Ethnic Identity Development Theory and its Use in Navigating Issues of Race and Power in Teaching Family Science

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ABSTRACT. Ethnic identity development theory highlights the individual's development of his/her ethnic or racial awareness as he/she is confronted with experiences of racism and social inequality (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 1995). In this paper, we will examine the task of teaching, through this theoretical lens and consider how issues of power and race influence this process in the classroom. In doing so, we will consider the role that the professor's ethnic/racial identity plays in the teaching of diversity. We will explore in what ways or to what extent does race or ethnicity *work for* and also *work against* a faculty member of color in addressing diversity issues in the classroom. Finally, we will structure our analysis by considering the development of a course as a journey that has its own *beginning*, *development* and *resolution*.

Keywords: ethnic identity development, White identity development, dialogic learning, teaching and learning, social capital.

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The growing change in demographic and economic factors in the U.S. has brought about renewed interest in addressing the need to raise cross cultural awareness and competency among students in many colleges and universities (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2012). In the field of human development and family science, the implications are significant as students are asked to understand and respond to a variety of complex factors affecting the well-being of diverse families. A theory that has proven to be helpful in explaining the components in the process of cultural identification and change is ethnic identity development theory (Ponterotto, et. al., 1995). Ethnic identity development theory highlights the individual's development of his/her ethnic or racial awareness as he/she is confronted with experiences of racism and social inequality. Within this framework, the focus is to understand how issues of power and racial inequality operate and how they may influence the way ethnic and white individuals see themselves and respond to others over time.

Teaching within this context requires an understanding of the individual's experience of ethnic awareness and identification to the dominant culture, as well as a general understanding of how issues of race, power and social privilege operate in American society. In this paper, we will examine the task of teaching, through this theoretical lens and consider how issues of power and race influence this process in the classroom.

To examine these elements, we will take an introspective/reflective approach in studying the intersection between teaching, race, power and student learning in the classroom. In doing so, we will consider the role that the professor's ethnic/racial identity may play in the teaching of diversity. Drawing from a participant observer perspective, we consider how personal teaching experiences may shed light in understanding the challenges associated with this process. To this end, we will frame two questions to guide our reflection. First, in what way or to what extent does race or ethnicity *work for* a faculty member of color in addressing diversity issues in the classroom. Second, in what way or to what extent does race or ethnicity *work against* the faculty member of color in addressing these issues. Specific application to the field of Family Science will be made by reflecting and providing examples of teaching experiences in two diversity courses in my institution's Family Science curriculum (i.e., HDFS 386 Family, Ethnicity & Human Services; HDFS 383 Topics in Multicultural Families – Latino Families).

**Conceptual Understanding of the Process of
Ethnic Identity Awareness and Change**

Before examining the task of teaching, it is important to expand on the theoretical assumptions that often undergird such a process. As mentioned earlier, ethnic identity development theory examines how individuals develop their understanding of the value and acceptance of their own ethnicity or race in a racialized society like the United States. Most of the earlier work done in this field originated out of the research of African

American scholars such as Cross (1971, 1978), Jackson (1975), and Vontress (1971) (as cited in Atkinson, Morten & Sue, 1993).

In Cross' (1995) model, African Americans move through four stages: *pre-encounter*, *encounter, immersion/emersion* and *internalization*. According to Cross (1995), the person moves through different developmental stages and discovers, through different experiences, what "it means" to be black in the United States. The process begins with a period of unawareness and/or ambivalence regarding the meaning of one's own ethnicity *(i.e., pre-encounter stage)* and continues to one of awareness *(i.e., encounter stage).* Unfortunately, the process of awareness is often precipitated through conflict by experiences of racism and/or discrimination. Through this process, the person becomes painfully aware of how his/her race or ethnicity is viewed negatively in society. This results in the person experiencing deep feelings of anger and resentment against the dominant group *(i.e., immersion phase).* Eventually, as the person is able to process this experience with others, particularly those of the dominant group, he/she begins to move away from the negative and reactionary position *(i.e., emersion phase).* Following that, the person moves to a stage of resolution and acceptance where he/she is able to understand who he/she is and accept his/her social environment as being both positive and negative at the same time *(i.e., internalization stage).* As a result, within this perspective, more emphasis is devoted to personal exploration and reflection for the purpose of achieving a heightened sense of cultural self-awareness (as cited in Atkinson et al., 1993; Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 1995; Tatum, 2003).

