

Unit Six:

Working in Diverse Environments

YGPS (Your Global Positioning System), Workshop Series 2010

Unit 6: Working in Diverse Environments

# 1. Introduction

As an introduction to the extent of diversity in the global village you will be working in one day, visit the following website and watch the video of the miniature earth: <http://www.miniature-earth.com/me_english.htm>

In summary, this short clip shows us just how diverse the world in which we live in is, yet so often we find ourselves thinking about the world only in terms of the people and activities that we are used to.

The purpose of this unit is to help you become more aware of your own identity; embrace and value the differences between yourself and others; and be able to admit and work towards overcoming your own personal biases in order for you to be the most productive you can in the 21st century world of work.

## Learning outcomes

The aim of this unit is to help you to:

* Know what diversity is and in what forms we encounter diversity daily in South Africa;
* Increase your awareness of your own identity and uniqueness;
* Increase your awareness of the uniqueness of other groups who are different from your own;
* Value the differences between your own identity and the identities of others;
* Understand the concepts of discrimination and prejudice;
* Practice how to respond to biased and discriminatory statements in an effective manner;
* Reflect on your how your behaviour may be prejudice/discriminatory towards other groups;
* Understand how you will benefit from being able to deal effectively with diversity in the workplace;
* Use your understanding of diversity in order to be able to be more successful in diverse groups.

# 2. What is diversity?

Whether you are in a classroom, a boardroom or a sports-team locker room, diversity is one of the words that we often hear used in everyday conversation. The question we should ask ourselves is whether we know precisely what diversity is?

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpg | Learning Activity 6.1:  What is your DQ? (Diversity Quotient) |

### Instructions:

Take this short quiz to assess your knowledge of diversity in the South African context. For each of the 10 statements, indicate whether or not you think information given is true or false. Once you have completed the task you will have the opportunity to review your responses.

This quiz was designed based on the following resources: ([http://www.diversitydtg.com/tools/diviq.html; http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/quizzes.html](http://www.diversitydtg.com/tools/diviq.html;%20http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/quizzes.html))

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| STATEMENT | TRUE | FALSE |
| 1. Diversity in the workplace deals mostly with the number of non-whites who are employed by a company |  |  |
| 1. Diversity initiatives disregard the needs of white males |  |  |
| 1. Racism is no longer a problem in South Africa now that Apartheid has ended |  |  |
| 1. Parking in marked parking spaces for the physically disabled is okay to do so long as it's for a short period of time. |  |  |
| 1. Almost 90% of disabled persons in South Africa are unemployed |  |  |
| 1. It is OK to tell jokes about homosexual people as long as there are no homosexuals in the group |  |  |
| 1. Less than 1% of people are gay |  |  |
| 1. Women in South Africa have the most access to jobs, housing and opportunities on the whole of the African continent. |  |  |
| 1. In the new South Africa, women and men are now earning equivalent salaries |  |  |
| 1. Islam is the fastest growing religion in South Africa |  |  |

Using the answers provided on the following page, score your responses. For each correct answer give yourself 1 point, the closer your score is to 10, the higher your Diversity Quotient is.

