



CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE & HUMANIZING ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

LeeAnne McNulty, Ed.D.



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Culturally Inclusive & Humanizing Organization Assessment

Introduction

The *Culturally Inclusive and Humanizing Organizational Assessment* is a guide to measure the levels of multicultural inclusion through the representation, communication, practices, policies, humanizing features, and the content of the organization's character. This assessment tool is designed to be a guide to assist organizations, businesses, and educational institutions to ensure they reflect, include, and serve diverse cultures, LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, multiple faiths, formerly incarcerated, English learners, and other traditionally minoritized by the dominant population. The combined attention to multiple cultures provides indicators into the ways organizations, institutions, businesses, and corporations can bend or shift to support employees, customers, students, and those served. *The Culturally Inclusive & Humanizing Organizational Assessment* is a guide for organizations to better support the population served and employed.

Becoming a culturally responsive and humanizing business or organization is not only a way to support employees, students, and customers; it also has positive effects on the bottom line. According to Badal (2014), gender diverse organizations earned 14% higher revenues than non-gender diverse counterparts did and retail businesses saw a 46% increase in revenues. Positive bottom line effects can be realized as synergy as trust and engagement permeate through the organization through educating leadership and employees to value diversity, understand team dynamics, and following procedures which are just (DeMartine, Maffe, and Saddam, p. 14). Demartine et al, (2014) identified procedural justice as an important part of the recipe to increase diversity and inclusivity within an organization. When organizations are fair and just, they increase levels of trust and create the motivation to support an organization. There are many routes to building transparency and trust through equitable hiring practices, shared policymaking, and supportive relationships through building decision-making teams.

What is a Culturally Inclusive Organization?

Culturally inclusive organizations serve diverse cultures that utilize the system by honoring the differences in our histories, perceptions, experiences, and needs. To begin the culturally inclusive organizational assessment process, one must first acknowledge inequities do in fact exist, while intentionally analyzing each aspect of our environments, processes, and policies to develop active responses to transforming daily operations by considering the diverse cultures served. Zaretta Hammond, describes developing a culturally responsive environment as knowing how to create an environment that the brain perceives as safe and nurturing so it can relax, let go of any stress, and turn its attention to learning (p.50, 2015). She applies Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and describes the layers and determining factors the brain goes through to detect and minimize social and physical threats; concluding that our cultural and experiences help shape what our brains determine to be threatening. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is said to be drawn from the Blackfoot Nation's Siksiká which provided much of the theoretical framework, yet was inversely structured.

Conceptually, a sense of belonging leads to a more productive use of time, collaboration, and positive interactions because energy is diverted away from defense mechanisms and towards the achievement of goals. Culturally inclusive organizations welcome diverse groups and utilize their perspectives to build strategic foundations for success.

James A. Banks researched multicultural education for over three decades. In his recent publication, *Transformative Knowledge and Civic Education* (2020), he reiterates the importance of a thorough reconsideration of how schools are organized, ... who is hired to teach, and what builds the curricular content. These values can be transferred to other types of organizations. We need to consider how our organizational design influences who is hired to uphold the system, how employees are represented, and consider the notion that who we serve is as important as how we serve. This means the inclusion of diverse cultures and a shift away from colonized power. Banks advocates for a recognition of multiple forms of communication and understanding. To do this, an acknowledgment of historical oppression and an expansion of global diversity must rise to the surface to drive the contributions towards transformative practices.

A culturally responsive organization is a motivating organization creating a connection between people to serve together in a unified approach with respect and attention paid to each person who enters the space. Ginseberg and Wlodkowski explore the tie between culture and intrinsic motivation. They describe the interrelated conditions that work together to influence the way we approach learning and solution building actions (p.373, 2009). The combination of inclusion, recognition, and safety provide the intrinsic motivation to persevere and succeed.

What is a Humanizing Environment?

Humanizing organizations are human-centered and compassionate. This approach instigates a conscious effort to acknowledge the balance of personal, professional, and familial responsibilities that each person juggles as they navigate their lives. Humanizing the experiences of employees, visitors, customers, students, and investors moves organizations away from reflecting a machine, and brings the parallel to family, neighbor, friend, partner, and colleague. We argue that, in order to be successful, frameworks promoting organizational sustainability should be humanized, that is, they should attempt to further incorporate stakeholders' perceptions toward sustainability and assess their impacts on (un)sustainable behavior (Luis and Silva, p.1, 2022).

Changes may be subtle, such as designing a space to feel inviting. Other changes may be bold, for example, changing the trajectory of an entire organization through mandatory shifts in approach, vision, or mission. Adding professional development training to ensure every employee who works for an organization knows the culture and values, while providing explicit examples is another way to improve organizational humanizing. A humanized organization begins with trust, rather than expecting trust to be an earned outcome. To humanize an educational institution many times means slowing down enough to observe possible disconnects and add a human touch in the areas known to be barriers to success. These steps and examination take time and experimentation based on best practices. Some known barriers can be altered, others can be removed altogether, but organizations must stop long enough to find out. "Sometimes you have to slow down to go fast," Jeff Olson.

Decades ago, Paulo Friere described this approach as a way to release historical oppression. He stated, "to transform the world is to humanize it," (p.70, 1970). A humanizing approach takes into consideration the fragile balance each person experiences to manage their time, energy, and resources. In a humanizing organization, time and spaces are designed for individuals to navigate systems in diverse ways and under different circumstances. In recent years, scholars and innovative business leaders acknowledge that how people feel effect the way they work and learn.

In a *Humanizing Virtual Learning Guidebook*, Tonnette Salter described human capital as the nation's most valuable asset (Foreword, 2021). She continued to reiterate the urgency to rebuild and change the narrative to ensure each person has the opportunity for further growth.

When people feel valued, a tendency to work towards the goals of the organization emerges. One of the most destructive forces within organizations is a lack of buy-in to the mission. The connection occurs when the vision is shared and internalized. Changing the narrative of the dominant culture to highlight the worth diverse cultures bring to organizations through their insights and past experiences opens the door to a new way of conducting business.

