Difficult Dialogues, Privilege and Social Justice: Uses of the Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) Model in Student Affairs Practice
Sherry K. Watt

Rearticulating Whiteness: A Precursor to Difficult Dialogues on Race
Robert Reason

Racial Microaggressions as Instigators of Difficult Dialogues on Race: Implications for Student Affairs Educators and Students
Derald Wing Sue, Madonna Constantine

A Socialization-Based Values Approach to Embracing Diversity and Confronting Resistance in Intercultural Dialogues
Alex L. Pieterse, Noah M. Collins

“What do You Mean by Whiteness?": A Professor, Four Doctoral Students, and a Student Affairs Administrator Explore Whiteness
Stephanie Power Carter, Michelle Honeyford, Dionne McKaskle, Frank Guthrie, Susan Mahoney, Ghangis D. Carter

When the Dialogue Becomes Too Difficult: A Case Study of Resistance and Backlash
Wilma Henry, Dedrie Cobb-Roberts, Sherman Dorn, Herbert A. Exum, Harold Keller, Barbara Shircliffe

Dealing with Institutional Racism on Campus: Initiating Difficult Dialogues and Social Justice Advocacy Interventions
Michael D'Andrea, Judy Daniels

Traversing Boundaries: Dialogues on Christian Privilege, Religious Oppression, and Religious Justice
Ellen E. Fairchild, Warren J. Blumenfeld

Queer(y)ing Religion and Spirituality: Reflections from Difficult Dialogues exploring Religion, Spirituality, and Homosexuality
Lucy LePeau

Engaging Men in Difficult Dialogues about Privilege
Chris Loschiavo, David S. Miller, Jon Davies

Beyond the Binary: Gender, Identity, and Change at Brandeis University
Lyndsay J. Agans

When White Women Cry: How White Women’s Tears Oppress Women of Color
Mamta Motwani Accapadi

Implications for the Privilege Identity Exploration Model in Student Affairs Theory and Practice
Dawn R. Johnson, Susan D. Longerbeam
The Southern Association for College Student Affairs, an independent, regional association, has as its mission to be an exemplary organization for practitioners, educators, and students engaged in the student affairs profession. Although published by a regional association, The College Student Affairs Journal (ISSN 0888-210X) is national in scope. It is an official publication of SACSA and is published twice a year.

Editorial Board

EDITORS
Dennis Gregory
Old Dominion University

SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Don Gehring

Class of 2007

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Bonnie Daniel
Univ. of Tennessee-Martin

Pamela Havice
Clemson University

Phyllis McCluskey-Titus
Illinois State University

Jeanette Barker
University of Georgia

Jennifer Lease Butts
University of Connecticut

Gypsy Denzine
Northern Arizona Univ.

Jeff Doyle
Appalachian State Univ.

Sherry Mallory
Indiana Univ. Southeast

Judy Rogers
Miami University

Marc Shook
University of Alabama

Norleen Pomerantz
Radford University

Bonita Vinson
Texas Lutheran University

Class of 2008

Anne L. Ward
Old Dominion University

Class of 2009

Anne L. Ward
Old Dominion University

Editorial Board

EDUCATION
Denise Collins
Indiana State University

Randy Hyman
Univ. of Minnesota, Duluth

Frances Pearson
University of Memphis

Janet Laughlin
Danville (VA) Community Coll.

William Haggard
Univ. of North Carolina, Asheville

Camilia Jones
Kansas State Univ.

John Mueller
Indiana Univ. of Pennsylvania

Christy Moran
Kansas State Univ.

Terrell Strayhorn
Univ. of Tennessee

Diane Warloyd
Appalachian State Univ.

Maureen Wilson
Bowling Green Univ.

Linda Jameison
Presbyterian College

Carole Hughes
Boston College

Andrew Wilson
Emory University

Audrey Jaeger
North Carolina State Univ.

Lori Patton
Iowa State University

Janice Austin
Virginia Tech

Bob Ackerman
Univ. of Nevada Las Vegas

Sarah Marshall
Central Michigan Univ.

Guidelines for Manuscript Authors

Purpose: The College Student Affairs Journal publishes articles related to research, concepts, and practices that have implications for both practitioners and scholars in college student affairs work.

Types of Manuscripts Accepted: General articles may be research reports, updates on professional issues, examinations of legislative issues, dialogues and debates, historical articles, literature reviews, opinion pieces, or projections of future trends. Authors may also submit reviews of works in any medium, such as books or films.

Publication Schedule: Twice yearly, fall and spring.

Circulation: 1,200.

Index: Current Index to Journals in Education and Higher Education Abstracts.

Concurrent Submissions to Other Publications: Not accepted.

Style Guide: Manuscripts should follow the style of the fifth edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). Authors should particularly note this manual's recommendation to use active voice and first person narration. All copy should be typed, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font with notes, references, tables, and figures appearing at the end of the manuscript per APA style.