**My DQ is =**

**Answers:**

1. False, diversity in the workplace refers to a broad range of issues including, amongst others: race, gender, religion and sexual orientation. For a complete understanding of the complexity of diversity in the workplace continue reading this module to find the definition of diversity and how to deal with diversity related matters.
2. False, diversity initiatives are designed to allow space for every type of person in an organisation, regardless of their physical characteristics.
3. False, many people today are still stereotyped and discriminated against on the basis of their skin colour. The end of Apartheid symbolised the end of a political dispensation that formally discriminated against particular groups, it did not however eradicate the stereotypes and prejudices that groups have of each other.
4. False, people with physical disabilities are protected by law to ensure equal access in services and accessibility. Physical arrangements such as parking spaces are created for them in order to allow them to participate fully in our democracy. It is our responsibility to respect the laws that are designed to assist them rather than making circumstances more difficult for them.
5. True, there are approximately 2.5 million physically disabled people in South Africa and currently 88% of them are unemployed (http://www.signgenius.com/info-statistics.shtml).
6. False, it is never appropriate to use humour to degrade other people, regardless of whether they are part of your conversation or not.
7. False, approximately 10% of the population are homosexual (http://www.gaysouthafrica.org.za/homosexuality/lifestyle.asp).
8. False, according to the 2007 Social Watch Gender Equity Index, which focuses on economic activity, empowerment and education, South Africa came 42nd out of 154 countries and was placed second in Africa after Rwanda, which ranked third in the world (http://www.mediaclubsouthafrica.com).
9. False, on average for every R1 men earn, women earn 75c. (http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/newsletter\_archive/women\_in\_business\_is\_sa\_lagging\_or\_leading\_.html)
10. True, there are currently more than 1 million Muslims living in SA and it is the religion to which the most people are converting to in South Africa. (http://www.islamawareness.net/Africa/SouthAfrica)

As you can clearly see the issue of diversity is about much more than race! The extent of diversity you are likely to encounter in your future working environment will present you with many challenges. What type of challenges, you ask? It is the challenging of knowing yourself and what you believe, whilst at the same time being able to understand people or viewpoints that are different from your own. Let us take a moment to reflect on a definition of workplace diversity:

“Diversity is a **commitment** to **recognizing and appreciating** the variety of characteristics   
that make individuals **unique** in an atmosphere that **promotes and celebrates** individual   
and collective achievement.

Examples of the ways people differ are:

* age;
* cultural practices;
* disability;
* economic background;
* ethnicity;
* gender;
* language(s) spoken;
* HIV/Aids status;
* political affiliation;
* religious beliefs and
* sexual orientation.”

*(The University of Tennessee Libraries Diversity Committee Spring 2001; Revised January 2003*.)

Now that you are aware of all the aspects that diversity includes, it is time to investigate your own identity and the identities of those around you.

# 3. Knowing and Understanding MYSELF!

In order to be able to show respect for the values and lifestyles of diverse people, it is important to know who **YOU** are, where you come from and what you believe in. In this section you will be asking yourself the question “Who am I in this diverse context?”

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpg | Learning Activity 6.2:  Writing your own “WHO AM I?” poem |

### Instructions:

In this activity you are going to write a poem that describes yourself and what you are all about. When you do this activity focus on sharing those aspects of yourself that really make you stand out as a unique individual and describe you the best.

Write a 12 line poem that you could use to describe yourself to others. You will be sharing   
your poems in groups at a later stage so now is your chance to really let others get to  
 know you better.

The only rule for this poem is that each line should start with the words **“I am...”**

Think carefully about the things you like to do most and the things that have made you   
who you are. Use this poem to express who you are ethnically, religiously, what you   
interests or hobbies are, what your family is like or anything else that defines who you are.

**Example:**

I am female and white!

I am running.

I am chocolates, cheesecake and fruit salad.

I am Christian.

I am the oldest child.........

Now that you have taken the time to put down on paper some of the aspects that define you as an individual, you are going to have the opportunity to share this with others.

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| YGPS_group activity icon.jpg | Group Activity 6.3 |

**Instructions:** Divide into groups of 6-8 people. When choosing your group, make sure there is at least one person who is not of the same gender as you are, at least one person who is not in your school/course/faculty/university **AND** at least one person who is not of the same ethnic group as you.

Now, take turns to read each other your “I am poems”.

Give each person in the group a chance to read their poem and then discuss the following questions in your groups:

* How did it make you feel to share your poem with the group?
* Who else in the group had similarities in their poem to yours?
* Who in the group had something totally different to yours?

