

Graduate Certificate in Diversity Facilitation

Advancing Multicultural, Intercultural, and Intergroup Relations through Dialogue and Action

Overview

This is a proposal for a 12-credit Graduate Certificate in Diversity Facilitation (GCDF). As used in this document, *diversity* refers to inter-group differences that are grounded in gender, race, ethnicity, social class and other identity markers and structured social inequalities that frequently create barriers to collaboration. The overall purpose of the GCDF is to prepare professionals in educational, community, and public settings to support formal and informal learning across the boundaries that diversity creates. More specifically, the program will support a number of Temple's Strategic Compass goals: first, to enable diverse student groups and students and community members to find common ground, learn from one another, and undertake collaborative actions that address pressing issues in their environment ("partnerships"); second, to foster the civic mission of the university by contributing to the creation of responsible, ethical citizens for an increasingly diverse world.

The GCDF consists of three new courses and one course that has been taught previously as a special topics course. The courses will be taught in intensive, short formats appropriate to subject matter and pedagogy and suitable to the needs of working professionals. The GCDF will be administered by CSJME and awarded by the College of Education.

The GCDF responds to a growing trend toward increased diversity, locally and globally, accompanied by an increasing need for collaborative solutions to problems facing communities and the public in general. The call is for new types of (social) partnerships that join diverse groups and are undertaken in the spirit of democratic civic engagement and social justice. Achieving these goals requires *connectors* who can help diverse groups and organizations achieve mutually desirable ends through socially and ethically responsive actions. As an urban and highly diverse university that is committed to Metro and Civic Engagement locally and abroad, Temple is eminently well-placed to play a leading role in responding thoughtfully to this need. The GCDF will provide such connectors who will then be able to support Metro Engagement's vision of growing local partnerships that are linked to the core functions of the university through community-based learning and research activities. Other stakeholders known to GCDF sponsors are also in need of *connectors*. The certificate program is thus directed at members of Temple University and other university communities, educators in schools and communities, community leaders, and professionals in related fields.

The GCDG draws from two well-known and successful models for promoting democratic dialogue, action and civic engagement in the context of diversity: (a) the "Michigan Model," a process used by the University of Michigan and others to promote intergroup dialogue, action and civic engagement in higher education settings; and (b) Transformational Social Therapy (TST), a process used internationally to promote knowledge sharing and collaborative action involving diverse parties in municipalities, civil society, educational settings, and other public arenas. Both models are informed by the theory and practice of multicultural citizenship and theory and research on learning and equitable social change in the context of diversity. TST's grounding in depth psychology and critical social theory complements the Michigan Model by contributing a more robust understanding of the ways human needs and social structures interact

and influence intergroup behavior. The role of the diversity facilitator is to subtly change the group's social structure so as to allow participants to better meet their needs and thus become aware of and remove their blocks to cooperation.

Participants have two options for enrollment in the GCDF: a graduate credit option, leading to a *Certificate of Specialized Study*, and a Continuing Education Units option, leading to a *Certificate of Completion*. The requirements for the two options are the same. Participants will be able to complete the program in one year and additional professional development will be available after certificate completion. The co-sponsors are well placed to understand the demand and market the certificate to their constituencies, which include currently matriculated graduate students as well as practicing professionals who may enroll as non-matriculated students. We expect this program to generate about 80-90 additional enrollment units per year, to be revenue neutral for the first two years and to produce revenue subsequently. Certificate holders who also hold terminal degrees will be able to teach GCDF courses starting in the third or fourth year. Other Certificate holders will be prepared to teach undergraduate courses, community-based learning, and other experiences that do not involve the granting of graduate credit.

