

Mapping Social Identity Timeline

<p>Overview</p>	<p>This activity asks students to create a visual map of their socialization in some aspect of identity (such as race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) through the course of their life. Students will create a timeline of their lives, noting at what ages they learned particular lessons about their identity, by whom those lessons were taught, and how those lessons were taught.</p> <p>Students can refer to the Cycle of Socialization handout to help them understand the relationship between identity and socialization. This handout offers a diagrammatic representation of how social identities such as race, gender, sexuality, and class are constructed and reinforced by socio-cultural interactions and context. It prompts students to reflectively engage with aspects of their own identities, and identities they learned about but do not share, to consider how their understanding of identities is enforced and how they reinforce or challenge the socio-cultural construction of identities. This activity could also be paired with The Social Identity Wheel activity to help students determine which aspects of their identities they might like to further explore in this exercise.</p> <p>The activity includes questions for reflection and discussion that will encourage students to recognize the larger social context of identities and how identities are socially constructed and maintained.</p>
<p>Goals</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To help students understand the ways their identities were learned and policed throughout their lives. This can prompt students to question the pervasive essentialization of identities. 2) To assist in challenging normalized policing of gender, sexuality, and race in social groups. 3) To emphasize the difference between messages students receive about their genders, classes, and races depending on what groups they belong to. For example, white students might not remember learning anything about whiteness from television as whiteness is normalized and abundantly represented in television. Students of Color, on the other hand, may have memories of learning negative messages about their racial groups from television.
<p>Implementation</p>	<p>This activity and the accompanying Cycle of Social Identity handout are suitable as an introduction to socialization and identity. Instructors should preface this activity by introducing the Cycle of Social Identity. The Social Identity Wheel could also be used to prepare students for this deeply reflective exercise. The Mapping activity should be followed by a discussion to debrief and synthesize what students learned from their independent reflection.</p>

	Questions and instructions can be projected on the board or printed and distributed. It may also be helpful for students to see a completed timeline as an example.
Challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The students may not perceive the activity as relevant to the course and thus may exhibit resistance. The learning goals of the activity should be emphasized in the introduction and reiterated in the debrief.2) Students with relative privilege may feel inclined to cite instances in which they were treated poorly during their socialization as evidence of reverse sexism or reverse racism. Instructors should approach this activity with a sense of how they plan to respond to misunderstandings such as these.
Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) 11x17 sheets of paper (enough for each student)2) If available, but not necessary, rulers for each student3) Cycle of Socialization handout (enough for each student)
Citations	Resource adapted for use by the Program on Intergroup Relations, University of Michigan.

Session Sequence

Lesson Structure	Time <i>(Estimated amount of time for each component)</i>	Activity Content and Instructions
Introduction	5 mins	The instructor welcomes the class and provides an overview of the lesson, introducing the concept of socialization through identity (such as race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.)
Mapping Social Identity Timeline	15-20 mins	<p>Students will work individually on their timelines.</p> <p>Explain the exercise to students and project/write mapping instructions on the board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Choose a social identity that you would like to reflect on and examine. 2) Using your paper, you will map what you have learned about this identity in the following manner: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Draw a straight, horizontal line in the middle of the paper b. Write the identity you are mapping on the top of the paper c. Section the horizontal line with four vertical lines in roughly equal parts d. Chart each section according to age <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16 to present ii. Students may also think in terms of school life: preschool, elementary, middle/junior high, high school, and college 3) In mapping, refer to the cycle of socialization handout <p>Questions for students to consider or answer on their map:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What messages did you hear/learn about being____? • Where did the messages come from? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parents, other family members, religious organizations, schools, teachers, media, other institutions, peers, etc.) • What behaviors were encouraged, rewarded, and supported? How? • What behaviors were discouraged, unsupported, and punished? How?
Small Group Discussion	10-15 mins	<p>Students will be in pairs or triads and discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When were you first aware of yourself as a member of____ group? • When were you first aware of people from other groups in this category? • When did you first experience being treated differently because of your membership in this group?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When did you first witness someone being treated differently because of membership in another group?
Large Group Debrief	10-15 mins	<p>As a whole class discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What key insights did you arrive at through this activity?• What/who were some of the biggest influences on your understanding of the identity you chose to map?• How will insights gleaned from this activity influence how you understand the identity you chose to map?