
Diversity Issues in a Professional Curriculum: Four Stories and Some Suggestions for Change

Integrating issues of multiple publics, cultural and social diversity, and inequality into the professional curriculum seem obvious goals these days. These issues will be the focus of major planning debates in the next decades. As educators, we might disagree over which theoretical and political stances are most appropriate, but a number of indicators show that planning educators say that diversity and inequality issues are important both for the curriculum and for the makeup of the profession. John Friedmann's (Friedmann and Kuester 1994) survey prepared for "Planning Education for the 21st Century," a panel at the 1993 Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) meetings; Jerry Kaufman's (1993) futures workshop with the ACSP Executive Committee; the ACSP's report from its Subcommittee on a National Urban Policy (1993); and the new Planning Accreditation Board Diversity Standards are merely recent indications that these are major areas for concern and action (see also Dalton 1993; Rodriguez 1993).

In this paper I try to go beyond the obvious level of agreement and envisage how planning educators can deal with some of the tougher aspects of these issues, both in curriculum development and in student recruitment and retention. I suggest that among planning faculty there are currently a series of stories or theories about diversity and inequality that need to be modified if planning faculty are to truly tackle the issues. This paper deals with four of these stories that I call Zero Sum Games, Reciting a Mantra, Overwhelming Pluralism, and Floodgates of Anger. They are each grounded in some partial truth, and as stories they provide emotionally compelling explanations of and guides to action. Looking over my own work I find their shadows. But the stories cast diversity issues in a defeatist or superficial way, allowing at least some members of each planning program to take them less seriously and dissolve into inaction.¹

The bulk of the paper focuses on the four stories, outlining their contents and suggesting strategies for overcoming their negative outcomes. Three aspects of my

approach to the stories and strategies are worth noting. First, I am working from a widely shared assumption that diversity issues are important, and I am analyzing why a number of practical proposals for increasing diversity (e.g., Galindo et al. 1987; Hill 1989; Ross 1989) have met faculty resistance or apathy. In suggesting strategies I have tried to reflect this breadth of opinion by advocating actions that are useful for planning educators holding a range of scholarly positions on issues of diversity, (critical) multiculturalism, and inequality, including positions that are not my own. My approach is thus one of sympathetic critique. Second, the stories that I outline are ones told by those who have some interest in diversity issues. There are other stories that this paper does not deal with, stories based on ignorance, disinterest, and outright opposition. As such, the paper is part of a conversation between those who, at least partly, agree. Finally, I have tried to be positive and forward looking, as well as slightly irreverent.

■ THE ZERO SUM GAME

A zero sum game, as planning educators know, is one where the pie is fixed and any win to one side means a loss to the others. The most public zero sum game in planning education is about competition for minority² students and also faculty. People say that all the schools are competing for the same bunch of students, so what chance has our school against MIT? The story says that the pie is fixed and our school will lose.

While planning educators do not go on record saying this about students, it has been raised in connection with faculty recruitment. The ACSP Commission on the Doctorate in Planning received complaints that some schools could not find enough women or people-of-color faculty as applicants. In a brief analysis they found this to be a severe problem in only one of four search processes studied (ACSP Commission 1992, 23–24; see also ACSP Working Committee 1990).³ Hill (1989) implicitly raises this issue in discussing three strategies for hiring minority faculty: luring people from other jobs, holding lines open until a candidate is found, and Hill's alternative proposal of increasing the supply of minority faculty (getting out of the zero sum game) by recruiting students to the doctorate and supporting them through it (see also King 1993, 16).

lays the groundwork for productive collaboration among peers with different types of contributions to make.

Planning educators and practitioners have often described the need for innovation and purposeful social action in planning education (e.g., Hemmens 1988; Tyson and Low 1987; Witty 1986). A studio-based approach allows for both. We can create innovative projects that facilitate student learning while we provide valuable services to the wider community. Universities, especially those supported through public funds, owe some responsibility to communities and public interest groups. We often find, however, that as planning faculty we need to explain to our colleagues in the university the validity and merit of providing community service through planning aid projects. Traditional university approaches to pure, unfettered inquiry may take umbrage with a community-service model.