Paul Emerich France examined the need to humanize education. He explained, “In order to humanize teaching and learning ...we must build independence within our students, so that they may become liberated learners and free thinkers who can encounter obstacles with persistence and learn how to learn. We must make collaboration and human connection essential components of our pedagogy, offering students a chance to not only socialize, but learn through collaboration with one another. We must center and unpack students’ identities, helping develop a conscious knowledge of themselves, all while using their self-identified strengths to overcome their obstacles (Forward, Humanizing Distance Learning: Centering equity and humanity in times of crisis, 2021).

What France explained for educators is applicable to organizations. Humanizing an organization means creating a sense of community, normalizing taking risks, building relationships, building trust, shaping a collaborative culture, and first and foremost, believing in the good intentions of the people by seeing the positive motivations. We can foster humanizing by recognizing, rewarding, and training for a culture of individualized support, team mentality, compassion, and service.

Salazar describes the construct of dehumanization as a distortion of the vocation of being more human; when humans are dehumanized, both the oppressed and the oppressor are constricted from the intentionality of consciousness and are therefore stifled in their quest for humanization (p. 131, 2013). With this in mind, the humanization of an organization must be aligned with training to empower the historically oppressed and training to identify the power and privilege residing within organizations, their environments, processes, policies, and structures. A culturally responsive and humanizing lens focuses on the following: rankism, racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and other forms of bias stemming from stereotypes and political dominance. Analyzing an organization requires a focus on systemic approaches to liberation, respect, acknowledgment, fairness, and diversity of perspectives.

A Culturally Inclusive and Humanizing Environment

A culturally inclusive and humanizing environment analyses organizational elements to ensure feelings of belonging, safety, cultural representation, and comfort. The elements to examine are tangible such as: the representation of multiple cultures throughout the environment, temperature, lighting, art, accessibility, cultural influences, signage, and languages presented. Another step is to examine cultural familiarity and significance. Cultural familiarity helps ease stressors and drive a sense of belonging and place. Representation should come in many forms including leadership, employees, training materials, and honoring differences by having them highlighted throughout an organization. By examining history through the eyes of the historically oppressed populations, assessments can be made to identify and remove any barriers, carryovers of dominant power, and actions can be taken to increase inclusion. This is an intentional, multi-faceted lens to look at the patterns of oppression and discover if these are present in the organization.



To create a culturally inclusive and humanizing business, institute, or organization, trust becomes the foundation for critical conversations and gaining engagement from every level of an organization. The first step to ensuring a safe environment to have these conversations is to guarantee diversity, equity, and inclusion as the North Star. This begins with procedural justice and removes rankism when having these discussions. Although this is easy to put into words, the practice of removing rank while discussing the need for change requires agreements and strict adherence to do no harm while discussing such sensitive topics. Sometimes, this step is so difficult, it may require anonymous note cards to be turned in to begin dialog. Other forms procedural justice may include, but is not limited to hiring based on merit, rewarding equitable practices, making decisions through shared governance that involves every level of within the organization, and taking note of different equity based adjustments needed for multiple populations. The diversity and inclusivity message needs to echo throughout organization's communication (DeMartin, et al, 2016). Holding managers accountable for inclusivity and diversity goals requires not only education for leadership but also staff (DeMartin, et al, 2016). Trust is developed through consistently echoing the importance of inclusivity and equity. Trust takes time, flexibility, forgiveness, and response with positive actions. Changes need to be made and actions need to be taken when a barrier is discovered or a group is not represented.



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In Jones and Brazzle's *The NTL Handbook for Organizational Development*, Litwin suggests taking an Appreciative Inquiry approach and involving multiple levels of the system. To bring change and create a diverse and productive environment for all participants, organization members, must inquire about behavior changes for both leaders and the average citizens utilizing the system. They must inquire about macrolevel change and systems change (2014, pg. 514). Jones and Brazzle reiterate the description of organizations as an open system, interdependent, with a constantly changing environment. To maintain/improve organizational performance, the organization must develop mechanisms for introspection, adaptation, and self-renewal (2014).

Appreciative Inquiry requires teams to: Discover, Dream, Design, and Deploy. These action steps should be done in stratified teams representing different employment levels and diverse perspectives. When a problem is discovered, solutions are dreamed and then, designed. The deployment of new systems requires a team approach, written guidelines, and several follow-up meetings to measure success and analyze whether the desired outcomes have been achieved.

The Culturally Inclusive and Humanizing Organizational Assessment, creates the mechanism to guide introspection, analyze practices, and study it from multiple lens with the plan to transform the system. By coordinating multi-level teams, reflecting each distinct group within an organization, drawing from their individual experiences, and utilizing an open forum to suggest changes, identify barriers, and truly mirror the diverse needs of diverse populations, an organization can change, adapt, and evolve.

Diverse Representation

Equity Expedition

Organizations serve diverse communities and populations. Visual diversity is the representation of race, gender, sexual orientation, people with disabilities, religions, body size, culture, and age. Visual representations have strong impacts on the internalization of whether or not a person belongs and are valued in a corporation, organization, or institution. Setting the tone of an environment begin as you enter the space. When organizations greet visitors with pictures that represent only one race or one gender, it sends a clear message indicating who holds value in an organization and who does not. As Mahoney concluded in his article on culturally responsive environments, by deconstructing social and structural barriers which hide the achievements of all cultures, races, genders, and abilities (p.47-59, 2022), we deconstruct the notion of who holds the power. Ensuring visual representation of culturally diverse people throughout an organization sends a clear message; people of color, all genders, people with disabilities, English learners, and the LGBTQ+ community belong.



Visual equity and inclusion shows up in many forms such as: multiple languages, wheel chair accessibility, auditory assistance, visual guides, symbols, graphics, maps, and access to spaces such as All Gender restrooms, lactation rooms, or prayer spaces. Visual indicators of belonging to an entity can be represented symbolically, such as a boardroom where the past trustees are pictured around the room or the art reflects the historical achievements of the community. Accessibility can come in the forms of multiple learning modalities, text options, QR Code directions, voice activation, multiple assessment options, scheduling options, translations, and technical assistance, that provide direction.

