

Pedagogical Approaches to Teaching about Racial Identity from an Intersectional Perspective

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Historically, few racial identity models have included or allowed for the effect that other categories of difference (e.g., ethnicity, sex, gender, class, sexuality, age, ability, religion, and nationality) have on an individual's racial identity. Yet, how people develop and experience their racial identity is interconnected with the other aspects of their identity. It has become increasingly clear that racial identity cannot be understood apart from other social identities. As evidenced in other chapters in this volume (see Gallegos and Ferdman, Holvino, and Wijeyesinghe), racial identity theorists are updating or creating conceptual models that capture this complex interrelationship between race and other social identities and incorporate aspects of what is generally termed Intersectionality.

Not only are racial identity theorists reconsidering their models in light of a more intersectional perspective, but so are educators. Those who teach about issues related to racial identity are also called to consider how race interacts with all other social identities. This undertaking raises questions about how to move from theoretical to applied Intersectionality in these

educational efforts. How is the *teaching* about racial identity informed and changed by intersectional theory? How does the student's level of awareness affect how and what we teach?

In this chapter we explore some of the issues and challenges that arise when teaching racial identity through the prism of Intersectionality. Many educators have long been teaching about multiple axes of identity and social inequality (most commonly race, class, and gender). They are now doing so in increasingly intersectional ways. However, there is little written about how to actually effectively *teach* about social identities and forms of oppression intersectionally, especially with learners at different points in the process.¹ We suggest some pedagogical approaches that may be more appropriate for learners with different degrees of racial consciousness and readiness to handle cognitive complexity. Exploring issues of social identity and structural inequality in developmentally appropriate ways requires rethinking our approaches, in theory and in practice. While both authors have decades of experience teaching about diversity and social justice in general, and race, racism, and racial identity in particular, we freely acknowledge that this is new terrain. Conceptualizing and then effectively teaching about racial identity using an intersectional lens is relatively uncharted territory. We therefore offer what we hope are helpful ways to think about teaching about racial identity, given the intersectional nature of our identities and lives and the varying needs of our students. Our focus is specifically on racial identity. Educators can consider if or how these approaches are applicable to teaching about other social identities or issues of social diversity and oppression more broadly.

Pedagogical Underpinnings and Assumptions

First, let us be clear what we mean by Intersectionality. We have often heard people confuse *multiple* with *intersectional* when speaking about social groups and oppression. Intersectional theory maintains that we have many social identities which simultaneously interact and affect our experiences of power and privilege.² Our multiple social identities are not simply parallel or additive; it is not that each identity affects us but is relatively independent of the others. Intersectionality requires that we consider how individual dimensions of difference overlap and interrelate. As Dill and Zambrana explain, "there is no point at which race is not simultaneously classed and gendered or gender is not raced and classed" (2009, 280). Identities mutually shape or constitute each other. While some identities may be more salient at different times, all of them are part of who we are and how we experience the world.

Moreover, since social identities are shaped by the social, political, cultural, geographical, and historical context, they shift as contexts change.

Ultimately in the course of teaching about racial identity we may want students to be aware of how all of one's social identities interact to shape and affect racial identity and life experiences (and vice versa). However, in the development of critical consciousness, Paulo Freire (1994) reminds us that "You don't get *there* by starting *there*, you get *there* from starting from some *here*" (1994, 58). Therefore, our pedagogy for teaching about racial identity is grounded in the belief that we need to meet students where they are in terms of consciousness about race and other categories of difference and help them develop greater breadth, depth, and complexity of understanding. So, how do we teach racial identity from an intersectional perspective when students are starting from very different "heres"? What about students who have little consciousness of their racial identity? What about the White student who says what we have often heard, "I never really thought about being White," or the Black student who says, "Race doesn't really matter anymore," or the Latino student who says, "But in my home country, I'm considered White."

Understanding racial identity entails answering the question: "What does it mean to be a member of a particular racial group?" This question invites exploration of one's own racial identity as well as the identity of others. Therefore, education about racial identity can promote both self-awareness as well as an appreciation of other people's realities. Educators may be dealing with just one or both of these aspects at any given point.

There are also many factors which contribute to the development and experience of one's racial identity. Some aspects are more related to race, such as one's physical appearance and the culture and history of one's racial group(s). Other aspects are more connected to racism, such as being a member of a racial group within a system of racial inequality. While racial identity is not limited to the influence of race and racism, these two facets are central components that have a major role in one's racial identity. They impact how one views the world and is seen and treated by others. Therefore, as we discuss teaching about racial identity, we highlight the examination of race and racism and one's sense of self and life experiences. In keeping with the core value of social justice in an intersectional analysis, other identities in conjunction with race will also be examined within a context of structural inequality. Even though each individual social identity influences all the others, in this chapter we give greater attention to the effect of other social identities on race and the impact that race has on an individual's collective social identity.

