

“One Voice” International Conferences 2009
The One Voice Institute of Elemental Ethics and Education

Paul Carlson, Ph.D., Ed. D., University of Houston-Victoria

Diane E. Prince, Ph.D., University of Houston-Victoria

Paul Carlson is a professor at the University of Houston-Victoria teaches Linguistic, Diversity, and Special Education Courses. Presently he is in the final stages of writing a textbook on Diversity and Education. He holds an Ed.D. from Univ. of Mass/Amherst with an Interdisciplinary Program in Anthropology Linguistics and a Ph.D. from Ohio State University in Special Education.

Dr. Prince holds a Ed.D. from the University of Houston and teaches in the areas of the Foundations of Education that includes history and philosophy. She has held positions of Chair and Dean of Education at the University of Houston-Victoria. Her research interests include the areas of Cognitive-Moral Development and the History of Education.

This paper will give Educators information on Identity Groups and indicate the necessity for having knowledge of these in schools and classrooms.

Identity, as it is normally treated by educational researchers and policy makers, is a set of relatively static group-centered markers. Ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status cordon off students (and sometimes educators) as defined groups. These groups are seldom viewed as dynamic and socially constructed.

Dynamics of identity

There are within-individual variations and between-individual variations. The salience of identity changes with setting, experience, and age. The most frequently cited identity groups such as those above are *transcendent*. That is, their identity originates in the general society and they receive specific local definition in local settings such as schools.

Single factor identities seldom provide more than a crude picture of identity in education. The experiences of males and females from the same ethnic group often vary significantly. Sexual orientation, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity all interact. Thus “counting” students by the usual identity markers does not reveal inter-group experiences (e.g., between students and faculty of different ethnic groups). Therefore, they fail to incorporate the multiple identities of individuals. The educational experiences of each identity group are far more complex than can be revealed either in quantitative group research or in case studies.