Organizations that have diverse leadership and representation, at all levels, not only indicate visually that multiple cultures belong, they are assumed to have a voice at the table for decision-making. The promotion of equity is driven by the multiple perspectives that come to light when seeing the same reality through a different lens. Without the guidance and insights of others who have experienced the world differently, we carry our blind spots when problem solving. Diversifying leadership, employees, and bringing in the community/customers/students, invites an awareness into the dialog that otherwise would be left out of the conversation.

Communication

Organizations are communicating all of the time. Like people, they have auditory, visual, and structural cues. Some questions to consider are: How is the organization's Mission, Vision, Goals, and culture reflected throughout the environment? What does your organization's name mean? What symbols and colors are used for your organization? What is communicated throughout the environment, offices, hallways, parking lots, and workspaces to the employees and the public?



To analyze what you are communicating, study the environment, documents, training materials, dress codes, office designs, etc.... Do they align with your mission? Do they reflect your vision? Do they reflect those you serve? Are they motivating the employees to conduct business in culturally responsive and humanizing ways? Are there barriers to some groups? Does everyone who works for the organization, institution, corporation, or business know how to prioritize their energy to match the prioritized values?

Employees, leaders, and teams need to know what the priority of the organization is and what it looks like throughout different facets of the organization. In business, people may not seem to be the priority. Yet, to make money, you must have buy-in from people. How employees treat

customers and each other communicates the essence of a business. Each employee becomes a symbol of the business and the way that business conducts itself.

Interactions between people become the culture of organizations. Verbal communication, visual communication, messaging, return policies, getting help or assistance, finding offices or departments, and every aspect builds the feeling people have when they are employed, partner, do business, or invest time. The valuing of people, their differences, needs, contributions, cultures, and experiences becomes the human side of organizations, corporations, and institutions.

Building trust and a sense of belonging begins with a combination of small nuances and large impactful changes and policies. Each create predictable expectations of what one can assume when entering the doors, calling, emailing, or experiencing websites.

The architecture, furniture, wall hangings, color, style, and imagery used visually communicates the values and population businesses, educational institutions, and organizations wish to serve and attract. When women, people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+, and a diverse array of people, cultures, and languages are present, access and belonging is presented as the norm. The words and visual messaging in promotions, social media, logos, tag lines, and music shape the perception of companies and institutions.



The instituted mechanisms organizations use to manage and provide support when customers or students need help and processes do not go as planned is another reflection of the culture and communication. There should be an expectation that things will not go as planned for every individual and there should be easily accessed support systems to help the individuals form solutions and several access points for assistance. Collecting data to illuminate who is being left out of processes, not completing, or disconnecting from the company, services, or opportunities will help organizations pinpoint who needs to be in the conversation to develop new systems. Those closest ones to the problem, should be on the team to decide what changes will provide the best chance of equity.

Water flows in the direction of least resistance and the same goes for most people. To produce desired actions, the focus should be on the ease of entry and processes. For example, if a hospital wants visitors to walk through the gardens to feel calm when entering, broaden the paths, and add direct routes in between buildings and from parking lots. Technologically, if a company wants forms filled out and returned on time, give plenty of notice, create clear directions, make the platforms simple and intuitive, send reminders, have help easily accessible, and ensure there is plenty of time given to complete the task.

For colleges, business, and corporations, entry begins in the parking lots or on the website. Can students or interested, curious community members find a way to explore programs, register, receive financial aid information, find assistance, and enroll in classes? If processes are confusing or take multiple steps, they become a barrier to access. The easier and more intuitive the entry, the more likely people will enter, purchase, and return. Think of every additional step as an additional barrier.

Organizations need to assess what experiences others have as they embark onto the grounds or into the website. For complex institutions, work to identify ways to simplify and guide those new to the system to create access. Large corporations have a similar complexity. Employees are expected to figure out who to request information from, what processes are in place, procedures, training opportunities, purchasing, and other functions of complex organizations. Finding clear ways to communicate how to independently navigate complex systems is a way to empower employees and visitors. From decision trees to orientations to guidebooks, steps should be clearly laid-out and in multiple modalities.

These can be simple adjustments such as inserting a button “Start Here” on a website, a live chat option, or simply guiding visitors through the site through a diagram of options. On campus, placing large QR Codes at most entry points, motion detected chat directions, and hosting information desks with helpful staff and student workers, and providing multiple modalities will be essential to increasing the comfort level of students and employees. Assistance through multiple languages, text sizes, gender neutral language, visual symbols, auditory directions, QR Codes with demonstration videos, and having live chat options, are all helpful ways to communicate inclusivity and add a humanizing touch through stressful, new experiences.



Processes

Processes within organizations can become barriers to diverse populations in a variety of ways. A lack of accommodations for diverse populations, such as flexible work arrangements and accessible technology, are examples of these organizational barriers.



Processes become a barrier if they are not designed to support everyone utilizing a system. Although this was stated previously, it bears repeating: each step of a process becomes another barrier. To ensure processes do not become barriers, try to minimize the number of steps and increase the simplicity of steps. When using the *Culturally Inclusive and Humanizing Organizational Assessment*, it is imperative to utilize culturally diverse, stratified teams to gain insight on the parts of processes used that may be confusing, frustrating, or unnecessary.

Processes to access help and support reflect the heart and vision of a company, business, or institution. To assume nothing will go wrong with purchases, registering for classes, received payments, change of schedule, project timelines, adding lived or preferred names, pronouns, or any other processes is to turn a blind eye to the reality of the human condition. When people are in distress or when actions do not result in the desired or planned outcome, it can be very disorienting. Disorientation may lead to fear, which becomes a chance to build or lose trust. Providing easy access to assistance and approaching unexpected

problems as expected parts of the progression will lead industries to build positive report, educational institutions to catch what could become lost enrollments, and businesses to build customers.

For diverse populations, instructions should be available in a variety of formats to create access and adherence to processes. Written instructions, auditory directions, video guidance, pop-up directions for each step, check-off lists, multiple languages, and people to contact (via phone, email, text, chat) should be presented as choices to assist in the navigation of processes.

Policies

Policies define the regulations, laws, administrative actions, responsibilities, and actions expected by all participants sharing an organization, institution, business, or industry. When policies detour expected actions or create barriers, then, they should be altered to clear the path for successful navigation. Policies should reflect the most highly prized values of an organization.

