

# The Strength of Diversity Awareness

**SUBMITTED BY:** Knowledge@Wharton Summer  
Educator

**SUBJECT(S):** Management

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 9, 10, 11, 12

## ≡ OVERVIEW:

This lesson will engage students in reflecting upon themselves as diverse individuals and encourage them to view diversity awareness as a strength in doing business.

## ≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Management, IV. Personal Management Skills
- Management, VI. Human Resource Management

## ≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“The Economics of the Refugee Crisis: Paying Off Debts and Launching Startups”](#)
- [“The Conversation: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Business”](#)
- [“Learning to Be Color Brave”](#)
- [“Is Bossy the Other “B” Word?”](#)
- [“Hollywood and Pro Football Brands Respond to the Dialogue on Diversity”](#)
- [“Future of the Business World: Moniola Odunsi Fights for Racial Justice”](#)
- [“Exploring Immigration: Will the U.S. See Reform in 2019?”](#)
- [“Educator Toolkit: Diversity and Inclusion in Life and Work”](#)
- [“Career Insight: Hope for Young Black Entrepreneurs”](#)
- [“Can Shaq Save the Papa John’s Brand?”](#)
- [“A ‘Zero-Generation’ American on What Shakes Him to the Core”](#)

- “6 Takeaways from Wharton’s Discussion on ‘Race and the Entrepreneur’”

### Common Core Standard(s):

- *Speaking & Listening*: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10–11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- *Speaking & Listening*: Present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically in such a way that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development, substance and style are appropriate to the purpose, audience and task.
- *Writing Standards*: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes and audiences.
- *Reading Standards for Informational Text*: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- *Reading Standards for Informational Text*: Determine a central idea of a text and be able to provide an objective summary of the text.

### Objectives/Purposes:

- Students will be able to recognize the strengths and challenges that diversity presents in the business world.
- Students will recognize their own power as consumers.
- Students will be able to articulate diversity awareness as a strength to future employers.

**Knowledge@Wharton Article:** [“The Bitter and the Sweet: How Five Companies Competed to Bring Chocolate to China”](#)

### Vocabulary Spotlight:

**Culture:** The behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic or age group (Dictionary.com).

## Activities:

- 1) Ask students what is meant by the term culture. Write the responses on the board. (3 mins)
- 2) Once you've finished fleshing out a good definition for the term culture (you can use the one provided in the vocabulary spotlight as a guide), ask students about the ways that they think culture matters in the world of business. (3 mins)
- 3) Inform students that they will be studying the relevance of culture and diversity awareness to the contemporary world of business. Given the advances in technology and the expanding economic growth of developing nations such as China, our knowledge of cultures outside of our own is becoming imminently important to business success. At one point in time, business directed little attention to the needs of those outside of the white culture in the United States. However, now with shifting demographics and people's resistance to acculturation, reaching these consumers requires a different business model and strategy than before. (1 min)

Have students read the article "The Bitter and the Sweet: How Five Companies Competed to Bring Chocolate to China." (9 mins)

- Engage students in responding to the following questions (9 mins):
  - i. What were some of the major difficulties noted in introducing chocolate to Chinese consumers?
  - ii. What could the chocolatiers have done to avoid the problems they experienced?
  - iii. What do some of their [chocolatiers'] actions suggest about how they view the Chinese?
  - iv. How do you think diversity (or lack thereof) might have played a role in the chocolatiers' difficulties in expanding their business? What evidence can you draw from the article to support your analysis?
  - v. Conversely, which companies did seem to demonstrate an awareness of culture and diversity as they pursued the Chinese market? Again, what evidence do we have of this?

- 4) Next, have students collectively brainstorm about companies, products and services that they believe overlook diversity as a business strategy. Have students state why they believe this to be true. (7 mins)
- 5) Recap with students the highlights of this lesson thus far in demonstrating how actively paying attention to culture is critical to business success. (2 mins)

6) Next, direct students to write a list of the ways in which they see themselves as culturally diverse people. Afterwards, have students speculate about how these elements might serve as strengths in their future careers. If students struggle with the second question, have them think about a business, product or service that they believe misses out on getting their patronage because of a culture-related oversight. Have the students share these lists afterwards. This item can be used as a form of informal assessment. (The teacher should add on to students' contributions, where it is informative.) (10 mins)

7) Optional: Students can write about their own current ability to successfully interact with diverse bodies of people. In what ways do they see themselves as being culturally competent in the world (local or larger context)? In what ways do students think that they are lacking in terms of being culturally aware? Have them focus on one area and write about the ideas they have for improving this area.

**Tying It All Together:** This exercise allows students to see diversity as an important means of getting business done (i.e., understanding one's audience, utilizing the strengths of colleagues who have different backgrounds and experiences, etc.). It may also have highlighted the ways in which their diverse perspectives can serve as strength in solving problems of the future.

### **Practice Outside of the Classroom:**

1. As students pursue jobs and leadership positions within the school and the community, suggest that they speculate about the ways in which their cultural beliefs, values and practices could be an asset (e.g., insider knowledge of practices or meanings of words and actions) or a challenge (e.g., communication, preferences and tastes) in a particular role or position.
2. Challenge students to begin expanding their network to include more contact with those who they might not otherwise come into contact with. They can do this by joining volunteer organizations, engaging in special programs that bring people together from an expanded region, etc. Students can also be directed to read about the lives of others who are culturally different from themselves.
3. Have students read the Knowledge@Wharton HS article "Embracing Differences: Companies Tap the Richness of Diversity," which was published after this lesson plan was written.

**What Worked and What I Would Do Differently:** The Knowledge@Wharton article is an exemplary model for demonstrating how important understanding culture is to being successful

in business. It also underscores the significance of the global market in students' future job prospects.

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