

Cultivating Cross-Cultural Awareness among Adult Students: Examples from the Buffalo Project



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Rhianna C. Rogers Ph.D., RPA
Aimee M. Woznick, Ph.D.

Activity #1

What does Cultural Openness mean to You?

- Break into groups and define this term
 - How does it differ from cultural sensitivity?
 - How does it relate to multiculturalism?
 - Does it mean something different than cultural tolerance?

Buffalo: Historical Contexts

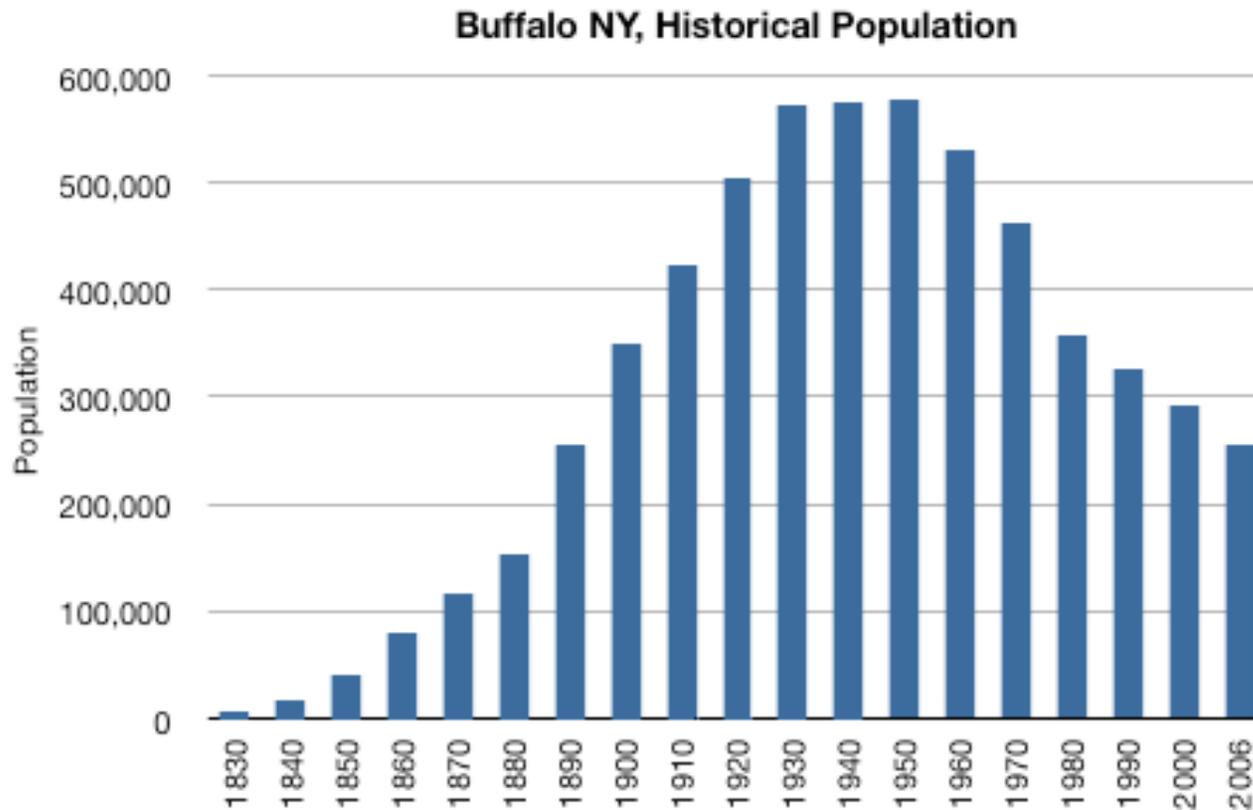
- Buffalo's Historical Settlement Patterns
 - WNY Settlement 1700s-1800s: Ethnic Enclaves
 - Germans, Irish, Freeman, Seneca, Italian
 - Industrial Revolution (1750-1850)
 - Increased immigration due to employment opportunities
 - World War II (1939-1945)
 - Minority vs. Majority Ethnic Enclaves (Mark Goldman, 1983)



