Thanks for being here so early in the morning.

This really matters. As recently as Tuesday, a former student of mine posted this on Facebook.
Had there been Facebook here in the 1980s, you’d have heard the same stuff.

There’s nothing new, in some ways, under the sun here at the Capstone.

And thinking about talking about diversity in creative and useful ways matters.
What makes me feel strange about being here is that I do not teach a diversity class.

But this is in some ways new to me....

I wasn’t exactly born into an understanding of diversity.

My family hails from Hokes Bluff, Alabama, right on the Coosa River and just down from Gadsden.

The latest Census report shows that Hokes Bluff has (CLICK) exactly zero residents. Folks are fearful of people and things they don’t see – and certainly do not understand.
And we've come a long way.

Journalism 312
University of Alabama
Fall 1985

It wasn’t until I came to Alabama to learn more about the need for diversity. And even that was in fits and starts.

This was my reporting class from 1985. You’ll notice in two classes, a single person of color.

(Nancy Parker, now the morning anchor at the Fox affiliate in New Orleans.)

Which makes me perfect to talk diversity to some students.

This makes me useful in talking about diversity to students who may not want to hear it, or feel that it’s being preached.

I’ve lived their life. They don’t see me as threatening.
My technique: Diversity as example.

Are you tweeting students?  
(A tweet from Wednesday)

I teach 200-plus students – nearly all freshmen – each semester in the Introduction to Mass Communication class.

As I said, it’s not specifically about diversity – it’s about explaining how communication (and mass comm) works – law, theory, ethics, news, advertising, PR, etc.

The techniques

1. Personal life examples.
2. ‘Simultaneous’ instruction
3. Overt

It finally occurred to me that this can work in three ways.

1. Personal life examples. Are there situations or experiences in your life that you can do to provide a lesson on diversity.
2. ‘Simultaneous’ instruction – Similar to No. 1, but not a real-life situation. It’s teaching a key point related to the topic of the class, but using an example that can provide a diversity insight.
   I think of it this way: “Hey, because I have to show an example to explain this communication phenonium, why not make sure that example can teach something, too?”
3. Overt – specific times you focus on a diversity topic.
Three quick examples: Personal life

1. The opening lecture: What is communication, and how is Mass Communication different?

Start by defining communication

"The process of creating shared meaning."

All together, communication creates meaning – and gives us the culture in which we live.

And while your reality is different from my reality, and your reality may be slightly different from the reality of the person next to you – we may continue our communication until we "agree" upon a mutually shared meaning.

I explain to students that this is a cultural definition – that our communication creates our culture and shared values. And one sort of culture isn’t necessarily wrong because it’s not the culture you grew up with.
Then they see an example. I ask everyone in class wearing Nortsto raise their hands.

Advertisers are spending millions of dollars, for example, to tell us that short pants are OK to wear. You’ve seen the ads and – regardless of the fact that most of you have ugly legs and wear shorts that let your crack show or your behind hang out or whatever – our culture has taught us that it’s OK to wear shorts. And it’s even told you what type of shorts to wear – capris or culottes or cut-offs and baggies – and changed the style so they can sell you something new. (Yes, clothing is cultural communication – and a way to make money by changing styles.)

But the cultural message about shorts is different elsewhere: I was in the African nation of Senegal, and men don’t wear shorts. It’s not against the law, but it’s culturally unacceptable. And the preaching from the mosques – and the dirty looks you get from some people – communicate that message and reinforce it.
Three quick examples: Simultaneous

2. The second week: How choosing a communication channel affects the message’s meaning and impact.

Two ideas from McLuhan

1. “The medium is the message.”
   — Marshall McLuhan

“The medium is the message.”
ASK: What does that mean?
Each medium, independent of the content it mediates, has its own intrinsic effects which are its unique message.
“The message of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs. The railway did not introduce movement or transportation or wheel or road into human society, but it accelerated and enlarged the scale of previous human functions, creating totally new kinds of cities and new kinds of work and leisure. This happened whether the railway functioned in a tropical or northern environment, and is quite independent of the freight or content of the railway medium.
(Understanding Media, N. Y., 1964, p. 8)
What McLuhan writes about the railroad applies with equal validity to the media of print, television, computers and now the Internet. “The medium is the message” because it is the “medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action.” (p. 9)
The channel you use affects the message.

The point: The channel you use affects the message, as we talked about on Thursday – with the idea of message and channel “richness.”

