

Learning to Value the “Other”: A Framework of Individual Diversity Development

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Extrapolating from current developmental theory and using practice-to-theory/theory-to-practice methods, the authors propose a framework for individual diversity development among faculty, staff, and students. The model offers individuals in-depth cognitive, affective and behavioral frameworks of development toward consciously valuing complex and integrated differences in ourselves and in others.

Entering into the 21st century, students, staff, and faculty in institutions of higher education have become a collection of a multitude of different ethnic, religious, cultural, and ideological backgrounds. Collegiate learning communities represent wide diversity in sexual orientation, age, gender, language, physical ability, values, and personality to name just a few aspects of identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Because diversity is embedded in higher education in myriad ways (hooks, 1994), developing multicultural competencies is paramount (Pope & Reynolds, 1997) for faculty, staff, and students. Teaching, advising, leading, administering, and communicating within this diverse context requires multicultural skills, knowledge, and awareness for effectiveness (Ibarra, 2001). University professionals and students must learn to value and harness the multitude of talents originating within various cultures, identities, ideol-

ogies, and backgrounds to be successful as institutions of higher education (Fried, 1995; Thomas, 1992).

For the purposes of this framework, we define *individual diversity development* as “cognitive, affective, and behavioral growth processes toward consciously valuing complex and integrated differences in others and ourselves.” We provide this framework primarily for student affairs and other higher education professionals to use in self-reflective growth efforts and for those facilitating the development of faculty, staff, and students to understand, in an ethical way, the developmental frameworks of persons with whom they interact in higher education environments.

This article proposes a framework for understanding the individual diversity development of students, staff, and faculty. First, we provide the theoretical and practical grounding for the framework’s development and offer springboard theories for understanding its historical underpinnings. Next, we describe, illustrate, and discuss the dimensions of this framework within the context of higher education environments. Finally, we outline how to use this framework to influence the diversity development of students, staff, and faculty. Throughout, we make suggestions for campus action to encourage healthy individual diversity development among all campus community members.

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FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

This framework of individual diversity development springs from a variety of theoretical and practical traditions. Overall, a constructivist approach (Broido & Manning, 2002) is used in this framework to consider a complex multiplicity of developmental pathways (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998) that focus on diversity. A focus on themes and patterns identified in the literature and through practice, rather than construction of distinct empirical developmental stages (Allen & Cherrey, 2000) distinguishes this framework from those derived from singularly theoretical or singularly practical foundations. This framework also is grounded in the notion that practice is guided by theory (Ortiz & Rhoads, 2000), that theory can be created directly from practice, and that findings from practice can create theory (Upcraft, 1994). Keeping in concert with constructivism, nonlinear development, and developing theory from practice, this framework is based on three primary sources: a theoretical foundation; our collective work as educators, consultants, and trainers; and reflection on our personal development and the development of those we've worked with as educators. Recently, autobiography (e.g., Neumann & Peterson, 1997), auto ethnography (e.g., González et al., 2001), narrative (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), and storytelling (e.g., Garrod & Larimore, 1997) gained legitimacy as collection tools in educational environs for creating new knowledge by incorporating personal knowledge into research. By reflecting on these myriad ways of knowing and their application to diversity development, the authors articulate an individual framework.

As educators and activists keenly interested in multiculturalism, we have system-

atically observed and studied our own and others' development in many settings over varying periods of time for the last 25 years. We draw heavily on the combined 50-year experience of two of the three authors. One of the authors worked for 2 years as a diversity development specialist in consultant and educator roles at a land grant institution in the Midwest, working with colleges, departments, programs, policies, and services to reengineer operations and practices to serve a wider diversity of faculty, staff, and students. Her most recent experiences include supervision and administration in reengineering educational environments for diversity as a dean at a large Research I institution and as the senior executive officer at a campus where over half of enrolled students (59%) and staff (71%) are Hispanic or Native American. Both educators have 15 years combined experience teaching graduate level student development theory courses with extensive identity development components including students' thinking, writing, and analyzing their personal development. Both educators teach cultural studies in higher education graduate courses with a cultural autobiography writing assignment including a self-reflective analysis of development. Both educators' combined scholarship demonstrates knowledge in ethnic identity development (Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999), student development (Evans et al., 1998; Guido-DiBrito, 2002; Guido-DiBrito & Chávez, 2002), curricular development for diversification (Chávez, 1998), personal ethnic storytelling (Chávez, 2001), developing multicultural classroom techniques (Chávez, 1995a; Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999), creating holistic multicultural learning environments (Guido-DiBrito & Chávez, in press), and differentiation of knowledge construction

among diverse cultures (Chávez, 1995b; Guido-DiBrito, Chávez, & Lincoln, 2002).

From small private institutions of higher education to university-wide systems nationwide, both educators consult with and conduct professional development seminars for faculty, staff, and students in the varied areas above as well as encourage and facilitate the personal development of the staffs we supervise. Both educators cocreate ongoing professional development curriculum for faculty and staff. One has long-term, and the other has limited, national consultation and training of cross-institutional higher education teams in the area of diversity development. One held a national leadership role in a higher education professional association championing gender, ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, spiritual, and sexual orientation initiatives. The third author's social action research is related to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender student organizations (e.g., Mallory, 1997, 1998). She has presented at regional and national conferences on issues related to inclusion in the academy. Additionally, positive input from colleagues across the country in their implementation of this development model for the professional development of faculty, staff, central administrators, students, boards of regents, and community advisory groups lends credence to the model's utility (e.g., Fried, personal communication, October 20, 2002).