View Looking West Toward Lake Erie From Commercial Slip at the Buffalo River

<http://www.buffalohistorygazette.com/2010/08/historic-buffalo-river-tour.html>

Chart of the historical population of Buffalo, New York from 1830 until 2006



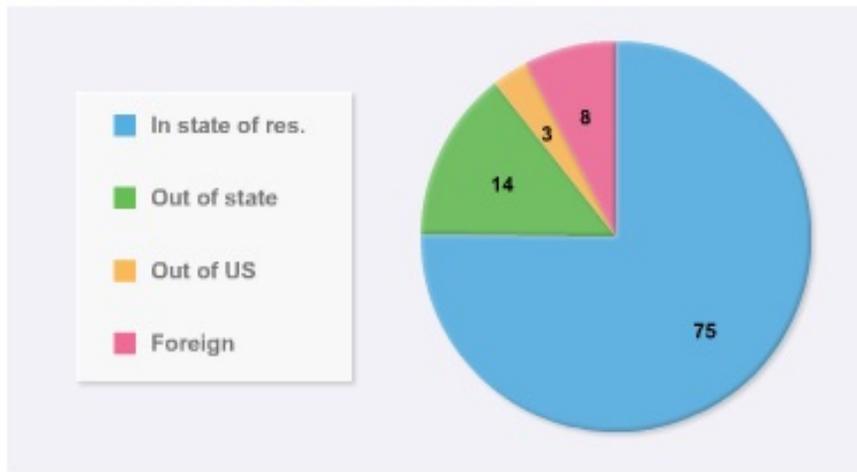
Source: Newtwowiki, 2008 ,http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Buffalo_NY_historical_population.png>

Greater Buffalo Demographics

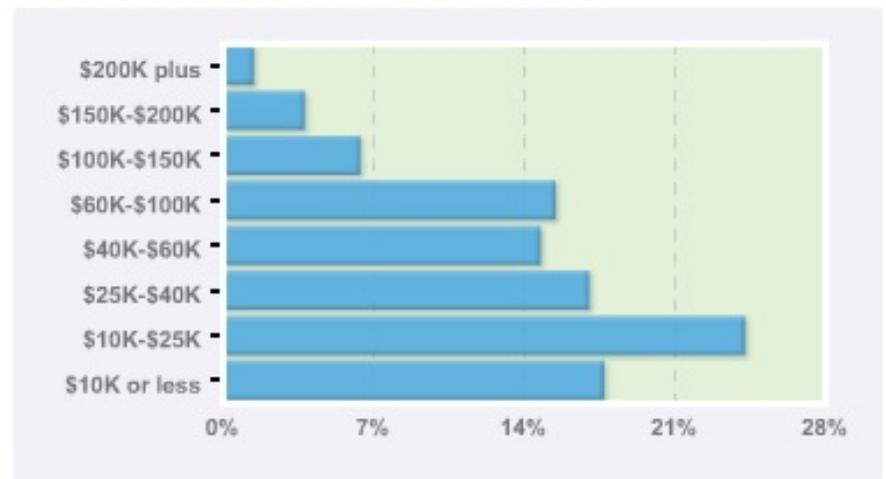
Buffalo population breakdown by race

Race	Buffalo	New York	National
Caucasian	51.35%	66.03%	74.17%
African American	37.87%	15.66%	12.56%
Asian	3.31%	7.45%	4.81%
American Indian	0.55%	0.36%	0.82%
Native Hawaiian	0.04%	0.03%	0.17%
Mixed race	3.13%	2.44%	2.68%
Other race	3.75%	8.03%	4.79%

Place of birth by citizenship



Household income distribution



For Data Collection Methods See <http://www.areavibes.com/methodology/>

Forbes Magazine: Best Places for Business and Careers (8.17.2013)

- Metro Population: **1,133,900**
- Major Industries: **Financial services, Technology, Education**
- Gross Metro Product: **\$66.5 B**
- Median Household Income: **\$48,958**
- Median Home Price: **\$126,700**
- Unemployment: **7.8%**
- Job Growth (2012): **0.8%**
- Cost of Living: **10.3% below nat'l avg**
- College Attainment: **29.0%**
- Net Migration (2012): **-1,910**
- BUFFALO QUICK FACTS
- #75 [Best Places for Business and Careers](#)
- #111 [in Cost of Doing Business](#)
- #50 [in Job Growth](#)
- #92 [in Education](#)
- For more information see: <http://www.forbes.com/best-places-for-business/>

Contemporary Research Buffalo Neighborhoods (AY 2010-2014)

December 2013

- 2010 Census Data
 - Dominant cultures
 - Polish, Italian, Irish, (German)
 - Marginalized cultures
 - Native American
 - Seneca Nation
 - Latin American
 - Buffalo Puerto Rican (Nuyorican)
 - African American
 - Middle Eastern
 - African
 - Southeast Asian
 - Socioeconomic status (income levels)
 - Class structure (the vanishing middle calss)

