

IDEAS 44

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



CONTENTS

THE 44TH INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

DIVERSITY HUMAN DIVERSITY IN A HIGHLY DIVERSE WORLD Kathlyn Q. Barrozo 2
DIVERSITY IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL Kathlyn Q. Barrozo 3
DIVERSITY EMBRACING DIVERSITY Kathlyn Q. Barrozo 4
DIVERSITY DEALING WITH DIVERSITY AS A MOTHER AND A TEACHER Kathlyn Q. Barrozo 5
DIVERSITY DIVERSITY OF IDEAS - DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES Marian Baltazar 6



HUMAN DIVERSITY IN A HIGHLY DIVERSE WORLD

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The entire universe is a plethora of apparent diversity. The very fact that different people all over the globe live with highly-diverse cultures and varying races, religions, and ways of life demonstrates the fact that we have been created to be different. We enjoy things differently, do all manner of things differently, view things in varying levels of approval and disapproval. These are just some of the considerations that show us how diverse we have all been from the very beginning.

Even twins, whose identical birthdates and countenances, show diversity. Most are born seconds or minutes or even hours apart. Growing up, they may also exhibit differences no matter how small they may be or how their parents dress them in identical clothes. They do share a certain unbreakable bond which experts attribute to their arising from the same zygote, and for twins who are fraternal, two separate zygotes being fertilized by two sperm cells but still being produced in the same pregnancy. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twin>) But they still exhibit diversity, just the same.

Our own Creator, in Whose infinite goodness we have come to be on this plane of existence, has made it all the more demonstrable how diverse we are: no two fingerprints are exactly the same, no matter how botched up a crime investigation is (Smirk! Smirk!). This is the primary reason why all crime scene investigations commence with the dusting for prints, in the hopes that viable ones can be taken to give light as to the perpetrator's identity or other. Sloppy criminals who haven't been watching CSI: Miami, CSI: New York, or whatever version there may be of the popular television program may just slip up and forget how the crime scene will be thoroughly dusted for prints made by fingers, palms or feet.

The world itself is a picture of diversity. I live in a tropical country where the seasons are readily divided into two classifications: wet and dry, although one of my former students used to remark that the categories could very well be hot and very hot. But no two days are exactly the same. There will always be something about a particular day that doesn't make it an exact replica of the day before nor the day after it. Unless of course, you were stuck in a time loop that got you stuck in a day that kept repeating itself. If that were the case, imagine how many historical mistakes could easily be righted, or how many crimes could be solved!

But the fact remains that we live in an ever-changing world with ever-changing days and nights. The world is highly-diverse like us humans who inhabit the earth.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Diversity is a rather difficult topic to discuss in a concrete manner. How would you tackle it if you had to write a paper on it?
2. Why do you think we have been created differently?
3. How is diversity of the human race both an advantage and a disadvantage?
4. In your opinion, what makes diversity difficult to comprehend for humans?
5. What makes you different from others? Why do you think that?



IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL

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Diversity is a lot more difficult to discuss than it looks, despite the fact that it pervades our daily lives and our very selves. We are born of different races in different countries with different locations and time zones. We do not have the same mother tongues. We do not share the same religions nor have the same cultures. However, as globally individualized as we all have seemed, we have also learned to embrace the fact that diversity is part of survival.

This is what makes the human race special: the fact that we can face diversity in its various forms without losing sight of global unity and cooperation. There may have been numerous instances when wars have been fought over territory, religious concepts, and all manner of frameworks that have caused rifts and divisions among us. But as intelligent beings, we have also submitted to the belief that such broken bridges can also be eventually repaired and built again. Nobody wants to live in eternal chaos—the time of barbarism and unfruitful wars has come to an end.

The advances of technology have brought everyone closer together in the here and now. The race to produce the greatest technological innovations has brought about unity instead of more disunity, single-mindedness instead of divisiveness. The synergy of phone and computer applications has been continuously explored by internet and tech giants, and has created an even larger network of applications in both fields. We can communicate easily, see things more clearly, appreciate the same things in real time despite varying time zones. We watch movies with all the five senses participating—3D is of the past.