A one-size-fits-all pedagogical approach may not make sense when students are coming in with very different understandings of race, racism, and

racial identity. How can we expect students to grasp the complexity of how multiple identities simultaneously overlap and interrelate when they have a limited understanding of racial identity or are focused on only one dimension of identity and social oppression? While some students are more ready for multilayered analysis, many educators teach students who have less theoretical and experiential background in these topics. We have seen students, White students in particular, being unable to effectively integrate two dimensions of identity when they were still challenged to understand one. This occurs both when considering their own identities as well as when considering the identities and experiences of others. For example, while studying equity issues in education, students began to understand how race *or* sex could affect their own or others' experiences in school. However, it was difficult for many to conceive of how race *and* gender *together* shaped their realities. How does being a White female or Black male differ from being a White male or Black female?

We are therefore suggesting that an incremental framework for using an intersectional approach to teaching about racial identity may be useful. We explore how to build toward an intersectional understanding of racial identity, moving from a single focus on race toward an increasingly multidimensional integration of other social identities. In our teaching, we attempt to lay a foundation that is then continuously built upon. This developmental framework includes four pedagogical approaches:

1. A race-centered, single-identity focus,
2. A race-centered, limited intersectional focus,
3. A race-centered, intersectional focus, and
4. A full intersectional focus.

These four pedagogical approaches to teaching racial identity development increase in their integration of other social identities and increase in their incorporation of an intersectional paradigm.

Before describing each of these approaches, we want to elaborate on the reasons we believe that *as a pedagogy* having a single focus on race and racial identity can be useful and appropriate, even while maintaining that an intersectional lens more fully captures people's realities. Dill and Zambrana (2009) name one of the tensions in trying to value both an intersectional perspective and the distinctiveness of different social identities: "How do we benefit from comparisons and interrelationships without negating or undermining the complex and particular character of each group, system of oppression, or culture?" (2009, 280). This question is particularly relevant as

we explore pedagogies with different students. Furthermore, as Luft (2009) recognizes, “the merit of Intersectionality as an analytic frame does not necessarily translate into the efficacy of operationalizing it as a methodology in all settings” (2009,103). For broad, group-based, and macro-level interventions—social justice research, advocacy, and policy—a more multidimensional analysis is needed (African American Policy Forum 2008). However, for educational consciousness-raising or in the early stages of a “micro-level intervention” (Luft 2009, 102), a single-issue focus may be an appropriate place to start for several reasons. First, as noted above, many students new to these topics have little understanding of racial issues or racial identity. It is therefore unrealistic to expect them to appreciate how racial identity interacts with other categories of difference. A stronger grounding in race, in its various manifestations, creates a foundation for students to appreciate and retain the significance of race and racism when adding other identities to the discussion and analysis. This is often true for White students, but even for Multiracial students or students of color who may not have had the opportunity to meaningfully analyze the myriad effects of societal racism, the history of race as a social construct, the meaning of race in different contexts and for different racial groups, or reflect on their own racial identity development process. A singular focus on race enables students to explore the similarities and differences between and among racial groups. It also allows them to acknowledge the distinctiveness of race and racism relative to other forms of social identities and social inequalities.

Second, it is our experience that White students have a strong tendency to move the focus off of race in class discussions. They frequently prefer to discuss other identities, especially ones in which they are part of the subordinated group. For example, White women may focus on their oppression as a female, or White gay men their experience with homophobia. Similarly, Luft (2009), despite being an intersectional theorist, has advocated “strategic singularity” in antiracism education (2009,101). She maintains that this approach is warranted given that White people tend to avoid discussing race and racism and that the prevailing racial logic is *color blindness* which denies the significance of race and the existence of racism.³

Even within a race-centered approach, we can still set a context which recognizes other social identities and forms of oppression, and the ways they interact and intersect. Educators can acknowledge the fact that students have many social identities that simultaneously intersect with race, and that these other identities may have varying degrees of salience and social power. A more race-centered approach is not race exclusive. We can affirm the relevance of other identities and their overlap with race while still choosing to

focus on racial identity. For example, as an introductory activity, even in a class with a predominantly single-identity focus, students can be asked to think about their identities within numerous social categories (e.g., race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexuality, class, ability, age, national origin, religion). They can consider which groups are most central to who they are and how these identities affect their experiences, opportunities, sense of self, and worldview. Reflections and discussions with others about their responses highlight not only that we all have multiple social identities but that the salience, impact, and ways these identities interact vary among individuals. This conversation can prompt further exploration about why this is the case. Throughout a class, while emphasizing race, we can note examples of how other identities and types of social inequality interact.

