

Cultural diversity in higher learning in the 21st century essay

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



The world has become a global community with different races and tribes living, studying and working together. Companies and organisations such as schools and colleges have even incorporated diversity policies in their corporate governance structures. For every recruitment exercise, it is an intentional and deliberate move by management to ensure women, disabled and minority races such as blacks and Hispanics are employed. In higher education institutions cultural diversity practices have also been in the increase. Several schools are engaging in practices promoting inter-culturalism (Warner, 1993). This is where learning in the school occurs across different cultures but no one culture is superior or dominates.

Research and studies have been conducted in schools of higher learning in order to find the best way to promote cultural diversity. It has been recognised it is not just about admitting students from minority races, low-income background, disabled or non-English speaking environments. The staff and other students have to be involved. There has to be a new attitude in place and a new way of doing things. In schools exchange students are no longer seen as special (Nelson, 1996; Oblinger 2003). These students are being seen more and more in campuses. To embrace diversity in the schools both the teachers and other students should be prepared to do things differently and move from traditional ways of teaching. A study conducted in a New Zealand college showed that research based teaching approach increased appreciation of cultural diversity. This was achieved through deep styles of teaching that will raise the level of awareness, changed attitudes and behaviour (Deakins, 2007)

Appreciation of diversity helps decrease violence among students against minorities. Four years ago in Loyola Marymount campus there was an increase in anti-racism violent acts. This caused the campus management to look at ways of enabling students to embrace diversity in the campus. In a college where the dominant race was white, it was realised the style and way of doing things was indifferent to the other minority races. Consultants were hired to teach lecturers how to teach in a diverse environment. There was even an innovative idea by the staff to engage in minority faculty hiring. A study was later conducted on the effects of participation in inter-cultural activities. The outcomes were that people were now comfortably discussing their ethnicity with others; they believed race relations were good and they had positive relationships with people of different ethnic backgrounds. The people also identified more with the campus policies once intercultural policies were incorporated (Ibarra, 2001)

Every school of higher education should therefore embrace cultural diversity practices and policies in their system. The benefits are overwhelming. Socializing with someone of a different background or race does contribute to the student's satisfaction with college, academic performance, cultural awareness and increased commitment to enhancing racial understanding. For the staff the lecturers learn to work with people of different backgrounds. They also learn new methods of teaching as their classes now have more diverse students. As an institution everyone benefits.

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Education