

Teaching about Identities, Diversity, and Equity

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How can instructors teach about diversity and social justice in ways that minimize resistance and maximize learning? This poster describes a portion of the Teaching about Identities, Diversity, and Equity (TIDE) Framework, which integrates critical and learning theories with existing best practices to explain the factors related to the development of students' diversity attitudes.

The Developmental Cycles within TIDE describe the sequence in which students develop knowledge and awareness about social identities and inequality as well as how increasing knowledge and awareness inform critical agency and action.

All individuals begin in Stage 1, which has three competencies. Each represents a low-level awareness of how social identities and inequality operate in general in society. It is important for learners to master each competency in the order below. Otherwise, learners might experience confusion, threat, and other negative emotions that drive them out of the learning process. Some grasp these competencies as adolescents whereas others may come to understand them in adulthood, for example through diversity courses in college.

In Stage 2, learners can move in any direction and between the two cycles. The outer circle represents knowledge specific to a particular social identity; learners can have differing levels of knowledge for different groups. The inner circle represents traditional conceptualizations of critical consciousness. We argue that greater knowledge facilitates more effective critical action.

The competencies in Stage 2 build throughout an individuals' life, although certain experiences might cause one to slow or stop their development.

Key Terms

Social identities: group identities based on social traits, such as race, gender, and sexual orientation

Structural inequality: group differences in access to power and resources based on social identities

Identity-general: characteristics similar across multiple social identities

Identity-specific: characteristics specific to a particular social identity

Critical action: individual and collective work aimed at addressing structural inequality

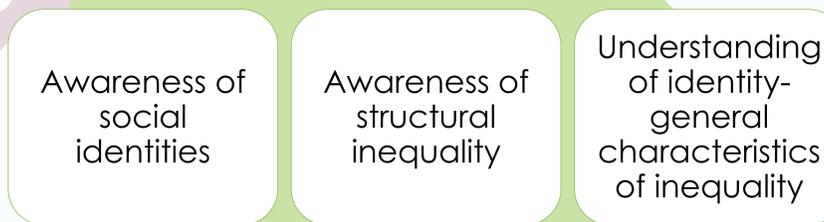
Critical agency: a desire to engage in critical action and a confidence in one's ability to take effective critical action

Introduction to the Developmental Cycles

There are two stages in the Developmental Cycles that are divided into competencies. Movement through the cycles is driven by motivation and emotion. Motivation can be entirely extrinsic (i.e., driven by external rewards) or intrinsic (i.e., driven by personal interest), or a combination of both (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Learners can have multiple goals and values at the same time.

Learning is also driven by activating emotions like empathy, hope, and righteous anger (Boekaerts & Pekrun, 2016; Hardiman et al., 2007). Negative emotions can occur when learning about identities, diversity, and equity, and if not appropriately managed, these negative emotions can lead to disengagement from the learning process.

Stage 1



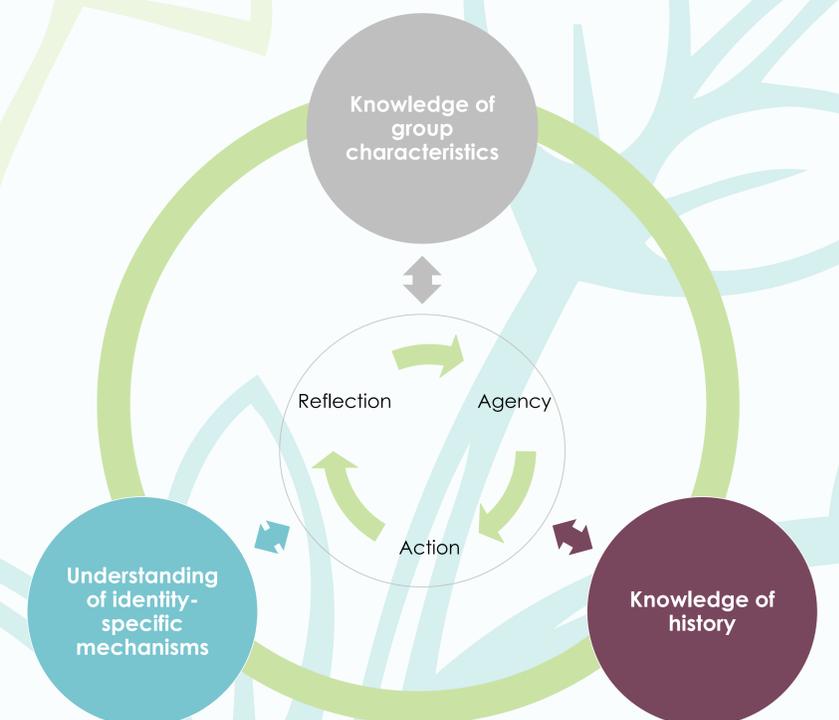
Forms of Resistance

Frequently, students feel threatened by content that conflicts with their pre-existing knowledge and values. Resistance is particularly common for those with advantaged identities. Forms of resistance include:

- Denial
- Minimization
- Feelings of overwhelm
- Call it something else/blame the victim
- Focus on intent
- Disbelief in the methods
- Avoiding the conversation

We seek to explore how various forms of resistance manifest throughout the cycles and how instructors can respond productively.

Stage 2



Implications

- Instructors should assess students' previous awareness and knowledge as they enter diversity courses
- Instructors should set learning goals appropriate for students' current level(s) of awareness and knowledge
- Instructors can teach strategies to help promote motivation and productive emotions throughout the learning process

Join Our Research!

Do you teach a course or workshop series with topics relating to identities, diversity, and/or equity? Help us test this framework and understand how student, instructor, and classroom characteristics affect teaching and learning. Email christy_byrd@ncsu.edu.

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