Most developmental theories stem from a positivistic tradition and fail to capture the complex and unique process for each individual (Evans et al., 1998), which the Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education, 1937) suggests is imperative in higher education. In our framework, we provide a contextually variable structure to assist individuals in

mapping their own changing development. It is not a framework for tolerance, sensitivity, or awareness among campus community members but an individual model of cognitive, spiritual, psychological, and social behavioral transformation. Considering Strange and Alston's (1998) critique of student development and Kegan's (1994) complex psychological theories, we provide a framework that goes beyond a Western orientation and moves toward considering holistic development integrating the mind (cognitive), the heart/spirit (affective), and the body (behavioral). With this diversity development framework, we provide a process by which students, staff, and faculty can reflect on their own diversity development as well as assist each other in personal growth. The creation of truly engaging learning communities requires individual as well as community diversity development (Katz, 1989). Thus, theoretical, practical, and personal knowledge all inform this framework.

SPRINGBOARD THEORIES

Several theories informed and acted as springboards for conceptualization of the framework. These springboard theories are not replicated in their entirety; rather different content or process components are applied in our individual diversity development model. First, we drew from Kegan (1994), who—in his *Five Orders of Consciousness*, constructs of mental organization affecting thinking, feeling and relating to others—examines “psychological growth as the unselfconscious development of successively more complex organizing principles” (p. 29). Kegan suggests that individuals move through concrete, durable categories in childhood to trans-system structures

requiring reflection and high degrees of abstraction in adulthood. Although Kegan's model focuses on cognitive functioning, the affective (feeling) and behavioral components (interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships) are not absent. His holistic framework provides a way of looking at these dimensions and how they interrelate. In addition, Kegan suggested that individuals at any one point in time show indications from a number of different stages or frameworks, an important concept in the consideration of our growth in relation to the multitude of types of difference. Extracting from Kegan, our model reveals affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions which inform our understanding of the complexity of development. We find that many efforts to deal with diversity issues on campus fail to incorporate all three of these components, with concentration on only one dimension at a time, thus producing little effect.

Next, we drew from Gilligan (1977) and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) gender-related concepts to explore a relational basis for moral development. Divergent from Kohlberg's (1976) research conducted on White Harvard males using hypothetical situations, Belenky et al. and Gilligan studied women struggling with extreme moral dilemmas. Kohlberg's research suggests a strong need for independent moral thinking at the highest stages, in contrast to Belenky et al. and Gilligan, who reveal the importance of being in relationship when exploring moral decision-making. To varying degrees, this relational quality and concern for others affects the ways in which individuals seek to explore the worlds of those whom they consider "other." We suggest that a balance of independent and relational orientations are necessary for holistic diversity development.

Drawing on these gender-related concepts, we based our model on the assumption that students, faculty, and staff in a higher education community value both connection and autonomy and seek growth when encouraged independently and collectively to reflect on their thinking, feeling, and behavior towards those they think of as other.

Identity formation models often consider the otherness inherent in oneself (i.e., gay/lesbian and racial identity, respectively) when forming an identity in a society where an individual is not a part of the dominant group upon which normative behavior is defined (D'Augelli, 1994). Understanding the dynamics of dissonance is critical to a framework of diversity development because of individuals' uninformed outsider status within our increasingly diverse society. Individuals moving toward multicontextual identities and competencies face a transition toward societal norms that are new to everyone and under constant renegotiation. For each individual, challenges of dissonance and introspection often are faced from unique and perhaps uncomfortable perspectives. For individuals of homosexual (D'Augelli, 1994) or ethnic minority status (Cross, 1995), as well as others, the identity development process often includes questioning the value of groups with whom they identify.

Devine's (1989) findings on the relation of learned stereotypes to prejudiced response demonstrate that, to different degrees, individuals have the ability to distinguish between beliefs about groups and behavior toward individuals who are members of those groups. In her work, Devine showed how individuals who have generalized concepts about particular groups can interrupt their affect and consciously choose not to respond with prejudicial behavior. In

developing our model, we drew on Devine's hope for individual change and positive social action in the continuing development of societal contributors who are diverse in more than just demographics.

Finally, Maslow's (1970) Hierarchy of Needs provides a theoretical groundwork for understanding the power of internal and external influences on a person's progression or regression within a diversity development process. Although our framework is not hierarchical, we find these needs useful as a basis for our framework. Maslow's model assists us to examine individuals' needs, how needs function in our society and the behavioral choices we make toward others as a result of these needs. Acknowledging and understanding our individual needs is critical to analysis of what motivates how we respond to others. Also critical is an understanding of how individual responses might change, as needs change. Thus, Maslow informed our model by demonstrating how individual's needs change and how these changes motivate a response to "the other."

A DIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Learning to value and choosing to validate those who are other, as well as otherness within ourselves, is unique to each individual, yet there seems to be a common framework in what many individuals experience. Throughout their lives, individuals learn and store information in an effort to make sense of their world (Evans et al., 1998). In doing so, individuals respond to their own generalized concept of the group with which they associate the other as well as their actual experience or nonexperience with individuals from this group. In many

cases, we—as individuals—apply what we learn generally about *groups* of people (whether correct or incorrect) *directly to individuals*, and then respond to these generalizations through our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

The diversity development framework we propose (See Figure 1) shows aspects of a framework in which individuals develop in a nonlinear (Evans et al., 1998) and a deepening and expanding way toward valuing, and possibly choosing to validate, those who are other. This process is one of learning to be aware of, exploring, understanding, integrating, and valuing various types of otherness. Individuals may then make conscious choices to validate persons who embody particular types of otherness. It is a process of learning that each individual is a composite of many characteristics—some that seem other to us and some that seem familiar. The intersection of the many characteristics inherent in any individual makes it impossible to understand and know them by utilizing only one lens of a generalized concept of one of an individual's many identities. Instead, we—as individuals—learn that each person is a unique and complex blend of many identities that interact (Jones & McEwen, 2000) and challenge the generalized concepts that are held about groups of people.

Individual diversity development is an uncomfortable developmental process for most people because otherness, by its very nature, makes individuals uncomfortable. For each author, there are different aspects of identity that feel other. The process involved in this developmental journey moves us toward understanding and valuing complex individuals who are at the same time similar and different from each of us. We advocate a meaningful change, not just

in sensitivity and awareness, but change in an individual's way of being, the development of a way of seeing and interpreting the world, much like Kegan's (1994) description of meaning making. We find that diversity development occurs gradually over time requiring considerable practice. Most individuals begin at the cognitive level and at some point leap to the emotional practice and on to the behavioral components of each dimension of the model, although all three appear to interact in a meaningful gestalt. Ultimately, most individuals choose to validate and even advocate for persons with similar and different characteristics and beliefs.

The framework we offer presents six dimensions commonly found in varying forms as individuals process various types of "otherness," represented in the pictorial slice of the framework. Progression is possible for any identity of otherness experienced. For any one kind of otherness, individuals move—although not necessarily in a linear progression—through periods of unawareness, dual awareness, questioning and self-exploration, risk-taking or other exploration, and integration dimensions. Individuals may or may not consciously choose to validate the other, yet make increasingly conscious and complex choices toward a better understanding of a myriad of diverse others. These dimensions are experienced at various ages, simultaneously, repeatedly, or not at all. Within each dimension, individuals experience interactive cognitive, affective, and behavioral dynamics.

Unawareness/Lack of Exposure to the Other

An individual centered in the Unawareness/Lack of Exposure to the Other dimension lacks a conscious sense of a particular type

of diversity. Individuals experience this dimension before they acquire significant conscious contact or personal knowledge of a particular type of otherness (e.g., Stalvey, 1970). For example, when one of the authors moved from the Southwest to the Midwest, she found that the proven cultural training techniques she used with Southwestern students were met with blank stares and unknowing looks by Midwestern students. In the Southwest, nearly all students consciously held cross-cultural experiences and could draw from them in conversation. However, in the Midwest most students, staff, and faculty, had little consciously held cross-cultural experience to draw on during diversity development seminars. Although we are all steeped behaviorally in our own cultural traditions, in some parts of the country there are more consciously held understandings of the cultural origins of these behaviors than in other areas (Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999).

Cognitively, an individual in this dimension is unaware that certain types of difference exist or has not personally experienced this type of difference to have consciousness of it. Affectively, the individual has little or nothing to base feelings upon and so lacks feeling toward this type of otherness. Behaviorally, an individual may not consciously recognize or react to particular types of differences, even when experiencing them.

Many types of otherness are subject to this dimension. Before a certain age, children are unaware of things such as skin color or gender and do not react to these characteristics in others. Lack of exposure, and thus unawareness, has become less prevalent in adults as the media, music, and the World Wide Web expand their influence. Yet individuals often surround themselves with

family, friends, and even coworkers who are, at least visually, similar to them. Thus, information about others is gained primarily in nonpersonal ways, creating a basis for generalized conceptions of others based on incorrect, stereotypical, out of context, or

exaggerated information. While in the Unawareness/Lack of Exposure to the Other dimension, individuals benefit from activities that facilitate reflection on types of differences they are likely to be aware of such as religion, body type, personality, and