A study by the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) found that individuals with disabilities often face barriers to full participation in the workplace, such as lack of accessible technology and inflexible leave policies (NDRN, 2021). Additionally, research by the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) highlights the importance of creating inclusive and welcoming environments, such as providing translation services and offering flexible schedules, in order to support the needs of diverse populations (NAME, 2021).

A bank policy where customers are charged fees for the lack of transactions, which would appear to create less work on the bank's side (not depositing monthly or not purchasing monthly). This policy would illustrate moving funding in and out of the account is valued. It also represents that even though it is less work on the bank side of the equation, the bank still gains funding. This policy may dissuade trust and be determined to be unfair.

At a university, the policies around credit by examination, for example, may be a long list of what students "must" do in order to request and then, take the examination. For example, student may be expected to be enrolled in a certain number of units, apply within a small window of time before even asking, a credit by examination. Although this type of policy may save the college funding, it may go against the vision and goal of student completion and persistence in a timely manner.

Exchange policies for businesses, educational policies for grading, payment policies for fines, attendance policies, excused absence policies, and industry policies for missed work all have the same thing in common. They are supposed to be designed to get their desired effect. If they are not obtaining the organization's vision, mission, goals, and values, and if one or some groups gain an advantage over another, due to the policy, then the policy should be changed.

Humanizing the Experience: Humanizing organizations by affirming a sense of value, belonging, and integrity.

Humanizing organizations is important in order to create a positive workplace culture and increase employee satisfaction. A study by the Harvard Business Review (HBR) found that employees who feel their organization values their well-being are more productive and have higher job satisfaction (HBR, 2017). Another study by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that a positive workplace culture can lead to increased employee engagement, decreased turnover rates, and improved overall business performance (SHRM, 2019). In order to be successful, frameworks promoting organizational sustainability should be humanized, that is, organizations should attempt to further incorporate stakeholders' (e.g., employees, managers, external stakeholders) perceptions toward sustainability and assess their impacts on (un)sustainable behavior (Luis and Silva, p.1, 2022). To humanize an organization or corporation many times means slowing down enough to observe possible disconnects and barriers to use or success.

Additionally, humanizing an organization can improve its reputation and relationships with stakeholders. A study by Forbes found that consumers are more likely to do business with companies that they perceive as ethical and socially responsible (Forbes, 2021). By creating a workplace culture that prioritizes the wellbeing of employees and stakeholders, organizations can improve their reputation and foster stronger relationships.



This in turn, can lead to improved brand reputation, increased customer loyalty, and increased revenue (HBR, 2017).

Creating a culturally inclusive, humanizing learning community requires accessing cultural knowledge and perspectives. This access is created by design. Ensure representatives from every culture are gathered to share ideas, perspectives, experiences, and reform designs. For this to be an effective practice, there needs to be a safe space encouraging out-of-the-box, new ideas. These ideas may begin as outlandish notions, but the planting of the idea in an important stage for developing true change and transformation. If your mind(s) can conceive the idea, the idea is possible. Even bad ideas spur important, innovative thoughts to occur. Organizations need to step away from everyday tasks and take time to reflect on what is going well and where there is a need for growth, response, and action. An important aspect of this process is realizing that most likely, up to this point, most of the structures were designed to serve the dominant culture. Meyer and Davis (2003), referred to organizations as living organisms that need to be adaptive to survive and thrive.

To develop a culturally inclusive organization, it is important to engage in intentional and ongoing efforts to create an inclusive and equitable environment. A study by the National Equity Project (NEP) highlights the importance of conducting regular cultural competency training for employees, examining and addressing organizational biases and power structures, and incorporating diverse perspectives into decision-making processes (NEP, 2019). Additionally, research by the National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME) emphasizes the importance of integrating culturally responsive practices into all aspects of the organization, including hiring and promotion processes, employee development initiatives, and community engagement efforts (NAME, 2021). Furthermore, actively seeking feedback and input from diverse communities and stakeholders is also crucial in developing a culturally responsive organization.

Professional development opportunities should be focused, planned, and reflective of culturally responsive, humanizing values. Professional learning will involve hearing differing perspectives on the same topics, multiple viewpoints on policies, solutions designed to dismantle dominant power



structures, and finding new ways to build a sense of belonging. One key focal point is to ensure the cultural representative, number one, wants to participate, and number two, that all involved understand that one person cannot speak for an entire culture. They are only able to share their perspective, which can open the door for new perspectives to be considered.

All too often, humanizing plans are turned-down due to a small fraction of the beneficiaries who will exploit opportunities. An example can be paralleled by the notion of creating access to people in wheelchairs at amusement parks. There is a shortened wait for rides, and usually, a different route. Some families may place a family member in a wheelchair just to get their family on every ride quicker... but for the most part, most families and friends follow the rules and support using the faster line alternatives for people in wheelchairs, because it is an equitable practice. Culturally responsive and humanizing organizations mean building equity into practice, rather than equality.

Moreover, creating a culturally inclusive and humanizing environment also helps to break down stereotypes and biases. A study by the American Psychological Association (APA) found that exposure to diverse perspectives can lead to increased empathy, reduced prejudice, and improved intergroup relations (APA, 2020). Additionally, research by the National School Climate Center (NSCC) found that a positive school climate can lead to improved social-emotional well-being, higher academic achievement, and a decreased likelihood of involvement in negative behaviors such as bullying and substance abuse (NSCC, 2019).

The Content of Your Organization's Character

The content of your organization's character is the heart and culture of your institution, business, corporation, or organization. It is the way you do business, the reflection of your values, and involves integrity. Organizations are



like ecosystems; each part of the system is somehow tied to another part of the system. The tethered nature of these relationships and interworking parts are not always obvious, but combining the effort and a shared vision of the intent to bridge the gaps between cultures and people, develop the character of an organization. Ensure your organization uses the mission and vision as their North Star. If it does not include cultural responsive, diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, these may need revision.

