

ASTC Equity & Diversity Toolkit

ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

Assessing Diversity Success in Science & Technology Centers

Science and technology centers are characteristically full of measurements—electrical voltage, tsunami speeds, sound frequencies, dinosaur bones. Audience research is common, but research about audience diversity is not. For example, many centers would have a difficult time assessing what draws adolescent girls of color to particular exhibits. When was the last time your center assessed the work climate for staff of color? Do leaders have instruments to assess their diversity skills and commitment? Measurement of diversity success can be approached from a variety of vantage points, and the following resources offer not only answers to the following basic questions about measurement and change, but also strategies for data collection and analysis. Some centers may find themselves unable to afford external evaluators and will find materials and ideas for assessment here.

Why Measure?

To understand the effectiveness of the organization's efforts, it is paramount to know what is working and what isn't. Feedback helps identify problem areas that need attending to and that may or may not be on "the radar screen." Baseline data give a clear picture of both overall progress and particular issues such as staff development needs. All too often, precious programmatic and human resources are wasted by not measuring diversity results. Without dependable data, planning by diversity committees and others responsible for diversity work is not based on firm ground. Also, the message is clearly sent that diversity efforts are not as important as other organizational systems that are measured. It is important to remember that the process of collecting input from the whole organization helps build ownership of diversity initiatives.

Questions that every good diversity initiative needs to answer include:

- Is your talent pool diverse? Representative?
- Where are your champions for diversity, and if so, where in the hierarchy are they? In senior leadership ranks? Among middle managers?
- Are diversity training programs working?
- What is the work climate for current diverse employees?
- Are you measuring both organizational and staff diversity performance?
- Are you assessing diversity policies, practices, and resource allocation?
- Has diversity (or lack of it) played a role in diverse employees (or others) leaving the organization?
- Do you have good retention of diverse employees?
- Do diverse employees have upward mobility in your organization? Are they in the "pipeline"?

- What is the diversity of your senior leaders? Are they leading diversity? Do they have the capacity to lead diversity efforts?

Who Should Measure?

The individual or group coordinating and implementing diversity research will vary from organization to organization. Most research should be done by external, non-biased persons so that fear is minimized, data is trustworthy and confidentially issues can be reduced. Whoever is in charge needs to be skilled in measurement, dedicated, understand diversity and have experience in nonprofits.

For those science and technology organizations that can't afford much outside help, the following ways to choose what to measure are suggested:

- Focus groups (hire facilitators to assure trust and confidentiality)
- Brainstorming method—get a group of employees together and ask them to brainstorm ideas for things to measure without making judgments on the suggestions.
- Nominal Group technique—according to Dr. Edward Hubbard, a business consultant—is similar but more powerful than brainstorming. The steps are:
 1. Gather a small group of employees (no more than 12)
 2. Ask them to write their suggestions of things to measure.
 3. Write down each suggestion—a word or short phrase on a post-it™.
 4. Place the suggestions on a flip chart or wall. Then, sort them into similar groups.
 5. Have a recorder keep track of the suggestions--this information could be recorded on a computer.
 6. Clarify suggestions and eliminate duplications.
 7. Then decide how many things you can reasonably measure and vote by rank order.
 8. Decide what kind of process or instrument to use for gathering the data.

How to Measure?

Both quantitative (capable of being measured or expressed in numerical terms) and qualitative (relating to or based on the quality or character of something, as opposed to its size or quantity) measures need to be used. Each type of measurement has its strengths and weaknesses, and both can often be used to measure the same thing. For instance, you can use quantitative measures to assess your affirmative action numbers, e.g. there are so many Asians, African Americans and so on, but you need qualitative measures to really understand the character of their work experience. For example, an agency might boast a large number of persons of color in the workforce and congratulate itself on having achieved diversity. But if the stories of those workers are not captured in some depth, the fact that there is subtle discrimination at play will probably be missed. In a recent case of one African American woman employee who has multiple

sclerosis—a disease whose symptoms are notoriously unpredictable—her experience as a person with a disability was much more unpleasant than the occasional racist incident.

Qualitative measures tend to be more “person friendly” and have the benefit of gathering a great deal of data while giving full voice to the person who is being interviewed or speaking in a focus group. There is less opportunity for researcher bias, since the researcher is intentionally listening to views of the respondent and asking for feedback on both the content and form of the questions being asked. Often the respondent gives information about “the right question” without being prompted. Oral cultures often find the conversational methods of focus groups a good fit.