Educators who decide to take a studio approach with community clients have to ensure that pedagogical goals remain paramount through the process. Students have to understand that they need not accept client, faculty, or community solutions to given problems. From the outset, faculty must make clear to client groups the potential limitations of student work. In balancing the needs of community, university, and student, as educators we ultimately put the learning needs of students first. We can and must ensure that students consider creative options rather than feeling bound to the status quo. Often students want to try to deliver what they think clients or faculty want; instead, faculty must urge them to explore problems and present alternatives so that communities find their own solutions. First and foremost, projects must allow students to learn how to learn and to accept the limitations of theory and practice. Process thus takes priority over product even in studio-based learning.

As faculty select appropriate projects for their students, they will seek projects that resonate with the departmental and studio philosophy. At NSCAD that means creating opportunities for students to begin to develop confidence in their own abilities to offer environmental planning information and advice. The peer resource model offers a useful direction for planning educators—we can practice the empowerment we often preach. It gives us a technique to demonstrate our commitment to positive social action while presenting students with valuable experience that will suit them well in their careers.

Authors' note: Instructors interested in examples of course outlines or teaching materials may contact the authors at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 5163 Duke Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 3J6, Canada.

■ NOTES

1. At the peak of the project, 49 students and three faculty members were committed to the initiative.
2. Only sophomores and juniors participated, with 32 students and two faculty members involved at the peak of the project.

3. Thirty students and two faculty members participated in the project.
4. Project sponsors may range from government agencies to nonprofit community groups. We typically provide them with a budget of the project-related expenses we expect to incur. No labor or overhead is included in those budgets, as the college would face those costs in any event. Sponsors may meet part or all of the expenses, depending on their resources. Once the department makes a commitment to the project, it proceeds regardless of the level of funding the sponsor can provide.
5. In situations where prescreening is possible, faculty look for students with good work habits, an open mind, and willingness to work with others. Teams whose members have a range of personality types prove better rounded and capable of greater success; teams lacking members with good task-focus and logic skills have a difficult time making progress.
6. Some students have to unlearn bad habits they may have developed long ago. For example, we had one small team in which members thought two young men lacked interest in the project. When the instructor observed the group and met with the individuals to try to help resolve the difficulty, she noted that both young men maintained body postures of inattention even as they asserted their commitment to the project. They slouched and fidgeted. When the students realized that their body language sent negative messages to their colleagues, they adjusted their behavior. In peer evaluations at the end of the semester, teammates spoke of improvement in attitude after the intervention. Other instructors also noticed changes in the students. Identifying such communication problems can result in significant improvements.
7. Student reports and models prepared for the Woodens River project became hot commodities in the fall of 1994 after the provincial government closed one of the lakes in the watershed due to contamination from an abandoned salvage yard.
8. Unfortunately, some students find it impossible to work effectively in groups. Such individuals typically succumb to intense peer pressure, but may fail to meet the expectations of peers and express real resentment at the group process.
9. The instructor of the teamwork studio gives the subteams "pink slips" they can issue to their members for failure to meet group expectations. The college uses such slips as midterm warnings to students who may fail a course.

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In terms of student recruitment, in the short run there is probably something to this story of zero sum games, just as there can be in terms of faculty recruitment. By the time students are applying to programs it may very well be us versus MIT. Schools in large urban areas, with more prestigious programs, and in universities traditionally serving people of color seem to have an advantage in recruitment.⁴ In the long run, however, and even in the medium distance, there are opportunities both to increase the pool of applicants and to support them as they stay with the program.