Even though the different pedagogical approaches suggest a progression, they are not intended to reflect a rigid sequence or the notion that one is better than another. Rather, they each have value when applied in the right situation. Instructors may shift approaches within the same class as students gain awareness or as other issues/identities are introduced. Our pedagogical framework offers options for educators to consider as they assess what would be most effective for meeting the needs of their students. We are also not suggesting that this is the only or the best way to teach about racial identity with an intersectional lens. As each pedagogical approach is described more fully, we consider the criteria (when), the rationale (why), the learning objectives (what), the challenges and cautions, and the activities (how) for implementing it. The activities listed within each approach include strategies that focus on understanding the racial identity of oneself as well as others.

Pedagogical Approaches

Race-Centered, Single-Identity Approach

A race-centered single-identity approach puts the social category of race at the heart of inquiry. The purpose of this approach is to help students gain a basic understanding of racial identity within the larger context of race and racism. This approach increases students' appreciation of the significance of racial identity and how it is influenced by many variables. Students explore how race is socially constructed and the differences between how one may self-identify and how one may be viewed by others and the broader society. They become more conscious of the role race plays in one's sense of self and social reality. The central question in this approach is: What does it mean to be a member of a particular racial group?

CRITERIA FOR USE

This approach may be most appropriate for people with a limited understanding of race, racism, and racial identity. They may be early in the process of their own racial identity development, having given little thought to the meaning of racial identity for themselves or others. Students may have a limited awareness of the significance of race in affecting one's sense of self, worldview, experiences, and opportunities. They may need a better understanding of institutional and structural racism and how historical circumstances have shaped today's racial realities. Even if students have encountered racism, they may lack the conceptual frameworks to articulate or analyze their experiences or the experiences of others.

Students for whom this approach is useful may hold some common misconceptions which indicate that further examination of race and racism is warranted. These beliefs may include: (1) color-blindness—claiming that they don't notice race and that race should not and does not matter; (2) meritocracy—that there is basically a level playing field and that if you're smart and work hard you will succeed, regardless of race; (3) reverse racism—that White people can be oppressed by racism just like people of color; and (4) that racism consists of isolated incidents of individual prejudice and discrimination. These are some of the perceptions that suggest that a learner would benefit from further exploration of racial issues before adding other identities and forms of social inequality.

RATIONALE

In order to develop an understanding of racial identity, students need to reflect on the meaning of being part of a racial group. They need a basic knowledge of the dynamics and implications of race and racism before they can understand how racial identity intersects with other social identities. Without this foundation, they will not be able to accurately grasp how race functions in conjunction with other categories of difference and may not be able to hold race salient while considering other social identities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives in a race-centered single-identity pedagogy may be broad to provide students with an adequate basis for further study. This approach encompasses discussions of racial identity, as well as topics related to other aspects of race and racism. Learning objectives that would be appropriate for a race-centered single-identity pedagogy might include having students explore, in regards to racial identity, how:

- racial identity is shaped, and how it shifts and evolves over time and context.
- individuals define their racial identity and view the salience of their race, and how this may differ from the way they are seen by others.
- race affects one's attitudes, behaviors, values, and worldview.
- racial identity affects an individual's understanding of racism and approaches to social justice.

in regards to race and racism, how:

- racism is manifested on individual, institutional, societal, and cultural levels.
- race affects one's experiences, opportunities, and access to power.
- racism is a system based on an ideology which assumes the superiority and inferiority of people based on race, and how people internalize and enact the ideology of racism—internalized racial superiority and inferiority.
- ethnic and racial groups are defined and related.
- racial categories and classifications are socially constructed and why the definition and meaning of a racial group may change.
- the history of institutional racism affects current racial realities.
- throughout history people have created greater racial justice.

CHALLENGES AND CAUTIONS

The challenges in teaching from a race-centered single-identity approach are similar to the possible struggles instructors may face whenever teaching about race, racism, and racial identity, regardless of whether or not they have an intersectional perspective. Many others have written about ways to effectively teach about race and racism (cf. Bell, Love, and Roberts 2007; Derman-Sparks and Phillips 1997; Goodman 2011; Okun 2010; Tatum 1992). Helping students question accepted beliefs and rethink their sense of self is a formidable task, since it is both cognitively and affectively challenging. Often there is resistance from students when educators ask them to examine deeply held assumptions and worldviews. They are expected to reevaluate how they make meaning of themselves, others, and the world. Learners may resist questioning some of the beliefs identified above (meritocracy, color-blindness, reverse racism) and the ideology that supports White supremacy. Students frequently try to avoid feelings that make them uncomfortable.

White students in particular may find it difficult to recognize the significance of being White. Given the normativity and invisibility of whiteness and White privilege, it can be especially challenging for White people to see how they are part of a racial group that is advantaged. Many White people

feel that they are “just normal,” do not view their race as an important part of their identity, or do not even think about belonging to any racial group. If White students are relatively unaware of their whiteness, how they enact it, and how they benefit from it, it may be challenging for them to see why it matters. As they confront the significance of race, White students may employ different strategies to deal with their discomfort such as rebutting the information, shifting the discussion to other social identities and forms of oppression (especially where they are part of the marginalized group), and shutting down intellectually and emotionally. Some learners may feel mired in guilt, shame, fear, or anger.

