

# **DEFINING THE GOALS AND ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF A MULTICULTURAL REQUIREMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

A common part of a college or university's multi-pronged plan to empower students to become knowledgeable and active citizens in their community is to require the students to take one or more diversity [or multicultural] courses. This paper focuses on the evaluation of a course called workforce diversity which satisfies this requirement at our college. In two previous studies we found that different approaches to teaching and the qualifications of the instructors significantly influenced students rating of the course and their perception of course learning. The present study evaluates the effectiveness of the course relative to the different learning goals for different sections of the course.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The multicultural course requirement at our school is intended to increase students' awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity in the United States. In order to be designated as "multicultural," a course must focus on the interaction of values, beliefs, traditions, identities, and contributions of one or more of the following four groups of color in the United States: African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American, which may include within these groups a focus on gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability.

Any department at our school can develop and teach a multicultural course as long as it meets the criteria for multicultural designation. Currently there are approximately 40 "multicultural" courses at our school taught by faculty members in approximately 20 different departments. Each of these courses should focus on the content specified above as well as the specific student learning objectives for a multicultural course. These learning goals are listed in the Curriculum Guidelines, Policies, and Procedures Handbook, and states that at the conclusion of the course, students should be able to: 1- Define factors that lead to the formation and continuation of one or more of the four groups of color in United States society; 2-Present the customs, behavioral patterns, and/or identities of one or more of these four groups; 3-Delineate the effects of bias, prejudices, and/or discrimination on one or more of the four groups of color in United States society; 4- Describe the cultural similarities, commonalities, and differences within or among one or more of these four groups; and, 5- Communicate how the acceptance and inclusion of all groups of color enriches lives and increases the creativity and performance of everyone in United States society.

No comprehensive assessment of the impact of this mc requirement has been done although a number of individual faculty members have made attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of their individual courses. The present study evaluates the effectiveness of the course relative to the different learning goals for different sections of the mc course, MGT 4830, Workforce Diversity.