Ethnic Identity Development: Understanding the process

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Introduction:

- Who am I?
  - Educational – Poli-Sci, Ethnic Studies
  - Professional – OMA, MSS
  - Personal – Chicano, Daddy, Husband, Son Bro…

- Why am I here?
  - Expand Understanding of Cultural (Ethnic) Identity – to provide a set of tools for working with diverse students.
  - Help you understand how to serve students/parents/community members from not only theirs but other cultures and how these students identify or not with their respective cultures.
Review of questions – reactions?

1) What is your ethnic identity? – many, some mixed
2) On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the least and 10 being the most, how _______ (ethnic identity, e.g. Hispanic, Chicano, African-American, Black, etc...)
   - 1(0), 2(3), 3(1), 4(5), 5(3), 6(2), between 6 and 7 (4), 7(4), 8(9), 9(1), 10(5)
3) Are people treated differently based upon where they might place on this scale?
   - 27 – Yes, 3 – No, 4 – Maybe/Sometimes
4) Have you always felt the way you do about the answers to these questions?
Understanding of Cultural Identity
Definitions – the anchor of theory

from Richard T. Schaefer’s Race and Ethnicity in the United States unless otherwise noted

- **Biological Race**: The mistaken notion of genetically isolated human group. Race: A social category based primarily on skin color in the United States. Throughout the world this definition becomes more complex.

- **Race** (definition from White Power website): A race is defined as a group of individuals sharing common genetic attributes which determine that group's physical appearance and, more controversially, their cognitive abilities.

- **Ethnic Group**: A group set apart from others because of its national origin or distinctive cultural patterns.
Ethnicity, Race distinction

- Race – social construct primarily associated with visual physical characteristics - in practice in the U.S. this is a very “loose” categorization but there are recurrent attempts to codify (example – one drop rule) on the books as early as 1830 (Ohio) and codified widely starting in 1910. Finally defeated in Loving V. Virginia in 1967.

- This is generally the social assignment placed upon you by others (although you may not agree).
Ethnicity – Cultural practices based upon a more fluid definition of culture(s), not identified primarily by visual physical characteristics. In the U.S. is treated as a subset of Race – example of Jewish ethnic groups

THIS is the individual internal practice of our cultural identity (others take their cues from watching your practice)
Cultural Identity - What does it mean? (Context)

- Educational Context (developmental)
- Student/Teacher or Teacher/Parent
- Service context
  - Educational goals
    - Learning, Retention, Graduation
  - Departmental goals
    - Effect targeted institutional success
  - Institutional goals
    - Support for diversity
  - Societal/Community goals
    - Justice and Equality – Civil Rights legacy
Cultural Identity - What does it mean?

- How do we practice our cultural identity?
- How many of us have transitioned?
- What is the case for your students?
- What effects will this have for them?
  - Group support
  - Cultural activities
  - Mutually Exclusive affiliation(?)
Tools of theory – what is an ethnic group

- “An ethnic group is then a group of individuals that shares common cultural traits and a common field of communication and interaction, and identifies itself and is identified by others as constituting a distinguishable category.” (Ethnic groups and boundaries: The social organization of culture difference Fredrik Barth, 1969 – Norwegian Social Anthropoligist)

- Internally and externally identified
By identifying their allegiance to a particular culture, individuals tend to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction, and subsequently develop social forms in *relative isolation*. The self-declared allegiance or the "longing not to belong to any other group," is a critical defining characteristic of ethnicity (*The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1973).

- Internally identified externally reinforced
"it is a segment of a larger society whose members are thought by themselves and/or by others, to have a common origin and to share important segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients" (Ethnicity, by J. Milton Yinger Annual Review of Sociology, 1985)

- Internally and Externally identified and reinforced
Inventory of progress....

- QUESTIONS SO FAR???
Developmental model of cultural identity for the individual (RID – Racial Identity Development) – Janet E. Helms from the Handbook of Multicultural Counseling

■ Stage One

■ CONFORMITY STAGE - External self-definition; Devaluing of own group; Allegiances to White standards of merit (Helms, 1995).
Stage Two

DISSONANCE STAGE: Ambivalence & confusion about commitment to own group; Ambivalent socioracial self-definition (Helms, 1995).
Stage Three

ENCOUNTER STAGE: Experiencing an encounter may be negative (a racist event) or positive (exposure to own culture). Personalizing the encounter involves being turned around by the experience (William E. Cross Jr., 1995).
Developmental model of cultural identity for the individual (Stages)

- Stage Four
- IMMERSION / EMERSION STAGE: Idealization of one's socioracial group; Denigration of that which is perceived as White (Helms, 1995).
Developmental model of cultural identity for the individual (Stages)

1. Stage Five
   - INTERNALIZATION & INTEGRATIVE AWARENESS STAGE: Positive commitment to one's own group; Capacity to empathize and collaborate with members of other groups (Helms, 1995).
Implications for Educators

Your role

- Not to define for others – present information/opportunities, always be supportive of constructive positive identity development, redirect negative or destructive identity development

- Cultural Identity development or RID (Racial Identity Development) is a PERSONAL process. Students must move themselves, but you can model for them
Tools for Educators

- Cultural activities – may have to look for, but go above and beyond
- Courses related to ethnicity
- Cultural community organizations
- Faith communities
- Each other
Finally!

- Answers to questions
- Thank YOU!