Special Format Guidelines: The first page of the manuscript should include the article title; the name, position, and institutional affiliation of each author; and appropriate contact information for editorial response. The article’s first text page should include the manuscript title, but no information that would identify any author.

Recommended Length: Manuscripts submitted for the Articles section generally range between 3,000 and 6,500 words including abstract, tables, figures, and references. Reviews may be between 1,000 and 2,000 words.

Figures and Graphs: Supply camera-ready art.

Manuscript Submission: The College Student Affairs Journal uses an electronic submission and review process. Authors should submit by e-mail an electronic copy of the manuscript/review in Microsoft Word format (for PC) to the Journal editor, Dr. Dennis Gregory, Old Dominion University, dgregory@odu.edu.

Review Process: All submissions are refereed using a blind review system. Evaluative criteria include significance of topic, clarity of presentation, style of writing, usefulness to practitioners and/or importance for scholarship, contribution to the student affairs profession, and quality of methodology or program. Notification of acceptance or rejection of all manuscripts will be made by the editor. All manuscripts received and approved for publication become the property of the association. All others will be returned on request. The editor reserves the right to edit or rewrite accepted articles to meet the Journal's standards.
Editorial

Dennis E. Gregory, Senior Editor.

SPECIAL GUEST EDITOR’S NOTES

Sherry K. Watt.

ARTICLES

Difficult Dialogues, Privilege and Social Justice: Uses of the Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) Model in Student Affairs Practice
Sherry K. Watt.

Preventing for Difficult Dialogue

Rearticulating Whiteness: A Precursor to Difficult Dialogues on Race
Robert Reason.

This article reviews findings from a related study of 15 White racial justice allies, which highlighted the importance of re-articulating a sense of Whiteness. The author explores how the rearticulated sense of Whiteness demonstrated by these students may assist others to mitigate some of the defense mechanism discussed in the Privileged Identity Exploration Model.
Racial Microaggressions as Instigators of Difficult Dialogues on Race: Implications for Student Affairs Educators and Students  
Derald Wing Sue and Madonna Constantine. 136  
This article defines racial microaggressions and discusses their role in instigating difficult dialogues concerning racial and ethnic issues in student affairs classroom settings. The authors present four reasons that dialogues on race are difficult for many White Americans.

A Socialization-Based Values Approach to Embracing Diversity and Confronting Resistance in Intercultural Dialogues  
Alex L. Pieterse and Noah M. Collins. 144  
The dynamics of resistance articulated by the Privileged Identity Exploration model highlight the need to acknowledge the role of socialization in the formation of attitudes and behaviors that can support identities of privilege. Exploring individual and group related socialization processes in the context of a difficult dialogue might facilitate an atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect between participants.

Difficult Dialogues on Campus

Race

“What do You Mean by Whiteness?”: A Professor, Four Doctoral Students, and a Student Affairs Administrator Explore Whiteness  
Stephanie Power Carter, Michelle Honeyford, Dionne McKaskle, Frank Guthrie, Susan Mahoney, and Ghangis D. Carter. 152  
Four doctoral students, a faculty member, and an administrator reflect on difficult dialogues that took place during a seminar on whiteness. Privilege Identity Model (PIE) was integral in understanding students’ reactions and reflections.
When the Dialogue Becomes Too Difficult: A Case Study of Resistance and Backlash
Wilma Henry, Dedrie Cobb-Roberts, Sherman Dorn, Herbert A. Exum, Harold Keller and Barbara Shircliffe. . . . .          160

This case study explains varied perspectives on a difficult dialogue. It provides recommendations which can be used by student affairs professionals and faculty members who teach courses with content related to diversity, social justice, and privilege.

Dealing with Institutional Racism on Campus: Initiating Difficult Dialogues and Social Justice Advocacy Interventions
Michael D’Andrea and Judy Daniels. . . . .          169

The authors describe social justice advocacy interventions to initiate difficult discussions at the university where they are employed. They emphasize the need to foster difficult dialogues about the problem of institutional racism among students, faculty members, and administrators where they work. The Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) model is also discussed.

Religion and Sexuality

Traversing Boundaries: Dialogues on Christian Privilege, Religious Oppression, and Religious Pluralism among Believers and Non-Believers
Ellen E. Fairchild and Warren J. Blumenfeld. . . . 177

A dialogic model for the discussion of issues related to Christian privilege and religious oppression of minority religious groups and non-believers in the United States is presented. Dialogue circles are used to create and maintain a true multicultural community on campus.
Queer(y)ing Religion and Spirituality: Reflections from Difficult Dialogues exploring Religion, Spirituality, and Homosexuality
Lucy LePeau.  . . . . . . 186

This article describes a student affairs practitioner’s experience with co-instructing a course entitled, “Queer(y)ing Religion and Spirituality”. The ways practitioners can facilitate difficult dialogues with students about the intersection of spirituality and GLBT issues are explored.

