

ACPA 2002 - Educating Students - One Purpose - 10,000 Approaches – Session Notes

Title: Racial Identity Development Theory and You: Educating Students

Time: Monday, March 31st 12:30 – 1:45 pm

Abstract: Effectively educating students about diversity and racial justice requires an assessment and awareness of students' developmental stage. Any approach must be tempered to be inclusive of all phases of racial identity development, as well as encourage subsequent growth. Utilizing Cross's, Phinney's and Helms' identity development theories, this session offers practical methods for assessing, understanding and educating students. Participants will leave equipped with strategies and suggestions for creating meaningful learning opportunities around diversity and racial justice for students and themselves.

A few overall notes on Racial and Ethnic Identity Theories:

- Identity development moves along a fluid and usually progressive continuum from a point of “not knowing you don't know to a point of knowing” and then to a point of “being an advocate.”
- Stages can overlap and people do regress depending on environment and triggering events.
- Theory helps us understand where people are and how we can respond appropriately to their needs.
- An easy way to find where someone is along the continuum is to offer a stimulus and see how people respond. Lee shared various examples of racial injustices and how you can get a sense of where someone is based on their response. Sometimes the stimulus will already be present or be the very reason why you are interacting with the student.
- Use the Identity Development handout with quotes to help understand where people are and possibly how they have been triggered.
- Identity Development is fluid and multidimensional – thus individuals can experience more than one stage at a time and even regress to previous stages.
- Realize an individual's worldview is impacted by where they are along the continuum.
- Avoid judging people for where they appear to be – it's not their fault!

Thoughts on creating learning opportunities around Racial Identity Development

A few suggestions?

- Campus programming – how does multicultural programming help move students to the next step.
- Res Life programming – how does multicultural programming help move students to the next step.
- Staff selection – How does the process help see where candidates are and how can training be shaped to help them grow?
- Comparing Racial Identity Development among campuses with a critical mass of minorities compared to those that do not.
- Racial Identity Development can serve as a lens in understanding behavior and can be vital in helping to build communities that celebrate differences.
- Judicial discussions – helping to frame behavior in relationship to incidents and environment.
- True pluralism requires and understanding and appreciation for Racial Identity Development.