

In the study “Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Classroom: Does It Promote Student Learning?” The authors (who are all professors from Midwestern Universities in America) take 1,258 college students from 7 midwestern universities in the engineering fields to use as a sample. Their basic question is just what the study title eludes to: does racial/ethnic diversity in the classroom lead to higher performance and better learning? The authors site previous work as almost anecdotal in the sense that they say that diversity makes learning better for people, but challenge this by saying that there has never really been that many studies that show from a purely statistical standpoint that proves this. The results show that diversity does not have a significant impact on better learning in these classrooms.

This study makes me look at opposing viewpoints and play devil's advocate, so it's certainly useful to me in my research. At first glance it seems like it is sort of a dagger to the argument of diversity and inclusion being a magic pill to making the educational experience better for universities, but when taking a step back and looking at the whole context in which this study was done, it's a lot less cut and dry of an argument. The seven universities chosen (and their subsequent engineering programs) are generally less diverse than other programs in school, and the academic performance of the students that are a part of them are usually on the higher end to begin with, so of course their academic performance is going to tend to be on the good side, even in a non-diverse classroom environment. This a perfect example of looking at the statistics in a wider lens and not just relying at what appears at first glance. This a useful source to use to see some different perspective.

Link: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2672879>