

***The Diversity Bonus* - Discussion Questions**

To facilitate discussions around *The Diversity Bonus*, the authors have developed two sets of discussion questions. The first set emphasizes the core concepts introduced and developed in the book. These reinforce the main ideas introduced in the text and may be appropriate for a classroom setting or for an individual reader. The second set provides openings for broader discussions of how to apply and interpret the results. These are intended for managers and practitioners who would like to build better teams and organizations.

Concept and Content Questions

Question 1: Explain the difference between identity and cognitive diversity and the relationships between the two.

Question 2: Describe the link between diversity bonuses and a knowledge based, new economy. Why is this book more relevant now that it would have been fifty years ago?

Question 3: Explain why prediction, problem solving, and creative activities produce diversity bonuses and why a portfolio of stocks does not?

Question 4: Why do the authors link diversity to teams? What do teams have to do with diversity?

Question 5: When coming up with creative ideas diversity enlarges the set of possibilities. When seeking the truth, diversity reduces the set of possibilities. How can diversity both enlarge and reduce?

Question 6: What is meant by the “adjacent possible” and why might two people who belong to different identity groups or who have diverse training or education generate distinct sets of adjacent possibles?

Question 7: Katherine Phillips describes how the presence of diverse others can improve team performance. How does that happen?

Interpretation and Application Questions

Question 1: Think of a situation where a group's *cognitive diversity* was instrumental in making an accurate prediction, deciding on an appropriate action, or coming up with a creative design. What produced the relevant cognitive diversity? Could you have anticipated the types of cognitive diversity that proved valuable?

Question 2: Choose a pressing political or social issue (a non business case) where the types of cognitive diversity produced by identity diversity would be relevant. Be specific about the mechanisms through which identity operates. Does it result in different representations, categories, models, or heuristics? Next, think of a pressing social or political situation or issue where you think that identity diversity would not be especially relevant. Go back through the logic of your earlier example where identity did matter. Do you still believe that identity diversity would not matter in the second case?

Question 3: The book links diversity bonuses to complex problems. Within the organization in which you work, volunteer, and serve, can you identify which problems are complex? How might you change procedures for hiring and team composition in light of the potential for diversity bonuses? For example, how might the diversity bonus play itself out on campus, in classrooms, or among the professoriate?

Question 4: In Chapter 6, the author writes, "If diversity and inclusion are framed as the right thing to do, they cannot have much force...Let us suppose we get to that place, that we live in a world where people support affirmative action on normative grounds. I will argue that even in that world – especially in that world – the diversity bonus logic is necessary." Do you see risks in arguing that the normative argument for diversity is insufficient?

Question 5: Pick three organizations: one for profit, one university, and one volunteer organization. If appointed CEO of each of these organizations, how would you craft a diversity mission statement? Specifically, how much would you emphasize diversity bonuses, how much would you push reducing biases, and how much would you appeal to normative concerns? Put differently, how would being CEO of Amazon lead you to think differently about diversity than if you were president of Missouri State University?

Question 6: How much has your own identity influenced how you think about problems. Can you think of cases where it has played a large role and cases where you think it has contributed at most a little?

Question 7: Institutional racism and implicit bias play large roles in many people's lives. It impacts business, politics, and society as a whole. What are some examples of where you've seen demonstrations of biases? How does bias hinder the potential to realized diversity bonuses?

Question 8: American demography is shifting; the country is expected to be majority minority by mid-century. How do you think this will impact conversations about diversity and inclusion?

Question 9: When we think about identity diversity, many of belong to more than group. We cannot separate out these various parts of our identity. How do we account for this "intersectionality" in our daily lives and in business settings?

Question 10: How do organizations create a culture where diverse groups perform well? Is there a single answer to that question? Does the culture depend on the task? Or could there be multiple cultures that people select into?

Question 11: In her closing commentary to the book, Katherine Phillips poses the critical question: "Why is it necessary to prove the benefit of diversity?" She goes further to say, "Why do some people have to prove that their presence in a given environment is beneficial to the 'bottom line'?" What is your response?