Students of color and Multiracial students may also resist the content and process. They may balk at seeing themselves as part of an oppressed racial group or as part of a racial group that they may primarily view in a negative light. They may minimize the significance of race given their investment in living the American Dream, belief in a color-blind society, or desire to assimilate into the White dominant culture. The possibility of resistance, in at least one of its many forms, is highly likely in this approach. Therefore, educators need to be prepared with strategies for minimizing and handling it lest they risk losing student engagement.⁴

Even while keeping the spotlight on racial identity, instructors cannot ignore or discount the significance of other social identities. There is a delicate balance of ensuring that the focus on race is not subverted while honoring the reality of the multiplicity of one’s identity. As noted earlier, at the beginning of a class, even with a predominantly single focus on race, students can be asked to think about their identities within numerous social categories and consider which identities are most central to who they are and how they experience the world. In addition, examples of the intersection of race with another social identity can be noted in discussions of the class material and personal experiences. The relevance and interplay of other identities needs to be acknowledged without losing sight of the goals of this approach—developing a basic understanding of race, racism, and racial identity.

ACTIVITIES

The following activities are just a sampling of the myriad ways people educate about race, racism, and racial identity from a single-identity race-centered pedagogy. They include, in particular, ways to examine racial identity which are not always emphasized in teaching about race and racism. Students can:

- reflect on their racial socialization and their experiences learning about their own and others’ race. For example, they can be asked to recount early racial

messages and when they became aware of races being treated differently, or to develop a timeline of significant events in their learning about race, racism, and racial identity.

- look at how they think about and experience their racial identity in different contexts (e.g., their home communities, a workplace, college, recreational activity).
- create a time line of how their own or others' racial identity has evolved. How have they thought about their racial identity at different points in their lives?
- explore the culture of their own or another's racial group(s) and how this influences values, beliefs, patterns of behavior, and worldview.
- consider their experience of race and its significance by asking questions such as, What is it like being a _____ (racial identity) in this community, on this campus, in this workplace? How do you think your experience might be different if you were a member of a different race?
- be informed with concrete examples of racial differences in treatment and opportunities through a variety of sources, such as research studies, statistics, personal stories, films, and observations.
- participate in experiential activities that demonstrate the dynamics of racism and the effects of inequitable treatment on individuals.
- use their knowledge of and experiences with other social identities (both dominant and subordinated) to relate to race, racism, and racial identity development. How can understanding the experience and impact of marginalization, privilege, and identity development in a different form of oppression assist in understanding racial subordination, privilege, and identity development?
- read models of racial identity development or personal reflections on racial identity as points of reference to look at their own and others' experiences. Read personal narratives and identify themes related to racial identity.
- examine internalized racial inferiority and superiority—how people of color and White people internalize the messages from the dominant culture about their racial groups. How do these affect their own and others' sense of self and behavior and intra- and intergroup relations?
- consider the effects of differences in self-ascription of racial identity (how one defines oneself) and others' ascription of racial identity (how one is seen by others).
- learn about the reasons why and history of how racial categories and classifications were created and have changed. Discuss how this has affected people's racial identity and how this is still occurring.
- explore how racial identity has affected how people of color and White people have worked for racial justice and have students develop their own strategies to challenge racism.

In the race-centered, single-identity pedagogical approach, students have the opportunity to examine race, racism, and racial identity as it affects themselves and others. Of course, this is just a beginning step in the exploration of a vast topic. Yet it readies them to investigate racial identity more deeply, in a more multidimensional way.

Race-Centered, Limited Intersectional Approach

A race-centered, limited intersectional approach begins to complicate racial identity by integrating other social identities into the content and discussion. By adding another layer of complexity, a more nuanced, intersectional picture is being formed. Racial identity remains the focus as other social identities are incorporated in a limited way; only one or two other identities are considered simultaneously with race. The social groups explored can be based on which identities are most salient for the student, the teacher feels are most appropriate, or fit the topic of the class. This approach assists students in developing a basic conceptual understanding of an intersectional perspective. The central question in a race-centered limited intersectional approach is: How is one's racial identity shaped by one or two other social identities? How does one's class, sex, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, religion, national origin, ability, or other social identity affect one's racial identity and lived experiences?

CRITERIA FOR USE

This approach is likely to be useful when students have a basic understanding of race, racism, and racial identity. (See learning objectives for the race-centered, single-identity approach above.) Students are able to recognize the significance of race and racism in people's lives and have done some reflection on their own and others' process of racial identity development. They can appreciate the variations in racial identity and social realities, and how context influences how racial identity is shaped and experienced. Through exploring race, students have become familiar with some key concepts and dynamics related to social identities and social inequalities more generally, such as culture, power, privilege, oppression, and internalized inferiority/superiority.