Of all Bachelors degrees conferred in the U.S. in 1989–1990, 13% went to U.S. minorities up from 11% a decade before (Morgan 1992, 8). According to the 1990 Census, 29.3% of the U.S. population aged 20 to 24 were people of color, a rough approximation for those of graduating age. Of Masters degrees in the U.S. in 1989–1990, 11% were awarded to U.S. minorities (comprising 12% of degrees to citizens and residents),⁵ and of Doctorates almost 9% went to U.S. minorities (comprising over 11% of degrees to citizens and residents) (Morgan 1992, 8). As Table 1 shows, some groups receive disproportionately low shares of Bachelors degrees. These figures of course mask differences within groups with students coming from quite different ethnic and class backgrounds and with educational patterns also varying in complex ways by sex and field of study (see Morgan 1992). But while indicating general underrepresentation for people of color these figures also

	Percentage U.S. population aged 20–24 in 1990	Percentage U.S. citizens/permanent residents graduating with Bachelors degrees, 1989-90
African Americans (Non-Hispanic)	13.2	6.0
Asian and Pacific Islanders	3.2	3.8
Hispanics*	12.1	3.1
Native Americans and Alaskans	0.8	0.4
Whites (Non-Hispanic)	70.7	86.6

* Ethnicity/Race categories replicate those used by Morgan (1992), which in turn reflect Census categories.

Table 1. Graduating-aged population and bachelors degrees by race/ethnicity, 1989-90. (Figures are from Morgan [1992, 8], adjusted to eliminate the 2.6% of Bachelors degrees awarded to nonresident aliens, and from 1990 Census summary tables.)

represent a large absolute number of people of color with degrees.

Planning schools can work to increase these numbers, particularly in undergraduate planning programs and in the programs from which planning programs draw graduate students. Planning programs can develop permanent links with community colleges and high schools, recruiting students from communities of color. Several planning schools have held summer schools for high school students. Others hold recruitment days and conduct other outreach activities involving both students and faculty.⁶

Planning programs can follow engineering in providing summer schools, orientation classes, and student-faculty meetings to help students from less advantaged backgrounds develop skills and support networks and to help faculty better understand their students (Richardson 1994; Sobol 1994; see also Galindo et al. 1987). In doing this, schools need to consider what skills are essential for professional life, and which are more arbitrary standards based on student bodies from a more homogenous past (Galis 1993).

Money also matters. Without it, diversity will be securely middle class. For example, the 1985 report, "How Low-Income Families Pay for College," by the American Council on Education, found that of college-bound students, 50% of black students' families had annual incomes below \$12,000 compared with only 10% of white students (cited in Young 1992, 57). Low-income single parents may be paying a quarter of their income in child care (Rice 1993). In this context the returns to education can seem rather distant (King 1993, 11–13).

Many planning schools also need to revise their curriculums to be more attractive to a student body with varied backgrounds and experiences. Encouraged by new Planning Accreditation Board Diversity Standards, planning faculty can draw on the growing literature on teaching more inclusively in terms of pedagogy and course content (see Barnard 1992 on "anti-homophobic pedagogy"; Burayidi 1993 on teaching third world planning; Burnier 1992 on gender in public administration; Feagin 1992 on Black students' experiences of campus racism; Ritzdorf 1993 on teaching about gender in planning; McClintock 1989 on general issues of academic climate including issues pertaining to people with physical disabilities).⁷ Zero sum games are not an inevitable part of planning education.

■ RECITING A MANTRA

A mantra is a word or phrase recited repetitively in a sacred practice. In this analysis I am focusing completely on the repetitive aspect. This story goes, "If I recite the words race-class-gender (and maybe region or disability) enough, that means I have dealt with the issues."

People say the words but they do not treat the issues with much depth or seriousness, even with the depth and

seriousness involved in critiquing their usefulness. Saying class-race-and-gender (all in one breath) avoids the difficult problem of analyzing when, how, and if each one is important, and how they interact—the kind of detailed and sophisticated analysis good planning will need in the future. This is currently a favored option for liberals.⁸

I want to make it clear that I am not saying that class, race or ethnicity, and gender are unimportant. Rather I am arguing that these are very important issues that deserve to be analyzed for their relevance, character, and interactions in particular times and places rather than recited as a ritual performance.

