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Diversity and Incivility: Toward an Action-Oriented Approach

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Abstract

The problem and the solution. Some individuals experience incivility at work based on others' perceptions of whether they are different from the norm. Incivility, the often-unintentional violation of social norms, can occur as a result of perpetrators' unconscious prejudice. Such activity can result in decreased employee satisfaction, increased likelihood of looking for another job, and decreased mental and physical health. Employers can take these threats seriously by considering how to integrate diversity initiatives and incivility initiatives. Common diversity interventions might unintentionally lead to increased acts of incivility due to the likelihood of suppressing true feelings. Additionally, programs that encourage diversity awareness development and continuous introspection have been criticized for not leading to meaningful action. This article culminates in addressing how diversity initiatives might be reimaged using an incivility framework that seeks to integrate an action orientation.

Keywords: workplace diversity resistance, group dynamics, training, organization development, human resource development

Workplace diversity issues have become increasingly prominent in the last 15 years, as diversity is recognized as a core competitive strength and is seen as more than a compliance goal. Reflecting broader societal changes, workplaces have become more diverse and overt discrimination has decreased due to social taboos. However, deep-rooted prejudice cannot be wiped out in such a short time span (e.g., Pincus, 2000). As a result, subtler forms of discrimination have become more common, which can be described as acts of incivility. Workplace incivility is the violation of social norms in which perpetrators may unintentionally inflict harm (Cortina, 2008; Estes & Wang, 2008; Pearson & Porath, 2005). A link exists between incivility, job dissatisfaction, and health, leading frequent targets of incivility to consider leaving their jobs at higher rates than others (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005). Incivility targeted toward those who are different often results from "aversive discrimination," which occurs in situations where neither the instigator nor others are aware of its roots because the instigator internally and externally condemns prejudice (Cortina, 2008).

Most organizations have legitimately attempted to control overt discrimination and harassment in organizations using a top-down approach. Employers must protect their workers from discrimination and harassment. However, power is not one way. It permeates from all points in a fluctuating interplay between actors at all levels (Foucault, 1978). Legitimate top-down efforts have resulted in prejudice seeping out in unconscious ways through acts of incivility (Cortina, 2008). These subtler forms of prejudice are more complex and harder to eliminate than conventional forms of discrimination (Bond & Pyle, 1998a). Perpetrators of

uncivil behavior based on race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, class, or disability can engage in this behavior unconsciously. To address these issues, organizations have developed various types of diversity programs. Despite many successes, efforts to increase appreciation for diversity have faced persistent backlash. Subtler forms of discrimination are harder to address through human resource development (HRD) efforts, due to their elusive nature. The question now is how to best grapple with incivility resulting from one's personal characteristics.

Applying Foucault's ideas (1978), we can consider that those engaging in individual acts of incivility against minorities are *not* merely seen as individuals committing temporary aberrations. Instead, they are treated as troubled individuals having deep-rooted prejudice. For example, labels such as "racist," "sexist," or "homophobe" are commonly applied to perpetrators. These labels can lead to ascribing acts of incivility to psychological conditions that need to be acknowledged by the individual, treated through an intervention, and cured. Of course, with the exception of high profile or extreme cases, these conditions are rarely treated through formal clinical treatment. Instead, the most common form of "treatment" occurs through employer-sponsored education sessions, which do not always lead to meaningful action to improve the work lives of members of minority groups (Ellsworth, 1989). Instead, these efforts can lead to endless attempts to understand differences, in which members of minority groups are placed in the position of educating others about the salience of diversity issues. This education often takes the form of testimonials from diverse individuals and recounting discriminatory experiences (Mayo, 2007). Such efforts often fail to result in substantive change (Ellsworth, 1989) and sometimes result in guilt being transferred to members of majority groups (Brown, 1996). These problems also raise questions about whether focusing on "minority groups" is the most effective approach. Such questions have led to suggestions about utilizing broader conceptions of diversity and difference (Mor-Barak, 2011; Thomas, 1991).

In this article, I (a) provide an overview of the purposes and perspectives on workplace diversity, (b) summarize the approaches to diversity culture change through HRD interventions, and (c) explore whether incivility prevention is a useful approach for addressing workplace culture improvement related to diversity. Because acts of workplace incivility can happen to anyone, it is important to consider whether incivility should be dealt with as a broad concept in which any of us could become a target or whether incivility prevention should somehow be integrated with diversity-related initiatives. This discussion is parallel with debates in the workplace diversity realm over the appropriate breath of diversity initiatives. I juxtapose these discussions with similar debates regarding whether to focus on identity-centered change efforts, common action for broadly inclusive groups of many types of people, or some combination of these approaches.

