Free racial and ethical development and identity essay example

Technology, Development

Abstract

Ethical and racial identity is a very important part of a total framework of collective and individual identity. Looking at the minority group in countries like the United States, ethical and racial identities are demonstrated in extremely cognizant ways. This demonstration is mostly generated with two contradictory cultural and social influences. To begin with, deep conscious immersion into cultural values and traditions through educational, neighborhood, familial, and religious communities instills a positive logic of confidence and ethnic identity. Secondly, individuals repeatedly must sieve ethnic identity via media messages and negative handling from others for their ethnicity and race. The information above affirms that the individuals with the status of minorities are largely disadvantaged in the society. Other groups, for example, white Americans, patent racial and ethnic identity in ways that are mostly unconscious through their assumptions, beliefs and behaviors. This is so because for those societal standards are build priorities, values, cultural, ethical, and racial frameworks then they refer to this combination as culture of Standard America and not an identity of ethnicity. This is evident every day in ways of life of the Americans, and their attitudes and behaviors. In most of the minority norms and cultures, they rarely install particular identities in line with ethnicity. However, this paper signifies that ethnic identity and multicultural framework are very essential for learners in the learning surroundings. Thus, this essay reviews appropriate ethnic and racial identity literature to enhanced comprehension in what way it appraises adult learning.

Definition of Ethnic and Racial Identity

The paradigms of ethnicity and race in America are difficult and complex to frame and define. This is a topic that is widely discussed in philosophy, theology, literature and Psychology among other field hence different expects have come up with different definitions making the demarcation of terms even harder (Harris 2). Racial identity in itself has been understood as others get the meaning from its social dimension while others get the meaning from its biological dimension where the quality of personality, gene pools and physical characteristics of an individual defines an individual (Spickard 14). Employing these characteristic distinguishing features, Europeans majorly group persons hierarchically by moral qualities and physical abilities, with the leading being Caucasians then Asians, Native Americans and lastly Africans at the bottom of the ethnic ladder. Nevertheless, if we look past these features, racial groups have more resemblances than variances (Littlefield, Lieberman, and Reynolds 35). However, today, definitions of social dimension are the most dominant (Helms 3). This is where most people distinguish themselves as different from others basing on their skin color. In most cases, the color of the skin plays a very big role of how certain individuals are handled.

Therefore, ethnic distinctiveness is also a social difference or contrast. Actually, skin color identifies a person with a portion of a society hence functioning as an identity card. This group defined by color share cultures, norms and sometimes origin where they can be taught about themselves and sometimes other persons which makes these segments important in a way (Yinger 200). Whether unconsciously or consciously individuals will

identify themselves with a group or people with whom they feel they share a common connection out of similar beliefs, values, behaviors and traditions. This segments that connect people allow them proudly know who they are and find the world around them meaningful. Conversely, there are situations where an individual feels shameful and disconnection when they are identifies with a certain group especially in situations where negative ethnicity is observable giving negative public messages room to dominate. Thus, ethnic distinctiveness development entails an individual moving in the direction of a greatly conscious relation with their traditions, beliefs, behaviors, and cultural values. Racial and ethnic identity models offer a theoretical assembly for individuals to understand and appreciate their mediation and that of other cultures as well.

Models of Racial and Ethnic Identity Development

Theories and models of ethnic and racial identity progress have speedily increased in the last two decades as most people are coming to terms with the fact that the United States is more racially and ethnically diverse. Additionally, there are many other psychological and social theories that try extensively to define the ' self' and they too agree this is a term that is difficult to define (Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito 84; Helms 57). Thus, both cognitive and psychological structural models are phase models that allow growth in a stepwise development, while up-to-date models define ethnic and racial identity to be a lifelong process.

Development of Racial Identity

The original intent for development of these models was ensuring that the experience of the blacks in the United States is understood. One of these models is that of Cross (1971) where he shows a fit black progressing starting as a non-Afrocentric then progresses to Afrocentric and lastly multicultural distinctiveness. This transformation involves persons moving from whole ignorance of race via accepting the black culture totally heading to commitment to numerous cultures in addition to addressing all oppressed groups concerns. Cross's model is a very imperative part of delineation ethnic identity as a vibrant progression as inclined with persons in a specific ethnic group and others and it recognizes multiculturalism and ethnocentric frames. However, the major weakness of this model by Cross is that he starts that blacks are unaware of the race of others and even their own race before they experience or know identity

