

The Seamless Web: Minnesota's New Education System

4 The Diversity Package

We begin our study of the performance packages by reviewing several pages from the performance package called "Perspective Taking" used for the "People and Cultures: Diverse Perspectives" Content Standard. (Selected pages from this package are included at the end of this chapter.) As you will see, this Standard, which is required of all students to be eligible to graduate, is diversity training from start to finish. This package is not intended to raise academic achievement. Its goal is strictly social engineering.

Notice that this performance package does not promote the fundamental right of equality. Indeed, no genuine training in equality can be found anywhere in the Profile of Learning. Why not? The reason is because diversity and equality are different and opposite concepts. "Equality" holds that all people are equal, but "diversity" holds that people's actions, beliefs and values are equal.

Diversity includes the belief that everything is relative to culture—some cultures revere their ancestors and other cultures eat them. Diversity and equality are antithetical. If it is universally true that all people have equal value and should be equal before the law, then some cultures are better than others because some cultures accept equality while others do not.

If every culture is equal to every other culture, however, then the practices of those cultures must be equal too. For that reason, no culture can pass judgment on another and say that its way of doing things is superior. Consequently, you cannot subscribe to both equality and diversity.

In similar fashion, nationalism and diversity are opposing principles. If all cultures and governments are equal, then no country can have a better system than any other. The adherents of the new system of education recognize this, of course, and, since United States children normally grow up with a patriotic spirit, the education planners have built an anti-American bias into the program to counter the existing nationalism in our children. (See chapter 8.)

One way of evaluating whether people follow equality or diversity is to ask them if they believe that some cultures are better than others. If they say "yes," they probably subscribe to universal standards of some kind. If they "no," or if they are not sure, they most likely have adopted the diversity world-view—all values are relative to culture, and, for that reason, no cultures (or governments) are better than any others. Following this relativity mind-set, President Clinton announced several years ago that homosexual activity must be included under the umbrella of diversity. In similar fashion, Minnesota's CFL defines "cultural diversity" to include gay rights.⁴⁴

Why is the diversity training performance package required of all students? Remember the statement by Manno that progressive education adherents believe "that it is possible and justifiable for educators to use the schools to create a new social order." Diversity training is at the center of this social engineering; that is, in the new system, everything must be based on culture. If all values and knowledge are relative to culture, then the social engineers can recreate the world to be anything they want it to be.

How does the diversity performance package accomplish all this? Look at what the students are required to do. The instructions read as follows:

What students should do:

1. Identify how race, culture, gender and disability may influence beliefs actions and worldview
2. Identify how data and experiences may be interpreted differently

3. Identify issues, topics or concepts around which disagreement or ambiguity exists
 - a. describe points of view concerning the issue
 - b. investigate reasons (e.g. race, class, gender) for identified points of view
 - c. investigate reasons for alternative viewpoints (e.g. race, class, gender)
 - d. analyze how the interpretation of an issue is affected by omitted viewpoints

As we can see from this assignment, the process our students must now complete in order to graduate requires them to evaluate truth and values according to the artificial diversity construct described above. This construct evaluates data, actions and beliefs as though they are dependent on culture. Nothing is true or right of its own accord. Everything is merely a matter of a group's point of view. Morality and truth are socially constructed.

Objective truth, as well as genuine principles of right and wrong, all disappear under this scenario of opposing classes. The whole revolution in education is consistent with this viewpoint. Absent from the program is the search for real truth. Absent from the program is awareness of genuine right and wrong.

On page 3 of the performance package, we find a diagram explaining the "idea web" that students are required to construct. The idea web is a diversity training exercise. Notice how the web is constructed to suggest that the views we hold as individuals are really the product of the various groups we are part of—evaluate the groups, and we will then know what we believe and why we believe it. Our beliefs are viewed as being inherently irrational, as being dependent on group identification. Along the same line, the 4th page of the package lists "values" and "mores" as being "societal concepts," that is, relative to culture as opposed to being rational, genuine and universal.

Diversity training creates a system where its participants are forced to view themselves more as members of groups than as individuals. Group identity becomes a higher priority than individual identity. As we will see in the American history performance package, these groups quickly turn into oppressed classes that have allegedly been exploited by our evil American system of government. Our country was formed as a "melting pot"—out of many, one. Diversity reverses all that. Diversity creates a system which says instead—out of one, many.

Now go to page 15 of the performance package where students are required to "violate a folkway." That is, students are required to "do something weird," to violate a usual way of doing things. Why force students to violate a folkway? There are two reasons. The first is to illustrate the overall philosophy that any of society's ways of doing things are irrational and superficial and, for that reason, ought to be changed.

Secondly, this assignment is a microcosm of the social engineering goals of the Profile of Learning. The education bureaucrats have created a system where students must do what they are told by the central planners. Eventually the students will be told to do things that violate our nation's standards. When that occurs, our children must be trained to do what the central planners tell them, not what any other values, moral or otherwise, might suggest.

The brilliant work of Harvard psychologist and researcher, Lawrence Kohlberg, demonstrated that persons lacking high standards of morality will generally do what they are told by authority figures, even if that means inflicting great bodily harm on other people.⁴⁵ It follows that high moral standards will stand in the way of what the central planners want to accomplish.