RATIONALE

Students for whom this approach may be useful are those individuals who are ready to build on their foundational understanding of race, racism, and racial identity. Since they have a sufficient grasp of race, they can hold that

while also considering its interaction and intersection with another social identity. They are ready to develop the theoretical and cognitive capability to explore how two or more identities mutually affect and inform each other.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In the race-centered, limited intersectional approach, some of the main goals are for students to understand how at least one other social identity affects racial identity and lived experiences. It encourages students to explore how racial identity evolves, shifts, and gets reconfigured. Objectives that would be appropriate for race-centered single-identity pedagogy might include having students explore how:

- the interrelationship of race and another identity may change over time and depend on the context and circumstances.
- the integration of race with another social identity is not simply additive but creates a new whole which is greater than the sum of the parts.
- different identities in conjunction with race may differently affect one's experience and meaning of their racial identity. For example, what is the difference in how one's racial identity is experienced when considered in conjunction with one's sex versus one's sexual orientation?
- different social identities may have different degrees of salience in intersection with race, which can change over time and context.
- the social status of other social identities (dominant or subordinated) affect one's racial identity and life experiences, including the experience of racial privilege and oppression.
- less salient identities still have an impact on racial identity and lived experiences.
- one's racial identity in intersection with another social identity affects one's understanding of and strategies for racial and social justice.

CHALLENGES AND CAUTIONS

Since this approach calls for greater knowledge and cognitive capability there can be numerous challenges. One potential obstacle is having difficulty or the willingness to consider the *intersectional* relationship among identities, not just that an individual has multiple identities. Often it is hard enough to recognize that people have numerous cultural influences and different degrees of privilege and oppression because of their various individual social identities, much less to see how these interact. Some learners may find it easier to look at the intersectional nature of their own racial identities but

find it more challenging to see it in others; other students may find it easier to look at how others' identities interweave but cannot readily see it in their own lives.

The particular social identities that are being considered in relation to race also raise challenges. Students may have different degrees of *ability* to consider certain identities. If students do not have enough familiarity with an identity and form of oppression, it is difficult to appreciate its interaction with race. This lack of knowledge can impede their own self-awareness as well as their understanding of others. Therefore, students will have greater or lesser ability to comprehend the intersection of race with particular identities based on their level of awareness of those categories of difference.

In addition, students may have different degrees of *willingness* or *interest* in examining certain identities. They may only want to explore the ones that are most salient to them. People of color may resist looking at identities where they are in the dominant group, with the corresponding privileges, and how those affect their racial identity and experience. They may feel that this diminishes their identification with their race and minimizes the acknowledgment of the racism they face. Whites may overemphasize their subordinated identities in order to feel less uncomfortable with their dominant status as White people. Similarly, they may also resist including for study additional dominant identities. Furthermore, when people are deeply immersed in a subordinated identity, it can be particularly challenging for them to examine and integrate other identities. For example, in a group where people were being asked how their race affected their work, a White woman expressed apologetically, "I know my being White matters, but right now I'm in the process of coming out as a lesbian and just can't think of anything else!"

Given these challenges, there are a couple of cautions when using this approach. If only one or two social identities are considered in conjunction with race, students may feel that the ones omitted are being discounted or marginalized. Given the constraints of the class, it may be warranted to limit the areas of study since not everything can be considered in one class. The reason for the parameters of the class can be clearly explained. It is important that students do not infer that some social identities are inherently more important or significant than others or are more central to an individual's racial identity. There is also the danger of conflating differences among forms of identity and oppression. Students may struggle with appreciating both the similarities among axes of identity and forms of oppression as well as the differences. They may need assistance to see how each social category has its own unique contribution to one's racial identity and experiences.

ACTIVITIES

There are many ways students can be encouraged to gradually develop a more intersectional analysis of racial identity. Below we list some suggestions that can be adapted for different kinds of classes. The focus is on only one or two identities simultaneously with race. Even when looking at racial identity in a limited intersectional way, activities can have varying degrees of complexity and require different levels of cognitive ability. Educators need to consider the readiness of the students even when choosing strategies within this approach. If students have limited knowledge about a particular dimension of difference that they will be considering in relation to race, it might be helpful to review it first as a single identity before looking at its intersection with race. In a race-centered limited intersectional pedagogy, students can:

