Why is Diversity Important

PEERs Seminar
Week 2
Week 2 Outline

• Announcements
• Why is diversity important
• How to be an informed consumer of behavioral science findings
Announcements

(1) Syllabus and access to readings, Catalyst?

(2) Turn in photo release form

(3) Any representations to share?
Why Diversity Is Important
Social Identities

Nationality
Race
Tenure
Birth Order
Occupation
Mental Health
Language
Sexuality
Personality
Age
Weight
Geographic region
Religion
Education
Learning Style
Gender
Physical ability/disability
Marital Status
Physical Health
Ethnicity

Source: 2009 LEAD presentation by Kecia M. Thomas, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Sr. Advisor to the Dean of the Franklin College of Arts & Sciences, University of Georgia
Discussion questions

1. Why might being able to bring your whole self to work be important?

2. To what extent can we bring all of ourselves to our work, to our schools, even to our workplace relationships?

3. Do we permit our students to be all that they are? Or do we allow them to only reveal certain aspects of identities and force them to hide others?
Definitions of Diversity

• Everything that makes people different from each other

• Just race and gender (minority group status)

• Those differences that carry social and historical significance in the modern world

Source: 2009 LEAD presentation by Kecia M. Thomas, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Sr. Advisor to the Dean of the Franklin College of Arts & Sciences, University of Georgia
Why Diversity Is Important...

What did the readings say?
Examples of why diversity is important to engineering

- Innovation and creativity
  - Telephone
  - Vibrating and alphanumeric pagers
- Design flaws in absence of diversity
  - Car air bags (sized for adult male bodies)
  - Artificial heart valve (sized for male heart)
  - Voice recognition systems and video conferencing systems (calibrated for male voices)
  - CAEE playground design
- Missing out on talent
- Higher levels of complex thinking, greater range of perspectives, and willingness and ability to change [1]
- Provide equal access and opportunity
Benefit of diversity

N = 29 juries (6 people each)
Benefit of Diversity

• Diverse juries
  – More information exchange
    • Took longer
    • Discussed more case facts
    • Discussed more missing evidence
  – More accurate
    • Fewer inaccurate statements
    • Fewer uncorrected inaccuracies
  – More openness to discussing race
    • Discussed more race-related topics
    • Fewer objections to considering race

• Almost all driven by Whites!
Benefit of Diversity

- Whites’ in diverse groups less likely to vote guilty, even before deliberations began
- In diverse juries, Whites are:
  - Reminded to not be prejudiced
  - Processing trial info more closely
  - More receptive to discussing racism
Downsides of Having Diverse Groups

- May take longer
- Process may be more painful
- People may be concerned about what others will think

→ But research shows that the product will likely be better, even if it doesn’t feel that way
How to be an informed consumer of behavioral science
Key questions when reading a journal article

1. What is the overarching research question(s)?
2. How does the question fit into previous research?
3. What is the hypothesis for the study?
4. What did the study do? What were the authors measuring?
5. What were the key findings?
6. Why is the research important?
Comparing journal articles to popular press articles
(Paired activity)

What were the most noticeable differences between the scientific article and the popular press article?

What were the most noticeable differences between the two popular press articles?

Which article (of the 3) did you find most interesting?
Reading comments to popular press

Researchers analyzed 831 comments posted in response to article on NYT, Discover, and IFL Science (Facebook) from Sept-Dec 2012

Coded gender and STEM affiliation when possible
Coding categories: Negative

1. Sexist, either against women or men
   “Women suck”
   “Male partners should help more instead of getting jealous about their female partners being smarter than them”

2. Justification of bias
   “Men are simply born smarter”
   “Women get pregnant”

3. Disagreement with results
   “Why are your y-axes not labeled”
   “I am a scientist...No gender bias at my job!”
Coding categories: Positive

1. Constructive response
   “Thought this ‘gender gap’ had stopped…yikes”
   “Wow thanks for sharing this”

2. Agreement with results
   “Duh!! They needed to do a study for this?”
   “I am a female scientist, and even I sometimes struggle with this.”
Results

The bar chart shows the comparison between men and women in various categories:

- **Sexism**
- **Justification of bias**
- **Disagreement**
- **Agreement**
- **Constructive**

The x-axis represents different categories, and the y-axis represents the number of occurrences. The chart indicates a higher number of occurrences for women in the **Agreement** category compared to men.
Assignments for Week 3

• Reading Assignment
  – Introduction to Jigsaw I

• Complete Catalyst WebQ