


More Than a Number

Supporting a Diverse Population of Learners

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Presentation Outline

- Introduction
- Race and Ethnicity
- Identity Development
- ABC's of Creating Inclusive Learning Environments
- Affirming Identity
- Building Community
- Cultivating Leadership
- Closing



Importance of race and ethnicity

- Most people identify with race because it is visible to the eye.
- Affects how a person perceives and treats another person.
- Affects one's thoughts and behaviors.
- Psychologically, people of color experience unique identity development due to the systems of oppression that are imbedded in our society.



Ethnic and Racial Identity

- Ethnic Identity: derived from knowledge of one's membership to an ethnic group(s) and value and emotional significance attached to that membership. (Tajfel, 1981)
- Racial Identity: Psychological or internalized consequences of being socialized in a racially oppressive environment; characteristics of self that develop in response to benefiting from or suffering under such oppression (Helms, 1990)



Person of Color Racial Identity Development Stages

- Pre-encounter
- Encounter
- Immersion/Emersion
- Internalization
- Internalization-Commitment



Pre-encounter

- Child absorbs beliefs and values of the dominant culture, including the idea that it is better to be white.
- Personal and social significance of one's racial group has not yet been realized.
- Racial identity is under examination.



Encounter

- An event usually forces a young person to acknowledge the personal impact of racism.
- Heighted awareness of the significance of race is developed.
- The individual struggles with what it means to be a member of a group targeted by racism.
- Anger toward the dominant culture may develop.



Immersion/Emersion

- Strong desire to surround oneself with symbols of one's racial identity and actively seek out opportunities to learn about one's culture and history with the support of same race peers.
- Less anger toward dominant culture as they begin to seem irrelevant in this phase.
- Anger is not absent but the focus is much more on self-discovery than white people.



Internalization

- Characterized by a sense of security about one's racial identity.
- Relationships across cultural boundaries are often formed in this stage of development.
- Self-definition is realized more clearly.



Internalization-Commitment

- The individual has found ways to translate a personal sense of racial identity into ongoing action expressing a sense of commitment to the concerns of their culture as a group.
- Positive sense of racial identity
- Prepared to perceive and transcend race.

Tatum, B.D. (1997) *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?* New York, Basic Books.



White Identity Development

- Pre-exposure/Pre-contact
- Conflict/Disintegration
- Individuals respond to their new found awareness in one of two ways:***
- Pro-Minority/Anti-racism
- OR-
- Retreat into White culture
- Redefinition/Integration



Pre-exposure/Pre-contact

- Whites have not begun to examine their own ethnicity.
- Lack of awareness of self as a racial being.
- Unaware of social expectations and role with regard to race.
- Unconscious identification with whiteness.
- Acceptance of stereotypes about minority groups.



Conflict/Disintegration

- Individuals begin to recognize that they live in a society that discriminates based on race
- Individuals become aware of the realities of prejudice, discrimination, and racism
- Conflict over new knowledge about race relations
- Marked by feelings of confusion, guilt, anger and depression



Pro-Minority/Anti-racism

- Whites begin to resist racism and identify with minority groups
- Identification serves to alleviate strong feelings of guilt and confusion
- Still have self-focused anger and guilt, and anger at White culture in general



Retreat into White culture

- Retreat from situations that stimulate internal conflict
- Retreat into comfort and security of same-race contact
- Over identification with whiteness and defensiveness about white culture
- Fear and anger toward people of color.



Redefinition/Integration

- White people redefine what it means to be white
- Whites acknowledge their responsibility for maintaining racism
- Individuals become more balanced, more open to acquiring new information

(Stages from Ponterotto, J.G.; Pedersen, PB. (1993) Preventing Prejudice: A guide for counselors and educators. Newbury Park, Cal.)



The ABC's of Creating Inclusive Learning Environments

A, affirming identity

B, building community

C, cultivating leadership

(Tatum, B.D. (1997) *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?* New York, Basic Books.)



Affirming Identity

- Students must see themselves reflected in their environment, in the curriculum, in the faculty and staff, and in their classmates.



Affirming Identity

“Identities are the stories we tell ourselves and the world about who we are, and our attempt to act in accordance with these stories.”

(Theresa Perry, “Freedom for Literacy” in *Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African-American Students*, 2003.)



Affirming Identity

- How do our students see themselves reflected in our schools—teachers, other students, speakers?
- Desegregation displaced thousands of Black teachers in the 1960’s and 1970’s and today only 15.6 percent of teachers are teachers of color, 7.5 are African American. What does this mean for our students of color?
- Can white teachers affirm the identities of students of color in the classroom?



Affirming Identity-Breakout 1

- What are some ways that your school is affirming the identity of your students of color?
- Do you think a white teacher can affirm the identity of a student of color?



Self-Reflection

- Examination of own racial and cultural identities to understand the stories they tell without conscious awareness.
- Understanding of white privilege
- Willingness to learn about the lives of their students in their full cultural, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical contexts.
- Understanding of stereotype threat



Building Community

- Creating a community in which everyone experiences a sense of belonging, where there are shared norms and values and common purpose.
- Affirmation of identity is crucial for community building to take place. Once a student's own need for affirmation has been met it is easier to engage in the community as a whole.



Cultural Groups

- Encouraging students to engage in affinity groups with other students of the same cultural or ethnic background helps to affirm identity as well as build community.



What are the unspoken rules?

“That life is stressful for Black students and other students of color on predominantly white campuses should not come as a surprise, but it often does.”

(Tatum, p. 77)

- How do we communicate the social rules that our white students may in many cases already know?



Community Building-Breakout 2

- What are some things your school is doing or you would like to do to help build community for your students of color?
- Is retention of your students of color a challenge? What programs are in place to retain these students?



Cultivating Leadership

- The role of education in preparing citizens to be active participants in a democracy and the understanding that leadership must come from all parts of our community.



ABC's in Practice-Breakout 3

- Who is reflected in our school?
- Who is missing?
- What opportunities exist for building community, for encouraging dialogue across difference?
- How are students involved so that they are becoming leaders in a diverse world?



What Walker's is Doing

- Equity & Social Justice Website
- Director of Equity and Social Justice Programming
- Equity and Social Justice Team
- Speakers
- Reading Beverly Tatum's, "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria." as a community.
- Travel
- Books, skirts, etc.



Questions?

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