It is, however, more difficult to sort through open-ended data. Qualitative research has become more accepted in recent years as a valid way to gather information. Participants usually like the opportunity to give their views in focus groups and interviews.

Quantitative measures are necessary to measure aggregate or summative data and are very helpful in measuring EEO/AA statistics, for example. This form of measurement often meets with resistance when used to gather attitudes about diversity and there is significant evidence that there is a large “lie factor” when respondents are asked about their attitudes towards race. Researcher bias is another major issue that has to be confronted. Are the researcher’s questions the right ones? Is there inherent bias in the way questions are asked? This type of research is done with computer “runs” and information can be computed very quickly.

What to Measure & How to Measure It?

There are a number of ways to decide what needs measuring in the workplace and within the community your organization serves. According to Gardenswartz and Roe, authors of *Managing Diversity: A Complete Desk Reference* and *The Diversity Tool Kit*, these are examples of how both data structures can be used:

QUANTITATIVE

- Demographic representation
- EEO/AA reports
- Pay equity—are different groups getting equal pay for equal work?
- Promotions—who gets promoted?
- Recruiting—what are the costs of finding diverse employees?
- Retention—who stays? Who is leaving and why?
- Training costs—are you getting the results you need?

QUALITATIVE

- Focus groups and interviews
- Self-assessment

- Suggestion boxes
- Best practices and benchmarking
- Climate, morale and culture assessment
- Diversity goals
- Training
- Performance data—evaluations and discipline (frequency and severity of)
- Programs—how are they working?
- Reputation as a good diversity employer
- Customer satisfaction—internal and external feedback
- Team effectiveness
- Conflict management

What about beliefs? Shouldn't we measure whether someone is racist? A key question to answer is: So you know about someone's beliefs—what do you do with that information? How intrusive would/could you be? Some argue that what people believe is really none of our business, as long as their behaviors are not discriminatory. This is where self-assessment plays a helpful role in giving personal feedback about both beliefs and behaviors and some instruments help the respondent develop an action plan.

When to Measure?

Certain metrics need to be done on a schedule, e.g. yearly, quarterly, etc. For example, climate needs to be measured yearly since a lot can happen to change organizational dynamics in a year. So, it can be very helpful to repeat certain surveys or focus groups on this issue. Performance reviews should include diversity measures and be done at least twice a year. Although these are recommended practices, these timetables may not fit your organization.

What Supports are Needed?

There has to be a clear and compelling case made for gathering this information and trust in the ability of and support for the chosen researcher/s. Buy-in from center leaders is critical. This is especially important if you are using researchers who are different than the dominant culture in your organization. When data are negative, there is a tendency to deny problems or challenge the methodology of the study or the credentials of the researchers.

Calvin Ball II, national diversity consultant and author, suggests the following supports are needed for successful assessment:

- A perceived need for this kind of information
- Organizational readiness and willingness to deal with positive and negative data
- Buy-in from the top
- Commitment from persons in the dominant culture
- Allocation of necessary resources
- Preparedness and willingness to act on data, once gathered

What Are Organizational Benefits?

If measurement is done well, in a timely fashion, communicated broadly and acted on, according to Ball, the following can result:

- A high performance, high trust environment
- Diversity is not a project but the way business is done
- Feedback is effectively implemented
- Diversity is seen as an asset
- Senior leaders understand diversity and are diverse
- Resources outnumber problems
- Diverse employees are promoted
- Effective conflict resolution
- Low turnover rates

If your organization gathers and uses information to improve its diversity work, you will soon find that there are improvements for all employees, and your organization will be seen as an employer of choice for diverse communities in your city.

References:

1. Ball, C. *Diversity Metrics*. Herndon, VA.:Diversity Training Group, Inc., 2004.
2. Gardenswartz, L. and Roe, A. *Managing Diversity: A Complete Desk Reference*. McGraw Hill, 1998.
3. Gardenswartz, L. and Roe, A. *The Diversity Tool Kit*. Irwin Professional Publishing, 1994.
4. Hubbard, E. *Measuring Diversity Results, Volume 1*. Petaluma, CA: Global Insights Publishing, 1991, 2001.
5. Nelsen, V. *Diversity Self-Assessment Guide*. Minneapolis, MN: The Hypatia Trust, Inc., 1997.