My bias is that they are not always all equally important. Neither do they form a constant hierarchy of importance with, for example, race or class always and everywhere the defining characteristic. Each category is also internally complex, filled with people who are not at all identical. Although U.S. academic production is so dominant in anglophone scholarship and tends to shape scholarly understandings elsewhere, it also seems important to understand that the characteristics of race or ethnicity, class, and gender are not always those of the contemporary U.S. Further, class, race, and gender are not the only issues of importance. Naming them does not discharge one's entire duty to diversity. There are other areas of diversity and difference that may be more crucial in particular areas: culture, education, professional affiliation, cognitive style, worldview, sexuality, region, family background, age, religious practice, ecosystem, and disabilities come to mind. Categories may also arise from the data in quite unexpected ways. Many people who agree that diversity and inequality issues are important would, however, disagree with this contextual position, and so I leave it as a suggestion only.

It is harder to work in a situation where there are many variables, but rather than dismissing them, planning educators need to provide more tools for dealing with complexity and for analyzing variables that are interactive as well as additive.⁹ Planning educators need to understand that while in the last instance it may all be about power, we rarely work in a last instance. Rather, planning educators need to provide the analytical tools for students to understand the specific situations in which planners do work.

Course content is an obvious place to start, although this will involve different strategies in different areas. Some topics—like gender and international development—are huge fields with a wide literature to plow through, others—like the commuting patterns of people of color—have a few sources that need to be ferreted out. Reviews within each area can help educators and students navigate through the various approaches both among their colleagues and more broadly. This kind of work is becoming increasingly accessible. Among recent work in mainstream planning journals and bibliography series see, for example, Córdova (1994) and Mier (1994) on race/ethnicity and work by

minority scholars in planning, and Servon (1993) and Sandercock and Forsyth (1992) on gender and planning; see also Knopp (1992) on sexuality. A number of organizations and researchers are currently compiling further resources for curriculum development.¹⁰

In addition, planning faculty can use research on multicultural teaching, and on excellent teaching in general, to reach a cognitively more diverse body of students and a student body with a wider array of identifications. In turn, students can use these skills in both practice and teaching. Planning educators can combine concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract thinking, and learning by doing in each of our courses and require that our Ph.D. students understand these principles (Anderson and Adams 1992, 27; see also Herrington and Curtis 1990; Smith and Kolb 1986; Van Note Chism et al. 1990). Carefully devised practice workshops are also beneficial. Interacting with a wider population, particularly for those students with more sheltered backgrounds, can help make understandings of categories like class, ethnicity, or race and gender more complex and concrete (Pratt 1993).

Finally, I need to state explicitly that this does not mean that planning educators all need to conduct research and publish about issues of diversity and inequality or that every reading in every class needs to deal explicitly with these issues. Rather, my point is that students need to be provided with a solid grounding in various approaches to understanding and analyzing diversity and inequality in their planning education, something that involves moving beyond a mantra.

■ OVERWHELMING PLURALISM

The third story or theory about diversity is called overwhelming pluralism. This story has two versions. The first story is quite practical and has to do with the time it takes to revise courses and recruit students. In particular, in a busy schedule and for those whose research interests lie elsewhere, it can seem too daunting to reconceptualize whole courses in terms of diversity issues. An example from feminist work can illustrate this issue.

Feminist scholarship went through an initial period when it proceeded to add issues from women's lives into a variety of disciplines (the add-women-and-stir approach). But the problems with fitting the experiences of women into categories made from men's experiences caused feminists to rethink the fundamental categories within those fields. Similarly, once categories were being rethought, it became obvious—and was made obvious by a lot of women who were not white-middle-class-heterosexual etc.—that all women are not the same and so the category *women* itself needed to be rethought (e.g., Harding 1986). This issue of how, and even whether, to construct a category or set of categories called *women* has been a productive debate in

feminism in the last decade. However, this kind of rethinking takes a lot of time, even in the context of developing course content. If not done well it can appear to further undermine the small amount of coherence an educator has managed to impose on course materials. With the options cast as totally reconceptualizing a syllabus or just avoiding the issue, avoidance can be appealing given all the other constraints on faculty time (see Dalton 1986, 150 for a parallel argument).

So although the add-x-and-stir approach has been rightly criticized, I think that it has a place as a beginning in teaching. Adding a reading or using different variables in a database or a different assignment topic does bring another set of voices into the conversation, raises another set of questions, perhaps exposes some other gaps. A syllabus is not a published paper, it evolves, it can incorporate conflicting ideas without resolving their differences. In the next year its components can be reshaped in response to issues raised in the readings. It can start a process of incorporation and analysis that is rather different from the race-class-and-gender mantra which names the issues and does no more. While each course does not need to cover everything, the point is to think carefully about what is left out.

