Grant Stavely

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The attached *Academy of Management Learning & Education* article, “A Retrospective View of Corporate Diversity Training From 1964 to the Present” (Anand, Winters) from Vol. 7 2008 tells the story of diversity training in corporate America from its inception in 1964 through to current and emerging trends of today. While the authors acknowledge that limited-scope anti-racism and anti-Semitism existed prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, they believe only training started after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 have contributed to what we know today as diversity training. The article focuses on diversity training and case studies, but it is interesting to note that the history of diversity training trends can be aligned to Kohlberg’s three levels and six stages of of pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional moral development.

In response to or in fear of suits filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), most companies in the 1960s and 1970s mandated diversity training as a compliance measure. Stage one of Kohlberg’s pre-conventional level aligns this motivation for diversity training with the *obedience and punishment orientation*. Consistent with this stage, diversity training of the 1960s and 1970s lacked profitable business justifications, and focused heavily on the treatment of historically underrepresented minorities, resulting in misunderstanding or even resentment.

Stages two and three of Kohlberg’s moral development model, *self-interest orientation*, and *interpersonal accord and conformity* drove late 1970s and early 1980s diversity training programs, as companies steered away from the compliance message to one of assimilation. This, Anand and Winters argue was not necessarily because companies were embracing diversity, but because president Reagan’s appointment of Clarence Thomas to head the EEOC fostered a de-regulation message to business. Diversity training took a back seat to business concerns, and nearly fell out of practice except in recruitment and compliance obligations. Instead of focusing on the inclusive diversity-as-competency we know today, researched looked to the underachievement of women and minorities and sought to use diversity training to pull them out of some sort of self-inflicted inferiority.

As the 1980s became the 1990s, businesses moved to stages 4 and 5 of Kohlberg’s moral development model, *authority and social-order maintaining orientation*, and *social contract orientation*. Companies combined historical compliance and assimilation models of diversity training into social-justice and utilitarian sensitivity approaches. In some cases, this social-justice approach was taken to an extreme, as many of us have experienced in theater experiments, whereby a teacher will treat students differently based on eye color, height, clothing, etc…

While increasingly, companies are progressing to Kohlberg’s final stage, stage 6, *universal ethical principles*, and adopting diversity as a core competency for everyone, companies across the country can be found in all six stages of development. Anand and Winters argue that diversity as a core competency raises the bar for everyone, not just the majority, as in the case of 1960s compliance models, or the minority, as in the case of 1980s assimilation models. In a global economy, with a diverse, competitive, and fast hopping work force, companies have no choice but to abandon the compliance and assimilation models of workforce diversity education. By recognizing diversity as a competency, all are obligated, and often rewarded, for embracing diversity.