Leader Self-Assessment Sample Instrument

About this self-assessment: The objective of this self-assessment is to create an environment that effectively nurtures a work environment that welcomes diversity. The self-assessment will provide personal awareness about our perspectives and actions; where we can grow and model diversity's best practices.

Instructions:

1. Please reflect on each practice and respond to the statement(s) or question(s) after each one.
2. Next, determine from your answers 2-4 areas where you need to take more or different action.
3. Then discuss the results with your supervisor.
4. Finally, your action plan resulting from this process should become part of your annual appraisal development plan.

1. Leaders continually learn about racism and cultural bias and how to eliminate it from the work we do.

Performance Expectation: Seeks knowledge and reflects on ways to increase their own ability to eliminate racism and cultural bias. Leaders reflect on what they have learned and it's impact on their behavior.

Examples: Leaders seek opportunities through workshops, classes, volunteer work, and reading to expand their knowledge of diverse backgrounds.

Question: What activities have you participated in during the last year that has expanded your knowledge of diverse backgrounds? How did they change your view, attitudes and beliefs about diverse backgrounds?

2. Leaders have a responsibility to share the knowledge they have on eliminating racism and cultural bias to others in the workplace.

Performance Expectation: Initiates opportunities to share information about diversity, racism and cultural bias.

Examples: Leaders share the knowledge they have gained with their staff and others through unit meetings, informal conversations, resources, and work assignments.

Question: Describe how you have incorporated your learning about culturally diverse backgrounds into your work with your staff and others.

3. Leaders expect and encourage others to expand their knowledge of racism and cultural bias and how to eliminate it from the work we do.

Performance Expectations: Encourages others to expand their knowledge of racism, cultural bias, and other issues of people from diverse backgrounds and apply this information to eliminate racism and cultural bias.

Examples: Leaders support and encourage staff to participate in activities, including participating in internal county workgroup meetings, which will expand their knowledge of racism, cultural bias, and other issues of people from diverse backgrounds. Leaders approve training opportunities that increase staff's understanding and knowledge.

Question: What opportunities have you taken to promote and support staff increasing their knowledge and understanding?

4. Leaders are open to hearing about racism and cultural differences and accept the legitimacy of others' perspectives.

Performance Expectation: Leaders begin by listening and understanding for meaning, then using this to make changes for themselves and how they conduct their work.

Examples: Leaders first listen to understand others before responding or making decisions.

Question: How have the views and perspectives of others influenced the way you approach your job?

5. Leaders are open to challenges and feedback about their own internal biases about race and culture.

Performance Expectation: Leaders have a process that facilitates communication and an environment that encourages openness.

Examples: Leaders reach out to staff they supervise, and others to welcome their participation. Leaders solicit comments and feedback regarding their understanding and behavior.

Question: Have you solicited feedback from diverse staff on how you're doing? What have you done to encourage open and safe communication about diversity?

6. Leaders intervene and take action to change racist and culturally biased behavior.

Performance Expectation: Identifies and intervenes promptly and appropriately to take action to eliminate racism and cultural bias.

Examples: Leaders take people aside when they hear comments or conversations that are of concern. The first step is to clarify what was meant and then, if necessary, to assist the individual to reflect on how those comments might be interpreted by individuals of other racial or cultural backgrounds. The leader responds as soon as possible.

Question: Have you had any experiences in the past year where you have intervened, or should have intervened, with staff or clients regarding disrespectful behavior? What happened? Did you seek assistance on other appropriate ways of handling disrespectful behavior? What would you do the next time? What have you done to promote a safe venue for people to report/discuss discriminatory incidents without fear?

7. Leaders proactively seek to increase and maintain culturally and racially diverse staff.

Performance Measure: Embraces diversity through hiring, promotion practices and creating a supportive workplace culture.

Examples: Leaders actively recruit diverse staff, leaders recruit interns and temps who are diverse. Leaders create an environment where decisions are made without bias for all individuals. Leaders promote team building among diverse staff.

Question: Describe what steps you have taken in the past year to identify, recruit, retain, and promote staff who are culturally diverse.

