

## Statistics on Class Differences in the U.S. - A short explanation

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### Scene 3: May 10, 2007:

Including and Engaging people of all socio-economic levels: Working with the unmentionable difference - Class

The following slides include models for understanding and implementing class training, as well as guidelines for discussing class.

## An Educational Approach to Class: A Model for a Training Intervention

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- Personal awareness
  - Example: Questions to reflect on class background and current situation
- Understanding diversity
  - Differences and power model
- Understanding breadth and depth (for trainers only)
  - Class relations as systemic model
- Understanding class processes within the organization
  - The class structure in organizations model
- Dialogue on impact and alternatives
  - Organizational implications
- Application or praxis
  - Action planning

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## Understanding Differences: A Power Relations Model

### Social identity groups

- One's membership or belonging in a group which has some shared characteristics and historical experience in society. Focus is on the social rather than the individual.
- One definition/example of class identity using this model is "a group of people sharing the same economic, educational, and social background."

Esty, K., Griffin, R., Hirsch, M.S. 1995. *Workplace Diversity*. Holbrook, MA.

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## Understanding Differences: A Power Relations Model

### The "Ism" Equations

#### **Differences + ranking = prejudice**

Prejudice is devaluing, prejudging or stereotyping

#### **Prejudice + power = oppression**

Group power and institutional power  
result in exclusion and lack of access to  
privileges/resources of target social identity groups

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## Understanding Differences: A Power Relations Model

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### Power Relationship

The one-up, one-down relationship

*Who's up and who's down in your organization?*

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## Classism

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1. *What are the differences that get ranked which, in your experience, have to do with class in your organization?*
  - What is your data?
    - Feeling
    - Observations
    - Experience
    - Information
2. Report on the two or three most frequent or important differences you have identified.

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## Guidelines for Discussion

### ***The Class Structure in Organizations***

Think about your organization and provide at least one example to answer the following:

- ***What are the ways in which class differences operate and are maintained at X?***
  - Divisions, structures and processes, e.g., education v. job experience as the basis for job assignments and promotions.
  - Symbols, attitudes, and identities, e.g., office size, location, and decoration.
  - Interactions, e.g., professional staff does not say "good morning/how are you; just do this" to administrative staff.

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## Understanding Breadth & Depth: Class Relations as Systemic (For trainers only)

|           | Individual  | Group | Organizational | Societal |
|-----------|---|-------|----------------|----------|
| Ideas     | See following three slides for details of<br><i>Ideas, Behaviors and Feelings</i> |       |                |          |
| Behaviors |   |       |                |          |
| Feelings  |   |       |                |          |

Adapted by E. Holvino from work by Kate Kirkham, E.Y. Cross Associates

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## Understanding Breadth & Depth: Class Relations as Systemic

|       | Individual                          | Group  | Organizational  | Societal                             |
|-------|-------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Ideas | I deserve it because I studied hard | Managers believe workers need to be treated like children; workers believe that managers do not care what they think | Third-world women (with no formal education) are good at repetitive tasks | Welfare just creates more dependency |

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## Understanding Breadth & Depth: Class Relations as Systemic

|           | Individual  | Group  | Organizational   | Societal   |
|-----------|---|--|--|--|
| Behaviors | Cut off, walk away before a sentence is finalized when interacting with a person at the bottom of the hierarchy | Managers give them-selves a \$50 Christmas dinner bonus; workers not offered cash, only a dinner, which some shift workers cannot attend | Paying 100:1 (or more) salary differential between top/bottom organization members | Lack of active representation of the poor in the lobbying system |

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## Understanding Breadth & Depth: Class Relations as Systemic

|          | Individual  | Group   | Organizational   | Societal  |
|----------|---|---|--|---|
| Feelings | Feeling superior in a group because you are a manager | Workers feel "under the boot" of managers; managers feel stereotyped by workers | Disrespect for people with a lack of motivation and not wanting to advance | Disregard for contributions of unions to the welfare of workers |

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## Guidelines for Discussion

### The Class Structure in Organizations *continued*

- *What negative consequences in the organization are you aware of as a result of establishing and supporting these class differences/exclusion?*
  - Example: "People with a lot of experience cannot move up because of the degree requirement for promotions."

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## Guidelines for Discussion

### **The Class Structure in Organizations** *continued*

- *What are some ways in which your organization/ other organizations can challenge class exclusion in the workplace?*
  - Example: Eliminate perks and privileges like reserved parking and club membership for those in top positions.

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## Guidelines for Discussion

### **The Class Structure in Organizations** *continued*

- *What do you want to say/suggest to increase class inclusion as a result of your discussion?*
  - Example: “We can do more to integrate the support staff by including them as members of project teams.”

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**Diversity Learning Series: Class Relations in Organizations**  
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Scene Three was the third session of the 2007 NW Diversity Learning Series, Life Theater - Inclusion and Engagement: Challenging and Expanding My Diversity Competency: Moving Beyond My Comfort Zone. The Series, held in Seattle, WA, is organized by The GilDeane Group, publishers of DiversityCentral.com.