Hiring practice begins the building of the culture. The first step is Who... then What. Jim Collins described the core ideology behind moving companies from *Good to Great* (2001) as selecting people more on their fit with the core values and purpose, rather than their levels of skills. He further examines the drive that some people have to feel compelled to try to create greatness. Organizations are at their core people. Each person drives change, development, insight, and innovation. Once the "right" people are hired, the next step is defining and developing the expectations, role, rules, and governance. In other words, organizations need to define the power structure, expected steps, processes, and rank of positions. Robert R. Fuller, (*Somebodies and Nobodies*), considers rankism the mother of all "-isms." He explains, racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, ageism, and others reflect underlining power differences of social rank that in turn reflect underlying power differences, so they are forms of rankism (p.2, 2003). This does not mean rank has no place in a large system. Yet the communication, dialog, debate, and ideas should flow openly. Rank shouldn't always determine who carries the torch for change. Those who have the energy, motivation, skills, and vision to increase sales, increase graduation rates, or solve community problems should be given the support to try if it meets the mission and vision of the organization or company. Organizations need to constantly evolve to meet new challenges and dynamics. Some of the best and most poignant ideas come from those closest to the problem. People working and served at every level of an organization should be welcomed to offer ideas, think outside of the box, and suggest ways to shift practices to meet new challenges.

Christian Meyer and Stan Davis explored the concept of organizations responding like biological

organism and meeting the adaptive imperative it takes to survive and thrive. Meyer and Davis elaborate, Adaption, the process by which organisms respond to volatility in their environments, has been going on for the past billion years. As businesses today are struggling with volatility, they can look to nature's example for lessons on adaptation (p.6, 2003). Every person interacting in your system is a part of the system and provides the necessary information for it to adapt, change, and evolve. The communities surrounding your organization have a direct effect on the success and impact. Building partnerships, leveraging resources, sharing participants to meet shared goals, and designing the reach of the mission by knowing what is happening in each corner of the community helps build organizations and blend their roles into shared ventures. Developing the content of your organization's character takes time and requires patience for trust to be built upon dependability and consistency. Stephen M. R. Covey describes organizational trust building as a combination of the following attributes (2006, p. 237):

- Information is shared openly
- Mistakes are tolerated and encouraged as a way of learning
- Culture is innovative and creative
- People talk straight and confront real issues
- People share credit abundantly
- There is real communication and real collaboration

Cultural inclusiveness and humanizing represents a leadership paradigm in which the organization asks itself: Is what we "say" as leaders, what we "do" (Terrell and Lindsey, p.21-23). Organizations have a choice in the way they conduct business, cultural responsiveness, and humanizing actions that define who they really are and develop levels of expectation to employees, leaders, and the communities they serve.

Transforming an organization's culture to be more culturally responsive can be a complex process, but it is essential for organizations that want to better serve diverse communities. According to *The Culturally Responsive Organization: A Guide for School and Nonprofit Leaders*, by D.W. Cheek and M.G. Kravitz (2015), cultural responsiveness involves acknowledging and valuing cultural diversity, and using that diversity as a strength to improve organizational outcomes. This can be achieved through a variety of strategies, such as cultural competence training for employees, creating inclusive policies and practices, and regularly engaging with diverse communities.

One effective way to promote cultural responsiveness is to foster a culture of ongoing learning and self-reflection. In a research article by J. Jackson and J. Ruderman (2018), they suggest that organizations can encourage employees to continuously reflect on their own cultural biases and assumptions, and actively seek out opportunities to learn about different cultures. By creating a culture of ongoing learning, organizations build a more inclusive environment and improve their ability to effectively serve diverse communities.

Allan Hancock College Spring 2023
All Staff Day Breakout Activity

Use the questions as a prompt to begin thinking about an intervention for students. Responses can be brief/bullet points.
Please answer the two primary questions first (and if time permits the sub questions).

Area of Interest:		
	Question 1: What is the identified barrier?	
	Financial Hardship	
a. What data would you need/ can you find to support and/or better understand this issue?		
b. What supports already exist at AHC to help fill this need?	Financial Aid, College Corps, Student Worker Program	

Dismantling Barriers to Culturally Inclusive, Humanizing Change

Dismantling Barriers to create a culturally inclusive humanizing organization takes time, data gathering, focused leadership, a dedicated team to lead every part of the organization to develop the character of the organization, sufficient time to navigate and reinvent policies, processes, etc..., and funding that contributes to the time and value of the effort.

1. Establish a dedicated team that represents every part of the organization, institution, corporation, or business. Make sure to include customers, students, and those served by the organization, as well as every level of employee. Those closest to the problem will be the best resource for solutions.
2. Provide data to drive where you are and where you strive to be, who you strive to reach, and what you desire to do better.



3. Rewrite the Mission, Vision, and Goals to match a culturally responsive humanizing focus. This becomes the compass all will use to build their rationale for action, reform, redesigns, and development.

4. Visit or meet with other organizations, like yours, who have done the work to glean ideas and support successful change.

5. Establish strong partnerships with other entities that will assist your organization to meet new culturally responsive and humanizing actions.

6. Develop a Culturally Inclusive and Humanizing organizational plan annually, with the following attributes: Action needed, problem it solves, who is involved and what actions and responsibilities are tied to each person, steps to produce change, timeline to produce change, check-in time after to ensure the change or action provided the desired result.

To dismantle barriers to culturally inclusive and humanizing change, it is important to address systemic issues and engage in critical self-reflection. A study by the National Equity Project (NEP) found that organizations that engage in critical self-reflection and examine their own biases and power structures are better able to create inclusive and equitable environments (NEP, 2019). Additionally, research by the National Collaborative for Diverse Charter Schools (NCDCS) highlights the importance of addressing systemic issues, such as funding disparities and biased policies, in order to create more equitable educational opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds (NCDCS, 2021). Conducting scheduled culturally inclusive and humanizing organizational assessments with a small team of dedicated, multicultural stakeholders provides a mechanism for liberation, higher success rates, and evolution.

Final Note, taken from Ibram X. Kendi, How to be an Antiracist (2019), page 238:

Remove any racist policies, the way surgeons remove tumors. Ensure there are clear margins, meaning no cancer cells of inequity left in the body politic, only healthy cells of equity... Detect and treat a recurrence early, before it can grow and threaten the body politic.

