Title
Naming Racisms: Identifying and Responding to Biological and Colorblind Racisms

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Naming Racisms: Identifying and Responding to Biological and Colorblind Racisms
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Learning Goal 1: Students will collaboratively apply the concepts of biological and colorblind racisms to real-life examples.
Assessment 1: In groups, students will identify statements presented in the chat stations as either biological racism or one of Bonilla-Silva's four frames of colorblind racism and record their responses on a worksheet.

Learning Goal 2: Students will evaluate and produce responses to racist statements they may encounter in their everyday lives.
Assessment 2: Students will anonymously submit their potential responses to racist statements either through Socrative, PollEverywhere, or on index cards.

Abstract
The purpose of this activity is to help students identify and respond to biological and colorblind racisms they may hear in their everyday lives. The activity uses a pedagogical technique of chat stations where students move around the classroom to visit five different chat stations that each list one statement containing racist discourse. Students work in groups to identify if the statement is either biological racism or one of the four frames of colorblind racism and then record their answers on a worksheet. Students then individually evaluate how they would respond to the statements if they were to encounter them in their everyday lives.

Time and Class Size
This activity takes approximately 25 minutes to complete. I completed this activity in a classroom of 30 students, but it can be adapted to a larger classroom size by adding more chat stations or placing the statements in a PowerPoint.

Additional Materials
Additional materials for this activity include: (1) a worksheet, (2) the worksheet answer key, and (3) printouts for the chat stations. These materials are included in the files for this resource on TRAILS.

When to Use This Activity
This activity can be used in a Sociology of Race and Ethnicity course or during a unit on race and racisms in a general or specialty sociology class. Before completing this activity, students should be assigned a reading or have heard a lecture that defines biological racism and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's four frames of colorblind racism (abstract liberalism, minimization of racism, naturalism, and cultural racism). I use this activity in my Sociology of Race and Racisms course. Students read "Chapter 3: Racial Ideologies from the 1920s to the Present" in Tanya Golash-Boza's textbook, *Race and Racisms: A Critical Approach*. Students also heard a mini-lecture defining each concept with examples.
This activity is useful in a unit on race and racisms because it helps students practice identifying the concepts using real-life discourse. The activity also helps them to begin to think about how they would respond to these comments while considering various power dynamics.

Bonilla-Silva's four frames of colorblind racism was chosen as the focus for this activity because colorblind racism is the most dominant racial ideology in the United States (Bonilla-Silva 2014). Therefore, students should be equipped with the ability to identify, understand, and, if they choose, safely confront colorblind racist discourse.

Pedagogical Technique of Chat Stations

For this activity, I employed the pedagogical technique of chat stations as adapted by Gonzalez (2013). Chat stations are discussion prompts that are placed around the classroom. Students visit each chat station in groups of 2-4 to have a quick discussion and record their answers on a worksheet. When students finish visiting each chat station, the instructor reviews responses to each chat station prompt. Gonzalez (2013) argues that one of the benefits of chat stations is that it allows students to move around the classroom, which is novel and, consequently, may increase student engagement and recall of the concepts.

Procedures

Part 1: Identifying Biological and Colorblind Racisms

I posted numbered signs around the room that each lists a racist statement that they might encounter in everyday life (see document titled "Printouts"). Remember to bring tape to post the signs around the room. I used statements that I have most frequently heard in my own life, but you can revise the statements as you see fit. Below are the definitions of biological racism and the four frames of colorblind racism along with the examples used in the chat stations:

- ❖ Golash-Boza's (2018: 81) definition of biological racism: "Biological racism is the idea that whites are genetically superior to nonwhites."
  - o Example of biological racism used in the chat stations: "White people are smarter than all other races. Why else would Whites be in so many powerful positions?"
- ❖ Bonilla-Silva's (2014) four frames of colorblind racism:
  - o Bonilla-Silva's (2014: 76) definition of abstract liberalism: "The frame of abstract liberalism involves using ideas associated with political liberalism (e.g., 'equal opportunity,' the idea that force should not be used to achieve social policy) and economic liberalism (e.g., choice, individualism) in an abstract manner to explain racial matters."
    - ▪ Example of abstract liberalism used in the chat stations: "You don't have to worry about racism. As long as you work hard, you will be fine."
  - o Bonilla-Silva's (2014: 77) definition of minimization of racism: "Minimization of racism is a frame that suggests discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting minorities' life chances ('It's better now than in the past' or 'There is discrimination, but there are plenty of jobs out there')."
    - ▪ Example of minimization of racism used in the chat stations: "Racism is a thing of the past. It doesn't exist anymore, especially not in California" [you can change California to the location of your institution]
  - o Bonilla-Silva's (2014: 76) definition of naturalism: "Naturalism is a frame that allows whites to explain away racial phenomena by suggesting they are natural occurrences."
    - ▪ Example of naturalism used in the chat stations: "The reason that neighborhood has mostly Black and Latino residents is because Blacks