The Profile of Learning is all about control—controlling schools, controlling teachers, controlling parents, controlling students. It is a classic totalitarian mode of operating. It is all too reminiscent of the utopian dream of B. F. Skinner who said that the ideal society would be

managed by a small group of psychologists who would have total control over the populace, but who would, at the same time, program the people into believing they were free.

Notes:

44. Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, Minnesota School Health Guide, 1996, p. 20.
45. Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education," Moral Development, Moral Education and Kohlberg, (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, Brenda Munsey, ed., 1980), p. 61.

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING
Performance Package
Minnesota Profile of Learning

Content Standard: People & Cultures: Diverse Perspectives

Level: High School

Title of Package/Activity: Perspective Taking

Summary Statement of Content Standard:

Evaluate events and actions from diverse U. S. and world perspectives.

Description of Student Performances:

Task 1: Investigate a documentary, focusing on how it presents diverse perspectives about a specific event.

Create:

- web of individuals involved in or affected by the event
- individual perspective reports for three or four of the individuals
- analysis of the documentary as media.

Task 2: Create a documentary about an event, focusing on the diverse perspectives about the event. Create sections of the documentary for at least two individuals' perspectives. Prepare:

- project proposal
- source file of notes and bibliography
- working and final drafts.

After completing the documentary, write a reflective essay.

FINAL ACHIEVEMENT: Use the following scoring criteria when evaluating student performance.

Scoring Criteria

4 - Performance on this standard achieves and exceeds expectations of high standard work.

3 - Performance on this standard meets the expectations of high standard work.

2 - Work on this standard has been completed, but all or part of the student's performance is below high standard level.

1 - Work on this standard has been completed, but performance is substantially below high standard level.

No package score is recorded until ALL parts of the package have been completed.

PERFORMANCE PACKAGE TASK 1 Perspective Taking

Content Standard: People & Cultures: Diverse Perspectives

Level: High School

Specific Statement(s) from the Standard:

What students should do:

1. Identify how race, culture, gender and disability may influence beliefs, actions, and worldview
2. Identify how data and experiences may be interpreted differently
3. Identify issues, topics or concepts around which disagreement or ambiguity exists
 - a. describe points of view concerning the issue
 - b. investigate reasons (e.g., race, class, gender) for identified points of view
 - c. investigate reasons for alternative viewpoints (e.g., race, class, gender)
 - d. analyze how the interpretation of an issue is affected by omitted viewpoints

Product(s):

- Web that shows individuals involved in and/or affected by a specific event
- Individual perspective reports for three or four of those individuals
- Analysis of the documentary as media

Task Description:

Overview: You will investigate a documentary's presentation of an issue, topic, or concept. The documentary, which your teacher will select, may be a video, film, book, or museum exhibit.

You will focus on the documentary's presentation of diverse perspectives about one specific event. You will create an idea web in which you list the people involved in and/or affected by the event. On the web, you will also identify the various group affiliations of each person. Then you will chart information about three or four of these people and write reports on their perspectives of the event. Finally, you will write a media analysis of the documentary.

