Group Activity: Exploring Diversity Websites

Please read: First, explore the diversity website assigned to your group and answer the below questions. Then, as a group, discuss your answers. In the last ten minutes, each group will share their findings and conclusions with the class. (Definitions and an example can be found on page 2.)

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Hendrix College	Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration	U.S. Office of Personnel Management

1. How does the organization define diversity?
    a. If their definition is not explicit, offer your own interpretation given the information included in the page. If their definition is explicit, explore whether their website is consistent in its use of the definition. (Please follow links on the website, in addition to the first page you land on.) To help you, consider these questions:
        i. Does the organization describe diversity as:
            1. Racial justice?
            2. Beyond race?
            3. An institutional value?
            4. And/or an institutional characteristic?
        ii. Does the organization use "diversity displays" to signal ideas about race and/or ethnicity?
2. Given your answer to the first question, would you argue the organization's use of the term is racist, anti-racist, both, or neither?

Definitions:
- **Racial projects** are "simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial identities and meanings, and an effort to organize and distribute resources (economic, political, cultural) along particular racial lines" (Omi and Winant 2014: 125).
    - A **racist project** "creates or reproduces structures of domination based on racial significations and identities" (Omi and Winant 2014: 128).
    - **Anti-racist projects** "undo or resist structures of domination based on racial significations and identities" (Omi and Winant 2014: 129)
- **Diversity display** – "…diversity programming that is outwardly focused… regardless of whether such displays or programming is effective or beneficial for those who are typically the objects of diversity" (Okuwobi, Faulk, and Roscigno 2021: 386).
- **Color-blind racism** is an ideology that relies on race-neutral language and ideals of individualism to interpret current racial dynamics (Bonilla-Silva 2006)
- Diversity as:
    - **Racial justice** –Diversity efforts are described as a way to combat racial inequality.
    - **Diversity beyond race** – The organization minimizes race when defining diversity or uses the term ambiguously to leave room for interpretation.
    - **An institutional value** – Diversity is described as an ideal of the institution (like empathy, creativity, and self-understanding) but ideals remain separate from goals surrounding equity.
    - **An institutional characteristic** – Given its demographic make-up, the organization is a provider of diversity.

An example:

      I explored the website for Ohio State's [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#) (ODI). The website is somewhat vague in how Ohio State defines diversity, though the office's programming and description suggest the office is heavily invested in promoting racial diversity. Most of its support groups are for Black and Latinx students, and the website largely displays Black community members.

      I think Ohio State's ODI describes diversity as beyond race given its ambiguous use of the term. But the website also describes diversity as an institutional characteristic and value. The description of diversity as a value is noteworthy as it connects diversity to overall productivity and workplace well-being. Despite not defining diversity as a social justice initiative, the organizations involved with ODI undo structures of domination through academic, financial, and social support for students of color. Still, by othering students of color, the website implies that the normative Ohio State student is white, reproducing structures of domination based racial significations and identities. Therefore, the organization's use of the term is both racist and anti-racist.

Works Cited

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