

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 465 874

CE 083 500

AUTHOR Easter, Marilyn
TITLE The Rise and Fall of Diversity Training.
PUB DATE 2002-04-00
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 1-5, 2002).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Analysis of Variance; *Attitude Change; *Business Administration Education; Cultural Differences; Definitions; *Education Work Relationship; Higher Education; *Instructional Effectiveness; Literature Reviews; *Multicultural Education; Nontraditional Students; Pretests Posttests; Program Effectiveness; *Racial Attitudes; Racial Relations; Stereotypes; Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS Diversity Training

ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of diversity training in eliminating racial stereotypes in the workplace and modifying employees' negative attitudes toward diversity was examined in a study conducted at a private nonprofit college in the San Francisco Bay area. The study sample consisted of 80 nontraditional students from 4 sections of a course titled Managing Cultural Diversity (MCD) and 40 students from 2 marketing classes. The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) was administered to all 120 students as a pretest and posttest. The MCD students received 7 weeks of intensive training on cultural diversity, interracial differences, race relations, ethnicity and attitude, psychographics, prejudice and discrimination, and white privilege. The 40 marketing students received no diversity training during the study. An analysis of the students' performance on the CCAI using descriptive statistics and repeated measure analysis of variance established that there were no significant differences between the pretest and posttest scores of the two groups. Thus, diversity training did not appear to have altered the attitudes or behaviors of students who took the MCD course. Several possible explanations for this finding were offered, including the fact that the students were already fairly sophisticated with respect to the subscales measured by the CCAI. (Contains 27 references.) (MN)

The Rise and Fall of Diversity Training

ED 465 874

Presented at
The AERA Convention
New Orleans
April 4, 2002

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Easter

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

by

Marilyn Easter, EdD

Coordinator of Business Communication

San Jose State University
Department of Marketing
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95192-0069

Website: www.measter.com
Email: measter@msn.com

Abstract

The subject of diversity and racial differences has become a widely debated topic in both academia and business. As local and nationwide demographics reflect an increasingly diverse workforce, the need for diversity training becomes more apparent. However, while an increasing number of schools and businesses have incorporated diversity training as part of their mission statements for the 90's, little research has been conducted to show whether or not, or to what extent, diversity training is effective. It was the purpose of the research presented here to answer these fundamental questions: To what extent do employees carry negative racial stereotypes into the workplace? How effective is diversity training in modifying employees' negative attitudes towards diversity?

Introduction

The subject of diversity and racial differences has become a widely debated topic in both academia and business. As local and nationwide demographics reflect an increasingly diverse workforce, the need for diversity training becomes more apparent. But while an increasing number of schools and businesses have incorporated diversity training as part of their mission statements for the 90's, little research has been conducted to show whether or not, or to what extent, diversity training is effective. It was the purpose of the research presented here to answer these fundamental questions: To what extent do employees carry negative racial stereotypes into the workplace? How effective is diversity training in modifying employees' negative attitudes towards diversity?

Diversity is a contemporary term, which most commonly refers to differences between cultural groups, although it is also used to describe differences within cultural groups. For the purpose of this paper, we have adapted the general definitions of diversity by Vaughn (1998): diversity refers to the many ways in which different groups express their worldviews concerning differences such as workplace, gender, maturity level, religion, struggles of power, and education, while cultural diversity emphasizes how different worldviews represent cultural differences as such race and ethnicity.

Literature Review

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2002), ethnic and racial minorities constitute nearly one-half of all Americans, and this trend affects the composition of its workers. African Americans make up approximately 12 percent of the total labor force; Hispanics account for approximately 10 percent, while Asians account for approximately four percent. How are American universities and colleges preparing students for their place in a diverse workforce? Many American colleges and universities have instituted a wide range of initiatives and curriculum changes to equip all students for this challenge (Smith, 1997). Diversity education can help build both a strong society and a strong economy. People who have recently graduated from college and those who have taken diversity courses tend to be even more supportive of diversity education than the general public (Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1994).

The challenge to colleges and universities is to deliver graduates who are competent not only to function professionally and in a culturally diverse environment but also to be equipped to make personal and public-policy decisions as citizens of an international society (Anderson, 1988). Diversity training has its history in peace negotiation, racial desegregation in the United States, and race relations training. The rise of

diversity training became necessary when the United States tried to desegregate American racial groups. With armed forces taking lead, troops across the different military organizations received intensive race relations training (Vaughn, 1998).