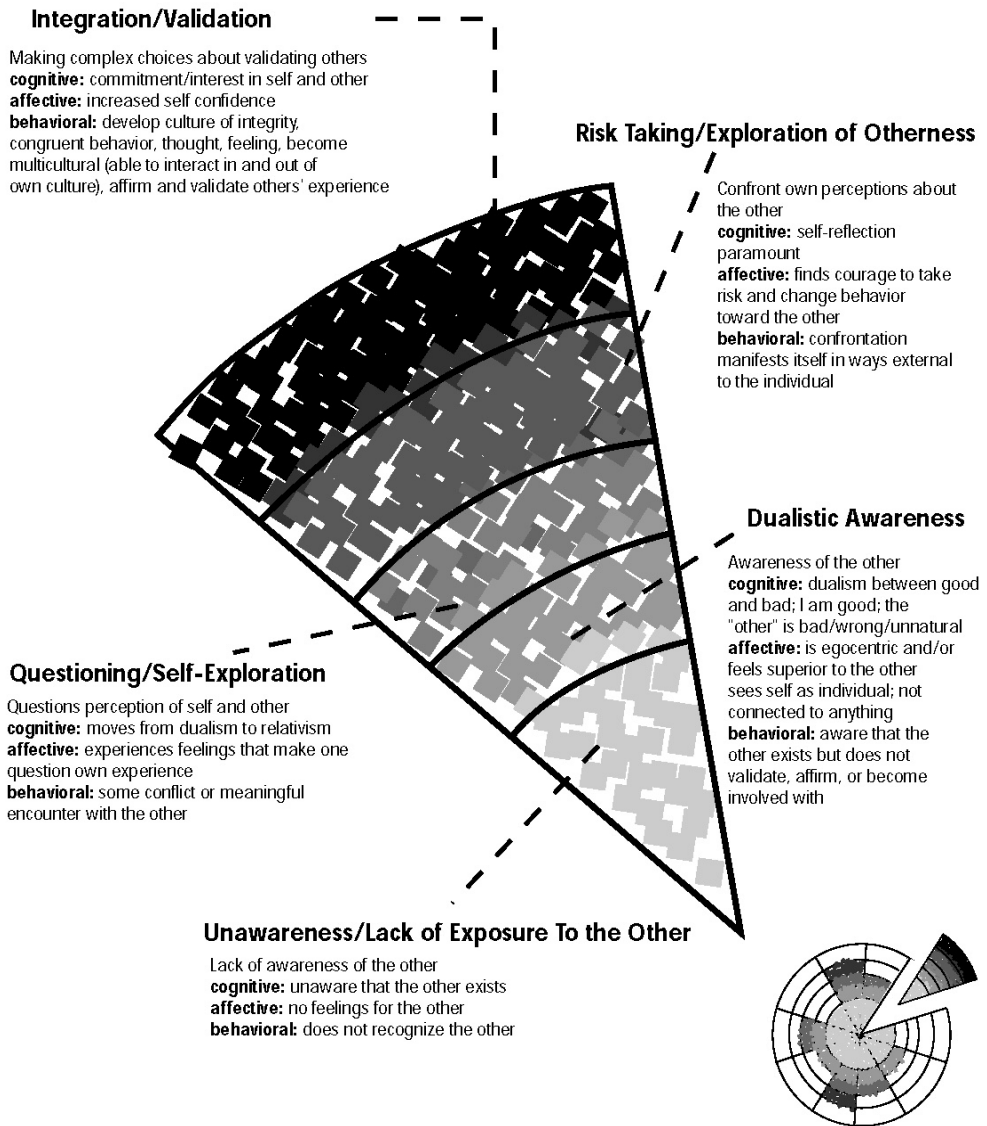


FIGURE 1. A Framework of Individual Diversity Development

personal habits—anything which can bring thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to the surface. These feelings and thoughts can be related to different types of identity, such as culture in this illustration, that are less conscious. When done kindly and purposefully, a balance of challenge and support (Sanford, 1966) are present to assist in building a developmental bridge for learning to value others.

Dualistic Awareness

An individual centered in the Dualistic Awareness dimension frames difference dichotomously (Gilligan, 1977; Perry, 1970), usually acknowledging familiar characteristics as natural or good and unfamiliar characteristics as unnatural or bad. Let us offer an example. At a national academic conference session on cross-cultural teaching and advising, a chemistry professor at a large state university related the following scenario and asked for helpful suggestions. The professor was teaching a course in which he assumed several Native American students were missing class regularly, due to alcohol and drug abuse. When asked by the facilitator (one of the authors) what made him come to these conclusions, the professor indicated that substance abuse was prevalent among Native communities and that as a professor he needed to teach responsibility to Native students so they would not be hurt in future. The facilitator asked if the professor was aware that many tribes have strong expectations that all members attend tribal ceremonies and events and that it may be considered culturally inappropriate to share reasons for absenteeism because of beliefs about not burdening strangers (such as the professor) with personal information and feelings. The professor, when given an alternative interpretation, suggested with

surprise that these Native American students possibly were acting in ways that were very responsible by striving to balance educational and tribal expectations.

Cognitively, individuals in this framework perceive differences in a dualistic, unreflective way, automatically interpreting behaviors, values, priorities, and other characteristics as good or natural if they are similar to their own and bad or unnatural if they are different. Affectively, individuals in this dimension are egocentric about this particular type of “otherness.” They are unlikely to question their own beliefs or characteristics and may feel a sense of superiority over those they feel are different. Behaviorally, an individual is aware that the other exists but will probably choose not to have in-depth contact with them. If contact is chosen, it may be to point out wrong behavior, to try to correct behavior, or to try to remove others from their environment. Attempts at correction or removal may be well intentioned or may be consciously aimed at hurting the other.

