

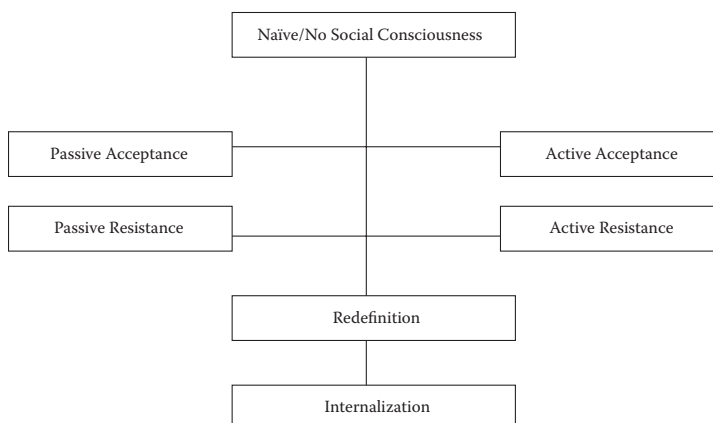
Appendix 2A

Jackson and Hardiman Model of Social Identity Development¹

Social Identity Development Theory

The generic social identity development theory is an adaptation of black identity development theory (Jackson, 1976) and white identity development theory (Hardiman, 1982).² Social identity development theory has also been influenced by other theorists and applications to other social groups (Cross, 1971, 1978, 1991; Helms, 1990; Kim, 1981; Schapiro, 1985). Social identity development theory describes attributes that are common to the identity development process for members of all target and agent groups.

We present the stages, for purposes of conceptual clarity, as if a person were to move neatly from one stage to the next. In reality most people experience several stages simultaneously, holding complex perspectives on a range of issues and living a mixture



of social identities. This developmental model can be helpful in understanding student perspectives and selecting instructional strategies, but we caution against using it simplistically to label people.

Stage I—Naive/No Social Consciousness

At birth and during early childhood, agents and targets are unaware of the complex codes of appropriate behavior for members of their social group. They naively operate from their own needs, interests, and curiosity about social group differences and break rules and push against the boundaries of social identity group membership. Through these boundary violations they begin to learn lessons about what it means to be a member of their social identity group— as agent or as target.

In the transition from Naive to Acceptance consciousness, agents and targets become aware of the differences between themselves and members of other social groups. While they may not feel completely comfortable with people who are different, they generally don't feel fearful, hostile, superior, or inferior. Children at this stage display an interest in understanding the differences between people and often ask questions that embarrass or threaten adults, such as "Why do people have different skin color?" or "Can two women get married?" This stage is brief and covers the period between birth and three to four years of age.

The events that transform children from a naive or unsocialized state to a stage of Acceptance of their social dominance or subordination are numerous. The most significant socializers appear to be parents, who are role models of attitudes and behaviors, and who convey important messages through their words and silences, actions and inactions; the formal education system, including teachers, and the formal and informal curriculum; peers, who set the standards for appropriate and inappropriate behavior; religious organizations; the mass media; and the larger community with its norms, laws, social structures, and cultures that set the limits, formal and informal, for the behavior of citizens.

Two related changes take place as the young agent or target moves into the Acceptance stage. One, they begin to learn and adopt an ideology or belief system about their own and other social identity groups. Another is they begin to learn that the world has rules, laws, institutions, and authority figures that permit certain behaviors and prohibit others, even if these rules do not make sense, and violate other principles such as freedom, equality, and axioms such as "do unto others." Both types of learning are immensely powerful, pervasive, and consistent, so much so that the acceptance of this socialization to some degree seems inevitable. This socialization process results in the second stage of identity development, Acceptance.

Stage II—Acceptance

The stage of Acceptance represents some degree of internalization, whether conscious or unconscious, of the dominant culture's logic system. People at this stage have "accepted" the messages about the nature of their group identity, the superiority of agents (Whites, heterosexuals, men, Christians), and the inferiority of targets (people of color, gays, lesbians and bisexuals, women, Jews). The Acceptance stage has two manifestations, passive and active, which refer to the relative consciousness and intentionality with which a person holds to the dominant belief system.

Agent in Acceptance: As agents in the Passive Acceptance stage have learned and to some degree internalized codes of appropriate behavior, conscious effort is no

longer required to remind them of what to do and how to think. Dominant beliefs and actions are part of their everyday life, as when a white store clerk carefully watches black customers to see if they are shoplifting, or a Christian manager sets a date for an important meeting on a Jewish holiday. Questions that arose during the naive stage have been submerged and repressed such that individuals are able to live their lives without doubt. When questions occasionally arise, there is a built-in system of rationalization to fall back on and provide answers.