Smith (1993) indicated that America needed to manage its increasing diversity to compete in the 21st century. By the late 1980s, multicultural education included race and human relations in the general education curriculum. It has been the mission and goal to prepare college and university students to live and work in a diverse society (Vaughn, 1998). Some institutions have offered guidelines for teaching the emotions associated with resistant attitudes (Vaughn, 1994). Aguilar & Woo (2000) suggest that a knowledgeable and culturally diverse team teaching diversity training in an open and safe climate is the key to addressing the emotions and attitudes of participants and instructors in diversity training.

As public demand has increased accountability for preparing students to live in a diverse world, colleges and universities have demonstrated practicing traditional principles of academic integrity and collective responsibility in delivering diversity courses (Cheney, 1994 and Ewell, 1994). Through the Campus Diversity Public Information Project, the Ford Foundation (1994) developed effective ways to communicate the value of diversity in higher education and helped those who value diversity to communicate more effectively. Generally, the literature suggests that diversity initiatives positively affect both ethnic minority and majority students on campus (AAC&U, 1996). Diversity initiatives have an impact not only on student attitudes and feelings about intergroup relations on campus, but also on institutional satisfaction, involvement, and academic growth (Smith, 1997). Smith (1998) further suggests that when students of color involve themselves in specialized student groups, such as ethnic residential theme houses, support centers, and academic departments, they all benefit from these experiences.

An increasing number of college leaders are recognizing that knowledge about the diversity of American history and culture and knowledge about international diversity are essential for today's students (Levine, 1996). A survey of 65 institutions nationwide involved in a transformation project to increase diversity sensitivity showed that almost 60 percent of those institutions require students to take at least one course addressing diversity (Humphreys, 1997). To increase the sensitivity and effectiveness of diversity training, Wentling and Palma-Rivas suggest that college leaders consider management commitment and support, inclusion in strategic planning, attention to specific organizational needs, qualified trainers, mandatory attendance, inclusiveness, trust and confidentiality, accountability, and clarity focused evaluation as key components (1999a).

Other studies (Astin, 1993; Bowen, 1995) found that faculty who emphasized diversity in their courses had a positive effect on student openness to racial understanding and overall satisfaction with their college experiences. Lopez (1993) found that course work had the most significant positive impact on increased support for educational equity. A 1991 study at University of California Berkeley found that a comparative multicultural course requirement led students to a greater appreciation of the works of different cultures (Diversity Project, 1991).

Research also indicates that diversity courses challenge students to think in more complex ways about identity and history and avoid cultural stereotyping. Many studies (Astin, 1993; Adams and Zhou-McGovern, 1994; Tanaka, 1996; Villalpando, 1994) have also indicated that diversity courses have a positive impact on critical thinking and learning. In a study conducted at Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania (1994), Nelson found that a diversity program design to facilitate effective communication among college students from different backgrounds was very effective in increasing intergroup understanding and racial awareness. Villalpando (1994) suggests that students who have professors that included ethnic and racial materials in their courses report higher levels of satisfaction in their college experience. Chang (1996) conducted a study of 300 campuses and found that racially integrated populations of students have reported positive effects overall college satisfaction, social and intellectual confidence, grade point average, and retention.

Despite studies of the success of diversity training, other studies suggest that the teaching and learning of diversity can be challenging (Berlak, 1999; Brown 2001; Hanover & Cellar 1998; Humphreys, 1996). In a pre-service and in-service diversity training course (Berlak, 1999), cultural and linguistic diversity teachers were asked to confront the effects of racism on themselves and the children they serve. Many white students participating in this training experienced hurt feelings, argument, violent, and angry behavior (Berlak, 1999). Many minority students, including gays and lesbians, white women, and disabled students, indicate that even college campuses that support diversity are indifferent to their needs (AAC&U, 1996).

In addition to the effects associated with diversity training in colleges and universities, Wentling & Palma-Rivas, (1999b) pointed to workplace diversity programs and initiatives and identified barriers that would influence the individual and the organization in the advancement of diverse groups in the workplace. Some of those barriers included demographic changes, affirmative actions programs, equal opportunity programs, and comfort with being different. Brown (2001) suggests that many workers, particularly white males, fear that

courses in diversity will create more problems in the workplace, causing them to lose out. Brown also adds that perceived myths about the effectiveness of diversity training might cause some people to resist or fear it.