Another thing that Berlo pointed out was “FIDELITY” – the idea that the more channels you have, the clearer your message can be. Say my wife sends me an e-mail telling me that my dog has just pooped in my bedroom. If I send an e-mail that says “That’s great,” you might think I mean I’m happy about dog poop in the bedroom. If I put an emoticon with a “frowny face” on it, maybe you know I’m being sarcastic. If you hear me on the phone saying “That’s great” and stretching it out and sounding whiney, they you may better know I’m being sarcastic. If you see me roll my eyes and scrunching my nose while I say it that way, then you’ve got a much more rich message.

The richer them message, the better the message – and the less noise in the message – and the more appropriate the feedback.

And did you notice that it’s “mAssage,” not “mEssage,” in the book cover. It was a typo – but McLuhan liked it so much that he kept it.

Two ideas from McLuhan

2. “Global village”

The other key notion from McLuhan from this chapter is what he called “the global village.” His idea was that the world would become “smaller” as TV became more important, because we could all see each other. His idea was that reading messages brought us apart, because reading is a “lonely” act. But viewing things brings us together, because TV exceeds print and lets us “see” and “experience” things – even when we’re not actually there.

One of the results of that “global village” is that when we see things, it has more of an effect than when we just read things.

The Pulitzer Prize for History this year went to a book called “The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation,” by former NYT editor Gene Roberts and current Atlanta J-C managing editor Hank Klibanoff – who I turned down a job from in order to get a PhD and teach here. The book talked about how journalists did a good (and not so good) job of covering the civil rights movement during the 1960s and 1960s.

A key point of the book: It’s one thing to read news stories about what happened in Selma, Ala., on Sunday morning, March 7, 1965 – when a crowd walked across a bridge in protest of the February 1965 shooting of a black man by an Alabama state trooper. The march ended when 600 state and local police used tear gas and clubs and bullwhips on marchers.

It’s one thing for me to stand here and tell you about it – or for you to read a news story about it.
Here’s the front page of the NYTimes from March 8, 1965.

The result: Seeing it happen as it happened led to the passage of President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 on August 6.

Justice takes longer, however. It wasn’t until a few months ago that the trooper who shot and killed the man was charged with the killing.

I hope that is a good example of how “the medium is the message” makes some sense to you.

Now, in the final few minutes, we move on to other ways that mass media have an effect on society:
The takeaways:
MC 101: Choose your channel carefully.
Diversity: You just learned about Bloody Sunday.

Three quick examples: Overt
3. The chapter on the motion picture industry.
The Bechdel Test

1. Are there two or more women in the movie who have names?
2. Do they talk to each other?
3. Do they talk to each other about something other than a man?

It has to have:
1. At least two (named) women in it.
2. Who talk to each other
3. About something besides men.

Recent movies: Fifty shades of gray passed; The Spongebob Movie did not. I read that of the Oscar-nominated movies of last year, just Selma and Boyhood passed.
7,000 movies since 1992
Percentage of movies passing the Bechdel test

- 58% - 3 of 3
- 10% - 2 of 3
- 22% - 1 of 3
- 10% - 0 of 3

A writing assignment

Name: [Student Name]
Date: [Date of Assignment]

Name the last movie you saw:

Answer:
1. Did it pass the Bechdel test?
2. Do you think it matters? Why or why not?

http://bechdeltest.com/
The takeaways:
MC 101: Hollywood doesn’t always think about women, particularly in ‘tentpole’ movies.
Diversity: You just learned a feminist theory.

How to do it?
There’s a Monty Python skit – a kids’ show called “How to do it.” One of the examples is “how to play the flute.” The answer is: “You blow in to one end and move your fingers on the other.”

So I can’t teach you how to play the flute or help you figure out precisely how to help you.

But what I’m saying seems obvious: Think about the classes you teach, and the examples you use to help students understand concepts. And, when you can, you find a way to simultaneously offer a diversity lesson.
SO HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOU?
UA’S STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL #1
Provide a premier undergraduate and graduate education that offers a global perspective and is characterized by national ranking, highly-visible scholarship, and distinctive curricular and co-curricular programs.

GOAL #2
Increase the University’s productivity and innovation in research, scholarship, and creative activities that impact economic and social development.

GOAL #3
Enrich our learning and work environment by promoting an accepting, inclusive community that attracts and supports a diverse faculty, staff, and student body.