In considering the question of ethnic/racial identity development among Caucasians, a number of models have been proposed. Within these models, the term used to describe Caucasians is "White" or "Whiteness." Helms (1995) identifies "Whites" as "individuals who commonly identify themselves as belonging exclusively to the White racial group regardless of the continental source (e.g. Europe, Asia) of the racial ancestry" (Helms, 1995, p. 188). She argues that, as a result of growing up in America, Whites have been socialized into an environment where, because of the color of their skin and their position of dominance in our society, they enjoy a number of social privileges. This phenomenon is often referred to as social or white privilege.

In taking a closer look at Helms' White racial identity model, it is interesting to note that the focus of the model is not to provide insight into the inherent attributes that constitute White identity. Instead, the focus is to describe the progression of changes in perception from lack of sensitivity to appreciation of other ethnic/racial groups (Rowe, Behrens & Leach, 1995). Within this framework, a positive progression in racial identity development involves the capacity to recognize and abandon the normative strategies associated with White privilege (Helms, 1995). For instance, the process begins with the individual's avoidance denial of the implication of one's racial group membership *(i.e., contact, disintegration & reintegration stages)* and ends with the person's ability to separate from racist perspectives within one's own group as well as the development of what Helms calls a more "humanistic self definition and pattern of interaction" (i.e., *pseudo independence, immersion-emersion, and autonomy stages)* (Helms, 1995, p. 188).

The use of Helms' and other models on White identity development can be very helpful in understanding the sequence of reactions that will take place in addressing racism in a primarily Caucasian Anglo-European environment (Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993). In many of these settings, the initial reaction is of resistance and anger because the individual often feels accused of being racist indiscriminately of who he/she is. The use of this model offers another way of conceptualizing the problem that focuses our attention not on individual frailties, but on social environments that influence the way White individuals perceive racial reality. Social institutions, according to this view, socialize White individuals to be ignorant about structural racism (Yeung, Spanierman & Landrum-Brown, 2013). Therefore, the goal of the educational process is to make White students aware of the inequalities that exist in society at large and to move the students from a state of ignorance to a view that redefines their understanding of power, and personal privilege (Yeung et al., 2013). At the same time, an ethnic identity development orientation reminds us that students of color are also in their own journey of self-awareness and that these students need specific opportunities to explore and address their own unique experiences different from that of White students. Amy Conley Wright (2013), in her examination of the teaching about diverse families, highlights how the design and evaluation of the course may impact the student's learning experience. Her research points to the need to move beyond a traditional *informational* model of learning, where students are asked to repeat back information provided in lectures and readings, to a more *experiential* model, where students are encouraged to be sensitive to other cultures by demonstrating understanding and respect in their interaction with others. Within this proposed educational experience, learning takes place in a dialogic process through the use of case studies, group discussions and what she identifies as "authentic performance assessment" (Conley Wright, 2013, p. 2).

The Teaching Process: Points to Consider

In examining different elements in the teaching process, we will take an introspective/reflective approach in studying the intersection between teaching, power, cultural awareness and student learning in the classroom. In doing so, we will consider the role that the professor's ethnic identity may play in the teaching and learning process. To guide our reflection we will ask in what way or to what extent does race or ethnicity *work for* and also *work against* a faculty member of color in addressing diversity issues in the classroom. We will also structure our analysis by considering the development of a journey that has its own *beginning*, *development* and *resolution*.

To situate my comments, we will begin by taking a look at my own personal journey in higher education. I was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. There, I completed my elementary and secondary education. At the age of 18, I came to the United States where I had the opportunity to go to college and complete my graduate education. For the last 18 years I have served as professor and researcher at small liberal arts faith-based colleges both in the Mid-Atlantic region and the Midwest. Through all those years, I have served in a number of diversity and inclusion committees both at the colleges that I worked for and in my professional academic organizations. I have also worked on a number of initiatives to enhance the recruitment and retention of Latino students in

college. In my academic department, I have often served as a resource in connecting leaders from diverse ethnic communities to the work of our department. Through all of those experiences, I have observed a number of factors that have both supported and challenged my interaction with students in the classroom.