Race and Gender

Engaging Men in Difficult Dialogues about Privilege
Chris Loschiavo, David S. Miller and Jon Davies.  . . 193

Male privilege is one aspect of social inequality that underlies much of the oppression and violence that occurs on college campuses. Mad Skills, a program addressing power and privilege with college men, is described along with general recommendations about how to engage men in difficult dialogues. The PIE Model is used to describe defensive behavior observed in college males.

Beyond the Binary: Gender, Identity, and Change at Brandeis University
Lyndsay J. Agans.  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 201

This article offers a case study outlining promising practices and effective dialogues on transgender issues. Also presented are methods for student affairs professionals to foster organizational change to serve transgender student needs also are described.
When White Women Cry: How White Women’s Tears Oppress Women of Color
Mamta Motwani Accapadi. . . . . . . . . . . . 208

This article focuses on the tension that arises as the result of the intersection of social identities, namely gender and race. A case study uses the PIE Model to consider ways in which white women benefit from white privilege through their interactions with women of color.

Response

Implications for the Privilege Identity Exploration Model in Student Affairs Theory and Practice
Dawn R. Johnson and Susan D. Longerbeam. . . . . . 216

This article comments on the utility of the Privilege Identity Exploration (PIE) model in student affairs theory and practice and draws upon examples from the preceding article.
EDITORIAL

Dennis E. Gregory, Senior Editor

Dear Readers,

It is a pleasure for me to write to you for the first time as Senior Editor of the College Student Affairs Journal. We have an excellent editorial board and have been blessed with a large number of excellent manuscripts from which to choose for future editions. I would also like to introduce Ms. Anne Ward who is a graduate student in our higher education program at ODU, and who is serving as the graduate assistant for the Journal. In addition to assisting me with editorial tasks, she will be working to digitize past issues of the journal so that we can increase the circulation and make past articles available through the Internet and electronic databases.

We have recently signed a contract with EBSCO to assist us with broader electronic distribution of future issues and I am working with ERIC to have us listed/available through the ERIC database. All of these changes will broaden the impact of our “national” journal and allow us to provide assistance to graduate students and scholars who wish to cite our articles. As we are able to make past issues available on-line, our Journal will also increase its impact.

I would like to invite all of you who receive this Journal to submit manuscripts for consideration for future issues. As the Journal increases in national importance, this becomes a prime place to publish your scholarship. Whether it is an article for a special issue like this one, or one for our general issue we want to have contributions from SACSA members as well as those from outside of the region.

Dr. B.J. Mann has agreed to serve as the editor of our next special issue. Dr. Mann has recently completed her dissertation on the history of SACSA, and will edit a special issue on the history of student affairs, with emphasis on the South. We invite you to contact her at mannbj@gmail.com if you would be interested in contributing a manuscript for this special issue. We would also like to have your ideas for other special issues of the Journal for the future. If you have an idea for a special issue please contact me at dgregory@odu.edu.

Finally, I would be remiss if I failed to mention the excellent work of Dr. Sherry Watt who has served as editor of this special issue. She has done yeoman’s work on this issue and has drawn together a superb group of authors to address the issue of difficult dialogues. This issue is unlike many of our issues in that it includes a large number of theoretical, analytical, case study and program descriptive articles rather than quantitative research. It addresses

THE COLLEGE STUDENT AFFAIRS JOURNAL.
many of the most difficult issues facing student affairs and higher education today and allows us to look inside of ourselves and face our own prejudices and those of our institutions and students. It also lays out, thanks to the creation of Sherry Watt’s PIE model, a theoretical basis for examining defenses used by all of us as we face discussions of these issues. The work of Sherry and her colleagues is enlightening and controversial and is certain to stir emotions and thinking.

Please call upon me if you have ideas about ways to improve the College Student Affairs Journal, if you have ideas for future issues, if you wish to submit a manuscript or if you would like to be considered for a place on the editorial board. I look forward to your feedback.
For the purposes of this special issue, the term *diversity* refers to raising awareness about promoting inclusion of historically oppressed groups (i.e. racial minorities, women, people with disabilities) and developing an appreciation of cultural difference (Goodman, 2001). Social justice goes beyond raising awareness and requires that individuals challenge dominant ideology and advocate change in institutional policies and practices (Goodman, 2001). According to Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004), a multiculturally competent student affairs professional is aware of his/her own assumptions, biases, and values; possesses an understanding of the worldview of others; is informed about various cultural groups; and has acquired the skills to develop appropriate intervention strategies and techniques. Additionally, he/she has the ability to integrate this knowledge throughout other core competency areas of student affairs practice (i.e. administrative and management, helping and advising, teaching and training, etc.). Extending on that definition, I suggest that being competent in this area means that he/she also understands that one will never reach an ultimate level of knowledge and awareness about the self and various cultural groups. One understands that his/her identity, awareness, and skills are constantly evolving in response to new information being received about the self or the other. Therefore, a multiculturally competent student affairs professional is continually seeking to raise his/her awareness and develop skills that help him/her to effectively address diversity and social justice issues. This requires that he/she develop the stamina to sit with discomfort, to continuously seek critical consciousness, and to engage in difficult dialogues.