What is Workplace Diversity?

Definitions

Three common views of diversity receive the most attention by workplace practitioners and scholars: narrow category-based definitions, broad category-based definitions, and conceptual articulations of diversity (Mor-Barak, 2011). First, within the U.S., narrow category-based articulations are based on discrimination laws and include "gender, racial and ethnic groups, national origin, disability, and age" (Mor-Barak, 2011, p. 134). This approach has generally focused on characteristics that are visibly apparent. Second, broad category-based definitions expand on categories included in the federal legislation to include cultural

background, social class, marital status, education, length of tenure in the organization, and skills. Such approaches generally include visible and invisible characteristics (Mor-Barak, 2011). Third, broad conceptual articulations of diversity have become increasingly common in the last 15 years, as organizations become more interested in viewing diversity in general terms that transcend categorizations. Broad conceptual articulations of diversity have been popularized by various authors, most notably Roosevelt Thomas (1991). Such approaches allow all members of an organization to personally identify with the concept of diversity and understand its relevance for all individuals (Mor-Barak, 2011). There are other approaches as well, beyond these three, especially in international contexts.

Some scholars and practitioners view broad general conceptual articulations as a progression from more divisive definitions (Brown, 1996). However, others contend that diversity should maintain a focus on inter-group inequality rather than looking at broad individual differences (Linnehan & Konrad, 1999). Linnehan and Konrad argue that broad-focused diversity initiatives have become popular and have resulted in the dilution of earlier diversity programs. This dilution minimizes intergroup inequality to the point of diversity initiatives being no different than other organization development (OD) initiatives that build group and interpersonal skills.

The ongoing debate over whether to use narrow or broad conceptions of diversity has resulted in multiple approaches in research and practice. Nkomo (1995) contends that neither approach is appropriate. She and other scholars advocate using a combination of approaches to ensure that diversity is not watered down to a meaningless concept, while at the same time still recognizing that diversity occurs in many forms beyond categories provided in formal lists (e.g., Bond & Pyle, 1998a; Nkomo, 1995).

Dominant Frameworks and Approaches

There are a variety of purposes and approaches for diversity within organizations, which influence the tangible ways in which diversity initiatives play out at multiple organizational levels.

Motivations. Generally, three prevailing motivations cause organizations to promote workplace diversity: (a) to fulfill compliance requirements; (b) to maximize competitive advantage; and (c) to meet ethical, moral, and social justice obligations (Cox, 1993; Ferdman & Brody, 1996; Kennedy, 2008; Mor-Barak, 2011).

Historically, *fulfilling compliance requirements* has served as an initial impetus for being concerned with diversity. Equal employment opportunity laws and Affirmative Action for federal contractors caused many U.S. organizations to become concerned about the issue (Cox, 1993; Ferdman & Brody, 1996). Additionally, most organizations have a public relations goal of avoiding negative attention as it relates to their diversity practices, due to social pressure (Ferdman & Brody, 1996). While legal requirements and social pressures can serve as valuable motivations, widespread consensus exists that a long-term focus on compliance is not in the best interest of meeting employer needs nor for meeting the needs of employees (e.g., Rocco, Landorf, & Delgado, 2009). Compliance connotes meeting minimum requirements, true cultural change occurs through a paradigm shift in which diversity is approached because it's good for the company or because it's the right thing to do.

Competitive advantage arguments have become a prevalent approach to workplace diversity. Typically, these rationales have been based on (a) attempting to maximize the potential of workers based on the demographic reality that available workers today are more

diverse than in the past; (b) to maximize organizational potential in a global economy in which a variety of perspectives are needed to succeed; and (c) to maximize the general and specific ways of thinking and working to encourage more creativity and innovation (Cox, 1993; Ferdman & Brody, 1996; Kennedy, 2008; Miller & Katz, 2002). The most common complaint with competitive advantage arguments relates to organizations co-opting a social justice movement to improve performance or increase profits (Johnson, 2007).. An additional problem is seen through research showing that diverse work teams are not always more productive. Although they come up with more creative ideas to solve problems, they are less cohesive, especially in the short-term after the groups are initially formed (Jackson, Joshi, & Erhardt, 2003; Linnehan & Konrad, 1999). Initiatives need to be designed to increase the cohesiveness of these diverse teams rather than merely working to form diverse teams.