**While you are discussing your poems, keep the following guidelines in mind:**

1. **Be respectful to one another:** each person must get a fair chance to share their poem and their feelings about having to share their poem.
2. **Share “air time”:** allow each person to finish what they are saying before interrupting them.
3. **Only one person speaks at a time:** as you give others the space to share their opinion, they will allow you the space to express your views.
4. **Speak for yourself, not for others.**
5. **If you are offended or upset, say so, and say why:** however remember to stick to the issue without getting personal (no name-calling or nasty comments).

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpg | Portfolio Activity 6.4 |

Once you have shared your poems and conducted your group discussions, take some time to reflect on what you have learnt.

Write a summary paragraph about what you have learnt during this exercise. In this paragraph make sure to include the following aspects:

* What did you discover about yourself whilst writing this poem?
* How did it feel to share your poem with the other group members?
* In what ways are you similar to the other members of your group?
* In what ways are you entirely unique compared to your group?
* Do you think there are certain characteristics that are similar between all humans, regardless of the groups they belong to?

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Excellent, you have completed the section on becoming aware of yourself. Read the instructions in Group Activity 6.4 to get a glimpse of what you will be doing in the next section of work.

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| YGPS_group activity icon.jpg | Group Activity 6.4 |

For your next class, bring an item with to share with the rest of the class. The item you bring must be something that tells about your cultural or ethnic background. It may be a picture, a drawing, an object, a poem, food, music, or whatever you like as long as the item you bring communicates something you would like to share about your group with others.

# 4. Investigating difference

In the previous section we investigated various aspects of our own identity. From these activities you should now be able to recognise that you as a person have many different aspects to your own identity. It would be impossible to describe you by using only one word such as “female”, “black”, “South African”, “Zulu” “student” or “disabled”. In a similar fashion, it is not possible to describe others who are different from us with only one word. In the next learning activities we are going to examine the complexity of others. Although we know that workplace diversity covers many different aspects, for this section we are going to pay particular attention to the cultural dimension of diversity.

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| YGPS_group activity icon.jpg | Group Activity 6.4:  (continued): Investigating differences |

**Instructions:** For this activity, you will be making use of the items that you brought with you from home. Divide into groups of 4-5 members. Each person in the group gets a chance to share with the group what their item is and what it represents to them.

Use the following guidelines as you describe your item to the group:

* What is the item and what is it used for?
* Why did you choose it?
* What does it say about your background and who you are today?
* What can this item teach people from other groups about your group?
* When have you been particularly proud to be a member of this group?
* When have you been ashamed of being a member of this group?

The objects that you have brought to share with the group are tangible, that is they can be touched, felt, smelt or seen. We refer to this as the ***concrete level*** of culture. The concrete level is those elements of our groups identity that are reflected in the music, food and clothes associated with us. The next, somewhat deeper level of someone’s culture is the ***behavioural level***. On this level we define our roles in society, it involves the language we speak and also includes the meaning that our groups attaches to non-verbal communication. The third and deepest level of culture is the ***symbolic level***. This level is abstract, in other words it includes what our group values and believes – including your religious view, your customs, your worldview and moral convictions.

So whilst the items you have brought help to outwardly identify you with your ethnic group, a person’s true identify is situated on the symbolic level where their beliefs, attitudes and values are. Your challenge in the workplace is to seek to understand not only the concrete and behavioural levels of someone’s culture, but to explore the deeper level of their symbolic identity (Hildago,1993).

There are times when our identification with a specific group on a concrete, behavioural or symbolic level leads to others treating us unfairly, often before they know us on an individual level. In the next subsection we will briefly investigate stereotypes and prejudice.

## Investigating discrimination and prejudice

Our membership to a particular group may lead to us being treated unfairly. This is known as **discrimination**. Discriminatory actions are often a result of **prejudice**. Although there are many formal academic definitions for "prejudice," most of these definitions agree that prejudice involves a negative prejudgment, about a group or its members. Also, prejudice is not just an opinion or belief or attitude, but it also includes feelings such as contempt, dislike, or loathing (Plous, 2003).