Sample

In this study, the sample population included nontraditional students from Business and Intensive Human Services of the College of Notre Dame (CND), a private nonprofit college in the San Francisco Bay Area. Of its 1,600 students, about 300 are nontraditional students: most are employed men and women seeking career advancement and/or completion of their degree. The age of these students ranges from 25 to 62. Seventy percent are midlevel supervisors, ten percent are top executives, and twenty percent are entry level. These nontraditional students typically have some college in their background. While forty percent have started or completed an associate degree, sixty percent have begun work toward their bachelor's degree but have not yet completed their programs. Eighty nontraditional students who participated in this study were from four sections of Managing Cultural Diversity (MCD) while forty were from two Marketing classes.

Instrument

The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) was administered as both pre/post test to all 120 students. The CCAI addresses one's ability to adapt to any cultural differences and is designed to respond to several needs or practical concerns expressed both by culturally diverse and cross-culturally oriented populations and by the trainers and professionals who work with them (Kelley & Meyers, 2000). In conjunction with training, it is also used to enhance cross-cultural effectiveness, to build self-awareness, to improve intra/inter personal relations, and to improve communication skills for working with people.

Background data on the CCAI indicate that it has both content and construct validity. In addition, construct validity of the CCAI was determined by rigorous statistical analyses. From these analyses, four factors emerged and an assessment of these factors produced four interpretable scales: Emotional Resilience (ER), Flexibility/Openness (FO), Perceptual Acuity (PAC), and Personal Autonomy (PA). Discriminant validity of this instrument seems promising. The results of one study showed that school principals with higher CCAI scores had more cross-cultural training, were more ethnically different, and spoke several foreign languages. With an overall reliability of .90, the CCAI has adequate reliability and validity for a diversity-training instrument.

Training Methodology

The MCD students received seven weeks of intensive training on cultural diversity, interracial differences, race relations, ethnicity and attitude, psychographics, prejudice and discrimination, and white privilege. During this training, students were expected to participate in role-play activities by confronting inequalities and emotions that were felt by some students in the training. Teaching methodologies including lecture, tests, group analyses, presentations, breakout groups, self-assessments, dyad/triad exercises, fieldtrips, research projects, and discussions with special interest group leaders were also part of the training. While the MCD group received four hours of weekly intense training, the control Marketing's group received no diversity training during the same period.

Using descriptive statistics and repeated measure ANOVA (Analyses of Variance), data analysis indicated, contrary to the researcher's initial hypothesis, that there was in fact no significant difference between the test/survey scores of the two groups. That is to say, the diversity training appeared to have made no difference in altering attitudes or behaviors in the target group.

Discussion

To what could these results have been attributed? Several possibilities come to mind. First, the scores for the pre-test of the CCAI for the students in both groups were in the upper percentile ranges, thus with little room for improved scores in the post-test. Looking more closely at the sample population, one might guess that college students living in a metropolitan area, attending the private institution where the courses were offered, might be fairly sophisticated with respect to the subscales as measured by the CCAI. One might guess, accordingly, that the training might have elicited a greater change in attitudes had it been administered, for example, at a community college in a less ethnically or racially diverse geographical area. Another factor to keep in mind is the fact that the CCAI is a "deep structure" instrument, one that assesses long-held personality traits and belief systems. Hence, the instrument is possibly more appropriate for a longitudinal study with intervention that requires individual counseling rather than a brief academic intervention.

Additionally, the fact that this instrument is a self-report survey (in contrast to an objective, behavior-based assessment of cultural adaptability or sensitivity) might tend to skew test results. The fact that the items have a high degree of face validity might preclude honest responses. The students in these courses are graded, and they might have responded as they anticipated they were "supposed" to respond to the items, in which case the high scores may have been due, in part, to the students' second-guessing the "right" answer.

Implications

The results obtained in this study should not, however, imply that diversity training is a waste of time. They do, rather, tell us that there is a need for further study into the question of the effectiveness of diversity training. A careful needs assessment of the specific target population (whether students, business employees, or manager/supervisors) may indicate how appropriate such training would be.

In addition, an examination of the trainee profiles would help indicate what kind of training would be most effective. Is the training more effective if it is obligatory? Should the training be administered by an outside source? Should it be during or outside of work/classroom hours? Is length of training a significant factor? Does the instrument truly assess what the training teaches? Beyond this study, even if the post-instrument aligns accurately with the training and does produce significantly higher scores, will those scores result in higher worker/student productivity? These are some of the important questions elicited by this study that may serve as a basis for further research into the question of the effectiveness of diversity training in the classroom and the workplace.