While in this dimension, individuals benefit from education to broaden their knowledge base accompanied by a facilitated analysis of multiple perspectives. An activity we find particularly useful is to have individuals or groups identify the benefits and limitations of both sides of a dichotomy. In doing so, individuals break down the sharp polarization of their thinking and realize that neither is absolute. To develop cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally in this way, education must include affective catalysts. Repeatedly, we have found that knowledge alone does not change behavior. In the previous scenario, the professor truly cared about students and a combination of encouraging this care with processing his assumptions, allowed the professor to

reconsider his misconceptions and maintain his goal of encouraging a more diverse understanding of responsibility in students. By processing affective and cognitive hooks situated in the individual's experience (Baxter Magolda, 1992), examining incorrect knowledge and changing behaviors accordingly is possible.

Questioning/Self-Exploration

An individual centered in the Questioning/Self-Exploration dimension begins to reflect on their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in relation to others. The Questioning/Self-Exploration dimension is perhaps the most critical in an individual's development of valuing others and seems to become an increasingly integrated tool as the individual moves through other dimensions of the framework. For example, while working at a small, private, Catholic institution, one author was approached by the staff advisor of the student newspaper about a dilemma she faced. The advisor's dilemma sprung from a student editorial written on the importance of supporting Planned Parenthood's efforts in advocating and providing gynecological services for female students. The advisor struggled between her own and the institution's values related to student choices concerning premarital sexual activity. As a result of her discussion with one of the authors, the advisor began internally to question and explore her own beliefs and feeling about prior religious teachings and their effect on women, as well as the institution's lived values. Over time, the advisor found peace in understanding and balancing her values and those of the institution.

Cognitively, individuals in the Questioning/Self-Exploration dimension begin to move from a dualistic perspective to one of

relativism. Individuals begin to acknowledge, if only internally, that there is more than just their own sense of what is right and wrong, good and bad, natural and unnatural. Questioning during this process is compounded by the origin of beliefs and values, often grounded in religious, familial, and cultural teachings. Like a ball poised on a hill that begins rolling, once individuals accept the possibility of relativism, it is difficult—if not impossible—to retreat to dualism. Affectively, this dimension may find individuals struggling with fear, imbalance, or anger, as well as with feelings of excitement at the prospect of gaining a broader and deeper perspective of self, the world, and others. Dilemmas arise from this dimension when individuals feel that they may be betraying teachings of people, communities, and institutions they respect. Behaviorally, this dimension is—for the most part—internal. Individuals use observation, conversations with people with whom they are comfortable, and perhaps, some tentative vicarious exploration of others through media, literature, and music. Individuals in this dimension are encouraged to journal, discuss their exploration in small groups, and explore media, the Web, literature, and other sources of new information and feelings about a particular other.

Risk Taking/Exploration of Otherness

An individual centered in the Risk Taking/Exploration of Otherness dimension sets out to proactively explore and challenge their own worldview by taking risks to enter the experience of those they see as different. Taking a variety of forms, this is the most fragile dimension to begin and the most easily lost. Individuals face both their own discomfort and the very real possibility of rejection by those closest to them, by those

they are trying to understand, or even by both groups. In addition, many individuals face the dilemma of striving to understand differences in others without compounding societal stereotypes.

The following example highlights an in-depth example of the Risk Taking/Exploration of Otherness dimension. In a college student personnel graduate course taught by one of the authors, students were able to choose to do a semester-long experiential project in which they attempted to get a sense of what it is like to “walk in the shoes” of a person of a different identity than themselves (Strange & Alston, 1998). Graduate students were asked to experience at least one aspect of this identity each week and reflect on what they were learning in a journal. One student chose to experience what it might be like to be a person who must use a wheelchair for mobility. This student went to great lengths in risk taking. He read ethnographies and autobiographies by persons with physical disabilities, spoke frequently with a resident in his hall about life utilizing a wheelchair, watched several movies related to living with physical disabilities, and then rented a wheelchair and used it constantly for several days to attend class and work. Throughout the experience, the graduate student expressed fears, hopes, revelations and frustrations about his self-described experience of moving toward greater understanding, empathy, and appreciation. As well, this student struggled with the ethical dilemma of faking it to try to learn, and was concerned that he might be stereotyping even as he tried to gain understanding. Several times, the student wished to give up but strove beyond discomfort to continue his growth. The student was kept going by encouragement from several individuals with disabilities on campus and

his own growing realization that, unlike him, persons with physical disabilities do not have the choice to quit.

Cognitively, self-reflection is at a high point in this dimension. Individuals often reflect on minute details of their observations and experiences and compare them to what they know. Affectively, individuals must continually find the courage to take risks both internally and externally. Self-esteem is often fragile at this point, as individuals continue to explore a new sense of the world and wonder how they fit into its diversity. Behaviorally, individuals consciously search for new experiences, thoughts, and feelings. They may choose to temporarily leave behind their own “culture” or try on aspects of the culture that they are exploring. In turn, individuals modify thoughts and feelings about themselves and others in an actively experimental process. Though more visible than behavior in the Questioning/Self-Exploration frame, this dimension still takes a wide variety of subtle and overt forms depending on individual and environmental influences. For some, risk taking may include the beginning of advocacy, usually attempting to help the unfortunate other, rather than considering the more integrated possibility of mutual activism (Sleeter, 1996).

