Speaking the Language of Diversity & Inclusion

Presented by:
T. M. Linda Scholz, Associate Professor,
Communication Studies, EIU
Richard G. Jones, Jr., Assistant Professor,
Communication Studies, EIU

Making Excellence Inclusive

❖ Signature AAC&U Initiative

❖ Started informally at EIU in November 2012

❖ Website: http://www.eiu.edu/mei

Dominant/Nondominant Groups

❖ Dominant groups include those who usually enjoy more economic and social advantages in society

  ❖ Cultural power

  ❖ Socializing power via control of institutions

  ❖ Set status quo and parameters for what is "normal"

❖ Nondominant groups include those who traditionally have been less privileged (economically and socially) than others

Key Terminology

Dominant groups	Othering
Nondominant groups	Stereotypes
Personal narratives	Prejudice
Myth of meritocracy	Discrimination
Essentialism	Discriminatory silence
Privilege	Racism
Whiteness	Institutionalized racism
White privilege	Visible/Invisible identities
Color blindness	Invisible identities
Ideology of domination	Misogyny
Power	Heteronormative practices
Hegemony (ideology)	Homophobia
Assimilation	Equality and equity
Oppression	Tolerance and acceptance

The Power of Narratives

❖ Key to understanding experiences of identity is sharing and listening to personal stories

❖ Personal stories allow those from historically marginalized groups to contest the master narrative

❖ It is through communication that culture and identity are produced, maintained, and transformed

Assumptions about Difference

❖ Individuals of dominant groups:

    ❖ Tend to overestimate presence and inclusion of minorities

    ❖ Tend to overestimate similarity in terms of beliefs, attitudes, values, and backgrounds

    ❖ Tend to feel uncomfortable during discussions of "diversity"

    ❖ May feel that including minorities means excluding majorities

    ❖ Tend unconsciously connect "difference" with nondominant groups

Results and Impacts of Assumptions

❖ Tendency to "blame the victim"

❖ Tendency to minimize the experiences of others

❖ Myth of meritocracy

 ❖ "Bootstraps Model"

❖ Essentialism

 ❖ "They All Look/Act Alike"

Privilege

❖ Brenda Allen states that we all inherited a "system of handedness" that benefits some and disadvantages others

❖ Privilege:

  ❖ "Makes life easier; it is easier to get around, to get what one wants, and to be treated in an acceptable manner."

  ❖ Allows people to be oblivious to how their lives differ from others.

❖ Most of us simultaneously occupy privileged and nonprivileged social identity groups.

Whiteness and White Privilege

- A process of universalizing - white identity as the standard

- Whiteness works through white identity
    - White identity acquires meaning and privilege through whiteness

- Whiteness' relationship to white identity:
    - Produces color blind logic, discrimination in hiring practices (and segregation), etc.
    - Is produced through conformity and therefore sameness
    - Produces a framework through which racialized identity is understood through difference

Whiteness and White Privilege

❖ **White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack**

  ❖ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ga3lbyRO17A

❖ **Melissa Harris-Perry: The deaths of black men in America**

  ❖ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bzzoC1Y8I4

Power

- ❖ A state of differential levels of societal and structural privilege

- ❖ Ideology of domination

- ❖ Power and communication
  - ❖ The group with the most power determines the communication system
  - ❖ Rarely does communication occur between "equals"

Hegemony

❖ The domination of culture by one particular group, resulting in the empowerment of certain cultural beliefs, values, and practices over others.

Hegemonic Ideology

❖ Subordinate cultural groups accept the ideas of the dominant group (even if it disempowers them).

❖ Acceptance of ideas without questioning their validity.

❖ Provides a sense that things are the way they have to be.

❖ Asserts that its meanings are real and natural.

❖ IT CAN BE AND IS RESISTED

Assimilation

❖ A type of cultural adaptation where the individual gives up, willingly or unwillingly, facets of their cultural practices, beliefs, and behaviors (often with long term implications).

❖ The "melting pot" metaphor

   ❖ Presently seen as an "outdated" metaphor/system for the United States.

Oppression

❖ Refers to the "**systematic institutionalized** mistreatment of one group of people by another."

Othering

❖ The process of marginalizing nondominant groups (e.g., women, some ethnic and racial groups, some religious groups) by defining them in relationship to the dominant group.

   ❖ In *discourse* sounds something like, "you know, 'those' type of people"

   ❖ In *practice* fails to include the "voices" and "behaviors" of difference in various contexts

Stereotypes

❖ A set of 'limiting' and often negative assumptions and **beliefs** about the physical, behavioral, and psychological characteristics of a particular group or class of people.

Prejudice

❖ An attitude (usually negative) toward a group based on little or no evidence

Discrimination

❖ The behavior that results from stereotyping and/or prejudice—overt actions to exclude, avoid, or distance oneself from other groups.

Discriminatory Silence

❖ The public or private withholding of speech, specifically the withholding of voiced objections to statements that dismiss, disconfirm, or alienate a person because of racial, ethnic, or cultural origin when the ethical action would be to speak up.

Racism

❖ A prejudice and/or discrimination based on the social construction of 'race.'

    ❖ Differences in physical characteristics (e.g., skin color, hair texture, eye shape) are used to support a system of inequities.

Institutionalized Racism

❖ Subtle, often invisible *systematic* discrimination that does not explicitly use skin color as the subordinating mechanism.

❖ Decisions are based on other factors such as skill level, technology skills, or education that *appear* to be racially neutral but still *produce* discriminatory results.

Visible and Invisible Identities

❖ *Visible identities* are those identity characteristics that we often read (often correctly yet sometimes incorrectly) through a person's outward appearance. These traits give indicator to how we perceive an individual (e.g., one's ethnicity, one's sex, one's approximate age).

❖ *Invisible identities* are those identity characteristics that we often cannot or do not know about a person from their outward appearance (e.g., sexual orientation, political affiliation, religious identity).

Misogyny

❖ Hatred of women

❖ Connected to ideology of patriarchy

Heteronormative Practices

❖ Discourse and behavior that works to mainstream or typify heterosexual practices while silencing the practices and identities of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) individuals

❖ Example: when parents speak to/about their young child with the assumption that the child will grow up and "date" or "marry" someone of only the opposite sex.

Homophobia

❖ The fear of being labeled homosexual and/or the hatred of homosexuals.

   ❖ Being homophobic doesnt necessarily mean that you enact violence thorough physical means.

   ❖ Many "gay" individuals often have to work out of their own homophobia that they learned through mainstream socialization.

Equality and Equity

- **Equality** is the *ideal* of promoting just and equal treatment across the board with issues of civil rights… (strive for this one)

- **Equity** is the practice of promoting *fairness* in pragmatic ways (e.g., policy) in the socio-political world. (a practice a practice to help people feel and have a sense of fairness in their lives)

Tolerance and Acceptance

❖ *Tolerance* is employing social respect and/or acknowledgement of a socially valued and recognized diverse identity, particularly when you may not agree with the identity due to your own value system

  ❖ (i.e., a caring or respectful tolerance).

❖ *Acceptance* is a strong and holistic embracing of diverse identities that are, generally speaking, socially recognized and valued.

  ❖ Here, acceptance is the higher form of practice, but tolerance affords a respect and dignity for diverse identities in socio-cultural life.

Next Steps

❖ Review the terminology to

  ❖ Understand and be able to apply and identify it in everyday interactions

❖ Listening often times is more important than speaking

  ❖ "Don't deny other peoples' realities. Just because it does not happen to you does not mean that it does not exist."

❖ Ask questions for clarification and not accusation.