The last rationale and motivation for diversity initiatives originates from *ethical, moral, and social justice obligations*. Debate exists in the literature over whether motivation is more important than outcomes (Bierema, 2005; Johnson, 2007; McGuire, Cross, & O'Donnell, 2005). Some would argue that self-interested motivations negate positive results, while others argue that positive results that help people are more important than specific motivations (Johnson, 2007).

In reality, the three basic approaches often work in concert. Research has found that organizational leaders and change agents often espouse a competitive advantage approach, while also being motivated by social justice and moral arguments (Githens, 2008; Meyerson & Scully, 1995; Raeburn, 2004). The three approaches are not mutually exclusive and can complement each other in helping organizations improve their diversity climates.

Approaches. Beyond motivational issues, organizations differ in the level(s) at which diversity is addressed, the ways in which diversity change is sought, and how the scope of their views on diversity affect the type of change that is sought.

Diversity must be addressed at the individual, group and organizational level to impact (a) individual affective outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction) and individual achievement outcomes (e.g., job performance measures), (b) group effectiveness, and (c) organizational effectiveness. It is crucial to move beyond individual and team-level psychological factors, which sometimes dominate both practitioners' approaches to diversity and the training/psychology research on diversity. Some of the dominant training-oriented approaches to diversity create the risk that true feelings are merely suppressed and later seep out in unconscious ways.

One of the most common criticisms of diversity training is that it can instill guilt over past injustices inflicted on diverse individuals (Bond & Pyle, 1998a; Brown, 1996). This process typically involves training programs in which members of the majority "feel the pain" of diverse individuals, but the training often results in inaction. Debate exists over how to address this problem while recognizing the deeply troubling injustices experienced by members of some social groups. One approach is to recognize that group identity and group injustice is not a barrier to working on common ground and that actions are needed to rethink the *universal* while not attempting to transcend *particularity*. In other words, both category-based and general diversity approaches are needed. These approaches move beyond mere education and awareness and toward a mutual, group action approach (Brown, 1996; Ellsworth, 1989; Rocco et al., 2009). When utilized with education efforts, these approaches involve specific calls to action and movement by members of the majority and minority (e.g., Githens, 2008).

Workplace Incivility and Diversity

Employees' experiences with incivility differ based on diversity factors. Although all workers can be subjected to incivility, incivility targeted toward those who are different can result from discrimination. Overt, purposeful discrimination by perpetrators can be consciously toned down into milder forms of incivility that is no longer considered harassment. Or, more commonly, "aversive discrimination" occurs when nobody is aware of the roots of the discrimination because the instigators condemn prejudice to others and truly believe they are without prejudice (Cortina, 2008). In this section, I describe several empirical studies that illustrate the concrete relationships between incivility and diversity.

Fletcher (1998) found that women using collaborative language to come to mutual agreement receive less respect than those who act in uncivil ways. In the high-tech firm where Fletcher researched, men's incivility was memorable, while women's civility was not. When disagreeing with someone's ideas in an uncivil way, that person's contributions were remembered. Despite this perception, the women perceived that they needed to preserve their relationships and that acting in a combative way toward a man would be self-destructive to their careers. The women experienced the incivility in the firm like everyone else, but were at a disadvantage for not engaging in it.

Lim and Cortina (2005) found evidence of a relationship between general incivility, gender-related harassment, and sexual harassment. In other words, one seems to lead to the other. They conclude that sexual harassment occurs "against a backdrop of generalized disrespect in the workplace" (p. 492). Countering arguments that sexual harassment is merely an effect of sexual attraction or due to innocent flirting, they conclude that it is a form of dominance that occurs in the context of organizations that tolerate incivility. They found that occupational, psychological, and physical health declined when employees were subjected to incivility, gender harassment, and sexual harassment. This evidence illustrates the need for employers to take general incivility seriously because it can foster conditions that breed very risky behavior.