- think about the relationship of a particular social identity category in conjunction with race as they engage with different curriculum materials or self-awareness activities. The following questions can be used (if looking at class): How is one's race affected by one's experience of class and classism? How is one's race classed?
- identify the one or two social identities they currently feel most affect their racial identity. Have students discuss why they chose that identity(ies) and its impact on their racial identity.
- look at different contexts (e.g., their home communities, a workplace, college, recreational activity) and identify which social identity in conjunction with race is most significant in each of those contexts. Have them discuss why they chose the same or different social identity and how that identity affects their racial identity.
- use a Venn Diagram (two circles that overlap in the middle) to chart the intersection of race and another identity. In one circle, describe key qualities and experiences of one's racial identity, in the other circle indicate the key qualities and experiences of another social identity, and in the middle write the ways they overlap and interact. Ask: How does considering them together change the understanding of them individually?
- look at how the intersection of race and another social identity are experienced differently as the setting changes. How does the experience of one-self change depending on the context? As an example, what is it like being a Latina in a predominantly White women's organization versus in a Latino community meeting?
- create a time line to map how race and another identity have intersected at different times in their own or others' lives and how it has shaped their racial identity. For example, people can look at how their gender has affected

their sense of race at different points in their lives (e.g., elementary school, middle school, high school, college, and beyond). This can be further complicated by also considering contexts within those time periods. They can consider the impact of their age, context, the historical time period, and geographical setting on how their gender influenced their racial identity development.

- do the time line activity above, but instead of looking at the same social identity with race, explore which social identity in conjunction with race was more salient at different times and how it shaped one's racial identity.
- listen to the stories of others or read personal accounts of people's lives and identify ways those individuals' identities and experiences were shaped by the intersection of their race and another identity. Have students examine the forces which shaped their identities, including systems of inequality. Initially it may be useful to hear narratives where those links are more explicit until they can more easily do their own analysis.
- consider how self-ascription versus other ascriptions of racial and other identities affect one's experience of race and racial identity. For example, what happens when someone identifies as biracial but is seen as Asian, or an African American is heterosexual but is presumed to be gay?
- read historical accounts, descriptions of current events, and discussions of issues that reflect an intersection of race with another social identity or form of oppression. Analyze how each of these identities intersects to create different experiences. For example, the 2008 Democratic presidential race with Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton could be used to analyze how race and sex interacted to create some interesting personal and political dynamics.
- analyze or conduct research on an issue or social problem that involves race using an intersectional framework. Which intersecting identities and forms of oppression are most central to understanding and addressing this issue? How might this be addressed from an intersectional perspective?
- explore how the intersections of race and other social identities with dominant or subordinate statuses affect experiences of racial privilege and oppression and alter self-concept. What happens when a dominant or subordinated identity is considered along with a racial identity that is dominant or subordinated? How does this affect the experience of racial privilege or oppression?
- examine how the interconnections between race and another social identity create connections and barriers to working together for social justice. For example, explore the dynamics between Black men and Black women in the civil rights movement, or between White, middle-class, and low-income Black and Latino activists in the environmental justice movement.

Throughout the activities within this approach, students can have opportunities to deepen their discussion of the intersection of race and other social identities by looking at key dynamics. When students are asked to reflect on their own identities and experiences, they can compare their responses with others in order to notice the similarities and differences within and between racial identity groups and consider what accounts for these variations. They can explore the impact of different social identities, the status of identities (from privileged or oppressed groups), the impact of the particular context, and role of other personal and societal factors.

A race-centered limited intersectional approach provides extensive opportunities to explore and deepen the meaning of racial identity. It allows learners to understand what an intersectional approach entails and how it informs our understanding of the complexity of racial identity. Being able to grapple with the content draws on and develops cognitive skills and flexibility. These are expanded further in the next approach.

Race-Centered Multidimensional Approach

A race-centered, multiple intersectional approach allows for a more complete exploration of how race intersects with other social identities. In this approach, any number or categories of social identity can be considered simultaneously in conjunction with race. This approach offers an opportunity to examine the shifting interplay of race and other social identities. It best captures the complexity of how racial identity develops, evolves, and shifts.

The central question in a race-centered multiple intersectional approach is: How is one's racial identity shaped by one's class, sex, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, ability, and/or other social identity? How do these other identities interact with each other and with race to affect one's experience of race and racial identity?

CRITERIA FOR USE

This pedagogical approach is most appropriate with learners who already understand an intersectional perspective, have sufficient grasp of racial issues, and have a strong grounding in other forms of social identities and social oppression. Students have the content knowledge as well as the cognitive capacity to conceptualize and wrestle with the interplay of multiple identities and social realities.

They are ready to engage in a more comprehensive examination of Intersectionality and racial identity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives that would be appropriate for race-centered multiple intersectional pedagogy might include having students explore how:

- various social identities simultaneously intersect and affect the experience of racial identity.
- the salience of different social identities in intersection with race may change over time and context.
- the meaning of race in conjunction with other social identities may change over time and vary based on context. For example, in the U.S., Muslim men from an Arab country are viewed differently now than before 9/11/2001.
- different combinations of social identities may have different effects on one's experience and meaning of racial identity. For example, how differently is racial identity conceived when considering sex, sexual orientation, and gender versus class, ethnicity, and national origin?
- the experiences of privilege and oppression across various forms of inequality interact and affect one's racial identity and experience of racial privilege or oppression.
- less salient identities impact one's racial identity.
- the intersectional mix of social identities affects one's understanding of racism and strategies for racial and social justice.