GOAL #4
Provide opportunities and resources that facilitate work-life balance and enhance the recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty and staff.
Amy Stuart Wells on the benefits of a diverse classroom
2:04-3:53

Geoffery and Maruyama and Jose Moreno, 1999
Study consisted of 140 randomly selected full time faculty at various research institutions. Questionnaire was developed by a team of researchers under the leadership of the American Council on Education
Results demonstrate that faculty respondents believe their institutions articulate having a diverse campus environment as an important institutional value
Faculty members believed that in diverse classes, students are able to develop useful academic skills such as examining one’s perspective, being exposed to others, and critical thinking skills
So how does this apply to you as a teacher, an educator, an student advocate? Think about the classes that you teach. How many students are in it? What types of students do you have in your class? Is it an upper-level course or an introductory course? Is it discussion or lecture based? By reflecting on the environment of your classroom, it will be easier to sneak diversity into your classroom!

No matter if the professor or the student is the root of the comment, it should be used as a teachable moment.

How do you define diversity? How does it play a part in your role here at UA?

Diversity:
- Expands worldliness
- It enhances social development
- It prepares students for future career success
- It prepares students for a global society
- It increases knowledge base
- Promotes creative thinking
- Enhances self-awareness
First, allow students to cool off and reflect on the situation – write down their thoughts
Be aware of verbals and non-verbals
Regardless if you disagree or feel shocked by the comment, express curiosity and not judgmental – YOU set the tone
Acknowledge ALL emotions of your students
Observe, think, feel, desire
Use guiding phrases such as, "What does that comment bring up for you" or "Help me understand where you are coming from."

HOW CAN YOU SHIFT A CLIMATE FROM DEFENSIVE TO SUPPORTIVE?

- Concrete, factual observations of the situation
- Thoughts based on observations
- Emotions using "I" statements
- Specific request for desired outcome

Open the front door to communication
First, allow students to cool off and reflect on the situation – write down their thoughts
Be aware of verbals and non-verbals
Regardless if you disagree or feel shocked by the comment, express curiosity and not judgmental – YOU set the tone
Acknowledge ALL emotions of your students
Observe, think, feel, desire
EXAMPLE

“I noticed that several of you began to yell and raise your voices. I think there are some strong reactions to this comment. I don’t feel it is right to move forward with this discussion until we have a talk and explore this further. Can some of you share what you are thinking or feeling right now?”

If someone just makes a blatantly rude comment, consider the following:
• “I want to make sure I heard what you said...did you say?”
  • “I’m glad I misunderstood you, that can be...”
• “Can you help me understand what you mean by that?”
• “What impact do you think your comment could have on others?”
• “I encourage you to reconsider your view on...our class is a learning community and comments like that can make it difficult to focus and learn”

DIFFICULT DIALOGUES

1. Think ahead about the topics you are teaching.
2. Communicate the learning goals.
3. Build an inclusive and trustworthy environment.
4. Have a statement on your syllabus about the environment you will create with the students.
5. Create shared goals for dialogue.
6. Help students develop skills for productive conversation.

Difficult dialogues:
1. Were planned but didn’t go well
2. Moments that were not anticipated and caused tension
3. During office hours or outside of the classroom
ACTIVITIES TO ENGAGE IN DIVERSITY

- Likes
  - 2 students who do not know one another are matched
  - List things that they think the other person may like
  - Highlights how we all make assumptions
- What do you bring?
  - Add words about themselves to a large sheet of paper
  - Discuss that there are similarities and unique traits
- Paper toss
  - Paper and a recycling bin
  - Discuss privilege
  - Diversity position paper

IT'S ALL RELEVANT

Add in pop culture when you can
Discuss current hot topics – teaches students to do research and form their own opinions – invaluable skill set
STRATEGIES TO USE IN THE CLASSROOM

- Learning profile cards at the beginning of the semester
- Small and large group discussion activities
- Use multimedia
  - Videos
  - Music
- Presentations on multiple perspectives
  - Initially done by the professor
  - Students take turn based on the course content
- Blackboard discussion panels (great for an online class)
- Digital storytelling

Now it's your turn!

Your strategies
Scenarios
WHAT'S YOUR TEACHING PHILOSOPHY?

• What made you want to work with college students?
• Why are you teaching?
• What do you think motivates students?
• How does a good teacher interact with students?
• What pedagogical methods do you use?

Reflect and share

“I’VE LEARNED THAT PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU SAID, PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU DID, BUT PEOPLE WILL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.”

-Maya Angelou

Know that every interaction, discussion, debate, or collaboration will impact someone.