and Latinos naturally like to stick together. There is no segregation anymore."

- o Bonilla-Silva's (2014: 76) definition of cultural racism: "Cultural racism is a frame that relies on culturally based arguments such as 'Mexicans do not put much emphasis on education' or 'blacks have too many babies' to explain the standing of minorities in society."
    - Example of cultural racism used in the chat stations: "The reason that there aren't many people of color who are college graduates is because they don't value education. They just want children."

I chose to print the signs on a bright orange paper so that students can more easily find them throughout the room. I hung the signs throughout the room, making sure the sign was placed in an area that had enough space for multiple people to stand to read it and space for other students to walk pass. I made two signs for each statement (two 1's, two 2's, etc.) so that students would not have to wait for another group to finish. You can post more than two signs if your classroom space permits.

I distributed a worksheet to each group (see document titled "Worksheet"). Before they approached the chat stations, I either delivered a mini-lecture where I defined each concept and provided examples for each or asked students to review the definitions using their class notes and textbooks and then reviewed them as a class. Then in groups, students moved around the room and identified the type of racism presented in each sign. They wrote their responses in the corresponding numbered box of the worksheet. As they move around the classroom, the instructor should go around the room and ask students how they are doing and be available to answer any questions.

After each group finished identifying every statement on the signs, we reviewed the statements as a class. I traveled to each sign, read the statement, and then asked the class what kind of racism the statement is and why they think it is that form of racism. I have included a document titled "Worksheet Key" that lists the correct answers for each chat station. I asked several students for their explanations to get diverse reasons for why each of these statements are the identified form of racist discourse. Hearing from numerous students helps students who may have incorrectly labeled a statement to hear explanations from their peers on why their response is incorrect.

At the end of the activity, the students turned in the worksheet for in-class participation points. If the students have identified most racist discourses correctly, then they earned in-class participation points.

Part 2: Responding to Biological and Colorblind Racisms

For Part 2 of the activity, you can pose the following questions to students and have them respond anonymously either through Socrative, PollEverywhere, or on index cards.

- ❖ If you were to encounter one of these forms of racism in your everyday life, how would you respond?
- ❖ Would your responses differ depending if the person you were interacting with was your boss or professor compared to your best friend or grandmother? How would the responses differ depending on the race of the person making the statement and the race of the person responding?

Once students submit their answers anonymously, choose appropriate answers that are not triggering for students of color.

Oftentimes, students in sociology courses do not know what they can do to challenge inequalities. The goal of this part of the activity is to get students to think through how they would respond to racist comments on their own and develop ideas on how they would safely and effectively navigate and, ideally challenge, any dehumanizing comments they may hear in their everyday lives. Their comfort with responding to racist statements will likely change per the power dynamics in the situation, with their knowledge about race, etc. This activity is aimed to prepare students to challenge racist discourse if, when, and how they choose to.

Potential Pitfalls and Some Ideas on How to Avoid Them

❖ Having two copies of each chat station helped to avoid too many students at a single chat station. It also helped to not rush any group who was struggling with coming up with the answer. I would recommend instructors continuing this method of having multiples of each chat station. Two copies of each chat station are provided in the attached printouts, which worked well for my class of 30 students. If you have more than 30 students, you should consider printing more copies of each chat station.

❖ I found that most students were very enthusiastic about the opportunity to move around the room to each chat station, likely because it was something that they do not usually do. Some students were reluctant to get up from their desks first so they waited on other students to do so first. I approached the students who seemed to have finished reviewing each concept but were not going to the chat stations and let them know that they can wait until other students approach the chat stations before going up. With many students standing up and moving around, there was less attention on any specific student, which helped get the hesitant students to participate.

