

**General Education Diversity
Courses:
Syllabus Analysis Results**

Presented To

**The General Education Diversity
Assessment Committee**

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Overview

This analysis is based on the review of syllabi from courses fulfilling either the U.S. or Global diversity requirement. All syllabi obtained by our office were included in this review, and represent 75% of all diversity courses (with syllabi from 125 out of 167 individual courses collected). While all 125 syllabi were analyzed by at least one OAPA staff member, 94 (75%) were analyzed by two, the coding of each cross-checked.

Syllabus scoring was done using a rubric developed in consultation with the General Education Diversity Assessment Committee members and focuses on five components:

1. Whether the General Education diversity requirement is mentioned;
2. Types of assignments used;
3. In-class communication & interaction (i.e., class participation, class discussion, small group work);
4. Critical thinking emphasis and methods used to engage student with the material;
5. Approaches for facilitating student perspective-taking skills.

General Education Diversity Requirement

Reference Made to Diversity Course Status

Diversity Designation	0 = No	1 = Yes
Global (N=59)	83.1% (N=49)	16.9% (N=10)
U.S. (N=66)	84.8% (N=56)	15.2% (N=10)

Diversity Course Status Linked to Course Goals, Outcomes, or Assignments

Diversity Designation	0 = No	1 = Yes
Global (N=59)	91.5% (N=54)	8.5% (N=5)
U.S. (N=66)	90.9% (N=60)	9.1% (N=6)

Types of Assignments

(Journals, essays, exams, group projects, presentations, and research papers.)

Journals

Journals are reflections, opinions, and thoughts about the course material.

Inter-rater reliability: 96%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	91.5% (N=54)	6.8% (N=4)	1.7%(N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	86.4% (N=57)	10.6% (N=7)	3.0% (N=2)

Self-Reflective Essays

Self-reflective essays ask students to write their thoughts, feelings, and actions in an informal essay format.

Inter-rater reliability: 72%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	74.6% (N=44)	25.4% (N=15)	0% (N=0)
U.S. (N=66)	68.2% (N=45)	28.8% (N=19)	3.0% (N=2)

Expository Essays

Expository essays ask students to synthesize course information, provide explanations, or assert a point of view or analysis in a formal essay structure.

Inter-rater reliability: 86%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	10.2% (N=6)	88.1% (N=52)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	7.6% (N=5)	89.4% (N=59)	3.0% (N=2)

Exams

Exams include multiple-choice, fill in, true-false, short answer and essay formats. Here we include both in-class and take home exams.

Inter-rater reliability: 75%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Multiple Choice	2 = Essay	3 = Both	4 = Format Not clear
Global (N=59)	15.3% (N=9)	5.1% (N=3)	40.7% (N=24)	13.6% (N=8)	25.4% (N=15)
U.S. (N=66)	42.4% (N=28)	3.0% (N=2)	19.7% (N=13)	9.1% (N=6)	25.7% (N=17)

Group Projects

Course syllabi generally included a limited description of group projects with a stipulation "that additional guidelines will be handed out." Some syllabi offered students the option of completing a group project or a written assignment.

Inter-rater reliability: 99%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	2 = Optional	3 = Not Clear
Global (N=59)	88.1% (N=52)	8.5% (N=5)	0% (N=0)	3.4% (N=2)
U.S. (N=66)	81.8% (N=54)	10.6% (N=7)	4.5% (N=3)	3.0% (N=2)

Types of Assignments (*cont.*)

Class Presentation

Inter-rater reliability: 86%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	2 = Optional	3 = Not Clear
Global (N=59)	76.3% (N=45)	23.7% (N=14)	0% (N=0)	0% (N=0)
U.S. (N=66)	63.6% (N=42)	28.8% (N=19)	4.5% (N=3)	3.0% (N=2)

Research Papers

Generally, courses requiring research papers indicated that students would need to conduct outside research to synthesize with course material.

Inter-rater reliability: 67%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	2 = Optional	3 = Not Clear
Global (N=59)	78.0% (N=46)	16.9% (N=10)	5.1% (N=3)	0%(N=0)
U.S. (N=66)	60.6% (N=40)	31.8% (N=21)	4.5% (N=3)	3.0% (N=2)

In Class Communication and Interaction

Participation Emphasized or Encouraged

Syllabi revealed that student participation is treated in a variety of ways by instructors. The coding scheme took into account whether the syllabus suggested that participation was not encouraged, encouraged, graded, or encouraged and graded.

Inter-rater reliability: 59%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Encouraged	1 = Encouraged	2 = Graded	3= Encouraged & Graded	4 = Not Clear
Global (N=59)	16.9% (N=10)	6.8% (N=4)	25.4%(N=15)	49.2%(N=29)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	7.6% (N=5)	7.6% (N=5)	19.7%(N=13)	62.1% (N=41)	3.0% (N=2)

Class Discussion

Here we coded on the most basic level whether or not discussion was mentioned as a class activity.

Inter-rater reliability: 81%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	17.0% (N=10)	81.4% (N=48)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	15.2% (N=10)	81.8% (N=54)	3.0% (N=2)

Structured Discussion

Some instructors offered explicit parameters for classroom discussion (e.g., think-pair-share, etc.)