Certificate Program Model

There are many models for bringing members of diverse groups together so they might come to understand and respect one another and participate in collaborative action. We have selected two that form the basis of the proposed model for our certificate program: Intergroup Dialogue (“the Michigan Model”) and Transformational Social Therapy (TST). The Michigan Model is itself informed by related approaches, such as Public Dialogue (previously Study Circles; see www.EverydayDemocracy.org) and Sustained Dialogue (www.sustaineddialogue.org). TST is informed by action research (Kurt Lewin) and shares similarities with Public Work (Center for Democracy and Citizenship; Harry Boyte) and transformative approaches to conflict (John Paul Lederach, Notre Dame University and Eastern Mennonite University; Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation, <http://www.transformativemediation.org/>). All these approaches share an orientation to going below the surface to the underlying issues that can support or block relationship-building and collaboration, although they differ on where they locate themselves on the continuums of interpersonal relations and structural patterns, and dialogue and action. Generally, they also share the following characteristics:

Building a Group

- An emphasis on process over the achievement of a pre-determined set of outcomes
- An emphasis on helping participants learn about and from one another and build relationships across the boundaries of diversity
 - Connect in meaningful ways with people/identities one would normally avoid
 - See the person behind appearances and stereotypes
 - Be willing to listen, hear, and appreciate different perspectives and experiential understandings without having to agree and withholding judgment
- Groups are expected and encouraged to delve deeply into difficult topics
- There are recognized stages in the process, although they do not follow a predetermined order but vary within each group
- Work is sustained over time, thus supporting the ability of group members to dialogue and collaborate inside the group

Dealing with tensions

- Tensions are expected

- The process identifies ways of supporting the group through them and addressing overly aggressive behaviors
- Conflicts are not avoided but are seen as potentially constructive as they can lead to deeper understanding and empathy and on authentic foundations for relationships

Role of the Facilitator/Group Leader

- Moves the process along and does not act as a subject matter expert: the group's process determines the agenda
- Introduces exercises and activities designed to build the group, in ways that are responsive to the group process
- Helps group members consider the personal, interpersonal, institutional, and societal dynamics involved in inter-group relations (e.g. personal prejudice/structural racism)
- Helps participants become aware of their own and others' knowledge and share it, developing more complex understandings of issues

The Michigan Model and Transformational Social Therapy

The Michigan Model

Work done at the university of Michigan (for a summary see Hurtado, 2007; book) has established a research and theoretical foundation for the importance of diversity to the academic and civic mission of higher education. Simply put, meaningful and lasting learning that supports intellectual and personal growth occurs when the one's ways of thinking, perceiving, and feeling – one's worldview and sense of what is normal – are destabilized. The literature supporting this statement is huge and cannot be reviewed here. In general, in the absence of destabilizing, discomforting, and even anxiety-producing elements, new information is simply added to our existing models of how the world works (see Bolles on the pedagogy of discomfort). This is not about applying shock therapy but about providing a careful balance of challenges and supports that encourage self-questioning and openness to the uncertainty of not-knowing, and pave the way for learning that actually changes one's worldview (e.g. see Magolda & King). The Michigan research revealed that campus diversity can be a catalyst for such learning, but the simple presence of diversity on campus is not enough: learning happens when appropriate interventions bring together diverse groups. These findings applied and confirmed the extensive body of research on intergroup contact and prejudice reduction (e.g. see Pettigrew; references in Otten, 2003).

The Michigan Model is very valuable and strongly supported through an expanding base of research and practice. We believe, however, that it can be strengthened by the theory and practice of TST, which create a more robust base of support for instructors/facilitators of experiences across diversity, especially by enabling them to deal constructively with the potentially volatile environment that always underlies such encounters. This is all the more so when participants are further divided by local histories such as those of urban universities and their surrounding communities, histories that are interpreted through the prism of disrespect, deficits, disregard, discrimination, and downright power plays – all compounded by fear, discomfort, distrust, and avoidance.

To address these potentially volatile situations, Intergroup Dialogues and democratic dialogue approaches in general create safeguards that bracket disruptive behaviors. The creation of group contracts and agreed-upon rules of civil behavior are typically the first activity such groups undertake. The final resort – hopefully not in frequent use, but available as a safety valve – is to

evict a member who behaves inappropriately and refuses to abide by the rules. The presence of group contracts and rules creates the necessary zone of safety but it does so in ways that keep everyday ways of thinking and acting out of the door. In other words, an opportunity to change worldviews might be missed because certain behaviors are silenced. Of course, it goes without saying that safe spaces must be created. Are there other ways, ways that allow more of the everyday to step into the room?