Taking Off - **The Beginning of the Course**

As I reflect on those experiences I often equate the process of teaching as one of flying a plane, an experience that requires preparation and a clear sense of direction for the journey. In our department, the Family, Ethnicity and Human Services course and the Topics in Multicultural Families course meet the pluralism and contemporary society requirement in general education. A central objective for these courses is to assist students explain the effects of inequality, prejudice and discrimination in society. That means that as an instructor I'm asked specifically to introduce students to issues of power and racial inequality as part of these courses. A clear delineation of this objective has been helpful in organizing the content of the material and developing activities that provide opportunities to process the information. For instance, in both of these courses, the first section of the course is devoted to *developing a common language* by defining key concepts such as culture, ethnicity, race, racism, discrimination and social privilege. I also spend time introducing ethnic and white identity theories and, in so doing, provide a context for understanding the experience of cultural change that students will be learning about. Developing a *"safe space"* for discussion and processing of the information is critical at the beginning of the course as well. I do this by validating students' efforts in participating in class discussion and limiting critical comments among students as they respond to each other. The goal is to encourage class discussion and not necessarily evaluate the merits of a particular position. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done as I'm also going through the different stages of ethnic identity development and processing feelings associated with past experiences of racism and discrimination. In this process it is difficult to hear when students discount the reality of racial discrimination or attribute the challenges that a person of color may experience to individual shortcomings, ignoring larger historical factors that privilege one group over another.

Nevertheless, developing a meaningful connection with students is an important component of the beginning of this process. Two elements that are influential in the development of this initial connection are the instructor's general credibility and personal authenticity. What follows is brief description of the interaction of these elements in my courses.

General Credibility. Throughout my career, I have made the study of ethnic identity development and acculturative stress among Latino families an area of academic specialization. This knowledge has provided me credibility as I address these issues with students and faculty. However, the concept of credibility is unique in that, regardless of my academic understanding of the issues, I often experience a sense of *instant credibility* in the eyes of others because of being a person of color. For many White individuals, there is an underlying assumption that the issue of cultural diversity is an ethnic issue as opposed to an academic, professional or human issue. As a result, ethnically diverse

individuals have an inherent advantage in addressing ethnic diversity issues that White individuals just don't have. The notion that White individuals also possess a cultural/racial identity is something that White individuals often don't perceive or think about. In the classroom, the issue of instant credibility plays an important role in making an initial connection with students. As mentioned earlier, I equate participating in a course like this like going on a journey, a journey that for many students is unclear and anxiety producing. The assumption that a faculty of color may have *more* understanding of the cultural issues than they will encounter in class reassures the students that the person leading this journey is someone who is knowledgeable and able to lead them through this uncertain and confusing path. It also reassures the students that they will be learning something of value, because in addition to the academic information available through the reading, they will have benefited from the *insider knowledge* that the faculty member of color will bring to the classroom.

Ultimately, all these assumptions will have to be validated through the development of effective teaching and learning activities throughout the course. But that initial connection can be very helpful to increase the level of receptivity among students in responding to what the professor has to say. In this situation, the faculty member doesn't have to build a case as to why the student should listen to what he or she has to say. Instead, it provides him/her with an automatic point of entrance to the students' minds.

Personal Authenticity. Connected with the issue of credibility is the issue of authenticity. One of the reasons why issues of knowledge and credibility are often associated, as mentioned earlier, is because the assumption that any form of knowledge is better if it can be proven to also be authentic. The fact that a person of color may have some lived experiences that could explain or illustrate an issue of diversity adds to the notion that the process is more authentic and therefore qualitatively better. Not to have that personal experience takes away from the authenticity of the discussion. It is like learning a set of concepts through secondary sources as opposed to primary sources. The problem with this notion is that a number of White faculty, who specialize academically on these topics, have a lot to offer to this process. But, as opposed to the faculty of color, the White faculty member has to build a case as to why the audience should listen to him or her on these issues. Credibility of one's knowledge appears to rest initially on one's level of authenticity. And, unfortunately, perhaps this is the case because, at an unconscious level, White faculty are perceived to be outsiders and not insiders to this discourse of cultural change. I remember once how a White faculty member who had taught courses on African American literature and who wanted to expand by teaching a course on Latino American literature was not encouraged to do so because that faculty member was not perceived be as *qualified* as an ethnic faculty member simply because of their race.

Reaching the Required Altitude - **Teaching of the Content**

After creating a safe place for discussion and making a meaningful connection with students, the next step is to go deeper in understanding the experience of families of

color. To *"reach the required altitude"* is to find ways to present to students the complex interaction of different ecological factors that impact the wellbeing of diverse families. For students who are not familiar with the social and economic inequalities that exist in this country, this section provides an opportunity to be challenged by the facts and to reflect on its implications.

