

COPING WITH, AND MANAGING DIVERSITY IN A SUPERCOMPLEX HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

by

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ACTIVITY 1

REGION	DRAW	WRITE DOWN
EASTERN CAPE	A RAPIST	
WESTERN CAPE	A TEACHER	
GAUTENG	TWO PEOPLE FIGHTING	
FREE STATE	AN ANIMAL	
ALL OTHERS	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	THE NAME OF YOUR GRADE ONE TEACHER

DISCUSSION

- PEOPLE DIFFER IN PERCEPTIONS AND OR WORLD VIEWS
- BIASES ARE INHERENT IN HUMANS
- VALUE SYSTEMS DIFFER
- STYLES OF LEARNING DIFFER

CONTEXTUALISING DIVERSITY

- DIVERSITY IS A MUTATING CONSTRUCT
- Numbers/demographics, race, age, accessibility, ethnicity, gender, differently abled and part-time students (Smith 1989)

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY CONTEXT

- White paper 3 and 4 spell out policy and strategic issues around which higher education institutions should plan their activities notwithstanding diversity imperatives
- White paper 3 of 1997 avers that *“While some expansion is needed in the university sector, the DHET’s main focus will be on improving quality and building appropriate diversity within the sector”*
- *“Both White Paper 3 and the National Plan for Higher Education recognise the importance of a diverse higher education system with different institutional missions and programmes.”*

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

- Providing expanded access and increased diversity of provision to a hitherto segregated system
- To inculcate collaborative relationships between higher education institutions and within institutions
- Being responsive to the needs of individual citizens and employers in both public and private sectors.

ACTIVITY 2: DISCUSSION

- What issues do you consider as diversity-related challenges in the South African higher education context (and why?)

S.A. HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT ISSUES

- CULTURAL *DIVERSITY* (Race?)
- GENDER
- SOCIAL JUSTICE (White paper 2013)
- INCLUSION
- INCLUSIVITY
- EQUITY (leading to MASSIFICATION)
- RIGHTS
- QUALITY (Sayed & Ahmed 2011)
- ACCESS & SUCCESS

DIVERSITY CHALLENGES IN A SUPERCOMPLEX HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

- θ Capacity of institutions to function in a pluralistic environment (Smith 1989)
- θ Balancing issues such as 'rights', equity, diversity and participation in delivering quality education (Sayed & Ahmed 2011)
- θ Preparing students for a complex world and preparing them for a supercomplex world (Barnette 2000: 257)
- θ Apartheid legacy (Green paper 1996)
 - ‖ replicate the past;
 - ‖ disadvantaged institutions,
 - ‖ Racism

DIVERSITY CHALLENGES IN A SUPERCOMPLEX HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT (*Apartheid legacy*)

- } Marginalisation of the already alienated women and students
- } Female students as victims of patriarchal practices and sexual harassment
- } Poorer students needing to assimilate systems designed for those from privileged backgrounds.
- } Limited opportunities in rural areas than those in urban areas
- } Informal settlements are also victims of under-provision.
- } Disabled students experience discrimination (access to post-school education and training opportunities, inadequate facilities and staff to cater for their needs).
- } Education for adults has been marginalised and neglected esp.: vocational component meant to enhance occupational skills)
- } A recycled and rigid education system informed by nontransformative education related policies.

MANAGING AND COPING WITH DIVERSITY

- Focused curriculum transformation anchored on innovative teaching strategies that utilise opportunities presented by the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR).
- Managing people's differences is crucial in moulding a compatible and productive workforce (Alexander 2020)
- Improving the quality of research and innovation while building on areas of strengths (White Paper 2013)
- Recruiting and retaining knowledgeable academics that are alive to the transformation agenda.
- The need for improved problem-solving skills amongst staff and creation of learning spaces for the promotion of creativity and innovative practices (Alexander 2020)
- Training and capacitating diverse students with lifelong skills and knowledge using a responsive curriculum

SUMMARY AND WAY FORWARD

- Increased institutional flexibility and adaptability is required to respond to various environmental, national and institutional challenges (Alexander 2020)
- Creating inclusive and enabling learning spaces for all through collaboration, flexible teaching, robust engagement
- What is the role of institutional transformational policies and structures are cardinal in coping and managing diversity (Alexander 2020)?

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THANK YOU FOR
LISTENING AND
LOOKING!!