

Navigating Difference

Cultural Competency Training

— OVERVIEW —



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



EXTENSION

World Class. Face to Face.

By

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Washington State University Extension is committed to being an inclusive organization that seeks and promotes diversity in our workforce, program participants, educational partners, and program content. As a means of achieving the Extension vision, we strive to serve the diverse residents of Washington with culturally competent and linguistically appropriate programming and services. In support of this goal, *Navigating Difference: Cultural Competency Training* has been designed and is conducted statewide for all WSU Extension personnel and interested community partners.

Navigating Difference (ND) is designed to assist participants expand their skills in working with diverse audiences. The overarching goals for the training are to assist participants to:

- Become more aware of their own personal and organizational cultures;
- Examine how their personal and organizational cultures affect their ability to work across difference in both negative and positive ways;
- Build skills to increase competencies in working with others who are different.

The training is based on the WSU Extension Cultural Competencies (<http://ext.wsu.edu/diversity/>) and is designed using key adult education theory and practices that create a safe and welcoming environment for all learners. The learning activities respect and support individual learning styles, and the participants' life experiences are viewed as an important source of knowledge. The intent of the program is to gain knowledge and skills that can be used when engaging in a new situation/culture, rather than focusing on specific cultural knowledge.

Training Format

Modules have been designed, implemented and evaluated for each of the five competencies, listed below. Four of the modules are three hours each and one module (Cultural Interaction) is four and a half hours. Including time for introductions and wrap-up, the total training is about 18 hours.

All modules are currently designed to be delivered face-to-face, and it is highly recommended that all modules be taught in this format at this point. Conducting the training via distance technology is being explored. Plans are underway to create additional modules focusing on culturally competent program planning and evaluation and culturally competent leadership.

Training Modules

Module One—Competency: Cultural Awareness

Skill Set:

- Explore personal and cultural values, biases, prejudices, and views.
- Identify ways in which culture shapes beliefs, practices, and values.
- Identify similarities and differences among cultures.
- Recognize our own culture(s), including organizational culture.

Module Two—Competency: Cultural Understanding

Skill Set:

- Understand the developmental nature of cultural competencies.
- Describe issues and concerns which arise when values, beliefs, and practices differ from those of the dominant culture.
- Recognize ways culture affects participation in organizational programs and services.

Module Three—Competency: Cultural Knowledge

Skill Set:

- Develop familiarity with specific cultures, with an emphasis on the diverse audiences in your geographic area.
- Use conceptual and theoretical models for understanding human culture, especially the ways in which other cultures differ from our own.
- Identify appropriate cultural guides and build productive relationships with them.

Module Four—Competency: Cultural Interaction

Skill Set:

- Recognize factors impacting successful intercultural communication.
- Use concepts and theories of intercultural communication.
- Manage intercultural conflicts effectively.
- Interact productively with, and seek input and guidance from, cultural partners.
- Form new programmatic partnerships across intercultural differences.

Module Five—Competency: Cultural Sensitivity

Skill Set:

- Identify historical and sociological influences on specific cultural interactions.
- Recognize the impact of privilege, inequality and oppression in daily contexts.

Intended Outcomes

Culturally competent professionals are able to:

- engage in culturally diverse settings, initiatives, and programs;
- integrate cultural competencies in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programming; and
- practice strategies for successful intercultural communication in professional settings.

Training Offerings

In Washington State, the complete set of modules was first presented in a workshop with a small pilot group in 2006. Module One (Cultural Awareness) was presented four times as a stand-alone workshop (or seminar) to all county-based Extension educators and staff in 2007. As of September 2009, the complete program has been conducted three times with Extension professionals from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, North Dakota, Nevada, and Guam. All five modules have also been presented to staff from state and local social service agencies. In the spring of 2009 the first “Train the Trainer Retreat” was held with 16 participants from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho to develop more staff able to present the *Navigating Difference* modules.

Training Evaluation

Evaluation Summary for *Navigating Difference*, 2006–09

Two evaluations were conducted for the prototype workshop series, *Designing Culturally Competent Programming*, presented in 2006. The first evaluation was a written retrospective survey completed within a month after the last session by the participants who completed all the sessions. Participants were asked to report on their learning in twelve areas of cultural competency ranging from “recognizing similarities and difference among cultures based on cultural dimensions” to “integrating cultural competencies in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programming.” Before the training, 84% of the participants reported that they never or sometimes were able to perform these skills. After the training 96% felt that they usually or always were able to achieve these goals. The biggest learning for the group appears to have been in the competencies of identifying and working with cultural guides to better inform their program planning and implementation, and in identifying barriers to intercultural communications. At the time of the survey participants felt that the most important thing they had gained from participating in the workshops were that their views of diversity had been broadened, they wanted to learn more, and they were eager to apply what they had learned to their job responsibilities.