Critical consciousness is the ability to assess and take action against the social, political, and economic elements of oppression in a society (Friere, 1970). Critical consciousness about diversity develops when one’s own privileged status is explored, often through engaging in emotionally charged dialogue with others. The term *privileged identity* refers to an identity that is historically linked to social or political advantages in this society. Privileged identities include not only racial (White), but also sexual (Heterosexual), gender (Male), and ability (Able-bodied) identity. Defending these aspects of our identity is often kindling for difficult dialogues. A *difficult dialogue* is a verbal or written exchange of ideas or opinions between citizens within a community that centers on an awakening of potentially conflicting views of beliefs or values about social justice issues (such as racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism/homophobia).

Student affairs practitioners need to be effective at facilitating these difficult dialogues so that we can lead our campuses in creating welcoming diverse environments. To be effective facilitators, we must directly address issues related to privileged identity during these discussions about diversity.

*THE COLLEGE STUDENT AFFAIRS JOURNAL*
Therefore, the purpose of the special issue is threefold: (1) to move conversations about diversity and social justice in the student affairs profession in a new direction by taking the focus away from specific groups or segmented ‘isms’ toward a broader discussion of privilege, social justice, and the intersections of ‘isms’, (2) to explore different facets of social justice and privileged identity as they relate to race, sexual orientation, religion, and gender (transgender, women, and men), and (3) to impart practical strategies for faculty, students, and student affairs practitioners who are facilitating difficult dialogues. Together the articles in this issue consider two questions: What do we need to know to be effective facilitators of difficult dialogues? What strategies can we employ to facilitate productive dialogues on diversity and social justice?

This special issue opens with a feature article that introduces the Watt Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) Model. After the description of the PIE model, the manuscripts are divided into sections, namely, Preparing for Difficult Dialogues and Difficult Dialogues on Campus: Race, Religion and Sexuality, as well as Race and Gender. The special issue concludes with an article that explores the practical implications of the PIE model and reviews the preceding articles.

As a reader, I hope that you will approach the articles in this special issue with an inquisitive nature. Understand that privilege as it relates to diversity and social justice was introduced in the late 1980’s by Peggy McIntosh. While that was almost 20 years ago, theorists and researchers today are in the early stages of articulating this concept. Therefore, the exploration of privilege and what that means is a fairly recent body of knowledge that we are still defining. I want you to consider ways the information in this special issue considers more historical perspectives on injustice and also attempts to build a bridge to new conversations about diversity, privilege, and social justice. Whether you agree or disagree with what you read in this special issue, I hope that you will be inspired to have conversations with friends and colleagues about the content. I want you to be stimulated to ask thoughtful and interesting questions of yourself and others about the struggle for diversity and social justice. Lastly, I hope that you will also consider how what you read will inform your practice as a student affairs professional. It is my hope that the works presented in this issue and the ensuing conversations will assist in moving the student affairs field forward in our efforts to make campus environments more diverse and welcoming.
Difficult Dialogues, Privilege and Social Justice: Uses of the Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) Model in Student Affairs Practice
Sherry K. Watt*

This article will introduce the Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) Model. This model identifies eight (8) defense modes associated with behaviors individuals display when engaged in difficult dialogues about social justice issues. Implications for the model and ways it can be used to assist facilitators as they engage participants in discussions about diversity are discussed.

If student affairs practitioners are to foster more diverse and welcoming campus environments for our students, then we must find ways to have more meaningful discussions about diversity, privilege, and social justice. Our college campuses as well as the global markets for college graduates are becoming more diverse. Higher education administrators are searching for ways to prepare college students today to be productive workers in settings populated with individuals from various social, political, ethnic and racial backgrounds. While students attending college today may have been exposed to diversity (Coomes & Debard, 2004), they likely have not thoroughly explored their own identity and what it means to function honorably in a multicultural community. Therefore, America’s higher education institutions need to encourage the youth of today to engage in difficult dialogues that help them to thoroughly examine their privileged identities.

The purpose of this article is to introduce the Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) model that represents behavior often presented by individuals when engaged in difficult dialogues about diversity, privilege, and social justice. I will begin by defining the terms diversity, privilege, social justice, multicultural competence, and difficult dialogues. Additionally, I will discuss the challenges I face when facilitating workshops and classes on the topic of diversity. Finally, I will introduce the PIE model.