Transformational Social Therapy

Transformational Social Therapy (TST) handles the issue of safety differently. By adding to the knowledge base insights from depth psychology and critical social theory, TST teaches the facilitator to look and listen for unmet human needs and fears that underlie participants' utterances and behaviors and that may lead them to behave in negative ways. Through this lens, verbal aggression, judgments, defensiveness, rejection, resistance and refusal to hear others are pathologies that are not only personal but are supported by unhealthy/pathological social structures. The therapeutic lens maintains that people cannot be changed, but that they will change on their own accord through reflection/awareness and changes in their environment and relationships. The critical social theory lens adds the insight that these environments and relationships are not only personal or interpersonal but are created and re-created daily by institutions where societally 'pathological' behaviors are sustained and rewarded. As an example, overly authoritarian institutions and systems of regulation that expect and promote near-blind obedience and automatic compliance also promote aggressive and violent behaviors that may be invisible in those settings but are nonetheless real. This is the classic thesis of the Authoritarian Personality studies (Adorno et al), and related classics such as Eric Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* and Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*.

In TST, the facilitator learns to intervene in the group's environment so that participants' needs are met in healthier ways. The exercises and tools that are a staple of intergroup dialogue are present and the group process may look fairly similar on the surface, but in TST they are promoted by the facilitator's deeper understanding of the emotional life of the group. The advantage of TST is that by not relying on rules that structure the work of the group from the outside, but relying instead on carefully considered changes in the social environment, the facilitator supports participants' evolving self-awareness of how they are and behave in their everyday lives, and how some institutional structures maintain pathological behaviors while others support healthy ones. Because empathy, non-judgment and the willingness to hear others are thus the result of intrinsic motivation more than of rule-bound behavior, participants change in ways that are self-motivated and are more likely to know how take this changed self in everyday life, beyond the group. The point is not that intergroup dialogue does not create these changes; but because the passage from one state of being to the other has not been experienced as fully, the translation to the everyday is more difficult.

Course Descriptions

Course 1: The Emotional Life of Groups

The starting point for understanding the behavior of people, groups, and social institutions is a theory of human needs. Theorists generally agree that we have basic needs for affiliation and belonging, meaning, power, recognition, certainty, and safety. These needs can be met in different ways that go from relatively healthy to or unhealthy. Post-Freudian psychoanalyst

Anne Klein, the central figure of British psychoanalysis, contributes the insight that tensions around meeting these needs are never fully resolved: they begin in infancy, in relation to the mother, and become an important and mostly unconscious influence on how we respond to our environment.

From our early interactions, we have learned to hide our innermost feelings (our needs and our fears), even from ourselves, and we present ourselves to the world by wearing masks that protect our sense of an ordered and well-integrated self. We wear masks not only as protection against socially induced emotions such as embarrassment or shame, but for protection against exposing our innermost self. All masks are maintained through interactions with others, in whose mirrors we see ourselves. Masks are also part of professional relations: as professionals, we are those who “are supposed to know” and others expect us to behave as authority figures. Thus the mask of the expert and authority figure is not only maintained for personal protection but also as part of the professional/client interaction.

Whenever we express negative feelings for someone we do not personally know, it is because this person brings out our fears. The prevailing fears each of us has may be different and vary according to the circumstances: one person may fear being judged, while another one may be afraid of being rejected and unloved; some may feel that the other person is likely to attack them; others are afraid of what they don't know and don't understand, what doesn't fit easily into their world. These negative feelings and their attendant attitudes and behaviors result from a mutual lack of understanding, which is complicated in the presence of already existing prejudices, stereotypes and the lack of social connection. In a vicious cycle, each interaction that is interpreted negatively feeds the next and further reduces the ground for mutual understanding. Utterances such as “they're all like that” introduce us into a world of binary opposites, in which light and dark, good and evil are entirely separate, and those whom one fears are made into the collective repository of all that is evil.