Individuals in this dimension can be encouraged through inclusion with others who are actively exploring and through mentoring. Some good examples of recommended activities for individuals in this dimension include: study abroad programs; residential learning communities and classes focusing on difference; long-term collaborative staff and faculty training series; and service learning programs. The complex mixture of community support, facilitated reflection, and sustained learning provide an

ideal balance of challenge and support necessary for substantive development (Sanford, 1966).

Integration/Validation

An individual centered in the Integration/Validation dimension brings concepts of self and other together. In this dimension, individuals begin to see themselves, as well as others, both as members of a variety of different populations and as complex individuals with many identities and characteristics. Individuals in this dimension understand that they have some things in common and some differences with each person. These individuals are able to make choices whether or not they can, with integrity, validate various types of otherness.

The following example illustrates this dimension. While working in career services at a small, private, Midwestern college, one of the authors supervised an office manager who possessed an integrated, relativistic sense of self and others, authentically validated differences and advocated quietly for the needs of marginalized students and staff. In her humble way, this 50-year-old professional peacefully created a working atmosphere that was respectful, confrontive of hurtful or marginalizing behavior, and served the needs of a wide diversity of faculty, staff, and students. When faced with discomfort about specific differences, this professional actively reflected on what might be behind her feelings and the effect of her feelings on her behavior. She stated that she would always need to pay attention to her own reactions and actively explore and challenge the assumptions and influences behind them. In discussions about her philosophy, this professional expressed deep faith in others stemming from her concept of community and her multidimensional

belief system. She interpreted differences as making a community strong and as a daily relational challenge to be facilitated. She worked consistently to assist others to connect by helping them see, acknowledge, and value each individual's important and unique contributions to the group.

Cognitively, individuals in the Integration/Validation dimension are able to acknowledge the rights, responsibilities, and contributions of self and others. In addition, they can see how others are both similar and different from them. Affectively, there is a continuous stabilization of self-esteem and comfort both away from and with others. Individuals' self-concept is less threatened by differences because they are more secure in their own sense of self. Comfort increases as they have more experiences across differences and emerge with greater understanding and appreciation. Behaviorally, individuals in this dimension develop a culture of integrity in which their thoughts, feelings, and actions are congruent. Increasingly able to interact confidently in and out of their own cultures, they have the ability to affirm choices and beliefs different from their own. In this dimension, individuals are able to choose to validate the differences of others and may or may not openly do so. Individuals' sense of integrity does not allow for validation of certain behaviors or ideologies, perhaps because those behaviors or ideologies are not congruent with their sense of a diverse society. Unlike in other dimensions, however, this choice is a consciously reflected one. An individual in this dimension validates the need for connection with communities of identity and the need for appreciating the diversity within these communities (e.g., Chávez, 1998). The deeper an individual becomes a part of this dimension, the harder it is to see any

individual through only a generalized lens.

A SNAPSHOT OF DIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT: ANA RODRIGUEZ

In Figure 2, we provide a developmental “snapshot” to show one individual’s visual representation, within the above described dimensions, of her own diversity development in relationship to others. Ana Rodriguez (pseudonym), a student affairs staff member at a Research I university, describes herself as Mexican American, female, highly extroverted, and heterosexual. She was interviewed several times over a 6-month period and asked to chart her own diversity development using the framework presented in this article. During the interviews, it emerged that, of the identities she chose to reflect on, Ana was in a Risk Taking/Exploration of Otherness dimension in relation to some identities (extrovertedness, femaleness, and gayness); was questioning and purposefully reflecting on her feelings, thoughts, and behaviors toward persons with certain cultural/ethnic/ national identities outside her own (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, and Mexican nationals); had a dualistic awareness of Catholics and emotionally expressive individuals (though she herself is emotionally expressive); and lacked awareness and experience with persons having disabilities and persons who are Jewish.

Ana credited her own positive experience of extrovertedness and the student affairs profession’s primary norm of extroverted behavior, as influences toward this deeper level of development. She pointed out that although she experiences matriarchal familial and cultural elements in her life, they have not been strong enough to counteract wider negative gender messages toward women in U.S. society. She feels that societal

norms are not based primarily on female ways of being and is working to unlearn these messages that tell her that being female is something less than desirable. Ana described her uncle, who is gay, as having a positive influence on her own conceptions of gayness. She explained that she has learned a great deal about his life experiences because of her family’s interaction with and validation of him as an individual and gay person. In addition, she credited her continued development and advocacy in this area to the student affairs division at her university for actively supporting and educating about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender populations. Ana described taking courses on African American history and contemporary issues as experiences that encouraged her development in cultural identities. She expressed surprise that this education has also led her to question and reevaluate how she thinks, feels, and behaves toward Asian Americans and Mexican nationals. Ana credited other positive influences to her diversity development, including friendship and working relationships with others from various identity populations.