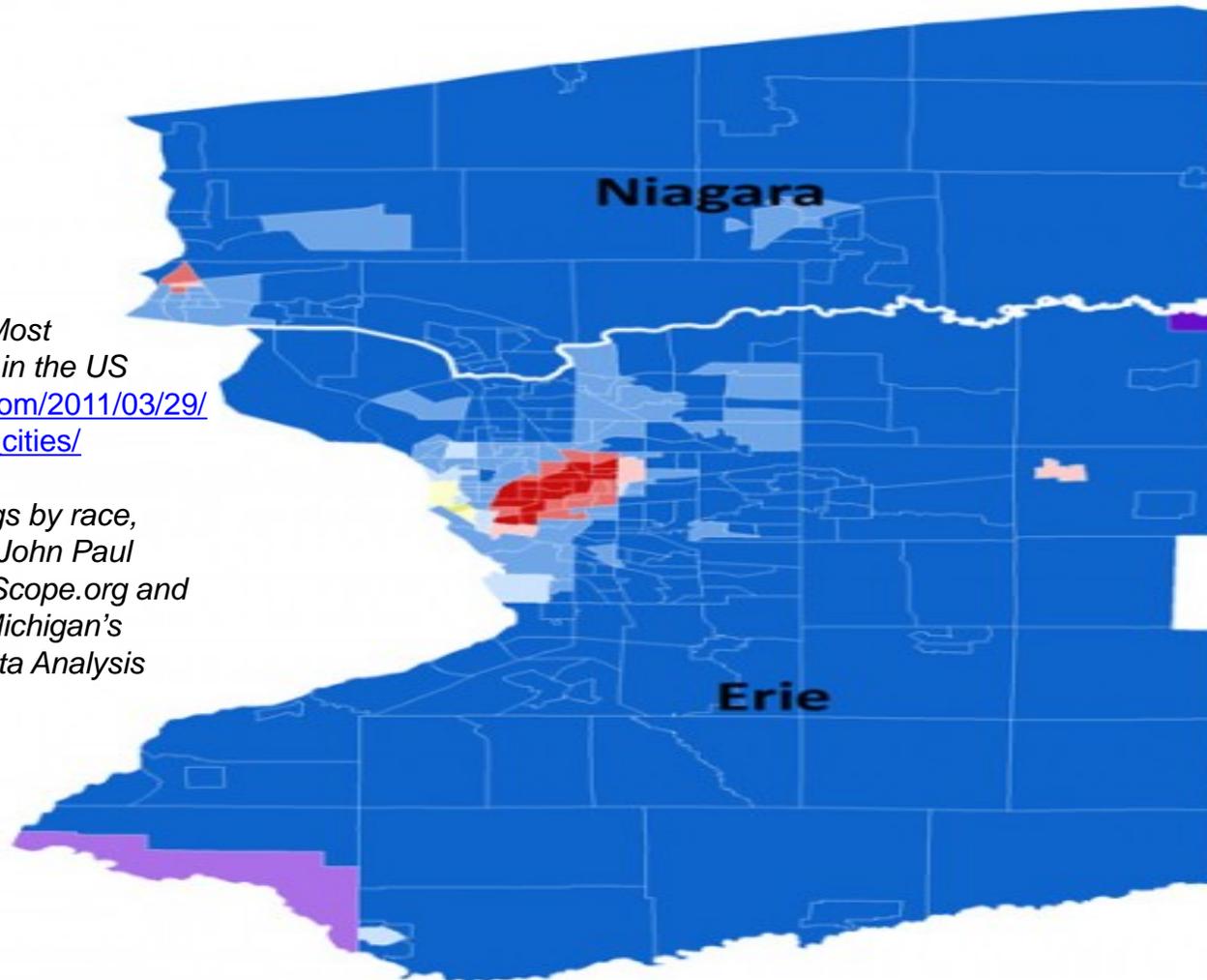


To Learn More See: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/3611000.html>

Urban/Suburban Segregation in Greater Buffalo

Source: *The Ten Most Segregated Cities in the US*
http://www.salon.com/2011/03/29/most_seggregated_cities/

Settlement rankings by race, were compiled by John Paul DeWitt of CensusScope.org and the University of Michigan's Social Science Data Analysis Network



American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
50.0% or less	50.0% or less	50.0% or less	50.0% or less	50.0% or less
50.1 to 85.0%	50.1 to 85.0%	50.1 to 85.0%	50.1 to 85.0%	50.1 to 85.0%
85.1% or more	85.1% or more	85.1% or more	85.1% or more	85.1% or more

Melting Pot versus Salad Bowl

- While the greater Buffalo area has always been (and continues to be) a diverse region with residents from a variety of racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, these individuals – including our students – too frequently exist in isolation from one another.



Activity #2

How does the Melting Pot vs. Salad Bowl relate to Cultural Openness?