Adding in, however, raises another set of problems in that planning educators may feel they are merely cramming more information into already crowded courses or taking time away from other important skills. This probably makes some level of course or curriculum revision essential in the longer term.

The second story about overwhelming pluralism is a political or theoretical objection to multiple viewpoints which are seen as leading to an anemic postmodern relativism. This comes from conservative critics of multiculturalism and political correctness who worry about diversity undermining previously agreed upon standards of quality (e.g., Bloom 1987; D'Souza 1991). But it also comes from those on the left. Some are worried that a focus on diversity and pure difference undermines progressive arguments for a common good or a public interest. Others are concerned that approaches such as deconstruction and genealogy developed in the humanities, are inadequate for dealing with such contemporary issues as inequality in urban areas.

These are complex and crucial issues that raise tough questions, questions that I cannot hope to answer in this paper, but neither do I want to. Rather, I argue, these debates about universality, relativism, communities, public interests, and so on should be seen as part of the culture in which U.S. planners work, and thus made subjects for study rather than pretexts for shutting down discussions (Graff 1992). Again, this does not mean that all faculty need to give up a belief in the public interest, take to reading Derrida, or stop teaching statistics or economic development in order to offer courses in Lesbian Landscapes.¹¹

Instead, it means that the issue of relativism should open up discussion, rather than close it down.

■ FLOODGATES OF ANGER

The final story is called floodgates of anger. This is the fear that once planning educators start to raise issues of, say, race, class, and gender—or really racism, classism, and sexism—that the strong emotions of anger, frustration, and despair that these practices generate will be unleashed on us and that our classes will be uncontrollable.

These are hot issues. In a classroom, frustration may face defensiveness, blame may face resentment. Students can be in very different places in thinking through issues. People have different approaches to dealing with conflict, something that varies with background but which also varies within groups. Some students and some faculty have strong and uncompromising opinions, confrontational styles of interaction, and a sense of humor that may be hard to locate. Others are acutely sensitive to every word. If the campus or departmental climate is already highly charged it can easily carry into the classroom. As a foreigner I am also keenly aware of the added level of miscommunication that may occur among multicultural student and faculty groups. Finally, these issues raise questions about power, which makes them important but also complex.

There are two responses to this story. First, emotional responses are not always strong or negative, and raising issues of diversity and inequality will generally be quite a low-key affair. Students mostly appreciate faculty who include different voices and current debates in their classes and who provide a set of tools and frameworks for analyzing diversity and inequality (see Ritzdorf 1993). Incorporating current research, discussing a range of views, and using students' own experiences in a structured manner can lead classes in very productive directions. Second, those comparatively rare occasions where anger and frustration do arise, although often uncomfortable at the time, can also be productive in raising issues in a compelling way (hooks 1984, 63–64). Most campuses have mediation programs that can help navigate through the toughest disputes. Anger is certainly a part of mainstream planning that has been neglected in planning education.

What does this all mean? This paper has outlined four stories about diversity that provide rationalizations for inaction. None of the stories is totally mythical, and some are quite relevant in particular times and places. Planning education is situated in a larger society that limits some possibilities for changing the situations reflected in the stories. But in terms of what is possible, it is clear that there are now a large number of resources to draw upon in moving beyond these stories to incorporate issues of

diversity in planning education—resources from both inside and outside of planning.

Planning educators can also create new stories about the positive value of diversity, based perhaps on powerful existing images like the rainbow coalition or the urban mosaic. We can extend the long tradition of critiquing inequality. As educators change courses, curricula, and recruitment practices there will be a new set of experiences from which to draw in story making. Planning educators can be sophisticated, critical, and imaginative in teaching about issues of diversity and inequality, and in recruiting. We will have to be to survive.