Ana described her collegiate experience—a time of exploring her own cultural/ethnic identity as a Mexican American female—as both a joyful and a painful influence in learning to challenge her own generalized thoughts and feelings about others. When Ana entered college, and experienced ethnically outsider status at a predominantly White institution, she began to wonder how others might feel and if they were marginalized as well. Ana concluded that diversity development is a lifelong process, as she still finds herself generalizing sometimes when she feels concern about future employment, media attention given to reverse discrimination, and news reports that

focus primarily on crime within specific populations. As a woman and a survivor of a date rape during college, Ana also worries about the balance between encouraging female college students to stay physically safe in their environment and not stereo-

typing all men because of the actions of a few.

Ana's personal experience is unique and yet exhibits patterns of development similar to many other students, staff, and faculty that we have observed, educated, and inter-

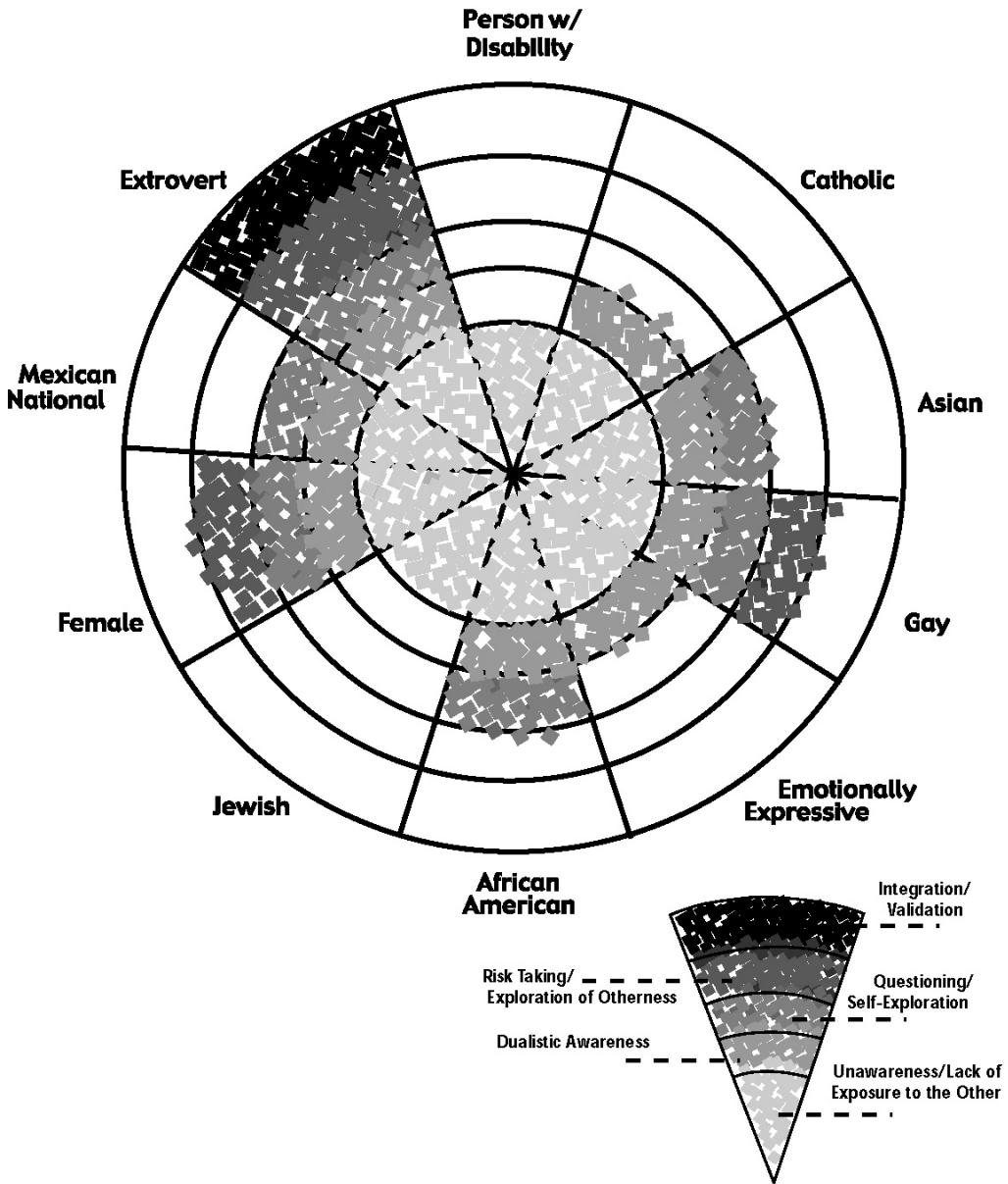


FIGURE 2. An Individual Diversity Development Portrait of Ana Rodriguez

viewed. By providing individuals the opportunity to choose the internal and external identities on which they wish to reflect, this framework enables individual reflection and growth producing developmental snapshots. We believe the usefulness of this framework is in self-reflection and in charting our own development, a kind of assessment tool for personal growth. Ana's visual snapshot is helpful for illustration purposes but is limited by its inability to show intersections between various types of otherness.

Intersections of more than one type of identity are not well understood (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Each individual embodies a collection of identities that interact and blend. Interactions between them are difficult to represent in a visual framework. In actuality, it is the intersection of identities that make it possible for us to find both similarity and difference in those around us. For example, Ana was able to find some commonality with other student affairs professionals, Hispanics, women, extroverts, and so on. Consciously searching for at least one commonality may be the first bridge toward valuing and validating "others" across differences. Often, this is where we start in our educational efforts.