In summary negative attitudes about the characteristics of a specific group’s members leads members from other groups to treat them unfairly. It is very important to remember that discrimination does not only occur due to the racial group we belong to, but can also because of our gender, physical disability, economic background or sexual orientation.

Read the following case study as an example of the negative impact of prejudice and discrimination.

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpg | Learning Activity 6.5:  Investigating intolerance |

This activity is based on the following resources (Responding to overt displays of prejudice (Plous, 2000) and I am human too (www.tolerance.org))

### Instructions:

Read the following case study and answer the questions that follow. This activity is going to combine individual and group work.

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| **The story of Simon Nkoli** |
| It is very difficult for a black person to be lesbian or gay in South Africa. First, there is no privacy. We have to live with our families, in very crowded conditions, until we get married. In my parents' home for example there were six of us living in four rooms. Second, homosexuality is very much taboo among black people in South Africa. The most important thing in a black family is to get married.  So 'coming out' to my family was not easy for me. I was 19 at the time. My mother was deeply upset. My stepfather, on the other hand, was cool about it and actually supportive. But still they took me to see a psychiatrist in the hope that I would be 'healed' - that I would become a 'normal' person. It lasted six months, It was not a good experience. And anyway, I knew I could never be changed.  Once I had 'come out' I realized I would be better off on my own. I lost contact with school-friends and former playmates. I was afraid they would victimize me if they knew about me.  When I was 21 I joined the Gay Association of Southern Africa (GASA). During that year I became increasingly aware of the fact that the interests of black gays were being ignored. GASA social functions were frequently held in places where blacks would be turned away. It was very humiliating for us. Some of GASA's members were openly racist.  We tried to challenge this racism and spoke to the executive committee. But after a while we decided it would be best to form a separate group - alterative but not opposed to GASA - and so we launched the Saturday Group. This was a non-racial group for people who wanted to do practical things. Our motto was: 'help each other to solve your own problem'.  Attitudes depend very much on individuals. To be accepted by straight people we have to be fighting the same struggle and working together so that they get to know us and get to understand gay issues.  <http://www.newint.org/issue201/fear.htm> |

**Reflect on the following three questions by yourself:**

1. Simon Nkoli has had to face discrimination on various levels during his life. Identify the different types of prejudice he has experienced.

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1. Reflect on Simon’s story and think of a time when you were discriminated against or treated unfairly based on a group you belonged to? How did this make you feel? Write down a couple of words that describe the emotions you experienced when you were discriminated against.

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1. Write down the types of statements that are said against a group that you identify with that you would never like to hear again.

**I WISH I NEVER HAD TO HEAR THE FOLLOWING SAID AGAIN ABOUT**

|  |
| --- |
| **My Race:** |
|  |
| **My Gender:** |
|  |
| **My Religion:** |
|  |
| **Other:** |
|  |

You have now completed the individual component of this activity. Now you are going to examine ways to deal with discrimination real-life situations.

To complete this activity you must divide into small groups consisting of 3 members each and follow this list of instructions.

1. Take turns to read to each other the list of statements about your group that you wish you never had to hear again.
2. Next, nominate one person in the group to be the “**SPEAKER**”, one person to be the “**RESPONDENT”** and one person to be the “**COMMENTATOR**”.
3. The **SPEAKER** and the **RESPONDENT** are now going to have a short conversation whilst the **COMMENTATOR** observes their interaction.
4. The **SPEAKER** should start a conversation with the **RESPONDENT** and must make a discriminatory remark based on one of the groups (ethnic, gender, language, etc.) that the **RESPONDENT** belongs to.
5. The **RESPONDENT** must now continue this conversation with an appropriate response.
6. This type of activity is called a role-play and its aim is to coach you how to deal with difficult situation you would encounter in everyday life. In order to you to learn the most from this activity you should try to make the conversation between the **RESPONDENT** and the **SPEAKER** as realistic as possible.
7. Once the **RESPONDENT** has completed the conversation/ response to the **SPEAKER** it is time for the **COMMENTATOR** to make his/her contribution. The **COMMENTATOR** must give feedback to the other two group members on how effectively he/she thought the **RESPONDENT** handled the situation.
8. Once you have completed this task swap roles. Each person must have the chance to be the **RESPONDENT**, the **SPEAKER** and **COMMENTATOR**.