In considering the role of race in incivility, Kern and Grandey (2009) found that members of racial minority groups with stronger racial identities experience more stress from incivility than minorities with weaker racial identities. In addition to incivility experienced directly, women and members of culturally diverse groups are more likely to see, point out, and discuss the incivility they see targeted toward others than that targeted toward themselves (Bond & Pyle, 1998b). Stress leading from this incivility can lead to physical and emotional problems, which impact both the employee and the employer.

HRD practitioners must also consider the negative effects of possible OD interventions in fostering climates that encourage incivility toward diverse workers. For example, worker empowerment often results in individual decision-making and control, which can be incompatible with fostering healthy collaboration environments and is antithetical to some members of certain cultural groups (Bond & Pyle, 1998a; Bordas, 2007). Another common OD tool, self-directed teams, results in team empowerment and group decision-making. Such approaches run the risk of reinforcing the norms of the majority. An additional concern originates from the research showing that, in the short-term, group members have a preference for those that are similar to them and that diverse groups are less cohesive in the short-term (Bond & Pyle, 1998a; Jackson et al., 2003; Linnehan & Konrad, 1999). Workplace diversity efforts need to consider how to grapple with both types of initiatives. For example, anti-incivility accountability can be built into these programs to minimize the instances of incivility.

committed by individually empowered individuals and self-directed teams. Incivility can be addressed as an integral part of HRD diversity efforts.

Common Approaches and Challenges for Diversity Culture Change: Implications for Incivility

Diversity Training

Diversity training is one of the most widely known diversity interventions. Despite the existence of some top-quality diversity training programs, they have a reputation of being used as “one-shot” superficial responses to prevent lawsuits (Bond & Pyle, 1998a). A common criticism of such training is the lack of a clear link between the training and positive outcomes. Such problems often result from inherent conceptual design problems. For example, as a result of her large scale study of retail bank branches, Ely (2004) concluded that the bank’s suite of diversity education programs might have failed to result in increased branch performance because of focusing too much on diversity awareness rather than skill building. Roberson, Kulik, and Pepper (2001) made similar conclusions in calling for behavioral skill building rather than focusing on awareness training.

Short of reframing the overall conceptions of diversity education to incorporate incivility concepts, as is discussed later in the article, several suggestions emerged from the research literature on how to improve the effectiveness of diversity training. Roberson, Kulik, and Pepper (2001) found that employees with higher levels of past participation in diversity education programs performed better after subsequent training when participating in homogeneous diversity training groups than those who participated in heterogeneous sessions. Roberson et al. explain that past research supports the idea that behavioral skill development (needed by advanced learners) is better supported in a homogeneous environment that is perceived as being safer. On the other hand, heterogeneous groups are good for development of initial cognitive skills such as diversity awareness. Another suggestion is to target teams by helping them to effectively utilize their internal diversity (Jackson et al., 2003). Modified approaches to traditional diversity training could use activities applied to diversity skill development within a team or could consider action learning approaches to building diversity capacity. Such approaches move closer toward participants in training programs taking mutual action in improving conditions for all individuals rather than expecting change from a passive educational experience (Ellsworth, 1989).

Organization Development

In addition to broad ideas like changing the culture, OD diversity efforts may include specific programs to: maximize productivity within diverse work teams, adjust work schedule structures, alter compensation systems, place responsibility for diversity initiatives in the hands of someone who reports to the CEO, develop diversity action councils, institute 360-degree feedback, and implement clear expectations that discrimination and incivility be addressed swiftly (Cox, 1993, Ely, 2004; Pearson & Porath, 2005; Wooten & James, 2004). When implementing such OD efforts, past research points to specific organizational, departmental, and policy considerations that need consideration.

Informal cultures that dominate today’s organizations can provide benefits in heightening creativity, collaboration, and morale. However, those less formal cultures can create such an ambiguity regarding roles and responsibilities for communications that employees’ informal

dispositions can easily lead to free-flowing emotions that become uncivil (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). HRD professionals in such cultures must concern themselves with how to help ensure that these cultures do not allow incivility to ruin the positive aspects of the culture by stifling teamwork and collaboration as a result of pervasive incivility.