CHALLENGES AND CAUTIONS

The main challenges of this approach are holding multiple, overlapping identities simultaneously. While not every identity needs to be considered in every situation, several will be explored at the same time. The ability to look at the intersection of several axes of identity as they relate to race is not a simple task. It requires students to have sufficient knowledge of many categories of difference and be able to retain their particular qualities as they contribute to an intersectional picture. Moreover, a race-centered multiple intersectional analysis entails being able to consider changes over time and context—to look at how racial identity shifts and evolves in conjunction with other identities.

As noted in previous approaches, there can be resistance to or difficulty examining social identities that are less salient, especially those in dominant groups. Students of color may see this approach as diluting the centrality of, or deflecting attention away from, racism and giving White people the comfort of focusing on subordinated identities. White students may in fact gravitate toward their other subordinated identities to the exclusion of other

dominant identities. There can also be competition regarding which identities are really most significant or most oppressive.

ACTIVITIES

Many of the activities in the race-centered intersectional approach build upon and expand the educational strategies discussed in the race-centered limited intersectional approach. Additional identities are added to the analysis. Any social identity can be considered in conjunction with any other social identity, along with race. For reader ease, the relevant activities previously listed in the race-centered limited intersectional approach will be restated in their expanded form. To develop an understanding of racial identity from a broader intersectional perspective, students can:

- identify the various social identities they currently feel most affect their racial identity. Have them discuss why they chose these and how they affect their racial identity and lived experiences.
- look at different contexts (e.g., their home communities, a workplace, college, recreational activity) and identify which social identities in conjunction with race are most significant in each of those contexts. Have them discuss why they chose the same or different mix of social identities in the different contexts and how those identities affect their racial identity and lived experiences.
- examine how changes in one identity within a constellation of identities impacts one's experience of race and racial identity. For example: How might it be different being an Asian, working-class, able-bodied male versus an Asian, working-class, able-bodied female?
- create a time line to map how race and different social identities have intersected at different times in their own or others' lives and how those have shaped their racial identity. They can also consider the contexts within those time periods as well as their age, geographical location, and the historical time period.
- do a similar time line as described above but hold constant the other social identities. Have students consider how those social identities affected their own or others' racial identity at different points in their lives.
- analyze personal stories, historical accounts, biographies, or descriptions of current events that reflect an intersection of race with other forms of social identity or inequality. How do these identities intersect with each other and with race to affect racial identity and lived experiences?
- analyze or conduct research on an issue or social problem that involves race (e.g., employment opportunities, college experiences, or media images) using an intersectional framework. Ask students which mix of social identities and

forms of oppression in interaction with race are most central to understanding and addressing this issue. Have students propose solutions using an intersectional perspective.

- explore how the statuses of other social identities (dominant or subordinated) affect the experience of racial privilege or oppression.
- consider how one's racial identity in intersection with other social identities affects one's understanding of racism and other forms of oppression and strategies for social justice.
- examine how the intersections of one's racial identity and other social identities create connections and barriers to working together for social justice. For example, explore the dynamics of how White women and women of color with varying class backgrounds, sexualities, and religious/spiritual identities worked together in the women's movement.

Full Intersectional Approach

A full intersectional pedagogical approach creates a more holistic picture of how social identities shape one's sense of self and lived experiences. It allows people to consider how all social identities are integrated and interact. Racial identity is no longer the focal point. Other social identities are not viewed in reference to or through the lens of race. Race is examined in the context of other social group memberships and as one component of a person's overall sense of self. While race remains part of the mix, its salience may fluctuate as other social identities take on varying degrees of significance at different times. This approach encourages students to consider how identities interplay, mutually shape each other, and affect experiences of privilege and oppression. While all social categories can be considered, not all will necessarily be examined simultaneously. Given the focus on racial identity, it may be appropriate to ask students to look at the influence of race in particular. In this approach, the question becomes, how is one's social identity shaped by one's race, ethnicity, sex, sexuality, gender, religion, ability, national origin, and other social identities? How do these social identities intersect and interact with each other, across contexts, to affect social identity and lived experiences? What role does race play in this integration?

CRITERIA FOR USE

This is a highly complex approach that will likely be most effective when students already have a strong understanding of not only race, racial identity, and racism but other social identities and forms of oppression. This approach requires an understanding of Intersectionality and experience using this

framework. If learners are able to look at racial identity from an intersectional perspective, they may be ready to expand their analysis to include how all social identities, including race, interrelate to shape one's identity and how one experiences the world.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives that would be appropriate for a full intersectional pedagogy might include having students explore how:

- various social identities intersect and simultaneously affect one's collective social identity and lived experiences.
- the salience of different social identities may change over time and vary based on context.
- identities that are less salient shape other social identities and impact one's identity and experiences.
- the social locations (dominant or subordinated statuses) of one's various identities interplay and affect one's social identity and experiences of privilege and oppression.
- how one's social identity affects one's understanding of systems of oppression and strategies for social justice.