Six months after the last session, follow-up evaluations found two salient behavior changes. All participants stated that they had changed their behavior in communicating with others

by being more receptive: asking more questions, listening more carefully, and looking for non-verbal cues more often. They felt this helped them to understand others and situations more than in the past. They also said that they spoke up more often when they encountered what they perceived to be discriminatory statements or actions. Most participants were in the beginning stages of integrating cultural competencies into their planning, implementation, and evaluation of programming and requested continued support in this area.

The Extension district Cultural Awareness Trainings were held throughout 2007. Written surveys were conducted immediately following each three-hour session. A total of 153 WSUE personnel participated in the workshops. Of those, 86% (133) completed the evaluation. Participants were asked to assess their abilities to recognize their own culture (including Extension culture) to explore personal and cultural values, biases, prejudices, and views and to identify similarities and differences among cultures. Before the workshop 37% of the participants believed they sometimes used these skills and 60.5% of the participants believed they usually or always used these skills. After the workshop 93% felt they usually or always could implement these skills. When asked what had been most useful to them in the training, the responses were evenly divided among (there are three items, yes?) learning how to identify similarities and differences in cultures based on a values orientation model; examining the organizational culture; and understanding their own biases and preferences. Several comments noted appreciation that the environment of the training was inclusive and welcoming and researched-based. Overall, there was an overwhelming request for more time in the training session and more of this type of training.

In March 2008, the 18-hour Cultural Competency Training (CCT) was conducted for Extension educators. The curriculum had been refined based on feedback and evaluations from the previous trainings. Again participants were asked to identify on a scale from 1–4 (one being the lowest) how they would rate their abilities before and after the training in nine areas of cultural competencies. The abilities ranged from “recognizing similarities and differences among cultures...” to “understanding the concepts of privilege, power, and oppression.” Before the training only 53% felt they were sometimes or usually able to perform these skills. After the training 81% felt that they could definitely perform these skills. The biggest learning was in the area of “identifying the barriers to intercultural communications” and “recognizing various cultural conflict styles.” The most important thing that participants felt that they had learned was awareness and understanding of their own cultures and those of others. One participant wrote, “This perspective/model should be integrated into all of Extension’s offices and functions.” Another person stated, “This information is hard to deliver and it was provided in an open and non-threatening manner.”

In the fall of 2008 the training program was conducted twice, with a total of 44 participants. A new evaluation tool was used with these groups that consisted of a 12-item survey that was administered both before and after the training. As a group the participants made statistically significant growth in eight of the twelve outcome areas. The greatest growth for the group was in:

1. recognizing different cultural styles of dealing with conflict;
2. identifying strategies to work with cultural guides; and
3. understanding the barriers to intercultural communications.

Follow-up telephone interview evaluations were conducted with a randomly selected group of the 2008 participants six months after their participation in *Navigating Difference*. One of the purposes of these interviews was to determine if participants had made any shifts in their behaviors pertaining to cultural competencies. Of the six participants that were interviewed, three were able to specifically identify changes they had made since their participation in the training. Some examples of their actions are:

- Completing a community map to become aware of gaps in programming
- Making connections with cultural guides to improve marketing outreach strategies
- Involving cultural guides in the formation of meeting and training agendas rather than telling them what was needed from them
- Being more intentional in integrating cultural competency in planning, implementing, and evaluation of programs
- Increasing the use of strategies for intercultural communication

The most recent *Navigating Difference* training was conducted in the spring of 2009 with 17 participants. Again, the pre- and post-surveys were administered. There was significant growth in five of the twelve outcome areas. The most significant growth was in:

1. understanding how culture affects participation in the organizational programs and services;
2. identifying strategies to work with cultural guides; and
3. having strategies for effective intercultural communications.

Some of the most important things that participants felt they learned during the most recent training were:

- “a greater understanding of my own personal cultural barriers and privileges”
- “a stronger theoretical framework for approaching diversity education”
- “tools to help me be more mindful”
- “a greater understanding of myself”

Overall, evaluations have shown that participants have made significant changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. As one participant stated, “This was the best diversity-type training I have ever had. The models and communication tools are great.”

Implementation of *Navigating Difference: Cultural Competency Training*

Assumptions

Organizations will want:

- a skills-based training approach to improve outreach to diverse audiences;
- a sustainable diversity training system; and
- to build internal training capacity in their organization.

In an effort to address these assumptions, a *Train-the-Trainer* program (or curriculum) has been designed. Potential trainers will be expected to:

- participate in all five modules of the *Navigating Difference* Training;
- participate in a three-day intensive Train-the-Trainer retreat; and
- agree to follow the training policies determined by WSU Extension.

For further information or questions, please contact:

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