Much of organizational life occurs within teams. However, despite widely espoused organizational values that espouse the importance of teamwork, individualism and independence dominate U.S. and Canadian organizations in actual practice (Bond & Pyle, 1998b; Elliott & Turnbull, 2003). When considering the implications of teamwork for diversity, Bond and Pyle found that influence, upward mobility, and positive working conditions are differentially provided for minorities and women based on their lack of desire to engage in “sucking up” for personal gain. Lack of opportunity due to cultural differences is problematic itself, but also leads to subtle acts of incivility in which others’ predicaments are dismissed because they do not engage in activities that will benefit their career. Such incivility leads to the erosion of trust and teamwork that organizations espouse as critical values.

Jackson et al. (2003) and Ely (2004) concluded work team diversity may be a significant barrier to performance, in some cases. However, these issues can be overcome through linking performance to group outcomes and through prolonged engagement in the same diverse work group. Ely (2004) conducted a large-scale study of performance and workgroup diversity in a large retail bank that connected individual performance assessments to team performance. Ely’s findings support other research that demonstrates increased motivation for cohesiveness, across differences, when individuals have a shared fate. In contrast, Jehn and Bezrukova (2004) found minimal connection between diversity and performance in a firm that emphasized individual ownership as the most important performance indicator. Despite Ely’s findings about team cohesiveness, she did not find a positive relationship between performance and increased race or sex diversity. Ely speculates that despite hiring people who are outwardly diverse, firms may hire similar types of people in regard to so-called “deep-level” issues like personality, attitudes, values and beliefs (Harrison, Price, Gavin, & Florey, 2002). This homogeneity might have prevented increased performance that can result from increased diversity of deeper-level differences that enhance creativity and problem solving skills. Such issues raise questions about whether organizations’ current approaches to diversity can effectively enhance competitive advantage. Additionally, Ely’s conclusion raises questions about acts of incivility toward employees who have different “deep-level” characteristics.

Organizations vary in their responses to diversity problems. At the executive level, problems such as accusations of discrimination can be addressed in multiple ways. Some organizations prefer to make the problem go away (e.g., settling a lawsuit), while others have taken an accusation as an opportunity to engage in organizational learning to proactively change the organizational systems, mechanisms, and culture that lead to the problem (Wooten & James, 2004). At the team or individual contributor level, resistance sometimes results from diversity-related OD efforts, in which studies suggest that white men see increased opportunities for diverse populations as being threatening to them, especially in periods of economic turmoil (Bond & Pyle, 1998a; Linnehan & Konrad, 1999; Tolbert, Andrews, & Simons (1999). Additionally, Bond and Pyle found that a lower quality of work life for white men in formerly white male-dominated departments emerges in some settings. In their study, increased feminization in certain departments resulted in lowering of status and even a lowering of pay. Such evidence points to the pressing need for HR practitioners to ensure that company policies and compensation systems prevent financial disparities. Aside from basic unfairness and

opening employers to legal risk, such problems can provide significant obstacles to widespread acceptance of diversity. Decreased acceptance of diversity can lead to increased acts of incivility toward workers who are different.

Likewise, seemingly unthreatening policies like family-friendly practices that allow for flexibility for working parents can result in backlash toward the employees who actually use the policies (Bond & Pyle, 1998a). Such backlash can take the form of explicit discrimination in promotion opportunities or, more likely, in acts of incivility toward the users of such policies. HR practitioners must consider how to effectively address such backlash and incivility surrounding their OD diversity efforts.

Conclusions: Moving Toward an Action Orientation in Integrating Diversity and Incivility

Proactive measures are important for preventing instances of incivility in workplaces. Additionally, both individuals and teams need to be held accountable after committing uncivil actions. However, the responsibility for combating incivility is oftentimes ambiguous. Organizational policies can more easily combat direct hostility and bullying, but have more difficulty in addressing underlying biases and the incivility that can result from such biases (Bond & Pyle, 1998a, 1998b). As mentioned earlier, common approaches to diversity policies and diversity training sometimes merely suppress bias, which seeps out later in unconscious ways.

Alternative approaches can examine why the dominant majority perspectives have been normalized (rather than focusing on a specific bias as a type of psychological condition to be cured) (Britzman, 1995). Additionally, instead of seeking to create an *understanding* of and *recognition* of minorities, diversity initiatives can encourage conversations with a wider range of individuals that are inclusive of more people, in their quest to build more inclusive and just workplaces (Duggan, 2003; Hill, 2004). Diversity efforts that address unconscious bias that seeps out through acts of incivility run the risk of encouraging the endless self-examination by members of the majority that is bemoaned by Ellsworth (1989). These risks raise the question of how to grapple with complex unconscious bias without falling into the same traps experienced through other diversity programs.