IMPLICATIONS

Because those who raise us define otherness in a variety of ways, individuals may grow up with varying comfort levels of difference, ranging from very comfortable to very uncomfortable. Similarly, individuals develop a wide range of multicultural skill levels to use in negotiating these differences (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). Some factors in an individual's environment and experience can act as positive influences, whereas others act as challenges to the process of diversity development. Internal and external factors

play a part in the determination of this development (Katz, 1989). If we, as practitioners and educators, are to create learning communities in which diversity is truly valued and used, acknowledging and coping with the reality of these influences is critical. A failure to acknowledge and deal with challenges leads to the development and maintenance of structures, learning environments, and processes that discourage and disable development (Strange, 1994). The creation, encouragement, and exploration of a variety of positive influences, as well as an understanding of challenges, will assist us in developing multiculturally competent individuals and environments (Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999).

Positive influences on our campuses are essential for diversity development to occur on a widespread basis. It is important to offer a wide variety of motivators to students, staff, and faculty, such as the importance of diverse ideas and institutions as educational tools (Chang, 1999) and pointing out the benefits of developing multicultural skills that allow for increased workplace effectiveness (Ibarra, 2001). Curricular and cocurricular opportunities and accountability to a larger community are important for encouraging diversity development in students. Tenure, promotion, and reward systems that encourage diversity development, in-depth learning opportunities, and release from other duties are helpful in encouraging campus professionals to develop multicultural competence in teaching, advising, administering service provision, and scholarship. Diversity training (e.g., Okun, Fried, & Okun, 1999); learning about various identities (e.g., Birdwell-Bowles, 1998); purposeful sustained dialogue across differences (e.g., American Council on Education, 1994); friendship (e.g., Antonio, 1998); work with others (e.g., Rhoads & Black, 1995);

travel (e.g., Porterfield, 2002); political climate (e.g., Tierney, 1993); and social, cultural, and religious teachings (e.g., McEwen, 1996) are all powerful influences in individual and community development.

We find that persons who have lived in many places, especially those experiencing more than one culture, are often more comfortable and able to negotiate a culturally heterogeneous group of people than those who have lived in homogeneous environments. An experience of marginalization, such as Ana described, often acts as a strong motivator and influence on individuals' diversity development. Students of color often seek wider cultural friendships (Antonio, 1998) and perhaps are more conscious of, and comfortable with, cultural differences than are Caucasian students (Mitchell & Dell, 1992). Faculty and staff of color, as well, are more likely than Caucasian faculty and staff to be actively involved in diversity efforts on their campuses (Viernes-Turner, 1994). Factors such as numbers of persons from their own cultural background on campus, a need to be aware of cultural differences to negotiate a predominantly White campus (Chavous, 2000), interest in understanding others' cultural experiences, an altruistic sense of wanting to make the world a kinder experience for others from their own cultural communities (Rochlin, 1997), and a need to fit into many environments may all be motivating factors for diversity development of faculty, staff, and students of color. Other marginalized populations of students, faculty, and staff, such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered individuals; individuals with disabilities; and individuals native to other nations, often exhibit signs of a deeper diversity development and involvement perhaps for parallel reasons. As well, women tend to be more likely than men to be involved, perhaps both

because of marginalization and relational orientation. This may explain, in part, why individuals from the aforementioned populations are so often frustrated with the lack of understanding and multicultural skills on our campuses. For these individuals, changes seem obvious and long overdue, and yet they too are in need of diversity development. It seems a mistake to assume that having a particular identity automatically translates to a higher multicultural ability and development, yet the way a person is treated stimulates a catalytic effect on growth, perceptions, and choices. All individuals can benefit from growth in this area, regardless of where they are in these frameworks.

Challenges or barriers to diversity development on our campuses are important for us to understand as well (Greiger, 1996). Economic pressures; fear of retaliation for identification; political climate; discomfort with difference; stigma of being an outsider; fear of change; and some social, cultural, and religious teachings can all act as negative influences to diversity development. For persons who identify as homosexual and for persons of color, there can be a time when negative feelings are experienced toward their own group (Cass, 1979; Cross, 1995). A very real fear of harmful treatment by others, if identified more outwardly or acting differently, also influences choices and opportunities for development. These concerns can influence behavioral choices such as choosing friends, sharing identities with others, and involvement on campus. Fear of change and lack of new, necessary multicultural skills are compounding influences as individuals begin to renegotiate norms, values, and priorities in a more diverse environment. These influences are not insurmountable with sustained, purposeful work by students, faculty, and staff on our campuses.

The very complexity of this framework makes it both helpful and difficult to represent and to study empirically. We have developed the framework based on theory, literature, and personal knowledge acquired through years of participant observation and systematic discussions with diverse individuals in a variety of situations. We encourage student affairs professionals to develop their ability to facilitate diversity

development in students, staff, and faculty. As higher education and student affairs professionals, it is our responsibility to create environments that promote continued growth in diversity development among all campus community members.

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