Work Cited

- Aguilar, V. & Woo, G. (2000). *Team teaching and learning in diversity training for service programs*. (Eric Database # EJ614201).
- Association of American Colleges and Universities. (1994). Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Adams, M., & Zhou-McGovern, Y. (1994). *The sociomoral development of undergraduates in a social diversity course: Developmental theory, research and instructional applications*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. New Orleans.
- Anderson, C. (1988). *International studies for undergraduates: Operations and opinions*. Higher Education Report No. 76. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education.
- Astin, A. (1993). *It matters in college? Four critical years revisited*: San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Berlak, A. (1999). *Taking it personally: Encountering racism in a cultural diversity course*. (Eric Database # ED444978).
- Bowen, R. C. (1995). *Achieving administrative diversity. New directions for community colleges*. New York.
- Brown, B. L. (2001). *Diversity training: myths and realities* No. 13. (Eric Database # ED454403).
- Campus Diversity Public Information Project. (1994). *Diversity Training at the Workplace*. Champaign: University of Illinois.
- Cheney, L. V. (1993). *Multiculturalism done right: taking steps to build support for change*. Change. March/April
- Diversity Project. (1991). *Institute for the study of social change*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Ewell, P. T. (1994). *A matter of integrity: accountability and the future of self-regulation*. Change.
- Hanover, J. & Cellar, D. F., (1998). *Environmental factors and the effectiveness of workforce diversity training*. (Eric Database # EJ567108).
- Humphreys, D. (1997). *General education and American commitments: A national report on diversity courses and requirements*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Kelley, C. & Meyers, J. (1996) *Cross-cultural adaptability inventory*. Ried London House
- Levine, L. (1996). *The opening of the American mind. - Canons, culture, and history*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Lopez G. E. (1993). *The effect of group contact and curriculum on white, Asian, American, and African American students' attitudes*. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Michigan.

- Ponterotto, J. G., & Pedersen, P. B. (1994, February). Fighting prejudice and racism: A racial/ethnic identity-based intervention program. Paper presented at the annual Teachers College winter Round Table in Cross-cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy, New York.
- Smith D. G., et al. (1997). *The emerging picture of how students benefit*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Smith, E. R. (1993). Social identity and social emotions: Towards new conceptualizations of prejudice. In D. Mackie & D. Hamilton (Eds.), *Affect, cognition, and stereotyping: Interactive processes in group perception*, pp. 297-313. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, & Jonanovich.
- Tanaka, G. K. (1996). *"The impact of multiculturalism on white students"* Ph. D. dissertation. University of Michigan.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2002). Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Labor.
- Wentling & Palma-Rivas. (1999a). Current status and future trends of diversity initiatives in the workplace: Diversity experts' perspectives. (Eric Database # ED414474).
- Wentling & Palma-Rivas. (1999b). Diversity in the workplace: A literature review. Diversity in the workforce series report #1. (Eric Database # ED414473).
- Vaughn, B.E. (1994). Teaching cultural diversity courses from a balanced perspective. In Exchanges: Newsletter of the California State University System Institute for Teaching and Learning, No. 5, Vol. 2, 17-18.
- Vaughn, B. (1998). *A historical view of diversity training*. Chicago: Diversity Training University International.
- Villalpando, O. (1994). *"Comparing the effects of multiculturalism and diversity on minority and white students' satisfaction with college."* Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Tucson.

For more information about her research, contact Marilyn Easter at www.measter.com or (408) 924-3530.



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



REPRODUCTION RELEASE
(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: The Rise and Fall of Diversity Training
Author(s): Marilyn Easter
Corporate Source: San Jose State University
Publication Date: April 04-02

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Sample
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Sample
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2A

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Sample
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2B

Level 1



Level 2A



Level 2B



Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above.
Signature: Marilyn Easter
Printed Name/Position/Title: Marilyn Easter, Assoc. Professor
Organization/Address: 7337 Elmwood Circle, Pleasanton, CA 94588
Telephone: 925 484-1287
FAX: 925 484-1287
E-Mail Address: measter@msn.com
Date: 04-03-02

Sign here, please



III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse: <p style="text-align: center;">University of Maryland ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation 1129 Shriver Laboratory College Park, MD 20742 Attn: Acquisitions</p>

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility

4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200

Toll Free: 800-799-3742

FAX: 301-552-4700

e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov

WWW: <http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com>