* Sherry K. Watt is an associate professor at the University of Iowa. Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to sherry-watt@uiowa.edu.
There are many ways to define diversity. For the purposes of this special issue, the term diversity refers to raising awareness about promoting inclusion of historically oppressed groups (i.e. racial minorities, women, people with disabilities) and developing an appreciation of cultural difference (Goodman, 2001). Social justice goes beyond raising awareness and addresses “issues of equity, power relations, and institutionalized oppression” (Goodman, 2001, p. 5). Social justice requires that individuals challenge dominant ideology and advocate for change in institutional policies and practices (Goodman, 2001). To advocate for social justice, individuals must raise their awareness and reevaluate the dominant value system that operates within the American culture. This awareness about diversity comes as one develops critical consciousness about his/her own privileged status. According to Freire (1970), critical consciousness is the ability to assess and take action against the social, political, and economic elements of oppression in a society. As Peggy McIntosh’s (1989) essay entitled White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack has pointed out, critical consciousness about sociopolitical issues often comes when one confronts his or her own privilege.

Multicultural Competence and Critical Consciousness

There has been a significant amount of research in the counseling and student affairs fields that describes the route to raising critical consciousness (e.g. Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller, 2004; Arrendondo, 1999). Regardless of the route, critical consciousness does not come without one engaging in difficult conversations and facing what it means to be privileged. According to Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004), a multiculturally competent student affairs professional is aware of his/her own assumptions, biases, and values; possesses an understanding of the worldview of others; is informed about various cultural groups; and has acquired the skills to develop appropriate intervention strategies and techniques. Additionally, he/she has the ability to integrate this knowledge throughout other core competency areas of student affairs practice (i.e. administrative and management, helping and advising, teaching and training, etc.). Extending that definition, I suggest that being competent in this area means that he/she also understands that one will never reach an ultimate level of knowledge and awareness about self and various cultural groups. One understands that his/her identity, awareness, and skills are constantly evolving in response to new information being received about the self or the other. Therefore, a multiculturally competent student affairs professional is continually seeking to raise his/her awareness and develop skills that help him/her to effectively address diversity and social justice issues. This requires that he/she develop the stamina to sit with discomfort, to continuously seek...
critical consciousness, and to engage in difficult dialogues. In part, becoming culturally competent involves becoming aware of one’s own privileged status in relation to racism, sexism, ableism, classism, etc. on a personal and political level. Most often, that awareness comes through having emotionally charged dialogue with others.

**Difficult Dialogues**

A difficult dialogue is a verbal or written exchange of ideas or opinions between citizens within a community that centers on an awakening of potentially conflicting views of beliefs or values about social justice issues (such as racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism/homophobia). Discussions about diversity, privilege and social justice are often sources of discomfort for faculty, staff, and students on college campuses. Student affairs professionals are the appropriate campus constituents to lead these discussions and must search for ways to effectively facilitate these uncomfortable dialogues. This type of discomfort often leads to one feeling that he/or she is being attacked and the need or requirement to defend oneself or one’s views. To do so, student affairs practitioners must be able to assess and manage defenses used by those engaged in these exchanges. Defensive behaviors related to a privileged identity can be displayed in reaction to protecting one’s existence not only with regard to race, but also other dominant identities such as being heterosexual or able-bodied. These defensive reactions often surface during workshops or courses where individuals are in training to increase their multicultural competence. As student affairs professionals, we have seen individuals both engage in and retreat from these conversations. Those who facilitate these difficult dialogues about racism, homophobia, and ableism in educational settings often feel helpless when conversations become heated. Since dialogue is so necessary to critical consciousness, student affairs practitioners need to expound upon ways to facilitate difficult dialogues between constituents in educational settings so that environments are made more welcoming. There are, however, many challenges one faces when facilitating discussions that contribute to raising critical consciousness.

**Challenges in Raising Critical Consciousness**

As a student affairs practitioner and faculty member for over 10 years, I have facilitated a number of workshops and taught many courses on topics of diversity and social justice. Although I have taught courses on these topics in two regions of the United States (South and Midwest), my classes primarily include students who are White, middle-class, heterosexual and, often, female. I face challenges in teaching a homogeneous group of students with chiefly dominant identities. Being both African American and female, I deal with the negative perceptions associated with both my race and my gender, which often
motivates students to undermine me despite the power that is inherent to my professor/workshop leader role. I manage resistant and emotionally volatile reactions of students who are not culturally used to dealing with discomfort as it relates to their social or political identity. Facing these challenges prompted me (1) to search the literature for practical strategies to approach teaching the topics of diversity and social justice, and (2) to conduct research that examined participant reactions to difficult dialogues.