In this course and other certificate courses participants learn how these mechanisms work and how one may intervene in groups through practices that interrupt pathological behaviors and support the kind of personal development and self-confidence that favors collaboration. The facilitator's intervention is designed to (a) reduce fears and create connections among group members; (b) help participants accept complexities, such as the sense that no one is fully an oppressor and no one is entirely a victim, assuming partial responsibility for any situation that causes difficulties; (c) shift roles from dependency on the facilitator to relative autonomy and interdependence among group members; and (d) foster an environment for free self-expression.

Learning goals: Participants will develop an essential skill for facilitating diverse groups: understanding and working with the emotional life of groups. The **foundational** knowledge base includes (a) the social and professional masks people wear; (b) fears, hatreds, and prejudices; and (c) psychoanalytical dynamics, including projection and transference.

Course 2: From violence to constructive conflict and dialogue

The first and most visible block to collaboration is violence. Violence may involve harm from pathological social institutions as well as from people, harm that may be inflicted on oneself as well as on others. Violence is personal and structural, and its expressions are more or less visible. It can appear as the physical or emotional aggression involved, for instance, in bullying (whether by students, teachers or others), self harm (suicide, cutting, eating disorders) as well as through

overly authoritarian leadership or through unjust and inequitable structures and practices. It can be perpetrated through ideologies, economics and oppressive institutions, through silence, silencing, and disregard. This means that all social institutions, in well-to-do and poverty stricken settings alike, may be violent. In polite settings, violence may appear as courteous avoidance of someone who is considered an enemy rather than a potential partner.

We usually try to fight violence by suppressing it. This is a problem, however, because if we can hear its message violence has important information for us. It is as symptom, the manifestation of another, deeper problem: what is its source? Violence is a pathological way of meeting one's basic human needs, in the face of relationships and institutions that foreclose healthy human connections. People who are violent know their reasons. If they can express it in a safe environment, without risks to those it targets, we all learn something. In our framework, violence is the denial of the humanity of the other and the refusal of interaction and dialogue. Transforming violence consists of creating spaces for conflict. Skilled facilitation is essential for this task, for it would be absurd and even dangerous to simply allow people to have their say, without appropriate preparation.

In a conflict, we may be angry, we may disagree vehemently, we may blame the other, but the very act of saying these things makes room for considering the other's position. Conflict requires at least a measure of empathy. In a TST group, conflict can only emerge once the space for it has been prepared. Its benefit is that it allows participants to let go of feelings of victimization and to become responsible agents. And responsibility is empowering.

Cooperation is not the opposite of conflict. By enabling diverse groups to move from violence to conflict and to cooperation, the intergroup dialogue process releases creative energies that were held back by toxic emotions. New democratic forms are thus born that allow people to pull together their knowledge, develop creative solutions, and become motivated social actors who can demand to be heard. Conflict entails engagement with the other, expressing, as needed, our disagreement, anger, hurts, and other emotions. Conflict can thus rebuild relationships that violence severs.

Dialogue (as opposed to debate) refers to the sharing of ideas that results in greater knowledge than was available to each person. One listens to understand and explore the others' ideas rather than to find out what is wrong with them and to build on them. The result is co-intelligence (collective intelligence). Genuine dialogue happens when participants are able to drop their masks and speak their truths. Dialogue happens when sufficient self-awareness has been generated for participants to have a sense of the masks they wear and sufficient trust in relationships with others so they can feel safe in dropping their masks.

Healthy relationships and social institutions support people in moving toward autonomous or interdependent relations rather than remaining dependent on powerful authority figures. Moving from violence to dialogue in the group requires the facilitator to help group members develop healthy relationships among themselves and with the group's authority figures, including and especially the facilitator him/herself.

Learning goals: Participants will develop an essential skill for facilitating diverse groups: Differentiating violence from constructive conflict. The **foundational** knowledge base includes understanding how (a) violence does not allow for dialogue; (b) conflict may be the frank

expression of differences and disagreements; (c) intergroup and intra-group violence can be transformed into constructive conflict.

