

Diversity in Higher Education

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to collaborate effectively with your peers by emphasizing the value of diverse perspectives. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. The Value of Diversity

Higher learning requires a mind open to new ideas and new people. A closed mind refuses to change, and without change, there can be no growth. Thus, a diverse student body and a diversity of ideas are cornerstones of the kind of intellectual and social growth that occurs in the best educational experiences.

Being open to and respectful of new people and new ideas makes you a good “citizen of the classroom”—that is, a student who is considerate of their classmates and helps to promote a spirit of inclusivity and welcoming. It also connects you to perspectives outside the scope of your experience and thereby enriches your own perspective. In other words, it makes you a better student and a better person.



THINK ABOUT IT

The Latin verb “vertere,” meaning “to turn” is part of the derivation of both the words “diversity” and “university.” Interestingly, whereas diversity denotes that things “turn away” or differ from each other, university—with the prefix “uni-,” meaning “one”—indicates a place where different things come together or “turn into one.”

The function of the university in a society—to be a meeting place or even a marketplace of diverse people and ideas—is embedded in the history of the word “university.”

In some online courses, you may have little or no interaction with other students. At the same time, it's important for you to understand what the norms are for other types of higher education courses in the likely event that you will continue your education in a traditional classroom or online course with discussion forums or virtual classrooms. This tutorial will help you prepare for those types of experiences.

2. Personal Perspectives: Culture, Values, and Beliefs

Your perspective is the position from which you see the world around you. It is shaped and informed by things

like where you come from, how you were raised, the privileges you've had, or the adversity you've faced.

You are inevitably going to be in class with students who come from a different culture or have different values than you—that is, people who see the world from a different position than you do. Once again, this is a good thing!

The classroom is an ideal place to learn with and learn from people from all kinds of backgrounds and perspectives. This includes students from different countries, different economic classes, different religious beliefs, different gender identities, different abilities, disabilities, etc.



SUMMARY

Diverse people and perspectives are valued in higher education. Be aware of your **personal perspective** and keep an open mind to new ideas and people to enrich your educational experience.