In both the Family Ethnicity and Topics in Multicultural Families course students have the opportunity to delve further into the experience of African American, Latinos and Asian American families by interacting with ethnic community leaders. Through class presentations as well as through assignments that require students to interview leaders in local churches and organizations students are able to grow in their understanding of these cultural groups. However, the ability to do this effectively requires the ability to develop social capital among diverse ethnic communities.

Formation of Bonding and Bridging Capital (Social Capital). Social capital theory refers to the ways in which an individual's social relationships and networks provide access to important economic, cultural, and academic resources (as cited in Carolan-Silva & Reyes, 2013). The development of social capital takes place primarily in two ways, either through the use of bonding or bridging capital. Bonding capital refers to the process of bringing people together who already know each other with the goal of strengthening the relationships that already exist (Granovetter, 1973). Bridging capital, on the other hand, refers to the type of social connections that brings together people or groups who did not previously know each other with the goal of establishing new social ties. These social ties provide new information, access to social networks, and fill the structural holes in the systems of networks in the community (Burt, 1992). It is in this area of bridging social capital that faculty of color can serve as an invaluable resource to students and academic institutions as they often have the capacity to provide social access to ethnic communities otherwise isolated from colleges and universities. Access to diverse ethnic communities represents an organizational hole for many academic institutions, as they often lack the cultural knowledge and/or language capacity to navigate within those ethnic environments. However, the faculty member's ability to serve as a *cultural broker* not only helps in providing social access but also in explaining and interpreting to students and administrators the interest and concerns of community members. This is particularly important when considering the complexities of these social environments and the needs for students for more practical field experiences in preparing for careers in family/social services.

An example of how ethnic faculty can serve, as cultural brokers, is evident in both of the course mentioned earlier. In both the Family Ethnicity and Topics in Multicultural Families, focus group interviews were conducted with Latino and African American mothers in local churches and one elementary school. In both of these instances, I participated in the focus group sessions. In working with the Latino group I served as an interpreter as the group was monolingual Spanish speaking. In the African American group I began the session by introducing the format of the session and students to the parents. I also began the discussion by introducing a couple of questions to get the conversation going. These efforts allowed students to gain a unique perspective on the

life experiences of low-income ethnic families, insight that students otherwise wouldn't have been able to gain without the bridging capital that was provided.

Encountering Turbulence – Teaching of the Content

However, we also encounter difficulties or *turbulence* along the way in exploring cultural/race issues in the classroom. Up to this point we have explored how the cultural/racial background of the faculty member can work *for* that faculty member. But what about when the person's cultural/racial background works *against* him/her? To encounter *turbulence* is to encounter the challenge that often accompanies addressing issues of social inequality and white privileged in the classroom. Two of the areas where the challenge is most evident are in the process of fostering class discussion/participation and in understanding as an international faculty member the students' social background. What follows is a description of some of these factors.

Issues of Power and Dialogic Learning in the Classroom. One of the central elements in the development of active learning is the use of discussion and interpersonal engagement. For this process to take place, individuals need to feel free and not be afraid to share their ideas and points of view on a subject. Unfortunately, in dealing with issues of race and cultural diversity, many White students often are afraid of saying something that could be misunderstood as being insensitive or offending someone. Therefore, as a result, many White individuals often choose to remain quiet rather than risk making an insensitive statement and being perceived as biased or, worse, a racist. This reality gets compounded when the balance of power in the classroom changes when the faculty member who has the power to evaluate each student's academic performance is also a person of color. In this scenario, the stakes or risks are higher. Here, the White students risk offending not only a fellow student, but also the professor. As a result, the faculty member's ethnic background has an *inhibiting* effect in initiating the development of class discussion or interaction. Evidence of this phenomenon was recorded in a study that examined the experience of White students in an intergroup dialogue course that employed critical Whiteness pedagogy. In the study, students reported a wide range of views about the implications of dialogue in an all-white class (Yeung et al., 2013). When asked on these issues, students reported the following:

> David explained that if the dialogue course included only White students, discussions may have been "a little more candid," "honest," or "less reserved." He added that some of the White students in the class "had stronger opinions than what they were saying" and that there words had been "sugarcoated." Interestingly, he claimed that he had been candid. Similarly, Ashley stated that she was honest when talking about Whiteness, but observed that other White students "shut [their] mouths" because people of color were in the room. Jen explained that at times she felt the need to censor herself in her writing assignments because she was submitting to a Black facilitator, and thus she did not feel "comfortable telling an ethnic minority a story of such terrible attitudes." She added that other White students might have censored themselves because they did not want to offend the Black facilitator who was evaluating their

coursework. (Yeung et al., 2013, p. 23)