In order to help you to complete this exercise read through the following example:

**SPEAKER:** I do not know why there is such a big deal being made about women’s rights. Women are just not as intelligent as men, they simply cannot do maths and science and those kind of difficult stuff. They should stick to the things they are actually good at.

**The RESPONDENT** should follow these tips when continuing the conversation:

1. *Tell the person how you their statement made you feel, rather than telling them how to behave.*

For example a good response would be: When you make comments about women not being able to do maths that makes me feel stupid and it is hurtful.

A bad response would be: You must stop making comments like that because you are wrong!

1. *Appeal to the logic of the person you are interacting with*.

For example: I do not think what you are saying is true. There are many women who have made an intellectual contribution to science and engineering. Think of like Marie Curie who was a pioneer in the field of radioactivity, received two Nobel prizes and was the first female professor at the University of Paris.

1. *Be assertive*, but not aggressive when you respond to the statement.
2. *Remain calm*. It will not help to shout at the person, raise your voice or speak in an irritated tone. Share your thoughts honestly without drowning out their meaning by being overemotional
3. *Do not retaliate* by making a negative statement about the speaker’s group or by name calling.

For example DO NOT say “Well so what, men are all a bunch of sexist pigs!”

Being the victim of discrimination is never a pleasant experience. However, even if we have had such experiences ourselves it is possible to find ourselves being the perpetrator in a different situation. When we target others and make them victims of discrimination sometimes we do it intentionally, whereas at other times it may be unintentional. Regardless, our actions and words can negatively impact on others around us. Complete the following activity to assess if you could be unfairly stereotyping others who are around you.

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpg | Learning Activity 6.6:  Investigating your own intolerance |

Can you think of an incident or situation where you may have been insensitive to the diversity and uniqueness of others?

Use the following questions to help you reflect on how you handle diversity in real life settings?

1. Do you laugh at jokes where the punch line depends upon negative stereotypes of Africans, women, homosexuals or people with disabilities?

Yes ⬜ No ⬜

1. Do you use dehumanizing slang when you refer to certain groups, for example queers, dykes, kaffirs, niggers, cripples or terrorists?

Yes ⬜ No ⬜

1. When you hear of someone being ridiculed because they are a member of a minority, do you speak in their defence even if they are not present?

Yes ⬜ No ⬜

**BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF!** If you answered "YES" to any of these questions you need to reflect on the extent to which you allow others the freedom to live out their own uniqueness – the same freedom you would appreciate from them.

It is only when each individual within an organisation commits to the eradication of prejudice and discrimination that true fairness and equality can be realised.

# 5. Diversity Success Strategies

Diversity in an organisation has numerous benefits to the individuals and to the company overall. Examples of such benefits are greater creativity and innovation; improved ability for problem solving; enhanced market appeal and increased organisational flexibility (Milem, 2003).

When you begin your formal working experience you will be an asset to your employer if you can effectively work in a diverse environment and manage diverse experiences. In order to assist you to do this here are a couple of ways that you can practice your diversity skills. Remember you do not have to wait till you are in a working environment to value diversity; you can practice these skills in the classroom on the sports field or in any context in which you find yourself.

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpg | Learning Activity 6.7:  Diversity Success Strategies |

**INSTRUCTIONS**: In this portfolio activity you will be required to complete a number of activities over a period of time. You will be presented with a principle for successfully managing diversity. Thereafter, you will be given a **DIVERSITY ACTION CHALLENGE** which you will be required to complete. These challenges are designed to allow you to practice your diversity skills right here and now. Use the scorecard below this activity to track your own progress. You will need to tackle these activities one-by-one over a number of days.