Inter-rater reliability: 84%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	72.9% (N=43)	25.4% (N=15)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	77.3% (N=51)	19.7% (N=13)	3.0% (N=2)

Small Group Work

Inter-rater reliability: 96%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	93.2% (N=55)	5.1% (N=3)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	90.9% (N=60)	6.1% (N=4)	3.0% (N=2)

Critical Thinking Focus

One of the requirements for all general education courses, including diversity courses, is that they promote critical thinking. Here we explore whether critical thinking or critical analysis is directly mentioned in the syllabus.

Critical Analysis

After sampling several syllabi, a range of definitions, implementations, and applications of critical analysis emerged. For consistency sake, each syllabus was analyzed for explicit reference to “critical analysis”.

Inter-rater reliability: 83%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	54.2% (N=32)	44.1% (N=26)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	57.6% (N=38)	40.9% (N=27)	1.5% (N=1)

Methods for Engaging Students with Course Material

This coding category reflects four methods instructors use to help students engage with course topics and materials: personal/reflective, research, experiential, and imaginative/creative.

Personal/Reflective

This way of engaging asks students to discuss thoughts, feelings, opinions, about course topics and material.

Inter-rater reliability: 78%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	76.3% (N=44)	22.0% (N=14)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	57.6% (N=37)	39.4% (N=28)	3.0% (N=1)

Research Based

This type of engagement includes having students analyze essays, books and/or articles, and develop their own observations/syntheses.

Inter-rater reliability: 83%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	76.3% (N=45)	22.0% (N=13)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	57.6% (N=38)	39.4% (N=26)	3.0% (N=2)

Experiential

Experiential engagement help students engage with course material through “hands-on” activities or experiences.

Inter-rater reliability: 86%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	83.1% (N=49)	15.3% (N=9)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	56.1% (N=37)	40.9% (N=27)	3.0% (N=2)

Imaginative/Creative

This last type of engagement calls on students' imagination and creativity.

Inter-rater reliability: 93%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	89.8% (N=53)	8.5% (N=5)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	72.3% (N=47)	24.6%(N=16)	3.1% (N=2)

Types of Perspective Taking

Another requirement of general education diversity courses is that the course encourages “pluralistic perspectives.” While the general education diversity course guidelines do not specifically define this term, the description suggests that the course helps students develop the ability to understand information, experiences, events from varied perspectives and that these perspectives are shaped by multiple factors (like culture, politics, personal experiences, etc...). Our analysis provides additional insight into how instructors emphasize different aspects of perspective taking in their courses. We have identified six sub-categories of perspective taking: self-identity, knowledge of others, relationship of own identity to others, knowledge/awareness of societal forces, relationship of own identity with society, and relationship of others' identities to society.

Self-Identity

This category asks students to draw explicit reference to their identity in relation to the course material.

Inter-rater reliability: 88%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	93.2% (N=55)	5.1% (N=3)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	74.2% (N=49)	22.7% (N=15)	3.0% (N=2)

Knowledge of Others

This category asks student to develop knowledge of others' experiences, cultures, and perspectives.

Inter-rater reliability: 88%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	15.3% (N=9)	83.1% (N=49)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	9.1% (N=6)	86.4% (N=57)	4.5% (N=3)

Who Are The “Others” in Global Courses?

Here we make a distinction between global courses that approach the analysis of a culture or society from a homogenous, or generalized, perspective versus those that focus on the diversity and complexity within a culture or society.

Inter-rater reliability: 86%

Diversity Designation	0 = Generalized Other	1 = Diverse Other	Not Clear
Global (N=53)	51.0% (N=25)	46.9% (N=23)	2.0%(N=1)

Self to Other (Relationship of Own Identity to Others)

The third subcategory of perspective taking focuses on the relationship of one's own identity to others.

Inter-rater reliability: 88%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	93.2% (N=55)	5.1% (N=3)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	78.8% (N=52)	16.7% (N=11)	4.5% (N=3)

Societal Forces

The fourth subcategory emphasizes knowledge/awareness of the societal forces that affect various groups or individuals.

Inter-rater reliability: 87%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	13.6% (N=8)	84.7% (N=50)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	6.1% (N=4)	87.9% (N=58)	6.1% (N=4)

Self to Society (Relationship of own identity with society)

This fifth subcategory focuses on the relationship of one's own identity to society.

Inter-rater reliability: 91%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	93.2% (N=55)	5.1% (N=3)	1.7% (N=1)
U.S. (N=66)	74.2% (N=49)	21.2% (N=14)	4.5% (N=3)

Others to Society (Relationship of Others' Identities to Society)

This perspective asks students to examine how other's identities are related, intersect, and connect with larger society.

Inter-rater reliability: 78%

Diversity Designation	0 = Not Used	1 = Used	Not Clear
Global (N=59)	44.1% (N=26)	55.9% (N=33)	0% (N=0)
U.S. (N=66)	13.6% (N=9)	80.3% (N=53)	6.1% (N=4)