

Using Cultural Anthropology to Facilitate Discussions of Racial Diversity: A Workshop
for High School Seniors

Bean (2016) has projected that, by the year 2050, “white” will no longer be the majority race in the United States. Consequently, the racial diversity in schools has also been projected to increase (Fedynich & Garza, 2016). These projections emphasize the necessity of educating students of all ages about the importance of respecting racial diversity, the history of racial discrimination in the United States, and the forms discrimination can take in and outside of schools. This education can be provided to students by incorporating an anthropology course, specifically a cultural anthropology course, into high schools. Cultural anthropology is the study of human societies and cultures, and it can teach students how to respectfully interact with people who are different from themselves. These differences can include, but are not limited to, differences in race. Cultural anthropology can help students evaluate their unconscious biases through the unique anthropological lens of cultural relativism, the practice of exploring a situation from a different, more inclusive point of view. Anthropology is unique in that it gives students tools to help them consciously assess potentially sensitive interactions with people of different beliefs and backgrounds. Anthropology teaches ideas that students can apply to interactions in their daily lives, and would therefore be impactful for students of all ages. However, there are currently many challenges that prohibit schools from incorporating this course into the curriculum, and this project explores those challenges. It also provides teacher guides, video clips, and selected readings to assist high school teachers in leading a two-day workshop for high school seniors. Exploring race using cultural relativism and past anthropological discoveries, this workshop is intended to challenge students to look outside of themselves (a), to increase their awareness of others, and (b), to help them explore their abilities to contribute to positive social change as the racial diversity in the United States continues to increase.

References

- Bean, Frank D. (2016). Changing Ethnic and Racial Diversity in the United States: A Review Essay Book Reviews. *Population and development review*, 42(1), 135-142.
- Fedynich, Dr. LaVonne, & Garza, Dr. Kristopher. (2016). Implementation Issues in Multicultural Education: What Are Secondary Public School Educators Facing? *Journal of Arts & Humanities*, 5(2), 1-11.