PERFORMANCE PACKAGE TASK 1

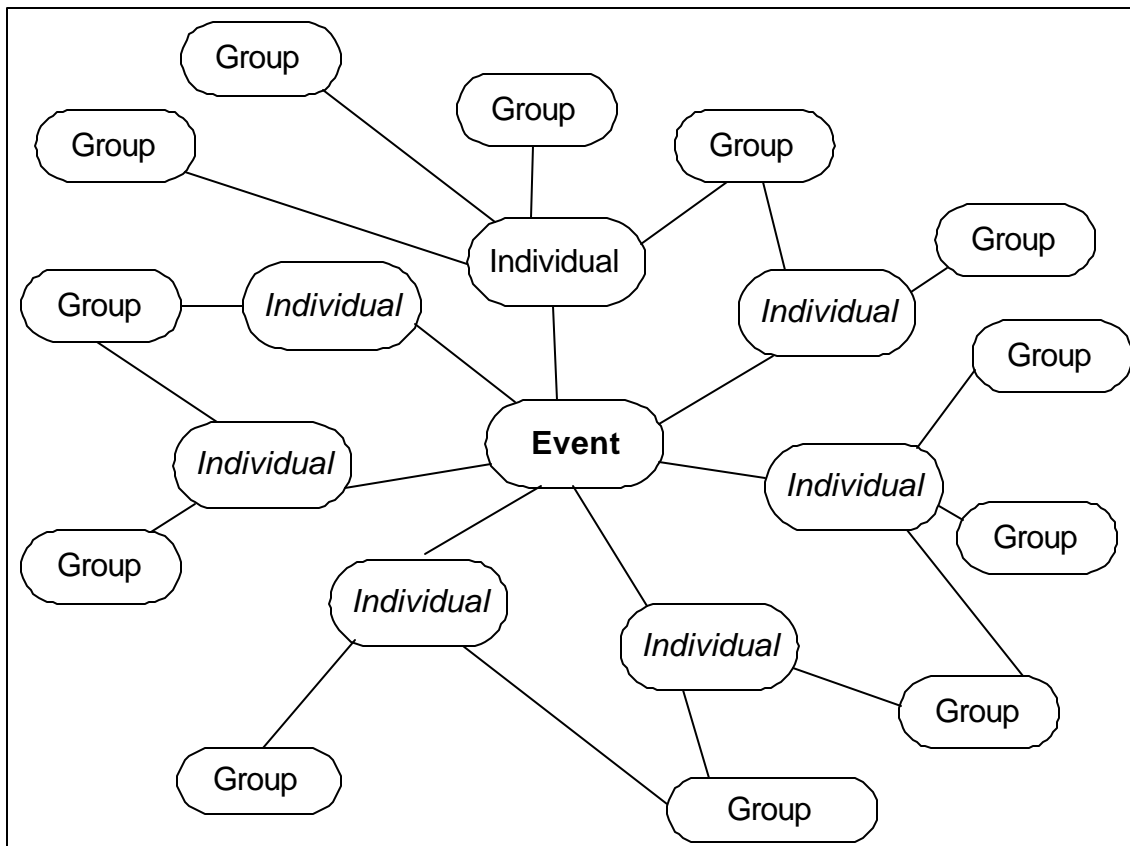
Perspective Taking

Task Description, continued

Web:

1. Read, view, and/or listen to the documentary (or specific portions of it) several times, taking notes on the individuals involved in and/or affected by the specific event on which you are to focus. (Your teacher may help you select an event on which to focus.)
2. Create an idea "web." In the center, briefly list the facts about the event which, according to the documentary, are agreed upon by all people involved. (Depending on the degree of controversy about the event, this may be a small list.) Then, write down the individuals involved in or affected by the event. Finally, note each individual's various group affiliations, such as race, culture, class, gender, disability. Some groups will have more than one individual affiliated with them. This is to be expected. Show this by the connecting lines on the web.

Here is a model of what the web could look like:



PERFORMANCE PACKAGE TASK 1
Perspective Taking

Task Description, continued

Media Analysis:

4. In this part of the task, you will look critically at the documentary to analyze the perspective of the documentary itself. Write a "Media Analysis" in which you address the factors listed below. For each factor, explain in detail and provide evidence and examples to support your ideas and assertions:
 - A. Who wrote, produced, funded, and distributed the documentary? What do you know, or what can you guess, about these people? How might the special interests, group affiliations, or personal consequences of these people have affected the documentary's presentation of information and its perspective?
 - B. What perspectives are emphasized in the documentary? In what ways are they emphasized? (Consider length of time given to perspectives, sound and lighting effects, camera angles, manner of interviews, etc., as ways of endorsing or discrediting certain perspectives.) Do any perspectives appear to have been given less attention or left out completely? What do decisions about selection and omission tell you about the perspectives of the documentary? Support your statements with specific examples from the documentary. For example, you might cite a quotation that uses "loaded words," exclusionary language, or poorly supported assertions.
 - C. What questions about the event are not addressed in the documentary? (It may help to think in terms of "the big picture," and consider how the event might be linked with larger social, cultural, economic, or political situations.) How would answers to those questions provide a more complete look at the event? What is the significance of leaving these questions unaddressed? Be specific.
 - D. What do you think is the purpose or goal of the documentary? (This may be stated directly in an introduction or preface or may be implied throughout the work.) Support your assertions with evidence from the documentary, such as "loaded" words or phrases; aspects of the event more focused on; aspects of the event less focused on or omitted; differences in how various people are interviewed. Consider also why this event rather than others was chosen for the documentary.

PERFORMANCE PACKAGE TASK 2 Perspective Taking

Task Description, continued

Creating the Source File:

6. Take notes as you study the perspectives of the two individuals for whom you are responsible. Document all sources of information. The information on which you need to focus is listed in Figure #2 (above).
7. Look for images that support or extend an understanding of the perspective of the individuals you are studying. These images may be photographs, drawings, artwork, cartoons, posters, and artifacts. Depending on the format of your documentary, you may also include sounds and video. (Non-text images and sounds are often used by artists, journalists, educators, and many others to communicate a perspective. If carefully selected, an image or sound can convey much about a perspective.)
8. Create an annotated bibliography for each of the sources used. For each source, note the following:
 - A. Standard bibliographic information. (See APA or (VILA style manuals for standard formats.)
 - B. An explanation as to how the source provides evidence for a perspective.
 - C. Biases or stereotypes evident in the source (particularly for secondary sources).
 - D. Your plan for how you will use the source in the final product. (For example, will you summarize, quote, paraphrase?)
9. Get feedback on your source file -- both the notes and the annotated bibliography. (See the Feedback Checklist.)

Creating the Documentary:

10. From your notes, create your sections of the documentary. Support all of your assertions with evidence from the many sources you have reviewed. For each individual perspective you have studied, present the following:
 - the individual's connection to the event
 - the individual's understanding of the event
 - the individual's interpretation of the event
 - the consequences of the event for the individual
 - the individual's group affiliations.