In reviewing the literature and conducting my own research, I learned that it is difficult for students to separate how they evaluate the learning experience from how they personally feel about the instructor and the course content. My experience was supported by research concluding that in many situations, female, gay/lesbian, or racial minority instructors are often rated lower on course evaluations than their counterparts and this can be linked to perceptions of instructor attributes (Nast, 1999; Steiner, Holley, Gerdes, & Campbell, 2006; Williams, Dunlap, & McCandies, 1999). Approximately 8% of the faculty teaching at universities today are racial minority (Wilson, 2002). Therefore, most college students have been primarily exposed to faculty who are White and male. Given that many students have had limited exposure to female, gay/lesbian, or racial minority instructors, it is not surprising that their perceptions of the instructor and the content of these courses becomes intermingled. These intermingled perceptions can motivate students to respond with resistance to class discussion that creates dissonance and introduces uncertainty about how they view the world. I discovered through conducting research that participant responses to difficult dialogues have patterns (i.e., Watt, Curtiss, Drummond, Kellogg, Lozano, Tagliapietra, Nicoli, & Rosas, in preparation). I learned that if I can anticipate these patterns, then I can be better prepared to respond in a productive way.

Resistance can be expected, especially when teaching homogenous groups of students with primarily dominant cultural identities (i.e. Goodman, 2001; Mio & Awakuni, 2000). There are frameworks that help practitioners understand students’ reactions during difficult dialogues about the differences between those with dominant and marginalized identities. For instance, Bennett (1986) developed the Intercultural Sensitivity model which describes a range of responses individuals have to difference. My review of the literature affirmed that creating experiences that draw a connection between emotion and intellect is a necessary part of unlearning social oppression (Young and Davis-Russell, 2002). While it is often uncomfortable to experience, I find that the most effective teaching strategy is to stimulate students to both think and feel. Next, I will describe the background of the model, its underlying concepts, assumptions, and definitions and present examples of typical reactions.
The Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) model identifies eight defensive reactions which occur when one is being encouraged to reflect on their social, political, and economic position in society (see Figure 1). The term privileged identity refers to an identity that is historically linked to social or political advantages in this society. Privileged identities include not only racial (White), but also sexual (Heterosexual), gender (Male), and ability (Able-bodied) identity.

The PIE model is designed to assist practitioners who are using strategies that are focused on raising individual’s critical consciousness by encouraging them to dialogue about their privileged identities. Practitioners can use the model as a tool to help them anticipate defensive behaviors and devise a strategy to prevent productive dialogue from being derailed.

Background. This model is based on the results of research that examined participant responses to difficult dialogues about racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism (Watt et. al., In Process). From 2001 to 2006, the research team collected qualitative data including personal narratives and reaction papers (over 200 papers) written by seventy-four helping professionals in training before, during and at the end of an annual offering of a course in multiculturalism. The research team assessed the reactions to difficult dialogues about social justice issues for master's level helping professionals in training. This preliminary investigation included nine participants and their twenty-seven reaction and narrative papers. The research question addressed by this analysis was: In what ways do students express resistance in reaction to difficult classroom dialogues about racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism? The results of the study indicated that there were eight identifiable behaviors or defense modes displayed by these participants.

Theoretical Foundation

Defense modes are primal responses as defined in psychodynamic theory and the work of Sigmund Freud (1937). In other words, defenses are displayed to protect the ego when one has a provoking experience that puts one's conception of the self into question. The PIE model is a conceptual framework that is grounded in psychodynamic theory in that the eight behaviors identified in the model are primal responses one has to cognitive dissonance introduced by a new awareness (dissonance provoking stimuli) about self or the other. Cognitive dissonance, as described by Festinger (1964), refers to the tension one feels when holding at the same time two incompatible cognitions. Figure 1 depicts a relationship between the defenses and a new awareness that is not hierarchical, but is directional. In other words, it does not describe a series of
defense modes displayed by those who are beginners in exploring their privilege and another set of defenses used by those more experienced at exploring their privilege. Instead it identifies primal responses individuals have when being introduced to a new awareness about an issue related to diversity and social justice, regardless of their years exploring these issues.

_Fear and Entitlement._ The concepts of fear and entitlement undergird the entire conceptual framework and are the base of the figure (see Figure 1). Fear and entitlement are considered innate responses to the threat of change to one’s conception of his or her social role. Fear is “to be afraid or feel anxious or apprehensive about a possible or probable situation or event” (Wordnet). In the PIE model, fear is the reason one may avoid and ultimately defend against going deeper in exploring their privileged identity. Entitlement is “an attitude that presumes ownership and power based on social/political contracts” (Watt, 1999). In the PIE model, entitlement can be viewed as another version of fear. When facing what it means to be privileged, individuals may unconsciously fear giving up power, and use defenses to retreat back to the comfort that exists within their dominant identity. Entitlement may also explain why individuals present defensive behaviors during dialogue. They view their participation in the exploration of their privileged identity as optional. In other words, they do not have to go deeper in exploring their privileged identity and they use defensive behaviors to avoid it. Fear and entitlement are underlying motivators for defensive behaviors presented during difficult dialogues. Thus fear and entitlement are the motivators, albeit unconscious, for presenting a defense mode.