But before we can treat, we must believe. Believe all is not lost for you and me and our society. Believe we can strive to be antiracist from this day forward. Believe in the possibility we can transform our societies to be antiracist from this day forward. Racist power is not godly. Racist policies are not indestructible. Racist inequities are not inevitable. Racist ideas are not natural to the human mind...

Racism is not even 600 years old. It is a cancer we've caught early.

But racism is one of the fastest-spreading and most fatal cancers humanity has even known. It is hard to place where its cancer cells are not dividing and multiplying. There is nothing I see in our world today, in our history, giving me the hope that one day antiracists will win the fight... Once we lose hope, we are guaranteed to lose. But if we ignore the odds and fight to create an antiracist world, then we give humanity a chance to one day survive, a chance to live in communion, a chance to be forever free.



Assessment



Organizational Assessment

Assessment Categories

- Equity Expedition Cultural
- Representation Diversity of Portrayals Communication
- Processes
- Policies
- Humanizing the Experience
- The Content of your Organization's Character Specialty Assessments

Assess the Organization in 5 Steps

This assessment can be done individually, with a partner, or in diverse teams.

Suggestion: Locate and refer to the demographic data from your organization, institution, or business, as well as the communities served to ensure the representation, support, innovations, and changes reflect the needs of all groups utilizing the system.

- 1** Once you have the organizational assessment in hand, review each item in each section: Equity Expedition, Cultural Representation, Diversity of Portrayals, Communication, Processes, Policies, Humanizing the Experience, and The Content of your Organization's Character. In the Notes Section record key words, ideas, and qualities. Gauge your confidence level for each item.
- 2** Set aside a significant period of time to begin reviewing each part of an organization/institution/business.
Setting aside at least four hours of time (some assessments will take more time than others) for yourself and ideally, four or more of the colleagues, customers, students, administrators, or community members who can leverage multiple perspectives is ideal. However, reviewing the organization, institution, or business alone can also be transformational.
- 3** Narrow which aspects of the organization you will be assessing. It may be easier to assess visual or tangible aspects of your organization first, then aim for the broader, less tangible aspects like the policies. Once identified, these may require greater levels of shared governance to change and therefore take longer.
- 4** In the first two sections, Diversity of Visual Representations and Diversity of Employees and Leadership, analyze each section by recording the visual representations (through a tally and data review) and researching employee / leadership data. An organization may excel in one area and fall short in another, and it is important to record those differences.
- 5** Analyze each score and begin to brainstorm where the barriers may be. It may take several meetings, days, weeks, or months, involving investigation, data collection, and a dedicated team to resolve the issues and create a culturally responsive and humanizing approach, action, change, addition, or institution of new practice. Each assessment team will create a prioritized list for each assessment tool (see tables after instruments).

Assess the Organization in 5 Steps (CONT'D)

Consult colleagues and examine internal and external resources to create modifications. A list of resources is in the Appendix of this assessment instrument. Reaching-out to other like organizations, corporations, and institutions, known to be culturally responsive and / or humanizing to gain insights is an additional strategy. You may also want to reach-out to colleagues, community members, students, customers, board members, and scholars to guide modifications and next steps.

A key paradigm, through this process, is to think outside of the box, and strive to do things differently. Creating a culturally responsive and humanizing organization will not happen overnight. It will take effort, time, compromise, and change. Most changes are challenging and make people feel uncomfortable, even if the change benefits the organization and those served.

Assessment Guidelines

Diverse Representation, Culturally Responsive, & Humanizing Organizations

Use the instruments below to indicate how confident you are that the examined organization, institution, corporation, or Business is Culturally Responsive and Humanizing.

Highly Confident:

If you are highly confident, you provide an abundance of specific examples (images, symbols, accessibility, clarity, languages, etc.) from the environment, practices, and policies of the organization to show how and why the statement is accurate. Items in this column are culturally responsive and humanizing.

Confident:

If you are confident, you provide some evidence from the environment, communication, practices, policies, and humanizing your organization. The organization may not be culturally responsive and humanizing, but elements are apparent in many cases.

Somewhat Confident:

If you marked items somewhat confident, this indicates that there is little evidence in the environment, communication, practices, policies, or humanizing elements throughout the organization.

Not Confident/Not Observed:

If not confident or not observed, there is no evidence of cultural responsiveness or humanization in the environment, communication, practices, or policies.

Self-Identification

Before completing the assessment regarding your organization, please provide the following information:

Self-Identification of Cultures:

In order to understand your diverse background, please share the cultures or ethnicities with which you self-identify. This can include: race, ethnicity, language, gender, income, ability, sexual orientation, immigration status, disability, trauma, or any other group you share beliefs, values, ideas, or experiences.

Self-Identification of Roles:

We also want to acknowledge the various roles you identify with in your personal and professional life as you conduct this assessment. These roles could include occupations, hobbies, or any other areas where you feel your identity is shaped. *(Example: Student, administrator, faculty, customer, community member, investor, board member, philanthropist, owner, manager, etc.)*

Please take a moment to provide the requested information. Your cultural identities are essential to the purposes of the assessment and will be confidential.

Name:
Cultures
Roles

Representation

Please record numbers or percentages below.

Diversity of Campus								
	Women	Men	Non-Binary	Other	Number of:			Overall Percentage/ Quantity
					Leadership	Employee	Students	
Latinx/ Hispanic								
Black/African								
Native American								
Asian/Pacific Islander								
Middle Eastern								
White / Caucasian								
LGBTQ+								
Multi-Racial								
Persons with Disabilities								
Non-Christian								
English as a 2nd or Foreign Lang.								
Immigrant or Undocumented								
Multiple Age Groups & Body Sizes								

Notes:

Diversity of Visual Representations

Please record numbers below.

Diversity of Visual Representations					
	Women	Men	Non-Binary	Other	Total
Latinx/Hispanic					
Black/African					
Native American					
Asian/Pacific Islander					
Middle Eastern					
White / Caucasian					
LGBTQ+					
Multi-Racial					
Persons with Disabilities					
Non-Christian					
English as a 2nd or Foreign Lang.					
Immigrant or Undocumented					
Multiple Age Groups & Body Sizes					

Notes:

Equity Expedition

Please rate the extent to which you are confident your organization includes the attributes below.