Therefore, the inhibiting factor that the faculty member of color may have on class discussions or engagement is an important one to consider. In my own personal experience I have noticed that White students are often hesitant to ask questions or make statements that may indicate to others that they may be wrestling with these issues. In these types of situations, I have found it helpful to provide opportunities for students to ask questions and share their concerns in small groups. Even if they may be hesitant to address an issue as part of a class discussion, in a small group, they have the opportunity to have a *non-threatening* space to process the content of the class. Another method is to be affirming and encouraging when eliciting a response from the larger group. As opposed to the experience of White faculty whose challenge may be to build a case for *credibility*, the challenge for the faculty of color is one of *impartiality*. Therefore, the emphasis should be to reaffirm over and over again to the students that every point of view is welcome and his/her main priority for the course is not to defend or advocate for a particular agenda, but to create a *safe* environment for learning and self-discovery. This raises questions as to whether faculty of color are best positioned for teaching courses on White privilege, whether this should be done by White faculty in the department, or whether this should be done jointly as opposed to separately.

Familiarity with White middle class American culture. Another area of difficulty for faculty members of color (particularly for international faculty) is the ability to connect with students when they may not be familiar with the values and social practices that govern American White middle class suburban families. In the case of international faculty, although familiarity with the language and clarity of a person's accent is sometimes considered in the selection of faculty member, seldom are there conversations about the level of cultural adaptation that the faculty member of color will have to undergo in order to be effective in teaching White middle class students in a primarily White educational environment. The level of acculturation of the faculty member of color to the dominant culture is an important factor to consider. The faculty member may be a very effective educator in their country or culture of origin, but that ability may not translate well in teaching and engaging American middle class or affluent White students

These difficulties are compounded when considering the unique cultural characteristics of American college students. According to Schwieger, Gros and Barberan (2010), "the American student is verbal, outspoken, and questions authority . . . is respected as an individual whose opinion is valued . . . strives for independence [and] values personal choice" (p. 150). For professors from other countries, the behavior of American students may appear challenging. They may misinterpret the student's level of assertiveness or questioning as being too difficult or disrespectful. This is particularly the case in cultures where the professor is accustomed to more differential treatment and less assertive interactions with students. Therefore, the process of cultural transformation pertains not only to students but also to the faculty member of color as well. To be an effective educator in this cross cultural environment requires that one be open to new possibilities by emptying long held assumptions and practices and being willing to learn

from others, particularly our students.

Landing the Plane – **Conclusion of the Course**

At the end of a course questions still remain. How much did students learn? Was it transformative? Did it make any difference? The use of an ethnic identity development framework can be helpful at this point as well as it provides the conceptual categories needed to identify where the students might be along a continuum of ethnic awareness and change.

If the goal is for students to achieve personal growth and transformation, there may not be a clear resolution to many of these issues at the end of a semester. Twelve or fifteen weeks in a semester may not be enough time to show significant change. However, the course may represent an important step in the student's growth and development. The use of an effective assessment instrument at this point is critical. A set of questions that can assess not only the students' familiarity with the concepts that they have learned but also the change in perspective regarding their understanding of their ethnic identity would be very valuable. In my courses, I haven't developed a survey or a set of open-ended questions yet that can fairly assess changes in cultural awareness. That is the next step in working with these kinds of courses. It is worth mentioning, however, the work of other scholars in this area such as Amy Conley Wright (2013) in the use of case studies and authentic performance assessment on the evaluation of these kinds of learning experiences for students. Also, the work by Adrienne Dessel & Mary Rogge (2008) has been very helpful in their review of the research on the evaluation of intergroup dialogue.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Finally, I would like to conclude by suggesting a few strategies that can be helpful in addressing issues of cultural awareness and competency in the classroom. Although I haven't had the opportunity to implement all of these strategies in my courses, I believe that these strategies have the potential to make a difference based on what we know from the research literature and what we have explored in this article so far. What follows is a brief delineation of these strategies.