1. *Treat all of the people you work with as individuals*. Make an effort to look beyond their background and the stereotypes of their group and see the person.

**DIVERSITY ACTION CHALLENGE**: Take time to invite someone who is from a different ethnic group than yourself to sit with you during a break time for a “Mix it up Lunch”. Ask them questions about themselves, their family and their interests. Make it your goal to get to know them as a person who has a unique personality rather than just a member of “this or that” group.

1. *Respect personal names*. Call people by the name they want to be called. Learn the correct way to pronounce it, the correct order to say it, and the appropriate titles of respect.

**DIVERSITY ACTION CHALLENGE**: Ask each of the people in the group with whom you did the “I am poem” activity what their full names are, what the meaning of their name is and what they prefer to be called. Before the end of this module make sure you are able to address each person by their preferred name.

1. *Use acceptable terms for cultural groups.* Find out which terms are acceptable to a cultural group and which are not. Speak up if others use terms that are not acceptable to you. Let them know what you would like your group to be called.

**DIVERSITY ACTION CHALLENGE:** Is there someone who makes references to a group to which you belong in a manner that is offensive to you? Rather than starting a confrontation with this person or ignoring the issue, ask them if you can sit together at the next break time to chat. Explain to them how the way they refer to your groups makes you feel. Allow them to share their views and opinions on the matter. Ask them how they prefer you to refer to their group and then share with them how you would prefer them to refer to your group in the future. Conversations such as these may not be easy to initiate, but they allow for respectful communication to place in such a way the all groups can learn to understand each other better.

1. *Turn fear into curiosity.* We are often taught to be suspicious of other groups. Ask yourself, "What if we could get beyond our differences? What would I learn?'

**DIVERSITY ACTION CHALLENGE**: Take the time to learn about groups who are different from you in terms of race, religion or sexual orientation. One of the ways to increase your knowledge of other groups is by watching movies. Pick one (or more) of the movies on this list and watch it paying specific attention to the diversity related themes.

* Crash (racial discrimination)
* Schindler’s List (religious intolerance)
* The Kite Runner (ethnic intolerance)
* Hotel Rwanda (xenophobia)
* Monsters Ball (racial discrimination)
* The Laramie project (homosexuality related issues)
* The Crying Game (race, gender and sexuality)

1. *Laugh with people, not at them.* Don't tell ethnic or sexual jokes ever. If you are offended by a joke told by someone else, tell the person later in private. Or simply say "Ouch! That hurts" to let the person know that your cultural toes have been stepped on.

**DIVERSITY ACTION CHALLENGE:** Watch how people react to your jokes. Often we are unaware that we are offending others with our jokes – the language we use may lead men/women, different races or people with disabilities to feel like they do not belong. Next time you tell a joke take note of who is **NOT** laughing and ask yourself why. If you can’t figure it out, ask them and be willing to listen to whatever it is they share with you. Also you may need to be willing to apologise if you did offend them.

1. *Find out how disagreements are handled in the other person's culture.* It may be considered unacceptable to say "No" directly, or "No" may simply mean that further negotiation is expected. Avoid public displays of anger.

**DIVERSITY ACTION CHALLENGE**: Dealing with conflict is never easy, even when people are very similar to you – anger is an emotion, and usually all people feel very strongly about the issue they are angry about. Speak to someone from a diverse group in a neutral situation and ask them questions about how they deal with conflict. It is important to do this in an environment when no one is yet angry – this way you can be prepared if a conflict situation does arise.

1. *Adjust your interpersonal "space" requirements, if necessary.* People in different cultures may feel very uncomfortable if you stand too close or too far away (by their standards). Notice how closely they stand after they approach you. Pay attention to how they react if you move closer. The same principle applies to touching, how often do members in the group you are observing touch/avoid touching each other? Watch what other people do, especially when they are with people of their own culture. Usually people do unto others what they will accept from others.