There are no more races to become super powerful nations, and passports have not been used to enter each other's countries. We see different races building one community, no fighting for supremacy on the streets nor hate crimes. Everyone is free to voice out their thoughts, without fear of being condemned nor becoming an outcast. It is much easier to make strides in Science because everyone welcomes breakthroughs without question. Diseases are easily combated because those who carry them are given the best medicines available and the best care possible. Old people and young have learned to peacefully live together because they have found no aspects to be divided on. The handicapped are given equal opportunities as their more able counterparts. Everyone gets into a career regardless of gender orientation or creed.

And then we wake up to the truth: Diversity still divides us. If only John Lennon's song IMAGINE had been wishes that a genie could grant. Unfortunately, that song, although sung innumerable times, remains just a song. Imagine that!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Get a copy of the song Imagine by John Lennon. Discuss the lyrics and the song's message with your teacher.
2. Why should we embrace diversity?
3. How has diversity proven to be a problem in the world today?
4. How do you consider yourself as a citizen of the world?
5. Do you believe that despite the diversity that exists in the world today, mankind will eventually find a way to be truly one? Why or why not?



EMBRACING DIVERSITY

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We live in an enlightened world where individual uniqueness should be appreciated and diversity in people should be respected. We should wake up to the fact that we have been born equal, no matter how different we may be from each other. We need to affirm that it is diversity which makes us survive. Although we have been created innately diverse from one another, that still serves no excuse not to find a common point that will seal us together.

We all have the same hopes of living to a ripe old age and seeing our future generations in the best of health and circumstances. We all share the same dreams of being successful in our own right, and being recognized for our accomplishments and achievements. We have absolute hopes of seeing our children grow up to be successful, too.

We are divided only when we fail to see that it is our diversity that makes us blessed. For instance, we do not acknowledge people of a different race as being our equals. We tend to typecast each other based on what we prefer to see and perceive, not based on who everyone really is inside. We do not bother to get to know each other more because we have preconceived notions of one another. We fail to see the beauty in others because we have made our minds focus on what makes others weak or unpleasant or just different.

What the world needs is unity in the face of all diversity. Considering others as way below you just because they come from another region of the planet is not being progressive-minded at all. Just look at how today's workplace has evolved from being homogenously-composed to being diverse. Forward-thinking managers have somehow become more aware of the many benefits that a diverse workforce could carry—more flexibility, more productive interactions, more business. Even first-world nations have learned that outsourcing can help them become more globally-competitive, due to the fact that their businesses have become more diverse and farther reaching.

As individuals, we should therefore learn to see how diversity has led to a more potent mix of talents that could propel everyone forward. No one should ever get left behind with the same concepts and old-fashioned principles characterized by selfish interests and ends. The Dark Ages gave way to the Age of Enlightenment in history, so we must also learn to accept the fact that it is diversity which dictates our survival as inhabitants of this earth.

The sooner we embrace and celebrate each other's diversity, the better it will be for later generations.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What makes diversity an important factor for survival in today's world?
2. Why is it important to respect each other's diversity?
3. How has diversity been demonstrated in the workplace? What have its benefits been to the workplace?
4. In your particular university/learning institution, how has diversity been demonstrated?
5. In what other area can diversity be demonstrable? How?



DEALING WITH DIVERSITY AS A MOTHER AND A TEACHER

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I am a mother of seven kids. Although they all have sprung from me, those seven lives that I have been entrusted with still differ in ways that I, despite being their mother, have never been and will probably never will be able to comprehend. One child is different from another within my brood, but one thing's for sure: I will never love any of them any less for being different from any of their siblings.

My former boss once remarked that one of the main reasons I got hired by her to teach foreign students was the fact that I had survived with seven different children with varying personalities, idiosyncrasies and pet peeves. It somehow signified my "uncanny" (Ahem, ahem!) ability to adopt myself to whatever circumstances that dealing with such diversity brings. I took that as a compliment then and I still consider it one of my strongest suits. However, that hasn't made my job as a mother and a teacher any easier. In fact, it has merely driven home the fact that students---just like my kids--- will always be different no matter what.