Diversifying the Physical Environment	Highly Confident	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident/ Not Observed
The organization...				
1. features diverse individuals, accentuates equity/sense of belonging, and highlights their contributions to the overall success of the organization. <i>(Examples: posters, board members, media, marketing)</i>				
2. is welcoming to individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and reflects multi-cultural influences.				
3. acknowledges lighting, furniture, art, color, accessibility, signage, temperature, and design choices providing a sense of belonging, safety, and comfort.				
4. portrays diverse relationships and family structures <i>(Examples: gay couples, interracial couples, single parents, transgender, multi-generational families).</i>				
5. supports individuals with disabilities, as evidenced by their representation and provides accessibility throughout the organization. <i>(Example: wheelchair accessible, sign language translators, symbolic directions, automatic doors, accessibility software)</i>				
6. provides multi-generational access points and learning tools that bridge generational divides and add accessibility. <i>(Example: hard copy, electronic access, phone numbers, qr codes, text, email, social media)</i>				
7. provides multiple language supports throughout the organization. <i>(Example: signage in multiple languages, symbols used instead of words for directions, auditory options, a list of employees who speaks what language(s))</i>				
8. references to current and historical contributions made by immigrants and undocumented individuals <i>(Example: through phrases, posters, sculptures, art, referenced on documents)</i>				
9. provides all gender restrooms, locker rooms, gender options (or fill-in own gender) on all documents.				
10. respects the religions, faiths, and internalized beliefs by providing appropriate space(s) .				
CONFIDENCE LEVEL				

Notes:

Communication

Please rate the extent to which you are confident your organization includes the attributes below.

Visual/Messaging/Tone/Options	Highly Confident	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident/ Not Observed
The organization...				
1. is welcoming to all cultures and provides an environment that communicates a sense of belonging. <i>(Examples: greeters, maps, website, posters, signs, directions, marketing, media, accessibility)</i>				
2. uses words, statements, and symbols that reflect historical understanding, cultural sensitivity, and reflect all gender identifications.				
3. provides culturally diverse leadership and acknowledges the importance of diverse leadership styles.				
4. clearly communicates how to gain assistance, and who to contact for help if things are confusing or not going as planned.				
5. includes diversity, equity, inclusion, and access as a priority in its mission, vision, and goals				
6. communicates steps and processes ensuring they are designed for clear access, intuitive navigation, and welcomes requests for assistance.				
7. shares preferred or affirmed pronouns as a part of the culture, and acknowledges the diverse ways people identify.				
8. communicates with respect and openly acknowledges all cultures. <i>(Example: All genders, religion, race, socio-economic status, ability, sexual orientation)</i>				
9. trains employees and leadership to modify communication to be culturally sensitive, respectful, and update terms annually.				
10. utilizes gender neutral terms.				
11. encourages individuals who are demographically dissimilar within the organization, to have opportunities to engage, interact, and learn from one another. <i>(Example: Different perspectives, points of view)</i>				
CONFIDENCE LEVEL				

Notes:

Processes

Please rate the extent to which you are confident your organization includes the attributes below.

Exploring the Existence of Power, Privilege, and Multiple Perspectives within Processes	Highly Confident	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident/ Not Observed
The organization's processes...				
1. are intuitive and make sense to diverse populations through simple instructions, provided in multiple formats.				
2. are designed with simplicity and ease for the users.				
3. provide fair and inclusive options. <i>(Example: Gender options, people with disabilities, sexual orientation, and/ or multiple races, ethnicities, and cultures)</i>				
4. are necessary and do not create a barrier.				
5. examine and support traditionally underrepresented cultures and people.				
6. acknowledge that individuals impacted by the legal system or veterans may have a sensitivity to surprises and language used, and may have opposing views regarding law enforcement.				
7. examine systemic flaws or challenges for employees, students, customers, and/or the community.				
8. provide guidance in multiple languages and modalities.				
CONFIDENCE LEVEL				

Notes:

Policies

Please rate the extent to which you are confident your organization includes the attributes below.

Review for Policies for: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access	Highly Confident	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident/ Not Observed
The organization's policies...				
1. promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and access.				
2. promote just practices, inclusivity, and respect for individuals or cultural groups.				
3. acknowledge the historic oppression within the systems and provides extra support for traditionally under-served populations and people with disabilities. <i>(Example: prisons, the workplace, academic institutions, houses of worship, legal, political)</i>				
4. ensure accessibility by addressing multiple learning styles, visible and nonvisible disabilities, mental health, and multiple intelligences.				
5. respects multiple faith-based guidelines, holidays, prayer schedules, and/or spaces.				
6. are necessary and should not create a barrier.				
7. acknowledge flexible schedules and supports a work/life balance. <i>(Example: personal, educational, family, work)</i>				
8. respects and considers intersectional identities. <i>(Example: gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religious affiliation, race, ethnicity, legal involvement, citizenship status, or military experiences)</i>				
9. are gender neutral.				
CONFIDENCE LEVEL				

Notes:

Humanizing

Please rate the extent to which you are confident your organization includes the attributes below.

Humanizing organizations by affirming a sense of value, belonging, and integrity	Highly Confident	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident/ Not Observed
The organization's humanizing practice...				
1. highlights diverse individuals for their unique contributions to the overall success of the organization.				
2. reaches out to others in need and seeks first to support and listen.				
3. provides dignity and respect as part of the decision-making, services, processes, and policy design.				
4. recognizes different people require and need different things and develops policies and practices to reflect that reality (equal treatment does not mean equitable treatment).				
5. addresses the use of authority by instituting multiple levels of evaluation and shared governance.				
6. provides a sense of belonging to a diverse, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, all gender identities, all sexual orientations, people with disabilities, formerly incarcerated, low-income, different learning styles, different leadership styles, and people of color.				
7. provides training for diversity, equity, inclusion, access, anti-racism, anti-rankism, and professional development geared to create equity and access for those historically oppressed.				
8. assesses policies to ensure a sensitivity and active transformation to require equity, inclusion, and a humanizing approach that honors each individual through the awareness of cultural need.				
9. seeks to catch people doing the "right" thing and acknowledge these actions to create a positive culture.				
CONFIDENCE LEVEL				

Notes:

The Content of Your Organization's Character

Please rate the extent to which you are confident your organization includes the attributes below.