Use of an Inter-racial Team-teaching Approach

A strategy that may be helpful is the use of an inter-racial/inter-cultural team-teaching approach for teaching these types of courses. Although the cost of having two faculty members teaching a course of 30 or 35 students may be an issue, it would be helpful to consider the benefits that this kind of arrangement could bring. Each faculty member would be supporting each other, particularly in areas where they may need more support. For instance, at the beginning of a course, the faculty of color could validate the preparation or skills of the White professor as a way of enhancing that faculty member's credibility in the eyes of the students. Later on in the semester, the White professor could lead the discussion on issues of White privilege and the changes that need to happen as a

result of this. This kind of combined approach would also dispel the notion that addressing the need of cultural diversity is an ethnic problem that only people of color care about. This approach shows shared interest among people from different cultural/racial backgrounds. It also provides the opportunity to model to students right there in the classroom how to have difficult conversations about race. As mentioned earlier, many White students are afraid of being insensitive or offending a person of color in asking questions. The fact that the two instructors would be modeling how to have these conversations may encourage more students to venture out and participate in this process.

The Use of a Dialogic Peer-led Approach to Learning

Although there are a lot of concepts, theories and ideas to learn as part of the process of developing cross-cultural knowledge, it is important to consider the role that peer and group discussion may have in this process. The use of peer-led discussion will allow students to learn from each other's experience and provide an opportunity to have conversation on race with people that are at their same level of power. In the study conducted by Yeung et al. (2013), they document the benefits of being able to learn about these issues from other students.

> I think it's probably the only way to teach a class like that, 'cause if you just have someone lecturing . . . it would be a Black woman speaking to a bunch of White kids about White privilege and that's not a good way to get it across. When it's peers talking to each other . . . they're less likely to be resistant to what they're hearing . . . When it's with your peers, you just learn through the process rather than in the sense where you're supposed to learn this and this and like a check mark list . . . The way we just talked . . . learning just happened . . . you didn't mean to learn it but you did through the process. (p. 22)

The Use of Multiple Voices in Addressing Diversity in the Classroom

One of the most challenging aspects of using a dialogic approach in a primarily White classroom is the pressure that it places on the few students of color to educate other students on what is like to be a person of color in America. The challenge with this is that many students of color may still be wrestling with what that means for themselves. Having to be the spokesperson for their own ethnic/racial group makes it really difficult for some. One alternative can be to use films or assigned readings to illustrate or explain the experiences of people of color. In this situation the main character of the film or the article would serve as the primary example (or voice) in addressing the issues being discussed in class. The student of color would be free to enter into the conversation and share their ideas or personal experiences if he/she desires. This is important because students of color in primarily white institutions often feel compel to share their experience in class even though they would rather not do so. In these kinds of situations students complain that although the professor may not ask them directly in front of other students to share their personal experiences, they do so indirectly. For instance in an interview conducted with students at my institution on issues of racism on campus, a

student spoke of this situation.

> You understand what your teachers' focus point is when they give a lecture and it happens [that] they are going to talk about multicultural issues. Then all of a sudden you become the focus point and so they lecture right to you and it is sort like, ok, would you affirm what I'm saying? Ok, this is what happens. And they have the text, they are the professor and normally they lecture to the entire class but all of sudden I'm the focus point or I'm the reference…
> Actually it even comes down to our text. They don't get texts that integrate throughout the whole book. It is the last chapter in the book, is on multiculturalism or something like that. So we get to that chapter and now the teacher lectures just to me and …you feel like crunching down because you don't like it when the teacher is just staring at you all the time... (Seegobin, & Kraybill, 2000).

Another strategy in trying to voice more diverse perspectives in the classroom is to take advantage of the faculty of color potential access to a diverse social capital network. Through this diverse social network the faculty member may be able to connect to a variety of community leaders and develop multiple opportunities for these leaders to come and address these issues in class. Through this format the experience of marginalization or discrimination is not voiced just by the faculty member of color or by the one or two students of color in the classroom, instead it is done through a number of community partners that assist in the teaching of the material by sharing their life experiences and perspectives.

Alignment of Institutional Diversity Goals, Learning Objectives and Instructional Methods

Finally it is important to be mindful of aligning all the different instructional objectives and methods of the course. These objectives may include the need to connect the student's learning experience with broader institutional diversity learning goals (i.e., diversity in the general education curriculum), with course learning objectives and instructional methods (i.e., group discussion, experiential activities, lectures). For instance, if the course is a freshman or sophomore level course in general education, is the initial learning goal just to introduce students to general concepts on diversity and encourage an initial awareness of cultural difference? This may be different if teaching a junior or senior level course in the major that is supposed to build on existing knowledge and it designed to develop specific cultural competency skills in family social services. Ultimately, it is critical to consider what is the educational purpose and end of such cultural exploration before committing to such efforts. If we know where we are going and how far we want to go in our journey, we will find the means and have the resources necessary to reach our destination.

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