- Break into groups and define this term
 - How do you view the US? As a Melting Pot, Salad Bowl, or some combination of the 2?
 - What would you do if you met someone who felt the exact opposite of you about this topic? How would you engage them in a cultural open discussion about their views and yours?
 - How would you address this disparity within a classroom, institution, or Higher Education overall?

Buffalo Project Research Question

- How can ESC-NFC become a more culturally “open” regional center?
- Objectives
 - **Understand** and / or construct a localized cultural history for ESC/NFC students in the context of the surrounding WNY cultural populations;
 - **Comment** on the role of culture in each representative demographic group at ESC/NFC and the greater Buffalo region; and
 - **Determine** what factors, if any, have occurred in or around ESC/NFC that may have positively or negatively impacted the learning processes and/or retention of diverse populations.

Project Research Question: Background Research

- A host of studies have suggested that student engagement with diversity is positively correlated with academic achievement, critical thinking, and social agency, and has a positive effect on retention.
(Bowman & Brandenberger, 2011; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Laird, 2005)
- As a result, many institutions have attempted to systematically chart their diversity initiatives and gauge student perceptions of diversity on campus.
(Cuba, et al., 2011; Halulani, Haiker & Lancaster, 2010; Littleford, 2013)
- However, most of the current research focuses on traditionally aged-students, whereas the identities, values, and beliefs of adult students may be more firmly entrenched.
- We wanted to find out: can college have the same kind of transformative impact and pluralistic influence on this population?

Buffalo Project: Our Research Methods

- Ethnographic techniques
 - Participant Observations
 - Informal Participant Observations (AY 2010–2012)
 - Formal Survey (AY 2012–2014)
- Types of Demographics/Data collected:
 - Perceptions of NFC culture & Self Identifications
 - To learn more see R. Rogers project website:
<http://commons.esc.edu/rhiannarogers/the-buffalo-project-an-ethnographic-study-of-western-new-york/>



Activity #1

Take a sample survey

- Break into groups or work individually
 - Answer the questions and think about how they may impact the way you would interact with students
 - Survey questions can also be found on the Buffalo Project website:
<http://commons.esc.edu/rhiannarogers/the-buffalo-project-an-ethnographic-study-of-western-new-york/>

Interpretation of Pilot Study Results (AY 2010-2012)

- “US Mainstream Culture” data suggests that the majority thought cultural was important to learn
 - **61% of sample population (14:23)**
- “US Subculture” data suggests that the majority felt that understanding Buffalonian culture was very important
 - **65% of sample population (15:23)**
- “Cultured Individuals” data suggests the majority of the student sample thought they were cultured persons, but did not understand what the term culture meant
 - **73.9% of sample population (17:23)**
 - **Open Ended Questions contradicted this last answer**

Interpretation of Formal Study Results (AY 2013-2014)

- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Sample of Survey data from this past academic year (AY 2013-2014); all data from this formal survey is still being processed (AY 2012-2014)
- 88.53% (54:61) of students either agreed or strongly agreed that cultural understanding is important to the college learning environment; however, only 54.1% agreed or strongly agreed that other peoples' languages are important to that environment.
 - **This data suggests that students may not understand the relationship between language and culture**
- Students agreed on the importance of cultural understanding, but a notable percentage either disagreed that they were culturally sensitive (3.33% or 2:60) or were unsure (16.67% or 10:60).

Interpretation of Formal Study Results (cont.) (AY 2013-2014)

- Additional survey data indicates that many students are not comfortable with approaching individuals from different cultural backgrounds, as 26.66% (16:60) of students either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “I am unsure about how to approach others about their cultural backgrounds,” and 18.33% (11:60) responded that they were unsure about this statement
- **These results would seem to indicate the need for more opportunities to learn about culture and cultural awareness at ESC**

Impact of Buffalo Project on Opportunities to Expand Cultural Awareness at NFC

- **Given the aforementioned findings, the project researchers and student assistants:**
 - Established a semi-annual Cultural Diversity Luncheon/Global Food Fest for NFC faculty, staff, and students
 - Established a semi-annual Buffalo Project Academic Plenary Series on topics related to culture and diversity
 - Gave campus and community presentations about the Buffalo Project
 - Integrated the student voice in institutional planning by adding student reps to programming committees and disseminating student survey data to administrators
 - Developed a culturally sensitive student club, SUNY ESC NFC CARES
 - Club Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SUNYESCCARES?ref=stream>
 - Club Website: <http://sunyesccares.wordpress.com/>

In Conclusion...

- *Diversity is ultimately about communications, respect, understanding, and trust...*

Further Questions?

Rhianna.Rogers@esc.edu

Aimee.Woznick@esc.edu

THANK YOU!