Question: If you currently have a diverse unit, describe what measures you have taken to ensure that staff are comfortable and working well together. What have you done to identify potential leaders among diverse staff for further appropriate training and advancement? What have you done to promote team building among diverse staff through training and task assignment?

8. Leaders identify and take action to eliminate institutional racism and cultural discrimination.

Performance Expectation: Leaders develop strategies to eliminate disparities for clients and staff.

Examples: Leaders keep track of service, outcome and staff differences by racial or cultural groups. Leaders develop methods to identify and monitor progress. Leaders identify ways that policies and procedures create disparities and develop strategies for change. Leaders work with staff to improve their ability to track

issues by racial or cultural groups. Leaders build partnerships with communities they serve. Managers and Directors ensure services are widely understood by people who speak different languages or come from different backgrounds. Leaders ensure that the perspectives of diverse cultural and racial groups are included in the decision making process when appropriate.

Question: What is your process for identifying issues of institutional racism? What issue are you currently working on that addresses an issue of cultural disparity?

Annotated Resources

❖❖ **Nelsen, Vivian Jenkins. *Beliefs & Behaviors That Help or Hinder Intercultural Relations*. Minneapolis, MN: Hypatia Trust Inc., 2004.**

This PowerPoint presentation offers the user a way of assessing whether his or her beliefs and behaviors are helping or hindering intercultural relations. This survey allows the user, whether a person of color or European American, to evaluate his or her beliefs about racism and cultural superiority. In addition, it provides affirmation for beliefs and behaviors that encourage positive intercultural relations. Best used as a confidential survey so that the user may reflect and benefit from it without fear of reproach by others.

For further information:

INTER-RACE

600 21ST Avenue S.

Minneapolis, MN 55454

612/339-0820

Resource Category

- ✓ Assessment
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Community Participation
- ✓ Exhibit, Program, & Audience Inclusiveness
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Planning & Implementation
- ✓ Professional Development/Human Resources

Particularly Useful to:

- ✓ All Staff
- ✓ Educators
- ✓ Visitor Services Managers
- ✓ Exhibit Designers
- ✓ Development Staff
- ✓ Facilities Managers
- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖❖ **Nelsen, Vivian Jenkins & Lela Porter. *The Diversity Curriculum: Diversity Leadership: A Trainers Manual*. Minneapolis, MN: Hypatia Trust Inc., 1997.**

The Diversity Leadership Manual outlines objectives and types of training. It instructs on the philosophy and methodology of training and it provides a step-by-step guide to conducting successful training and conflict resolution. Included is a guide on how to use The Diversity Curriculum and the proper role of each publication in the series. This book leads the way in planning and implementing training, analyzing issues, and managing conflict.

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INTER-RACE, 600 21ST Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55454

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❖❖ Federal Laws Prohibiting Job Discrimination Questions and Answers. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, ongoing updates.

Web site available at <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/qanda.html>.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) offers information on Federal anti-discrimination laws in employment. It covers such information as hiring and firing, harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age. Also covered are the processes used when an individual wishes to file a complaint with the EEOC. Finally, individuals can get information on what remedies are available if and when it is found that they have been discriminated against. This website is very current and is helpful if the reader is able to understand legal language and phrasing.

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❖❖ Findlaw's Employee Rights Center. Eagan, MN: Thompson West, ongoing updates.

Web site available at <http://www.employment.findlaw.com>.

This website offers information and resources about legal issues pertaining to employment. Topics include the hiring process, wages and benefits, family and medical leave, discrimination and harassment, and termination. Includes links to federal laws like the Americans With Disabilities Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, etc. Provides useful summaries of the law without using a lot of jargon or legalese.

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❖❖ Understanding Race and Human Variation (museum exhibit). St. Paul, MN: Science Museum of Minnesota, 2004.

Advice for connecting with the community both before and after the exhibit in order to build understanding and test exhibit and program ideas, get input and feedback on whether the exhibit meets the expectations of the community, and what could be improved. Also offers suggestions for working with school programs, local civic organizations, and youth in the community. Finally, advice is offered on proper staff training for the exhibit, anticipating that some people may find it offensive.