Course 3: Personal and Social Transformation

Identifying personal and institutional blocks to cooperation involves seeing, first, that people and social institutions are not separate. The rules and norms of dominant social institutions are inscribed in our minds and bodies from a very early age. As adults, we tend to repeat those patterns and thus collectively we reproduce the same social pathologies in the concrete social environments in which we live our lives. Through supports within the group and the facilitator's modeling, we come to voice, see the connections between our ways of being and the way our environment is structured, and accept ourselves as complex human beings who are both good and bad, strong and weak: imperfect beings in an imperfect world, who accept responsibility for the way the world is and for changing some aspect of it in the here and now, to the extent that we can. This kind of understanding of self and social institutions paves the way for cooperation. Whereas feeling a victim, hiding behind masks, refusing responsibility are disempowering, understanding and self-acceptance are empowering.

Analyzing the constraints to group action in a given social setting involves asking the following questions:

- Where is the violence?
 - Purpose: to identify any institutional pathology that should be changed.
 - Sub-questions: Is there any coercion/submission present? Any refusal to talk/to listen? Are emotions associated with violence present?
- What are the causes?
 - Violence is not the cause but the symptom of something else – look for unmet needs.
- What is the danger of not doing anything about this?
 - This helps us identify the motivation for wanting a change;
- Where is the suffering? What needs to change?
 - The motivation to act comes from the desire to be free of fear and suffering
- What is the problem to be met through collective intelligence?
 - A complex problem that cannot be solved through expert solutions. This type of problem need to call on everyone's knowledge/information.
- Who must be a participant?
 - Who has insider knowledge of the problem? (answer: not only those who are willing to collaborate, but also and especially those who are seen as “the problem”)
- What should this project be named?
 - The name is part of the contract. It should stress a positive outcome rather than the elimination of a problem; it should not specify a problem to be addressed.

Learning goals: Participants will develop an essential skill for facilitating diverse groups: Personal and Social Transformation. The **foundational** knowledge base includes being able to (a) identify personal and institutional blocks to cooperation and (b) analyze the particular constraints to group action in a given social setting

Course 4: Process and stages in facilitating group collaboration

The TST process creates a special kind of group in which participants can express themselves freely. This is different from what we normally call a group, which TST sees as a mere

collectivity of separate individuals brought together for someone's purpose. The theoretical grounding for group formation is derived from depth psychology, social psychology, and group therapy. The phases of the group formation process are:

(a) pre-task: in the beginning the group plays out and experiences, in attenuated and protected fashion, all the blocks and obstacles to cooperation that people experience in their daily lives. These barriers operate on many levels: personal, familial, organizational and social. This experience becomes a mirror in which participants can see what blocks collaboration at all levels, including their own personal blocks;

(b) becoming a group: participants are able to drop their masks, speak freely, and develop trust and relationships across diversity. Working with the group in this fashion also allows and encourages individual change – in particular, participants accept individual responsibility which will enable effective cooperation and social action;

(c) harmonizing of motivations: participants decide what they will do together (dialogue process: generative dialogue). It is an agreement that pays attention to and includes what each participant and any other stakeholders want;

(d) proposals for action: to be presented to and negotiated with any decision makers and stakeholders (dialogue process: strategic dialogue).

Facilitating group process through the phases of group formation includes accepting and engaging with necessary conflicts. Freed from fears, each participant is more creative. Frank dialogue allows authentic information to circulate in the group, thus creating a 'collective intelligence' (also known as co-intelligence) that throws new light on problems, provides new understandings, more creative solutions, and the motivation to act. "The more whole, complete and intelligent the individuals, the more whole, complete and intelligent will be their group" (Stalins S. & Stalins P., 2007, 9). Generative dialogue followed by strategic dialogue can lead to meaningful, lasting results. Relationships created inside the group form the basis for ongoing alliances for change work.

Learning goals: Participants will develop an essential skill for facilitating diverse groups: Process and stages in facilitating intergroup collaboration. The **foundational** knowledge base includes (a) facilitating group process through the phases of group formation, including accepting and engaging with necessary conflicts; and (b) applying the group's collective intelligence toward the resolution of common problems.