For those raised in the Active Acceptance stage, instruction about the inadequacies, weaknesses, deviance, and basic inferiority of targeted people occurs in a very direct manner. They are told in many ways “that’s how those people are”—Mexicans are lazy, Jews control the banks, women are dumb, gays are sinners, and the disabled are objects of pity. People raised in a Passive Acceptance environment learn to blame the victim for the effects of oppression. The key difference between Active and Passive messages is whether they are overt or covert.

Agents of oppression who have adopted an Acceptance consciousness are generally unaware that they have privileges as dominant group members of an oppressive society. They are usually unaware that they think of themselves and other agents as superior. More subtle is the assumption that the agent’s experience is normative or “the way things are done.” Therefore men should of course be heterosexual and masculine and those who deviate are sick or abnormal. Passive acceptance of the agent’s perspective as normative is more subtle than outright belief in superiority, but in practice it has many of the same negative effects as active acceptance.

Agents of oppression who move from the Naive stage into the entry and adoption phase of Active Acceptance tend to express their superiority more directly. In the extreme form, agents at Active Acceptance may join organizations (KKK, Christian Identity) that are designed to promote supremacy. Many agents who are in the Active Acceptance stage devote their lives to maintaining their dominant perspective and privilege.

Most agents are well into their adult years before encountering events or circumstances which begin the transition to the Resistance stage. This transition marks a confusing and often painful period. Information or experiences that contradict the Acceptance world view have been initially ignored or passed off as isolated or exceptional. Gradually as the individual begins to encounter more conflicting information these isolated incidents form a discernible pattern. The contradictions that initiate the transition period can occur in the form of a personal connection or friendship with a target, or through significant social events or information presented in books, media, and formal education.

Agents begin to experience difficult emotions during this exit phase and entry into Resistance consciousness. Their accepted identity as white, male, Christian, or heterosexual comes under scrutiny and they are often afraid and uncertain what the implications of this self-examination will be. The questioning that begins during this exit phase of Acceptance builds into the stage of Resistance.

Targets in Acceptance: Targets in the Acceptance stage have learned and accepted messages about the inferiority of targets and target culture. Often these negative/oppressive messages are held simultaneously and in contradiction to more positive messages about their social group conveyed by same group adults or social peers. Typically, the person lives with and rationalizes varying degrees of cognitive dissonance on a daily basis.

Some targets operate at a Passive Acceptance consciousness, unaware of the degree to which their thoughts, feelings and behaviors reflect the dominant group ideology. Some women prefer to work for men or to purchase services from male doc-

tors, dentists, and lawyers because of an ingrained belief that women are not smart or capable enough to handle these jobs.

Targets in the Active Acceptance stage more consciously identify with the dominant group and its ideology. For example, some people of color are opposed to civil rights laws and affirmative action because they believe that people of color are less successful due to their own laziness and pathological culture. Socialization of targets into the dominant world view is essentially an invisible process that is difficult to unlearn. Targets who retain this world view for life successfully rationalize efforts on the part of others to change their consciousness. Even targets who experience an urge to question their current status may find themselves seduced into remaining in place by the rewards offered by agents.

Targets who reach the exit phase of an Acceptance world view begin to acknowledge the collusive and harmful effects of the learned logic system and behavior patterns. Sometimes external events are so blatant that the person is hard pressed not to recognize the existence of oppression. Other times an individual may encounter someone of their own group who is a powerful role model, as when a lesbian in Acceptance encounters an “out” lesbian who spurs her to reject internalized homophobia, and a closeted existence.

Stage III—Resistance

The Resistance stage is one of increased awareness of the existence of oppression and its impact on agents and targets.

Agents in Resistance: As a result of experiences and information that challenge the accepted ideology and self-definition, agents entering Resistance reject earlier social positions and begin formulating a new world view. This is a dramatic paradigm shift from an ideology that blames the victims for their condition to an ideology that names one’s own agent group as the source of oppression as agents become aware that oppression exists and causes the disparity between agent and target groups. Furthermore, agents begin investigating their own role in perpetuating oppression. For example, a white person may become aware for the first time of white privilege in employment, recreation, travel, or schooling.