**DIVERSITY ACTION CHALLENGE**: take 10 minutes during one of your break times to sit quietly on your own and watch the other students around you. Pay particular attention to the following behaviours. How close do people from groups different from your own stand to each other? How do males and females interact? Are there differences when males interact with males or females interact with females? How can these observations that you have made help you to interact with others in the future? Make notes whilst you are doing this activity.

Don't play favourites or treat others unfairly. It is normal to feel a little uncomfortable when you are dealing with someone from another culture -- but don't let your discomfort cause you to treat that person differently. Take up the challenge to become diversity wise in your school, your workplace and your social environment.

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| 🗹 **SCORECARD** | | |
| **DIVERSITY CHALLENGE** | | **COMPLETE** |
| **1** | I invited someone to sit with me during break and I spent time getting to know them on a personal level. |  |
| **2** | Know the name that each person in my “I am poem” group prefers to be called and address them by that name. |  |
| **3** | I know how the other students in my class prefer their group to be referred to and I make a point of referring to their group in that manner |  |
| **4** | I have watched a movie with a diversity related theme with the aim of becoming more aware of the types of discrimination other groups have to face. |  |
| **5** | I have paid attention to the way people react to my jokes in order to make sure that I am not offending anyone with my style of humour. |  |
| **6** | I have attempted to resolve conflict situations in a manner that takes into account the upbringing and customs of other groups. |  |
| **7** | I have examined how different groups deal with “personal space” and made notes about my observations. In my interactions with people I now try to take into consideration their patterns of “closeness”. |  |

(This activity is based on the following resource: <http://www.sides.ca/capp/grade10/culture.htm>, <http://www.wacuho.org/>)

# 6. Final thoughts

In closing read the following poem:

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| **THE COLD WITHIN**  Six humans trapped by happenstance  In dark and bitter cold.  Each one possessed a stick of wood,  Or so the story’s told.    Their dying fire in need of logs,  The first woman held hers back.  For on the faces around the fire,  She noted one was black,    The next man looking cross the way,  Saw one not of his church,  And couldn’t bring himself to give  The fire his stick of birch.    The third one sat in tattered clothes  He gave his coat a hitch.  Why should his log be put to use,  To warm the idle rich?  The rich man just sat back and thought  Of the wealth he had in store.  And how to keep what he had earned  From the lazy, shiftless poor.    The black man’s face bespoke revenge  As the fire passed from sight,  For all he saw in his stick of wood  Was a chance to spite the white.    The last man of this forlorn group  Did naught except for gain  Giving only to those who gave  Was how he played the game.    The logs held tight in death’s still hands  Was proof of human sin.  They didn’t die from the cold without,  They died from – THE COLD WITHIN. |

Will you put your log on the fire in order to kindle the flame of acceptance and cooperation between all groups in South Africa?

# Tracking my progress

You have reached the end of this section. Check whether you have achieved the learning outcomes for this section.

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| **Learning outcomes** | **✓ I feel confident** | **✓ I still need practice** |
| I can define diversity in the workplace |  |  |
| I am aware of my own identity in terms of my ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual orientation. |  |  |
| I have encountered individuals who are vastly different from me in terms of their ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation and abilities; yet recognise the commonality between all people. |  |  |
| I am aware of what prejudice and discrimination are and the negative impact such actions can have on others. |  |  |
| I have practiced responding effectively to discriminatory statements that are made towards me. |  |  |
| I have reflected on my own capacity to discriminate unfairly towards others and I actively monitor how my actions affect others. |  |  |
| I know why diversity is important in the workplace and how I will benefit from being able to deal with diversity effectively. |  |  |
| I have identified various strategies that will help me to function effectively in a diverse workplace |  |  |

What did you like best about this section?

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What did you find most difficult in this section?

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What do you need to improve on? How will you do this?

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