❖ If you have students in the classroom with limited mobilities, a large class size, or a classroom with limited space, then an alternative is to use PowerPoint to project each statement. Students can work in groups for one minute to label each statement and write their answers in the worksheet. After a minute passes, you then switch the slide to the next statement and the students have another minute to come up with their answers.

❖ Some students disagreed on how to label each statement, particularly some of the four frames of colorblind racism. Sometimes these students misunderstood the frame, which provided a good opportunity to review the concept again. However, in most cases, several students provided reasonable explanations for why a single statement was two different frames of colorblind racism. This disagreement was useful in that it helped the class see how colorblind racism works in everyday life. I pointed out to the students that Bonilla-Silva argues that the four frames of colorblind racism are sometimes used at the same time to create a strong argument to justify racial inequality and to erase systemic, institutional, and individual racism that racial/ethnic minorities continue to experience in the United States. I explained that their disagreements in how to label each statement reflect the ways in which multiple frames of colorblind racism are used, sometimes simultaneously, to justify racial inequality.

❖ The course concepts discussed in this activity, and in sociology courses more broadly, may remind students of difficult personal experiences that they have faced. These moments are great opportunities to remind students that existing research shows that people of color feel empowered when they talk about and identify the racism they and other people of color face (see Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Gutiérrez and Lewis 1999; Mansbridge and Morris 2001; Twine 2004, 2010; Yosso 2005). By thinking through how

they would challenge racist discourse, students who have been dehumanized by racist rhetoric will likewise feel empowered (Gutiérrez and Lewis 1999).

References

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Naming Racisms: Identifying and Responding to Biological and Colorblind Racisms Worksheet

Please list the names of all group members:

As you go around the room, please identify the type of racism that is listed in each statement. Write your response down in the corresponding number.

1	2
3	4
5	

Naming Racisms: Identifying and Responding to Biological and Colorblind Racisms Worksheet

1 **Biological racism**	2 **Abstract liberalism**
"White people are smarter than all other races. Why else would Whites be in so many powerful positions?" Golash-Boza's (2018: 81) definition of biological racism: "Biological racism is the idea that whites are genetically superior to nonwhites."	"You don't have to worry about racism. As long as you work hard, you will be fine." Bonilla-Silva's (2014: 76) definition of abstract liberalism: "The frame of abstract liberalism involves using ideas associated with political liberalism (e.g., 'equal opportunity,' the idea that force should not be used to achieve social policy) and economic liberalism (e.g., choice, individualism) in an abstract manner to explain racial matters."
3 **Minimization of racism**	4 **Naturalism**
"Racism is a thing of the past. It doesn't exist anymore, especially not in California" Bonilla-Silva's (2014: 77) definition of minimization of racism: "Minimization of racism is a frame that suggests discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting minorities' life chances ('It's better now than in the past' or 'There is discrimination, but there are plenty of jobs out there')."	"The reason that neighborhood has mostly Black and Latino residents is because Blacks and Latinos naturally like to stick together. There is no segregation anymore." Bonilla-Silva's (2014: 76) definition of naturalism: "Naturalism is a frame that allows whites to explain away racial phenomena by suggesting they are natural occurrences."
5 **Cultural racism**	
"The reason that there aren't many people of color who are college graduates is because they don't value education. They just want children." Bonilla-Silva's (2014: 76) definition of cultural racism: "Cultural racism is a frame that relies on culturally based arguments such as 'Mexicans do not put much emphasis on education' or 'blacks have too many babies' to explain the standing of minorities in society."	

1

"White people are smarter than all other races. Why else would Whites be in so many powerful positions?"

1

"White people are smarter than all other races. Why else would Whites be in so many powerful positions?"

2

"You don't have to worry about racism. As long as you work hard, you will be fine."

2

"You don't have to worry about racism. As long as you work hard, you will be fine."

3

"Racism is a thing of the past. It doesn't exist anymore, especially not in California"

3

"Racism is a thing of the past. It doesn't exist anymore, especially not in California"

4

"The reason that neighborhood has mostly Black and Latino residents is because Blacks and Latinos naturally like to stick together. There is no segregation anymore."

4

"The reason that neighborhood has mostly Black and Latino residents is because Blacks and Latinos naturally like to stick together. There is no segregation anymore."

5

"The reason that there aren't many people of color who are college graduates is because they don't value education. They just want children."

5

"The reason that there aren't many people of color who are college graduates is because they don't value education. They just want children."