Another model is that by Parma (1989). For him, racial or ethnic identity development cycle is a lifelong activity that goes on continuously for blacks. His theory suggests that persons go through feelings of anger towards whites that leads to development of a positive black reference frame. As a result, bicultural realization and objective racial identity is achieved. Parham relays white people directly to black identity in a manner that moves the blacks from the unconscious to conscious. It goes on to emphasize that when blacks disagree with the Western culture and/or the negative treatment received from other because of the differences in color, they develop self-consciousness and feelings of being different from others which leads to consciousness or awareness of racial identity. Nevertheless, Parham's model

promotes a sense of development or progression. Additionally, it shows that there is growth from unconsciousness to consciousness in relation to racial identity. The weakness of this model is its statement that the principle cause of racial identity development is exposure to racial differences that cannot be avoided. Relatively, we consider the chief trigger for separable racial identity is engagement in one's own racial devolution and group of a racial self via that entanglement.

Next, is Helms (1993-1995) that is credited for developing another model of white racial identity. The model she came up assumes that the presence of institutional, cultural, and individual racism accepts white superiority. In fact, she shows that stages are a limiting factor since one individual is capable of being in more than one specific stage at a particular time. Her initial three standings outlines clearly how a white individual evolutions and distances themselves from a frame of racism before they find out a non-racist identity as whites. The strong part of this model is its emphasis that racial identity development strongly relies on interracial exposure. However, its weakness is that does not distinguish between racial identity development and a non-racist frame development leading to confusion. Helms gives evidence that whites ration identity revolves around their behaviors, feelings and perceptions towards black persons instead of consciousness and development of an authentic white racial identity.

The Helms, Parham and Cross models of racial identities all discuss and debate self-racial perception and a connection between racial awareness of others. Therefore, it is evident that every individual's self-consideration of

ethnic and racial identity is imperative. Additionally, how we look and perceive others plays a very big role in consciousness and development.

Ethnic Identity Development

This is another model that mainly focuses on what community and family teaches persons about their culture. Thus, there can be no ethnicity without shared geography, religion, language and culture. Moreover, people of one ethnicity are connected by kinship, proximity and strong loyalty (Torres 85). Elements that comprise learned culture include behavior, symbols, and rituals that patent themselves from fundamental assumptions, beliefs and values (Ott 127). Thus, commonalities that are expected within a specific group are specified by models of identity development. Three of these concepts are what we have discussed as this concept's representative. Walking Stickk Garrett and Garrett (1994) gives a descriptive or expressive model of Native Americans worldview and identity. They propose a number of elements of Native American perspectives and ethnic values comprising the meaning of humor, balance, harmony, spirituality and tribe. For examples, elders are a very important part of Native Americans life as they are used for reference and they are highly honored by their members who take culture seriously and identify with it. Therefore, individuals in Native America become more useful to the community as they grow older since they are considered to have gathered much wisdom that they ought to share with others in the tribe. Walking Stick Garrett and Garrett's model is therefore useful in making available some logic of communal patterns and structures of Native American's worldview, identity, and values. Moreover,

they compare each native element with major culture, discuss how cultural immersion contributes to Native identity development nature, and suggest how one can successfully work with clients from Native America. However, it is imperative to note that each ethnic population can have its own differences which sometimes are very huge hence all the models mentioned are only guides to some of the ways in which ethnic identity manifests itself. Katz (1989) identifies 15 distinct perspectives and values of identifying white American culture in her evocative and descriptive model of worldview and ethnic identity. This is spread from a notion of time that is guarded and linear as a product or service, to a win-loss alignment that is connected to the competition value. White American individuals also seem to reward and value autonomy and independence. More so, Katz goes ahead to state that individuals in this class or with these believes mentioned cannot comprehend shared culture or even connect well to others. I find this model to be more objective as it does not hold the idea that all whites were born racists. However, it does not clearly state the steps that the whites go through to form an identity in ethnic line. Furthermore, this model does not address absent or activators of ethnic identity consciously.