Anger is a prevalent feeling at this stage—anger toward other agents and the nature of the agent’s social group identity. Some agents wish they weren’t members of their dominant group and distance themselves from other agents who don’t share their new consciousness. Some zealously confront other agents for their group’s oppressive actions and attitudes. Others are ostracized because their behaviors and attitudes threaten other agents who are in the Acceptance stage.

Agents in Resistance begin to develop a systemic view of how their identity has been shaped by social factors beyond their control as they re-examine the roles agents play in supporting oppression. This occurs particularly for liberal agents who have been involved in helping targets assimilate into the agent’s culture and society. When the problem is redefined as an agent problem, the strategies for addressing it change. This new understanding helps some move beyond guilt and feeling overwhelmed by personal responsibility. Having negotiated the conflict between their own values and societal definitions of appropriate behavior for their group, they begin to move toward a new identity. At Resistance agents develop an awareness of their social identity, but one which is not necessarily positive. The task of Redefinition then is to engage in a process of renaming and developing a social identity that is positive and affirming.

Targets in Resistance: Acknowledgment and questioning of the cumulative experiences of oppression and their negative effects lead targets to the Resistance stage. Targets generally begin by questioning previously accepted “truths” about the way things are, for example, that men are superior, or that any person of color who works hard enough can realize their dreams. Gradually target group members become more skilled at identifying the oppressive premises woven into the fabric of all aspects of their social experience. They may also begin to feel intensified hostility toward agents, and other targets who collude with agents.

The overt expression of hostile reactions to oppression marks the transition from the entry to the adoption phase of Resistance. At this point the target group member has fully internalized the antithesis of the earlier Acceptance consciousness, and may experience increased and sometimes overwhelming anger, pain, hurt, and rage. The combination of these powerful emotions and the intellectual understanding of how oppression works may feel all-consuming. At this stage members of the target group often adopt a posture as anti-agent, for example anti-white, anti-male, anti-straight. Identity is defined in opposition to the oppressor.

Some targets may find that the Resistance stage results in losing benefits acquired when they colluded with the Acceptance consciousness and may choose a path of Passive Resistance, in hopes that they will be able to stay in favor with agents, while rejecting oppression. This strategy typically proves too frustrating and contradictory to sustain.

For most targeted people at Resistance the primary task is to end the pattern of collusion and cleanse their internalized oppressive beliefs and attitudes. During the course of the Resistance stage, targets often discover that they have become proactive and do have some power, even if not of the same type and quantity available to members of agent groups. Also, the targets begin to recognize that a considerable amount of energy has been put into “Who I am not.” As they move toward the new question “Who am I?” they exit Resistance and enter Redefinition.

Stage IV—Redefinition

The focus of the Redefinition stage is on creating an identity that is independent of an oppressive system based on hierarchical superiority and inferiority.

Agents in Redefinition: At this stage agents begin to redefine the social group identity in a way that is independent of social oppression and stereotyping of targeted group(s). In prior stages agents have not been concerned with their own social identity but focused on targeted people and *their* problems (Acceptance). Or they have *reacted* to the social issue of oppression (Resistance). The experiences in Resistance leave agents feeling negatively about their social group membership, confused about their role in dealing with oppression, and isolated from many other members of their social group. Developing a positive definition of their social identity and identifying aspects of their culture and group that are affirming are necessary parts of this stage. Men who form groups to examine their socialization and critically assess the definition of masculinity that they have internalized illustrate agents at this stage.

In contrast to the negative feelings about their social group identity in Resistance, people in Redefinition develop pride in their group and a sense of personal esteem. There is a recognition that all groups have unique and different values that enrich human life, but that no culture or social group is better than another. The transition from Redefinition to Internalization emanates from the need to integrate and internalize this new social identity within one’s total identity. Having established a sense of

pride in themselves and their group, they are now ready to act more spontaneously on their values in everyday life.

Targets in Redefinition: In the Redefinition stage targeted people are primarily concerned with defining themselves in terms that are independent of the perceived strengths and/or weaknesses of the agent and the agent's culture. The Redefinition stage is particularly significant for targets because it is at this juncture that they shift their attention and energy away from a concern for their interactions with agents toward a concern for primary contact with members of their own social group who are at the same stage of consciousness. This type of behavior tends to be viewed negatively in an oppressive society and is often seen as counterproductive by liberal agents who view themselves as kind and benevolent. Members of targeted groups who are in Redefinition are generally labeled troublemakers or separatists. Agents who have worked to get subordinates into dominant social institutions will be particularly confused and/or put off by this apparent "self-segregating" and ungrateful behavior by targeted people. Targets in Redefinition, however, do not see interaction with agents as useful in their quest for a positive or nurturing identity.