_Six Assumptions._ There are six assumptions to the PIE model. 1). The exploration of privileged identity is an on-going socialization process. 2). There is no ultimate level of consciousness that can be reached regarding one’s privileged identity. 3). Engaging in difficult dialogue is a necessary part of unlearning social oppression (i.e. racism, sexism/heterosexism/homophobia, and ableism). 4). Defense modes are normal human reactions to the uncertainty that one feels when exploring their privileged identities in more depth. 5). Defense modes are expressed in identifiable behaviors. 6). Expressions of defense modes may vary by situation.

_Categories and Defense Modes_

The eight defense modes are described below categorized by behaviors one exhibits when Recognizing, Contemplating, or Addressing his or her privileged identity. As you can see in Figure 1, the defenses are presented over a range in response to an initial presentation of new and dissonance provoking awareness and continue through taking socially just action related to this new awareness.
Recognizing Privileged Identity describes reactions when individuals initially are presented with anxiety-provoking stimuli about social injustice. They include Denial, Deflection or Rationalization. Contemplating Privileged Identity explains participant reactions when they are beginning to think more intently about stimuli related to diversity and social injustice and they may display Intellectualization, Principium, or False Envy defenses. Addressing Privileged Identity portrays behaviors of participants who are attending to their dissonant feelings about social injustice related to this new awareness, and are involved in some action to resolve the issue. They may express the defenses of Benevolence or Minimization. Once these defenses are presented, they can hinder productive dialogue about issues related to diversity and social justice. Below I will describe each defense mode and give an example of the behavior.

**Recognizing Privileged Identity**

**Denial.** A Denial defense can be identified by a person arguing against an anxiety-provoking stimuli by stating that it does not exist. This defense is usually precipitated by receiving information about an injustice done in American society to a particular group. Persons displaying Denial may acknowledge the injustice, but make contradictory statements that indicate that they are having difficulty accepting it as a reality. For instance, in response to hearing new information about how skin color can gain or deny a person access to resources in American society, one might say “I worked hard for where I am today and deep down I don’t really want to recognize my White privilege because I don’t want to have this White privilege and I am not sure it exists. I just don’t believe it exists, I mean look at how many Blacks are on television today.” This defense describes a primal response where the individual is having difficulty processing the difference in her reality and that of people of color in America, therefore denying the information she is receiving by stating evidence to the contrary.

**Deflection.** A person employing a Deflection defense may make a comment that avoids coming to terms with the realities of racism or heterosexism by deflecting the focus toward a less threatening target such as a parent or the school system. For example, in response to being introduced to a thought-provoking article about racism, an individual might state, “One thing I can say for sure is I have some anger at the school system for not teaching me about multicultural issues. We were never taught about the privileges White people have. In fact, as I grew, I rarely thought about racism unless I heard or read something that had to do with it which wasn’t very often.” This person’s primal reaction is to focus on the school system as the cause for her dissonance and to explain why she was not taught this information earlier.
Rationalization. A Rationalization defense can be identified by behavior in which an individual supplies a logical response regarding why atrocities happen in the realm of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism. An individual might present an alternative reason that does not require him or her to explore the roots of injustice in more depth. In response to a discussion about injustice done to sexual minorities, a person might respond,

A lesbian friend of mine says it hurts that I can’t accept all of her. Her sexual identity is important to her and it causes her pain that my not accepting this part of her puts a blemish on our friendship. I too say the same thing about my religious beliefs and yet by saying so I am branded intolerant and ignorant. The opposite side needs to accept the idea that others can like them and not accept this part of them.

A primal response in this case included a comparison and a contrast of experiences to attempt to resolve the dissonance brought about by this conflict.

Contemplating Privileged Identity

Intellectualization. An Intellectualization defense can be identified when a person avoids feeling dissonant by focusing on the intellectual aspects associated with the topics of social injustice. For example, one person might state, “I realize that racism exists and that Latinos experience racism. But it is just a matter of numbers and American jobs. If we focus on making the climate better, then more illegal immigrants will come to America and that will make it so that there are less opportunities for Americans and enough of our own are unemployed and homeless.” This person’s primal response is to attempt to resolve the dissonance by presenting intellectual arguments to explain why this injustice is happening.

Principium. A Principium defense can be identified by behaviors where one is avoiding exploration based on a religious or personal principle. A person using this defense might state, “I find it upsetting and disheartening that homosexuals, or anyone for that matter, would have to bear such injustices. However, I do not believe that it is an injustice or discriminatory act to not allow homosexuals couples to cross the threshold of qualifications to be married.” The primal response in this defense is based on a principle and that rule is used to explain the contradiction of feelings and to attempt to alleviate the conflict.

