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# Creating Learning Environments More Supportive of Diversity: An Ongoing Working Group

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# Creating Learning Environments More Supportive of Diversity: An Ongoing Working Group

## **Abstract**

At EDRA 31 in San Francisco we convened a working group to discuss issues related to creating learning environments more supportive of diversity. It has been five years since we last met. We believe it is time to revisit the issues of diversity in the learning environment to see what gains we have made, if any, and what more we can do.

## **Disciplines**

Architecture | Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education

## **Comments**

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of computer users, as well as their unique ways of adapting digital environments to fit their needs. (digital environments, culture, personality, gerontology, interior design). 05-201a

- **Gonzalez Reyes, Sandra (National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico). INTERNET AS AN ENVIRONMENT FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL INTERVENTION.**

The World Wide Web has emerged as a virtual environment that provides the observer - who uses the global network within a given context - with a number of resources that can have an impact on the person's micro, meso, macro and exo environments considering the ecological levels. It has become a public plaza in which diversity is heard and seen; communities and groups get organized and create alliances, self help groups, among other things. In other words, citizens are creating new ways to relate to others through the use of Information Technologies to promote social change towards social justice. Hence, it becomes an important tool for research and to socialize knowledge; furthermore it becomes a mean for community-based interventions. Community psychology tries to create resources within a given social system so to enhance people and communities' well being. The discipline should turn to the WWW to develop specific tools that foster social change. In this paper we discuss how CP can resort to Internet to achieve some of its goals within an ecological approach considering self determination/participation, education, health, tolerance /diversity and social justice as central values in the discipline's social agenda. We elaborate on the idea that Internet fosters the creation of social networks and alliances among individuals and communities through contents such as mailing lists, knowledge socialization, billboards and chat rooms. We propose some Internet contents that might facilitate program planning, developing and evaluation aimed for the Latin American context. In this area the sociopolitical conditions make the Web an adequate resource to facilitate regional communication but could promote, at the same time, the technological divide. 05-201b

Potter, James (University of Nebraska, NE), Ahrentzen, Sherry (University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, WI), Anthony, Kathryn (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, IL), Hines, Arlena (Lansing Community College, MI), Null, Roberta (Common Place Design, CA), Paxson, Lynn (Iowa State University, IA), Schneekloth, Lynda (State University of New York, NY), Stea, David (Southwest Texas State University, TX), and Witt, Tom (Arizona State University, AZ). **CREATING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS MORE SUPPORTIVE OF DIVERSITY: AN ON-GOING WORKING GROUP.**

At EDRA 31 in San Francisco we convened a working group to discuss issues related to creating learning environments more supportive of diversity. It has been five years since we last met. We believe it is time to revisit the issues of diversity in the learning environment to see what gains we have made, if any, and what more we can do. Literature on diversity suggests that while changes have been made to improve the quality of learning environments for diverse groups on university campuses, there is still room for improvement, particularly in the area of female and traditionally under-represented groups' recruitment and retention. For instance, lack of diversity is a continuing problem in architectural education, a field dominated by white males. Although ACSA has long recommended a Code of Conduct for Diversity in Architectural Education, it has only been recently that architecture schools have begun to realize how the learning climate may impact the professional world of practice. As a consequence, we have begun to see a greater emphasis on issues of diversity, not only in architecture, but also within all of the design disciplines. Building bridges is central to this Working Group, so we have continued our efforts to bring together a quite diverse group of participants. The intent of the Group is to provide a forum for the exploration of issues related to the creation of learning environments more supportive of diversity in its many guises - class, discipline, gender, ideas, life style, nationality, physical ability, race, etc. It will also provide an opportunity to gain feedback on work in progress. The goals are threefold: 1) to share information about the situation regarding diversity at participants' schools; 2) to identify common themes of diversity, including successful strategies for encouraging more inclusive educational programs; and 3) to plan for the next stage of research/actions to be taken to enhance diversity. Discussion will begin with a series of mini-presentations by the participants, which will outline the process, results and actions taken at their schools to create a learning environment more supportive of diversity. Then there will be a period of informal dialogue, during which time, we will encourage attendees to share their experiences of diversity in their own learning environments. Finally we will conclude with recommendations about how we can move forward on an agenda of creating learning environments more supportive of diversity. We encourage everyone interested in this topic to participate in these discussions. (case study, race/ethnicity, women, stress, behavioral change). 05-207

Wener, Richard (Polytechnic University, NY), Suedfeld, Peter (University of British Columbia, British Columbia, Canada), Harvey, Joan (Canadian Space Agency, Ontario, Canada), Wise, Jim (Eco-Integrations, Inc., WA), Clearwater, Yvonne (NASA Ames Research Center, CA), Gifford, Robert (University of Victoria, Canada) and Benjamin, Bezaleel (University of Kansas, KS). **PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES IN SPACEFLIGHT AND SPACE HABITATS.**