Renaming is one primary concern in this stage as targets search for paradigms that facilitate this task. This search often begins with the formation of a new reference group consisting of other targeted people with a Redefinition consciousness. Targeted people who are still embedded in the Acceptance or Resistance stages of consciousness are not likely to share the same concerns and personal needs as those experiencing Redefinition, and they are generally not supportive of the issues that Redefining people are attempting to address. Many targets form support groups and networks of like-minded people to focus on issues of self-definition.

The search for a social identity often involves reclaiming one's group heritage. Through revisiting or exploring one's heritage/culture, targets in Redefinition often find values, traditions, customs, philosophical assumptions, and concepts of time-work-family that are appealing and nurturing. They rediscover many aspects of their heritage that have been handed down through the generations and still affect their way of life today. They become clearer about the uniqueness of their group and come to realize they are considerably more than merely the victims of oppression. As they experience their group identity in a way that engenders pride, they may adopt a new name such as disabled rather than handicapped, or Black or African American rather than Negro. When people in Redefinition begin to contemplate the implications that this new sense of self has for all aspects of life, they exit Redefinition and enter Internalization.

Stage V—Internalization

In the Internalization stage, the main task is to incorporate the identity developed in the Redefinition stage into all aspects of everyday life. Even though targets have internalized consciousness, they are still likely to revisit or encounter situations that trigger earlier world views. For example, a Jew may feel that other Jews are acting "too Jewish" in a corporate setting and suddenly realize how they have bought into antisemitic stereotypes. The process of refining identity can be ongoing as new sources of history or past feelings and thoughts characteristic of earlier stages reemerge. As long as a person lives in an oppressive society, the process of uncovering previously unrecognized areas of Acceptance and Resistance will be ongoing even though their predominant consciousness may be in Redefinition or Internalization.

Agents in Internalization: Agents at this stage, aware of their past and concerned about creating a more equal future, try to apply and integrate their new social identity

into other facets of their overall identity, since change in one dimension will undoubtedly affect all others. Implicit in the term Internalization is the assumption that the new aspects become a natural part of behavior so that people act unconsciously, without external controls, and without having to consciously think about what they are doing. The new behavior becomes spontaneous.

Targets in Internalization: At this stage targeted people are engaged in the process of integrating and internalizing their newly developed consciousness and group pride. They realize that the process of redefining identity is a valuable learning and consciousness-expanding experience. It is now time to test this new sense of self in a wider context than the supportive reference group focused on in the Redefinition stage and to determine what effects this new social identity will have on the many social roles that people play. Targets at the Internalization stage begin by interacting and often renegotiating with the significant people in their lives for the purpose of establishing the type of social interactions that will serve their new social identity. Even in situations where their perspective is not valued and renegotiation does not succeed, they find that their new self-esteem and self-concept can provide the necessary sustenance to prevail.

Another significant aspect of Internalization consciousness is the appreciation of the plight of all targets of any form of oppression. Having moved through the liberation process for their own experience of oppression, it becomes easier for the person with an Internalization consciousness to have empathy for members of other targeted groups in relation to whom they are agents (for example, a heterosexual Latino who can now acknowledge and explore Christian or heterosexual privilege). It is less likely that a target in Resistance or Redefinition consciousness will be able to acknowledge coexistent agent identities. Furthermore, those who find themselves victims of more than one form of oppression (for example, black women or disabled Jews) find that their developmental process in one area of their social identity may be useful in dealing with other of their targeted identities as well. There is essentially no exit phase for this stage; the ongoing task is one of lifelong exploration and nurturance.

Conclusion

We have presented a developmental model of the social identity process. These foundational concepts undergird the curriculum designs throughout this volume.

Notes

1. Reprinted from R. Hardiman and B. W. Jackson (1997), Conceptual foundations for social justice courses, in M. Adams, L. A. Bell, P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook* (New York: Routledge), pp. 23-29. Citations refer to the 1997 edition.
2. For racial identity development models, see C. L. Wijeyesinghe and B. W. Jackson (2001), *New perspectives on racial identity development: A theoretical and practical anthology* (New York: New York University Press).