False Envy. A False Envy can be identified by behavior that displays affection for a person or a feature of a person in an effort to deny the complexity of the...
social and political context. For example, a person might respond to a
discussion about racial injustice by stating, “Sometimes I wish I were a
different race. Yes, being White is nice sometimes, but I think that people of
other races are cool. They have an identity to claim as unique, that bends the
social rules of normal, yet they are still normal and very strong. And what I
wouldn’t give to have a tan all of the time”. A primal response in this defense
includes a shift toward various surface-level admirations and an avoidance of a
deeper exploration of the complexities of race in society.

Addressing Privileged Identity

Benevolence. A Benevolence defense is when one presents behavior that
displays an overly sensitive attitude toward a social and political issue based on
a charity act. The following statement is an example of this defense, “I have
attended numerous fundraisers to help members of my community who are ill,
disabled or have suffered some type of devastation. Each time I have felt
overwhelmed by the feelings of support and gratitude expressed by those
receiving the help. I know that injustice exists, but I feel like if I keep helping
those who are less fortunate than I, then I can make a difference”. This primal
responses focuses on acts of goodwill rather than how reaching down to help
those less fortunate than yourself can contribute to maintaining the current
dominant society structure. These responses avoid exploring how acts of
charity are centered on both the power of the giver and the powerlessness of
the target population.

Minimization. A Minimization defense can be identified by comments that
reduce the magnitude of a social and political issue down to simple facts. In
response to a discussion about cross-cultural values, a person might respond,
“I would like to learn about other cultures, what they want to be called,
whether or not to maintain eye contact, and what some of their values are. It
seems like if I can learn some of these details, and then I will know what to do
in cross-cultural situations”. A primal response in this defense shifts the focus
away from wrestling with the magnitude of social injustice and toward sharing
a recipe for cross-cultural interaction.
Managing defensive reactions effectively results in deeper and more meaningful discussions about diversity and social justice. In general, the PIE Model reminds us that there are patterns in human behavior. While the model does not describe all reactions, it does identify a subset. Student affairs practitioners can use what we know about human behavior in this realm, anticipate reactions, and devise strategies to respond to difficult dialogues. Broadly, the PIE model and other similar frameworks (i.e., Bennett, 1986) help remind practitioners how difficult and complex a process it is to raise critical consciousness.

The PIE model assists me as a facilitator in three ways. The model helps me to remember that the defenses my students display are primal and normal. Therefore, it is imperative that I generate unconditional positive regard and non-judgmental understanding for my students. Second, the PIE model helps me to bear in mind that the journey to critical consciousness can be fatiguing. As a facilitator who is charged with the primary responsibility of managing these defenses, I have to monitor my own energy. I have to not only recognize these defenses in others, but I may display them myself. It can be exhausting to manage the many reactions presented during these dialogues. Therefore, I need to acknowledge and affirm the fatigue expressed by my students and felt by myself. While I acknowledge fatigue as a legitimate feeling, I also keep at the forefront of my mind that being tired does not excuse any of us from doing the work necessary for creating a climate on our campuses that is more welcoming for students of all races, genders, sexual orientations, and abilities. Third, I view the PIE model as a step toward moving the conversations about diversity and social justice forward. The model attempts to define behaviors that have the potential to stagnate these conversations. Peggy McIntosh (1989) defined White privilege and identified acts. Prior to her list, this very important concept remained in the abstract. Once she illustrated White privilege, conversations about race and racism began to move forward. I must remember that we need to continue to dissect the process for raising critical consciousness to provide stepping blocks to a forward-moving conversation about diversity and social justice.

**Conclusion**

Discussions about diversity are often sources of discomfort for students. However, students’ awareness of their social and political identity increases once they engage in discussions about diversity, privilege and social justice. This increased awareness often inspires them to be better citizens of the campus community. Student affairs practitioners must continue to effectively
facilitate these uncomfortable discussions and engage students in creating a welcoming multicultural environment. The PIE model helps practitioners to understand the reactions of colleagues (and ourselves) as we engage in difficult dialogues. The model provides a framework for practitioners to anticipate these reactions which afford them an opportunity to be prepared to respond in effective ways.

References


woman educators discuss how we deal with student resistance to
Wilson, R. (2002). Stacking the deck for minority candidates? Chronicle of
Higher Education, 48(44), A10-A12.
WordNet, Cognitive Science Laboratory Princeton University, 221 Nassau St.
Young, G and Davis-Russell. (2003). Dealing with difficult classroom
dialogue. In P. Bronstein & K. Quina (Eds.), *Teaching gender and multicultural
awareness: Resources for the psychology classroom* (pp. 347-360). Washington, DC:
American Psychological Association.