For further information:

120 West Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

<http://www.smm.org>

Resource Category

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- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Professional Development/Human Resources

Particularly Useful to:

- ✓ Development Staff
- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **Spitz, J.A. & M. Thom. *Urban network: Museums embracing communities*. Chicago: The Field Museum, 2003.**

A highly recommended reader based on a consortium of ten major urban museums: Art Institute of Chicago; Field Museum; American Museum of Natural History; Brooklyn Museum of Art; Exploratorium; Oakland Museum of California; Science Museum of Minnesota; Walker Art Center; Houston Museum of Natural Science; and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Network members share best practices, strategies, and resources to “advance a national dialogue on community engagement... points the way to future initiatives, and offers a practical help to others on the same path.” Three brief essays set the context for promoting access and equity. Offers full-blown program development blueprint that covers context for program planning, institutional self-assessment, audience assessment, relationship building, program development, sustaining institutional commitment of all partners, and operational tips. Individual museum case studies present cleanly organized and comparable information about program activities, goals, key resources, key factors leading to community engagement, internal collaboration, and learning from evaluation and experience. Especially useful is the evaluation section, which presents an evaluation rubric, methods for measurement and communication of results, key questions for using this rubric; easily replicated material for building questionnaires used both in internal and external evaluations.

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- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **ProGroup. *Attitudes Toward Differences*. Minneapolis, MN: The Professional Development Group, Inc., 1993-1999.**

(video: 18:13 minutes)

This video begins with participants getting a mental snapshot of people with whom they enjoy working and people with whom they have trouble working. The video continues by having participants do some analysis about what might be behind the choices they made in the first exercise. Participants are shown the Tolerance Scale, which is a numerical method of ranking their feelings about

others. The highest level of tolerance is appreciation, next is acceptance, third is tolerance, fourth is avoidance and finally the lowest level of tolerance is repulsion. The instructor then shows a series of close-up photographs and asks participants to rank the photos on the tolerance scale. This is the “first look”. The instructor then shows the wide angle of the photos and the participants rank their tolerance once again. The results are often startling and are very helpful to participants in identifying their biases. The video also discusses behaviors and the impact of biases and assumptions. An excellent resource for any area of the organization, the video comes with both an instructor’s and a participant’s manual with the entire presentation taking about two hours.

For further information:
 One Main Street S.E., Ste. 200
 Minneapolis, MN 55414
 800/651-4093
 progroupp@progrouppinc.com

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✓ Planning & Implementation	✓ Boards
✓ Professional Development/Human Resources	✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **hooks, bell. *Teaching Community, A Pedagogy of Hope.* New York: Routledge, 2003.**

Educators in particular will benefit from this book. In it, bell hooks discusses the pervasiveness of racism in U.S. society. “Teaching community” means working against the effects of a society which socializes individuals to “worship whiteness”. Hooks points out that this teaching can take place anywhere. Of particular interest are chapters on “what happens when white people change”, “progressive learning” and “practical wisdom.” This is a bold and highly progressive look at white privilege, how it plays out in society, and how individuals can recognize it and begin to challenge it in productive ways through education.

For further information: <http://www.routledge-ny.com>

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✓ Community Participation	✓ Boards
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❖ ***ASTC Dimensions, A Common Vision: ASTC’s Equity and Diversity Initiative.* Washington D.C.: Association of Science-Technology Centers Inc., January/February 2002.**

This issue of Dimensions includes articles on diversity by various authors and on various topics. Included titles are Confronting Demographic Denial: Retaining

Relevance in the New Millenium (Jolly, E.J., January 2002); Moving Toward Inclusion: A Model for Change (Bennington, S. & Smith, A.L., January 2002); Walking the Talk: The Importance of a Diversity Plan (Ellis, D.W., January 2002); A Question of Truth: Dialogue in Action (Lewis, L., Marville, C., & Spencer, C., January 2002); Quantifying Change: The Case for Equity/Diversity Metrics (Peterson, J., January 2002); Who Works in Science Centers? ASTC's 2001 workforce Survey (Pollock, W. & Nash, A., January 2002); and finally, a complete Equity and Diversity initiative has been published by ASTC. This is an excellent resource for those seeking to understand the ASTC vision for diversity and equity and is an essential starting place for gaining this understanding. [OBJ]

For further information:

ASTC Publications Department
1025 Vermont Avenue NW, Ste. 500
Washington D.C. 20005-6310
202/783-7200

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