Phinney (1990) comes up with another model that she considers better than the rest as she argues that it can apply to all groups. Phinney states that every ethnic group has conflict that come about because of their being members of a group that is not dominant and these must be resolved. To begin with, groups that are less dominant must resolution the prejudicial and stereotypical of the white population that is dominant towards individuals of non-dominant group which leads to creating of a danger to their self-

concept. Secondly, the resolved value system clash between dominant and non-dominant groups is imperative since it gives the minority group a chance to discuss bicultural value organizations or systems. This model is advantageous in that it recognizes actual consciousness triggers and outlines facing ethnic self-concept. Nonetheless, it lacks a discussion of the positive and critical elements of absorption into an individual's culture. Additionally, the resolution of the issues outlined largely depends on the cultures strength. Our experience demonstrates this. Alicia, who is Native American and Hispano, was raised in northern New Mexico which is her ancestral home. This village of Taos is really isolated allowing its members opportunities to hold majority of positions both in the government and educational sector. Additionally, there are versed business opportunities. Moreover, relationship, time and other aspects in daily routine of culture are basically a combination of both Hispano and Native American culture. Thus, Alicia could constantly refer to her culture even when away from home as it molded her. This was a big challenge for her when she went to the United States to study as she could not get why some things were happening in a certain manner. She also realized that her culture is viewed differently which awakened a consciousness to the ethnicity of others and hers as well (Chavez 107).

On the other hand, Florence made efforts to resolve her ethnicity issues by understanding the Italian culture well and also took her time to understand other cultures in climbing the social ladder and understood the culture that was dominant. Her daily life involved a mixture of Catholicism rituals, symbols and tangled customs. Habitually these cultural inspirations were

interspersed by unambiguous dissimilarities. For example, attending mass early every Sunday as it is with Italian Catholics, roll meatballs with Grandpa Guido for lasagna and plodded grapes together with Guido that would be used for red table wine. On the other hand, mama exhilarated her daughter to join the Cotillion, junior league and stop dating her Mexican lover as a result of German's influence to South Texan beliefs. Thus, this two cultures awakened in Flo the power to move in the two worlds and cultures present in her world and also developed consciousness of ethnic identity.

Implications for Adult Learning

It is challenging to understand how environments of education are affected by our ethnically and racially demarcated sense of self, of education and of learning. Complications come about for many international and minority adult learners when they try to transfer learning settings that have been built in an ethnic base of beliefs, behaviors, and values and different from their own ways of doing things. Unfortunately, these ethnic and racial indicators are usually unintentionally applied by peers and educators in the process of learning making them problematic to modify, examine and identify. Those, educators should make an effort to make what is termed as invisible to be visible in their roles as educators and in the learning environment. In addition, educators get a room of developing practices that fit in multiculturalism. Also, multiculturalism manner of doing depending on styles, perspectives and knowledge must be included in a multicultural learning environment. Secondly, a strong learning community should be characterized with ability to challenge, support and honor every learner

despite their uniqueness and different contributions. Ethnic and racial identities thus have very strong influence to the relationship between learning environment and individual learners.

In most cases, white children receive education that cements their culture and ways of life. Thus, these students do not get a chance to learn about other cultures which makes it a struggle for them to adopt to educational environments characterized with multiculturalism. Additionally, there is a great possibility that they might find it tough to communicate with other student from deferent cultures as their communication skills do not develop very well. However, some whites and learners from other groups get the opportunity to experience learning out of their culture, norms and beliefs which makes it possible for them to cope with different learning environments. Therefore, for education to be greatly valuable, it is important to create learning environments that accommodated and respects diverse cultures. These can be achieved by designing individual and collaborative tasks, encouraging discussion and reflective activities, and employing relational, written, visual, and many other styles of learning (Gardner 286). Activities and Curricula must be visibly and consciously multicultural to involve a diversity of knowledge bases and worldviews. Beside, educators should always consider the relationship between how an effective learning environment is defined and the present cultural activities and practices in different communities. They should also consider what a successful learner is characterized with to know the effectiveness of the method employed. In many occasions, educators would feel comfortable when they have established the setting considering their own norms and ignoring

multiculturalism. We can also not ignore that the different experiences that learners present to the learning environment largely depends on their ethnic and cultural identities. Thus, this is a major factor in what affects learning environments. Most international and minority members bring about experiences of having to survive or negotiate educational treatment of negative and invisibility stereotyping, lowed expectations, abuses and sometimes hostility (Ott 72). These individuals therefore get the ability to compare different cultures and give an objective observation. Lastly, educators can build positive communities of multicultural learning by teaching in dependable, self-sharing and rational ways, by offering and encouraging lenient handling of multiple points of view and by enabling a feeling of respectful and humble community for learning in the learning environment. Additionally, educators should help learners grasp the essence of developing multicultural skills and understanding as it largely fuels and enhances the learning experiences.

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