).

Assignments:

- The team assignment involves a presentation about organizational or affinity or ethnic culture, preferably one with which you are not familiar. You should include various artifacts and behavior patterns and a discussion of how they indicate underlying assumptions. It is worth 20 points.
- A written assignment, usually a case analysis or preparation for a small group discussion or exercise, is due every day. Each is worth 5 points.
- A course project is worth 35 points. A project consists of one of the following:
  - Presentation to the class about a topic relating diversity to management, marketing, or organizational change practices and processes. This presentation should thoroughly explore one topic in 15-20 minutes. It must be interesting...
and should include visual aids and handouts for the class. The presentation should also include one part that explains why you chose this topic and your personal response to the subject. Students who wish to make a presentation must do so during the week the class meets. Students who wish to make a presentation must have the topic and time approved by Monday of the week before class meets. Please contact both instructors by e-mail. There are a limited number of slots for presentations.

- Poster presentation about a topic relating diversity to management, marketing, or organizational change practices and processes. It will be presented during a poster session during class time. It must be interesting and include a written portion, visual aids, and handouts. You should include a section that explains why you chose this topic and your personal response to the subject. Your presentation must be completed by Wednesday of the week that we meet. You must have your topic approved by Monday of the week before class meets. Please contact both instructors by e-mail.

- Web page development about a topic relating to diversity in management, marketing, or organizational change practices and processes. Web pages must be developed with appropriate links to other relevant Web sites. The Web site with associated graphics and materials should explore the topic and be presented to class members. You should explain why a specific topic was chosen and your personal response to the subject. The Web page must be completed by Wednesday of the week that class meets. You must have the topic approved by Monday of the week before class meets. Please contact both instructors by e-mail.
### Schedule

**Day One**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before class:</th>
<th>Read Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of Cox and Beale. Specifically, read the introduction to each chapter and the following readings: 2.1 (pp. 15-19); 2.2 (pp. 23-25); 3.1 (pp. 31-34); 3.2 (pp. 35-46).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare a 1- to 2-page paper completing these sentences: “I am . . . ,” “My place is . . . ,” and “My people are . . . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete “Tasks for Individuals” in Activity 2.2, Defining Diversity, in Cox and Beale (pp. 26-27).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand in:</td>
<td>“Tasks for Individuals” in Activity 2.2, Defining Diversity, in Cox and Beale (pp. 26-27) (5 points).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During class:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-8:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Gather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45-9:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Introduction to course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45-10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Introductory exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-11:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-noon</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon-1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Lecture and discussion: Managing Diversity as a Business Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Native American Cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15-4:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Group exercise (Activity 2.2, Defining Diversity in Cox and Beale, page 26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15-4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day Two

| Before class: | Read Chapter 4 of Cox and Beale. Specifically, read the Introductions to Part 2 and to Chapter 4 and the following readings: 4.1, Cognitive Style (pp. 66-72) and 4.2, Reflections About Dialogue Groups Addressing Diversity (pp. 73-74). Complete activities from Cox and Beale: Activity 4.1, Group Identity in the Self-Concept, Pie Chart, Part One (p. 53) and Activity 4.2, Pie Chart, Part Two (p. 55) to be handed in. |
| Hand in: | Activity 4.1 (p. 53) and Activity 4.2 (p. 55), Cox and Beale |

<p>| During class: | Business |
| 8:30-8:45 a.m. | Lecture: Understanding Culture |
| 8:45-9:30 a.m. | Movie and Discussion, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” |
| 9:30-11:45 a.m. | Reflection |
| Noon-1:00 p.m. | Lunch break |
| 1:00-2:30 p.m. | Discussion of movie |
| 2:30-2:45 p.m. | Break |
| 2:45-3:30 p.m. | Student presentation: The Automotive Industry and Internet Marketing to U.S. Hispanics |
| 3:30-4:15 p.m. | Prepare team assignment on cultural artifacts |
| 4:15-4:30 p.m. | Reflection |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Day Three</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before class:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hand in:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>During class:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day Four

**Before class:**
- Prepare to discuss and hand in Cox and Beale, Activity 10.4. Developing a Philosophy for Managing Diversity (pp. 307-310).
- Write and hand in Task 1 and Task 2. We will do Task 3 in class.

**Hand in:**
- Cox and Beale, Activity 10.4 (pp. 308-310), Task 1 and Task 2.

**During class:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Student presentation: Diversity in Supply Chain Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15-10:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Team 1 presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15-10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Business and break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Student presentation: Affinity Groups and Corporations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-11:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-noon</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon-1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-1:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Team 2 presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45-2:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Alumna, Corporate Diversity Marketing Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-4:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Activity 10.4, Task 3 in small groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15-4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day Five

Before class:

Write a one-page paper about one new learning from this week.

Prepare food to share for lunch that is representative of your heritage. You are responsible for keeping it cold (e.g., cooler) or hot (e.g., crock-pot or electric frying pan) until lunchtime.

Choose music, a story, game, video, or some other cultural artifact that is representative of your heritage to share with the class.

Hand in:

One-page paper on new learning

During class:

8:30-10:00 a.m.  
Guest speaker: Alumni panel: Corporate Diversity Initiatives

10:00-10:10 a.m.  
Break

10:15-10:45 a.m.  
Group discussion of new learning

10:45-11:45 a.m.  
Team 3 presentation

11:45 a.m.-noon  
Reflection

Noon-4:00 p.m.  
Potluck lunch and multicultural celebration

4:00-4:15 p.m.  
Course evaluations

4:15-4:30 p.m.  
Reflection

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Appendix B

Web Links (retrieved June 5, 2004)

Government Sites:

http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/index.htm
U.S. Department of Labor
http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wt/g-wtl/diversity.htm
U.S. Coast Guard Diversity Program
U.S. Census 2000 Diversity Links

Academic Sites:

University of Maryland Diversity Database
http://www.simmons.edu/programs/gsm/cgov/index.html
Simmons College Center for Gender in Organizations
Media Sites:
http://www.msmagazine.com/index.asp
Ms. Magazine
http://www.npr.org/news/specials/michigan/
National Public Radio report on U.S. Supreme Court Decision on University of
Michigan Admissions Policies (includes links to other sites)
http://www.detroitpublictv.org/livingthedream/index.htm
Detroit Public Television Diversity Page

Commercial Sites:
http://www.diversitycentral.com/
Consulting firm specializing in diversity training.
Site includes an archive of articles related to diversity in business.
http://www.gardenswartzrowe.com/home.html
Consulting firm specializing in diversity training.
Site includes exercises on diversity.

References
edu/accreditation/business/BusinessStandards2000.pdf
Cox, T., Jr., & Beale, R. (1997). Developing competence to manage diversity: Readings, cases &
activities. San Francisco: Berit-Koehler.
Behavior Teaching Review: Journal of the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society, 12(2),
72-85.
Management education at risk: Report of the Management Education Task Force to the AACSBB
www.aacsb.edu/metf
from http://www.entinst.ca/Kantola-Main.htm
Norton, R., & Fox, R. E. (1997). The change equation: Capitalizing on diversity for effective
TwoTrees, K. (1997). Workshop at Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference, Case West-
ern Reserve University, Cleveland, OH.