Action-oriented diversity education programs, such as initiatives within existing team structures, can help organizations maintain a balance that minimizes some of the problems mentioned above. Such programs can utilize principles from the action learning literature and diversity social justice literature (Marquardt, 2009; Raeburn, 2004; Wooten & James, 2004). These programs help individuals address the unconscious bias that presents itself through acts of incivility *and* address the need for a group to continue moving forward toward broadly-inclusive action that will improve the work lives for everyone, not just members of specific minority groups. The social psychology literature has shown that group attitudes can be changed through interventions that seek to develop a common group identity (Cortina, 2008). Another approach could use general incivility prevention behavioral training to help teams deal with impulsive anger that enters routine conversations when perceived insults or threats are introduced. Such training can be especially helpful for those with a “hot” temperament (Andersson & Pearson, 1999) or those that work with such individuals. HRD professionals need to exercise caution in balancing general incivility issues with diversity-related incivility, to minimize the risk that the diversity component is lost.

Action-oriented diversity education programs can utilize category-based and broad conceptions of diversity, while pursuing civility for competitive advantage and moral/social justice purposes. A sample program might start by building initial diversity and incivility awareness among work groups. The second phase of the program could involve an incivility prevention skill-building program, in which participants consider how unconscious, suppressed thoughts might present themselves in uncivil ways and in stressful conversations. Behavioral skill development could include participants engaging in role-play situations in which uncivil behavior emerges with a person who is different in a way that they find uncomfortable. The next phase of the program could be the action-planning stage in which group members consider how they can build on their existing diversity strengths and how to remove components of the group culture that lead to incivility for those who are different (e.g., work environment factors, typical practices, formal policies). In the final phase, members of the group could develop a specific strategy and workplan structure for eliminating the problems and building on the positive aspects of the group. Depending on the needs of a group, these steps could easily be modified, with planning and action coming earlier for some work teams.

Structural OD changes can help to address concerns raised in previous sections (Cortina, 2008; Cox, 1993). For example, organization-level policy changes in regard to compensation can help ensure that the introduction of diverse individuals does not result in lowering of pay. Another example is seen through leaders who ensure that organizational prestige is granted to diverse work teams. Ely (2004) showed that linking individual performance to team performance helped to maximize team members' motivation for group cohesiveness. These solutions can increase group cohesiveness, civility, and appreciation for diversity.

Foucault (1978) contends that power is exercised from multiple levels, multiple locations, and in multiple ways—not just from the top. Given each individual's ability to exercise power, it is feasible to consider that some individuals with deeply ingrained prejudice will exercise this prejudice in conscious and unconscious ways that fall out of the sight of organizational leaders. However, most people want to work in relatively peaceful workplaces. For individuals who desire a positive, peaceful workplace, it is to their advantage to minimize the instances in which they commit incivility and to help prevent it among their coworkers. Reio and Ghosh (2009) examined the instigators of incivility and found that increases in committing acts of incivility were negatively related to perceived physical health and job satisfaction by the instigators. Negative affective emotions (e.g., anxiety, fear) were linked to increased acts of incivility. Regardless of causation, for example, whether negative affective emotions cause the acts of incivility or whether incivility breeds more negative affective emotions, Reio and Ghosh's evidence demonstrates an interrelated connection. This research illustrates the need for minimizing incivility both for the benefit of potential victims, for potential perpetrators, and for the climate of the entire organization.

One limitation of the approach I took in this paper is the problem-centered focus. This issue might be better conceptualized using an appreciative inquiry lens (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Some practitioners approach workteam incivility problems in this manner by helping a team to envision what their ideal working conditions might look like and then helping them move toward that positive goal (D. Twyford, personal communication, November 25, 2010). Positive approaches help prevent defensiveness and negativity that can paralyze these efforts. Appreciative inquiry approaches could also help prevent some of the fear, backlash, and lack of action associated with other diversity approaches.

HRD professionals can facilitate formal training, action learning, and OD interventions that empower teams to work through diversity and incivility issues in a positive proactive manner. By conceptualizing workplace civility and diversity as overlapping realms of practice, HRD practitioners can address category-based diversity, broadly conceived conceptual articulations of diversity, and the need to move toward action in seeking more humane and productive workplaces for all individuals.

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