

Student diversity and equity: Prospects for institutions and academic rankings

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Outline

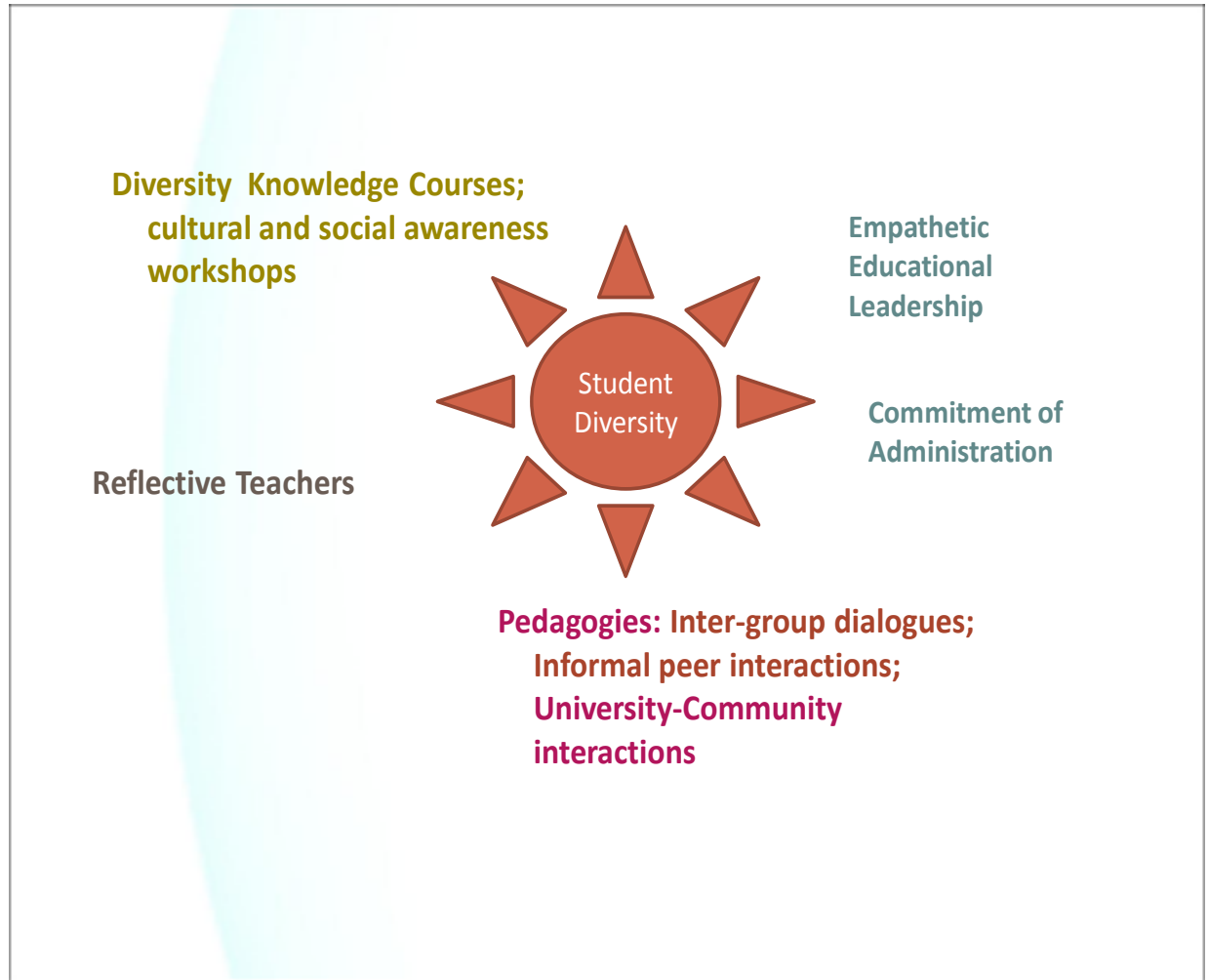
1. Student diversity and its link to civic contribution
2. Elements that support positive effects of diversity
3. Status of diversity/equity related metrics in academic rankings
4. Reflection on its absence

Student diversity and its link to civic contribution

- In a massified era: equity (affirmative action/unequal inputs in favour of those from marginalised groups for equal outcomes) and inclusiveness (non-discriminatory participation) become a part of the social responsibility of higher education institutions;
- Student diversity (participation by different group identities) on college campuses as a transformative agent for the higher education institutions as well as for the society;
- Theories of cognitive development and social psychology provide the foundations for valuing student diversity as a resource for civic learning (a type of learning that includes knowledge and skills to promote a culture of peace: SDG target 4.7).

Elements that support positive effects of student diversity

Research indicate links between inter-group contact, reduction in prejudice and positive inter-group social relations



Status of diversity/equity related metrics in academic rankings

- Methodologies of 17 world university rankings listed in IREG Inventory;
- Methodology reference periods: 2018, 2013;
- Equity-related rankings present in 2 of 17: U-Multirank and U.S. News Best Global Universities;
- Rankings outside the Inventory: NIRF (India), MosIUR, Social Mission Score.

Equity-related metrics, conceptualisation

- Gender equality (U-Multirank, NIRF);
- Satisfaction evaluation (U-Multirank)
- Underrepresented social groups (NIRF, SMS);
- Regional importance in research (U.S. News, MosIUR);
- Regional student diversity (NIRF);
- Focus on primary goals (SMS);

Equity-related metrics, conceptualisation (continued)

- Focus on professional shortage areas (SMS);
- Environment for challenged social groups (NIRF);
- Equity balance between indicators: academic awards vs. student contests (MosIUR).

Why so few?

- Berlin Principles: “a market-based perspective”;
- Incomparability on a global scale;
- Data issues;
- More suitable for observation and benchmarking, not evaluation and ranking.

Summing-up

- A diverse student body on campuses is an intellectual resource;
- Effect of structural diversity on the campus environment depends on the nature and quality of interactions. Elements that support positive effects of diversity include:
 - Diversity courses/modules for critical knowledge;
 - Pedagogies for developing democratic skills;
 - reflective teachers and
 - pro-active empathetic administration and educational leadership
- There is a need for valuing and honouring student diversity, as it is a resource that helps higher education to perform its social function.

Thank you for your time!