

Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice

Monthly faculty development seminar at CSBSJU

Session 1: Identity & Identity Politics

Wednesday, September 25, 2019

Like all of our TDSJ seminars, this session will be structured as a parallel process: You will participate as “students” in a set of facilitated learning activities, and then step back to reflect on how you might use similar activities, content and teaching tools in your own classes.

To help us use our time well, and to make the process as parallel to that of your students as possible, we offer some “homework” to help you prepare for the session. Although it will be possible to participate without having done any of the homework, doing it will help us engage in deeper learning together.

In this case, we anticipate the homework will take most people 60-90 minutes total, depending on how deeply you decide to engage with it. We know your schedules are busy; if you are not able to do all the homework, doing some of it is nevertheless much better than none! Since you come from many different disciplines and will have different levels of familiarity with the material, feel free to prioritize the pieces that are most new for you or that you think will be most helpful for your learning process. *The “Reflect” piece is the one we will be using most directly during the session, so make sure to at least look it over in advance.*

Read: Please read (or skim) these two very short pieces and one longer one:

- RDSJ#2, “Identities and social locations: Who am I? Who are my people?”
- Kaplan, “Identity,” in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. <http://keywords.nyupress.org/american-cultural-studies/essay/identity/>
- Heyes, C. (2002). *Identity Politics*. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2012 ed.): Stanford University Press. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2012/entries/identity-politics/>

Watch: Please watch this 3-minute video about social locations and “identity olympics”:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRiWgx4sHGg>

Reflect: Complete the activity and reflection questions on the attached handout, “Social Identity Wheel.” The other side of that handout provides definitions and examples.

Social Identity Wheel



■ Race

■ Sex

■ Sexual Orientation

■ Dis/abilities (physical, mental, or other)

■ Ethnicity

■ Gender Identity

■ Religious or Spiritual Afiliation

■ Body size

■ Nationality

■ Gender Expression

■ Age/generation

■ What's missing for you?

Social Group Identities

Social group: A group of people who share a range of physical, cultural, linguistic and/or other characteristics, and to which individuals are assigned based on socially constructed categories, such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender, age, religion, nationality, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, ability/disability status, and first language. (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 1997; Harro, 2000).

Social group identity: One’s sense of oneself as belonging and identification with a particular social group. (Harro, 2000; Whetherell, 1996).

Examples of Social Group Categories	Examples of Social Groups
Sex	Male, Female, Intersex
Gender Identity	Woman, Man, Nonbinary, Genderqueer
Race	Black, White, Latino/a, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, Multiracial or Mixed Race
Ethnicity	African American, Cuban, English, Chinese, Sioux, Jewish, French
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Lesbian, Gay, Queer, Questioning, Heterosexual, Pansexual
Religion or Spiritual Affiliation	Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Bahai’I, Agnostic, Atheist
Socio-Economic Class	Poor, Working Class, Lower-Middle (“Buffer”) Class, Upper-Middle (professional/managerial) Class, Owning Class
Age	Young People, Young Adults, Middle-Aged Adults, Senior/Elder, Children
National Origin/ Nationality	American (U.S.), French, German, Colombian, Sudanese, Thai
Physical/psychological/ mental/learning ability	Temporarily Abled People, People with a Disability such as physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental illness, etc.

Characteristics of social identities

- **Intersecting:** We have many social group identities and experience them simultaneously; they are entangled with each other and define each other in complex ways.
- **Change:** Some of these identities are pretty much fixed over our lifetimes; others (e.g. socioeconomic class, nationality) may change.
- **Choice:** Some of our identities may be chosen to some extent (e.g. religion); others are outside our control.
- **Observable:** Some of these identities are characteristics we can see or hear in another person (or think we can); some are not apparent.
- **Salient:** Salient identities are those we think about consciously. Identities are more or less salient for different people at different times. For example, being a US citizen may not be salient until one travels outside the country.