Organizational Culture and Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access	Highly Confident	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident/ Not Observed
The organization's practice...				
1. actively supports equity, diversity, and inclusion into their hiring practices and assesses the retention of employees.				
2. promotes a diverse representation of people into leadership positions.				
3. dismantles rankism to make room for dialog and integrating all perspectives into the decision-making process.				
4. examines data to identify equity gaps.				
5. includes and acknowledges different leadership styles. <i>(Example: Transformational, Disruptive, Democratic, Authorative, Servant)</i>				
6. considers equity in the dissemination of resources.				
7. resolves issues with equitable, and fair actions to encourage loyalty, responsibility, and organizational integrity.				
8. explicitly names diversity, equity, inclusion, and access into their vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan.				
9. institutes a structured and intensive on-boarding process that builds a culturally responsive and humanizing culture.				
10. encourages self-expression (such as affirmed name, preferred pronoun(s), and other individual preferences linked to identity.				
11. provides time to focus on a continuous cycle for improvement.				
12. connects to and supports social justice community actions.				
13. role models equitable actions and cultural changes to honor, respect, and support all cultures and genders.				
CONFIDENCE LEVEL				

Notes:

Action Steps Based on Your Assessment

Examine each item marked as **Somewhat Confident** and **Not Confident/Not Observed**. Analyze what modifications you might begin to heighten your culturally responsive and humanizing confidence levels. Research evidence-based best practices, consult colleagues, customers, community members, board members, employees, or find culturally responsive or humanizing best practices and organizational models that will assist you in this effort. You may also utilize the list of resources in the appendix of this instrument.

Not Confident/ Not Observed Items	Somewhat Confident Items	Confident Items	Highly Confident Items
Institutional Modification Needed	Institutional Modification Suggested	Culturally & Humanization Aware	Culturally Responsive & Humanizing
<p>These items were not present or do not contribute to the overall cultural responsiveness or humanizing organizational factors.</p> <p>Consider diversifying your organization by adding culturally responsive humanizing content and take an environmental deep-dive into modification options.</p> <p>Utilize resources and work with each facet of the organization.</p>	<p>These items do little to contribute to the overall cultural responsiveness or humanization of the organization, institution, corporation, or business.</p> <p>Consider diversifying and humanizing a few parts of the organization at a time, ideally with teams, to diversify perspectives.</p> <p>Utilize resources and work with each facet of the organization.</p>	<p>These items are adequate and contribute to the overall cultural responsiveness and humanizing approach of the organization, institution, corporation, or business.</p> <p>Consider consulting multiple perspectives and reviewing each item in diverse teams to continue the growth and examine resources to strengthen the cultural responsiveness and humanization of these items.</p>	<p>These items are strong and contribute to supporting the overall cultural responsiveness and humanization of the organization, institution, corporation, or business.</p> <p>Consider sharing resources, approaches, and environmental approaches relative to these items with similar organizations to expand the culturally responsive and humanizing opportunities.</p>

Data Gathering

The collection of data to inform next steps and practice is vital to promote a cycle of growth, development, examination, and best practices. Data collection should, at its core, reflect those served.

Culturally responsive data collection should reflect everyone in the population utilizing services. It should include, but not be limited to the following criteria to assess who the data is collected from and how it is analyzed: gender, race, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, identity, multiple income levels, special populations such as veterans, first generation Americans, English learners, people with disabilities, new immigrants, formerly incarcerated, multiple generations, foster/formerly foster youth, rural, urban, and city residents.

The main goal is to look for gaps in Cultural Inclusiveness and Humanization. Assess who has been left out.

When one draws on the insights and perspectives of diverse groups, the nuances of power, social rank, and representation come to light.

Data Gathering (CONT'D)

Ensure the collection of data represents not only current users, but those you hope to attract. Utilize JustLeadershipUSA's slogan, "Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution." Gather data from those who represent every facet of the population served or aspire to attract.

Assess the climate of your organization and the demographics tied to the responses, anonymously. Look for patterns to see who feels left out, powerless, oppressed, unheard, unseen, or under-valued. Then, take steps to modify the equity, processes, policies, and humanizing aspects of the environment.



Action Prioritization



Action Prioritization Table

Equity Expedition

Priority	What area is in need of modification?	What resources and estimated costs are needed?	Who will be responsible for championing this action?	How long will it take?	How many people will be affected?	What outcomes will be expected?	How will the outcomes be measured or tracked?
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

Notes:

Action Prioritization Table

Communication

Priority	What area is in need of modification?	What resources and estimated costs are needed?	Who will be responsible for championing this action?	How long will it take?	How many people will be affected?	What outcomes will be expected?	How will the outcomes be measured or tracked?
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

Notes:

Action Prioritization Table

Policies

Priority	What area is in need of modification?	What resources and estimated costs are needed?	Who will be responsible for championing this action?	How long will it take?	How many people will be affected?	What outcomes will be expected?	How will the outcomes be measured or tracked?
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

Notes:

Action Prioritization Table

Processes

Priority	What area is in need of modification?	What resources and estimated costs are needed?	Who will be responsible for championing this action?	How long will it take?	How many people will be affected?	What outcomes will be expected?	How will the outcomes be measured or tracked?
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

Notes:

Action Prioritization Table

Humanizing

Priority	What area is in need of modification?	What resources and estimated costs are needed?	Who will be responsible for championing this action?	How long will it take?	How many people will be affected?	What outcomes will be expected?	How will the outcomes be measured or tracked?
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

Notes:

Action Prioritization Table

Content of Your Organization's Character

Priority	What area is in need of modification?	What resources and estimated costs are needed?	Who will be responsible for championing this action?	How long will it take?	How many people will be affected?	What outcomes will be expected?	How will the outcomes be measured or tracked?
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

Notes:

Resources

Websites

- <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/ejroc/culturallyresponsive-curriculum-assessments>
- <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2019/1/dei-bookrecommendations>
- <http://www.jspac.org/>
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