Author's Note: An earlier version of this paper was presented in a panel, "A Planning Education for the 21st Century," at the 1993 ACSP Conference in Philadelphia. My thanks to John Friedmann, organizer of the panel, who asked me to put together these thoughts about planning education in the twenty-first century and who directed me to be outrageous. Four anonymous reviewers helped tremendously in reframing the piece. I particularly thank Reviewer I who pushed me to develop stories two and four and Reviewer III who helped story three with a number of very thoughtful and witty comments. Gwen Urey, Fred Rose, Xolela Mangcu, and Jessica Skintges provided encouragement and suggestions.

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■ NOTES

1. This paper is based on a decade of participation in planning education, as a student, as a faculty member, and as a practitioner supervising interns. I have been involved with three planning programs in North America. The three have quite different strengths and weaknesses in approaching diversity issues in planning education. This paper is based on this experience. Although this paper focuses on planning education, it reflects the current interest in planning practice as a storytelling activity (e.g., Mandelbaum 1990; Marris 1987, 1990; Moore Milroy 1989; Rydin and Myerson 1989; Throgmorton 1992, 1993). It also has something of the spirit of Christopherson's (1989) critique of human geography.
2. I use the term *minority* because of its prevalence, even though it inaccurately describes a number of locations that are majority *minority*.
3. The Commission found that while 20% of students admitted to doctoral programs are U.S. minorities (presumably the current figures), the proportion of graduates is lower than 20%, probably because many are only recently enrolled. Interestingly, while one-third of doctoral students are female to begin with, they complete the degree more slowly than men and only 25% of women graduates end up in academic position compared with 37% of men (ACSP Commission 1992, 23–24), although these average figures may mask a trend toward more uniformity.
4. In terms of U.S. minorities as a percentage of all U.S. students in planning masters programs, the highest numbers are at traditionally minority universities that have tended to stay that way and in urban schools. According to 1992 ACSP figures—which are a little vague in that they include an ethnic category called *other*—the University of Puerto Rico (100%) and Morgan State (93%) had the highest percentages of minority students. Alabama A and M, the University of the District of Columbia, and the University of Hawaii at Manoa all had around two-thirds of their U.S. students from ethnic minorities; UCLA and Pratt had 45%. As a number of these have

high foreign student enrollments, the overall minority enrollment figures are often lower, although still above one-third of total students. Ball State, Berkeley, California Polytechnic Pomona, Cleveland State, MIT, Princeton, San Jose State, and Wayne State all appear to have over 30% U.S. persons of color enrolled (Prakash and Brusi Amador 1992).

5. This figure includes planning but does not include first professional degrees such as law and medicine where the minority percentage was over 13% in 1989–1990.
6. Examples of planning schools with high school programs include Cornell and the University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign; those with recruitment days for people of color include UCLA.
7. These references approach teaching their subject matter in a variety of ways, some of which are not my style, but each has a number of useful ideas or sources.
8. Berman (1992, 14–19) also deals with this issue, though in a slightly different way. (My thanks to Reviewer III who pointed out this source.)
9. An example of interactive variables is that the experiences of women from a particular ethnic group are not found by summing *ethnic group + women*, but rather takes on a particular character due to their interactions. Being a woman in each group may have very different meanings and implications for planning processes (see Spelman 1988, 12–19).
10. Some additional resources are not yet published. The Planning and Women Division of the American Planning Association is developing a curriculum module on gender and planning issues. For information contact the American Planning Association (122 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1600 Chicago, IL 60603-6107). Ellen Pader from the University of Massachusetts and Marsha Ritzdorf from Virginia Tech are compiling a resource list on diversity issues. For more information contact Marsha Ritzdorf (Urban and Regional Planning, 201 H Architecture Annex, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA 24061) or Ellen Pader (LARP, Hills North, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003). A number of syllabi in the general area of race and poverty are available from PRACC (Poverty and Race Action Council, 1711 Connecticut Ave, NW, Suite 207, Washington, DC 20009).
11. My thanks to Reviewer III who raised the issues dealt with in this paragraph. For a useful critique and overview of the intersections of postmodernisms and the social sciences see Rosenau (1992). For interesting left-leaning discussions about universality, particularity, and political correctness see Ehrenrich (1992) and West (1992).

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