The journey through a diverse world with highly-diverse children and students has been anything but boring, though. There have been times when I have been able to take it easy because the diversity in my own kids and my students has made them quite easier to 'predict'. For instance, when one of my children shows signs of an impending tantrum, the best way for me to handle it is to cuddle her and show her there's no need to throw a temper. Another child requires a simple but firm reminder. When one of my former students started to show signs of a tantrum coming, I would just switch to a simple English song for children on a music channel that demonstrated the concepts she had gotten bored at studying, so she could find that learning could also be fun. The older ones who had seemed a little uncommunicative at certain times were easily engaged with out-of-the-blue questions that encouraged them to think of the lessons in a more out-of-the-box manner. The travails of being a teacher and a mother have both been enjoyable and delightfully refreshing at the same time.

As a mother and a teacher who has been taking the journey for some time now, I have also discovered that what has made my work more interesting is the fact that I do not have to deal with the same type of personality all the time. I have always embraced diversity in my children and former students as a blessing because it has given me a lot more to work on and a lot more to look forward to.

Now tell me, how boring can that be?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How different are you from your own brother/s or sister/s?
2. Why do you think diversity in people should be respected by teachers? In children by their parents?
3. Is it easy to see how diverse people are? Why or why not?
4. How can diversity cause problems?
5. Why is diversity important?



DIVERSITY OF IDEAS - DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

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Diversity goes beyond recognizing that we are different in many ways for with the diversity of ideas come different perspectives too. Wouldn't it be absurd if all of us have the same ideas, think in the same way and talk in the same way? Do all people claim the same thing? I believe that each one of us is unique in own way or another, because it has long been a fact that no two persons are alike. Therefore, diversity means differences and it's all because we people come from different cultures, be it ethnic, religious and other differences and this is what makes this world a diverse place to live. The true meaning of valuing diversity is to respect and enjoy a wide range of cultural and individual differences, thereby including everybody for that matter. As it is, it would only mean that we are all different in measurable ways.

Each one of us has different abilities and has different set of minds in pursuit of different valuable ideas. We are all subject to our biases and not only that, we all have our unique cognitive abilities, work experiences and life histories. A broad horizon of perspectives each to its own sets us apart from each other. Diversity brings innovation. Thus, we cannot discount the fact of what it brings us, of how people with more diverse sources of information actually generate better ideas consistently. This means that higher diversity of connections translates to higher value ideas. We can therefore say that diversity brings us personal improvement. We can say this because we gain a better command of options and ways to approach issues.

Yes, you can say it again, that is, we become better in the innovation discourse. What makes an individual smarter is the diversity of viewpoints that radically innovates meaning. Tapping diversity is the key that enables individuals to have better innovation. It means bringing different points of view to the innovation discourse. Statistically speaking, this will improve the chances of getting the best answer. Here we can see that diversity is very important and valuable for both the individual innovator and the innovative community at large.

As the years go by, we can see the growing need of diversity. Diversity of ideas is what really counts. As a matter of fact, there are two ways in which diversity affects innovation. One is that diversity relates to collaborative networks for an individual. The other one is that the wisdom of the crowd brings a diversity of perspectives in identifying top ideas. This is very true because crowd sourced diversity can also help shape an idea and improve it. Here we find that the role of the crowd is to filter the best ideas.

Diversity truly means differences. At present, it includes the perspectives brought about by intergenerational differences, international education and work experience and a multicultural background. Apparently, in this complex and intricate world that we live in, there is no doubt that diversity of ideas will definitely produce different perspectives.

Questions for discussion:

1. How do you view diversity? Explain your answer.
2. Can you say that ingenuity also mean diversity? Why or why not?
3. Does having diverse ideas improve yourself? Explain your answer.
4. Has diversity broadened your horizons? How?
5. Do you agree that diversity brings about innovation? Why or why not?



International Online Teachers Society(IOTS) is an independent non profit international organization committed to improving the state of online and offline education in the world by engaging all kinds of language teachers with fluent English speaking skill in the world to shape global, regional and education agendas.
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