CAUTIONS AND CHALLENGES

Since this approach is the most intersectional and complex, it is the most challenging. Students may struggle with keeping an intersectional perspective, not just a multiple identity perspective. It is easy to fall into examining how each social group membership contributes separately to one's identity and experience, not necessarily how they overlap and mutually shape each other. Learners may also start to lose the distinctiveness and significance of each social identity. It can be hard to acknowledge what each identity contributes while understanding their interplay. There may also be a tendency to overlook or minimize the significance of certain identities.

ACTIVITIES

To keep a focus on racial identity, educators could specifically include exploring the role and influence of race within these activities. Students can:

- look at different contexts (e.g., their home communities, a workplace, college, recreational activity) and identify which social identities are most significant in each of those contexts. Have them discuss why they chose the same or

different mix of social identities in the different contexts and how those identities interact to affect their social identity and life experiences.

- do the activity above but look at which identities are least salient. Have students consider how less salient identities may be relevant, in intersection with other identities, to how they experience the world and are seen and treated by others.
- create time lines to map how various social identities have intersected at different times in their own or others' lives and how those have shaped their collective social identity and lived experiences. For example, people can look at which mix of social identities most affected their sense of self and life experience at different points in their lives (e.g., elementary school, middle school, high school, college, and beyond). They can also consider the contexts within those time periods as well as their age, geographical location, and the historical time period.
- look at similarities and differences within the same intersectional identities. How does the addition of other identities affect one's social identity and lived experiences? For example, how is it different being a White, Jewish, heterosexual woman who is working class versus upper class? How does it further change if we consider age?
- use an intersectional lens to analyze personal stories, historical accounts, biographies, or descriptions of current events. How do multiple identity categories and social inequalities intersect with each other to affect one's experiences and social identity?
- use an intersectional framework to analyze or conduct research on an issue or social problem. Ask students which mix of identities and forms of oppression are most central to understanding and addressing this issue. Have students propose solutions or policies using an intersectional perspective.
- examine their own or others' lives, and explore how the intersection of social identities with different social statuses (dominant or subordinated) affect one's experiences of privilege and oppression.
- Analyze different social change movements. How have people's mix of social identities affected their ability to work in coalition with others for social justice?
- Ask students to identify ways their own social identity can assist them in working for social justice as well as the challenges, given their particular intersectional identities.

Conclusion

As these various pedagogical approaches indicate, an intersectional lens opens up exciting ways to broaden and deepen our understanding of social

identities and social inequalities. In particular, it allows racial identity to be examined with greater breadth and depth. It better captures the complexity and variety of how people make meaning of and experience their racial group membership.

In proposing these pedagogical approaches to teaching racial identity from increasingly more intersectional perspectives, we hope to add to the conversation of how to practically apply intersectional theory. As educators try to put theory into practice, questions and challenges get raised, such as

- Is the pedagogical framework we are suggesting for racial identity appropriate for exploring other social identities?
- How can we help students grasp the intersectional paradigm as a theoretical framework?
- How can we best acknowledge the particularities of each category of difference while recognizing how they simultaneously intersect?
- How can we promote the use of an intersectional approach while being mindful of the needs and abilities of our students?
- How can an intersectional lens help foster commitment to and create strategies for addressing societal inequities?

We know that our own thinking about and experiences with teaching about race, racism, and racial identity using an intersectional approach will continue to evolve. We hope that as others examine the strengths and limitations of what we have proposed and continue to share their own thinking and practices, we will develop increasingly effective strategies for helping students understand and address not only issues of race but all social identities and forms of social inequality, the hallmark of Intersectionality.

NOTES

1. For examples of efforts to incorporate a more intersectional perspective into teaching issues of social diversity and inequality, see Boucher (2011), Carlin (2011), Jones and Wijeyesinghe (2011), Longstreet (2011), and Naples (2009). There are also some collections of readings that address these issues from an intersectional perspective and offer teacher guides along with them, for example, Ferber, Jimenez, Herrera, and Samuels (2009), and Anderson and Collins (2010).
2. For a review of the origins, evolution, and core tenets of intersectional theory, see Berger and Guidroz (2009), Collins (2000), Crenshaw (1991), and Dill and Zambrana (2009).
3. However, Luft (2009) only recommends the use of a strategic singular methodology for race, not gender. She believes that since the current sex/gender formation has a different dominant logic system, rooted in gender essentialism, it requires an intersectional analysis.

4. See, for example, Goodman 2011 for strategies for dealing with resistance.

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