Diversity and Inclusion in Teaching: Information Packet

UW Anthropology Department
Diversity Committee
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Interrupting Bias: Key Concepts

Diversity: When we talk about diversity, often we are talking about social identities, groups to which we belong that are meaningful to us and give us a source of identity. Often our social identity can make us appear different from others. Diversity goals are intended to make difference acceptable and to reverse patterns of discrimination which result in underrepresentation in academia.

Privilege: Systemic form of advantage for those who have it. Because it is invisible, it is taboo to even name or identify it, and therefore much more difficult to challenge. We are all both afforded and denied privilege based on our various group memberships.

Micro-aggressions: Everyday acts of exclusion against underrepresented groups that attempt to denigrate their capabilities. Micro-aggressions include: interruptions, translations, misidentifications (called the wrong name or have one's name repeatedly mispronounced), exclusion (when one is ignored and left out of networks) and marginalization (one's contributions are ignored or discounted).

Unexamined Bias: A form of stereotyping that is often unintentional, automatic, and outside our awareness. Often contradictory to our conscious beliefs. Also called subtle or implicit bias. Framing it specifically as "unexamined" puts onus for change on the person who harbors or acts on bias, holding them accountable.

Inclusion: Valuing differences in social identities and cultural backgrounds. Working towards not only acceptance of these differences but celebration of them as well. In inclusive environments, faculty, chairs and deans are accountable for diversity and for actively fostering welcoming climates.

Underrepresented groups: People from groups who have historically been denied access or faced steep barriers to accessing higher education in the US, including women of all ethnicities, men of color, and people with disabilities.

Meritocracy: An ideology that there is a level playing field in the US and people can advance as far as their hard-work and abilities allow. Ignores long-standing discriminatory practices against women, people of color and people with disabilities in the United States.

Ally: Someone who advocates for underrepresented group members but does not share their social identity. Offers micro-support that counters the micro-aggressions listed above by:

- Providing others with full attention
- Acknowledging others' contributions
- Recognizing strengths
- Respectfully asking questions for clarification

- Holding others accountable when seeing micro-aggressions taking place
- Breaking the silence around these micro-inequities and developing personal and group strategies to deal with them when they arise.

Change agent: A prime mover in an organization who bucks the status quo, risking criticism to create change in an organization. A change agent learns to speak differently (not necessarily argue well) and frames issues of diversity in a refreshing way.

Accountability: Organizations leaders who make accountability central to their diversity efforts have more effective results than those that do not (Kavil et al. 2006). Incorporate the concept of accountability throughout the presentation to stress its critical role in diversity efforts.

Sample student comments about feeling excluded

1) "One day the professor started class with this joke about people who speak with accents. Chances are he didn't mean to make fun of them, but it's all I thought about for the whole hour. I might as well have stayed home that day for all I was able to pay attention during the rest of the lecture."

2) "We were discussing how education is viewed differently in other countries and the professor asked me about the Japanese education system. Just because I'm Japanese American it doesn't mean I know anything about how things work in Japan. I was born and raised here, and so were my grandparents!"

3) "Every time something about African Americans comes up in class the professor looks at me as if I should react somehow. I don't know if he's worried that I'm going to be offended or something but it makes me feel uncomfortable."

4) "I knew when I chose this major that there weren't many other women in the department, but I didn't want that to stop me from studying something I enjoy so much. It can wear you down after a while, though. You start to wonder, 'Am I the only person like me who has ever cared about this?'"

5) "It seems like every topic has a 'minority day' when we stop talking about the stuff in the textbook and we're supposed to discuss an article by somebody black or Asian or female. But nobody says much, and I doubt if very many people have read the article or at least they haven't thought about it very much. Those are the days when the minority students say the least, even though it sort of feels like everyone is looking at them to find out what they think."

6) "When he talks about 'common sense' or a 'typical human response', I used to think, 'Not where I live it's not.' For a while I thought it was something wrong with me, but now it's got me wondering if he really knows as much as he thinks he does."

7) "There seems to be an assumption in the classroom that everyone is middle-class. I grew up poor, and am still struggling to try to make ends meet and get through school – I get upset when some teachers assume that all students have the same access to resources, or that we all have the same style of communicating."

8) "I needed some special accommodations for the class because I have a learning disability – but that doesn't mean I'm dumb. Ever since I handed the instructor my note, she talks to me differently, slowly, like I don't understand."

9) "There's a class atmosphere where it's okay to make jokes about gayness – a (straight) guy's friends keep teasing him about getting boyfriends, or someone puts something down by saying 'that's so gay.' I don't think it occurs to the kids in class that there might be gay students in the class who feel put down by these comments."

10) "As a returning student balancing school with raising a family, I have a lot more life experience than most of my peers – and even some instructors. When a professor speaks condescendingly to the class like we're all 19-yr olds being supported by our parents, I wonder why I ever left work to go back to school."

"White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"
by Peggy McIntosh

As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage. I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege. So I have begun, in an untutored way, to ask what it is like to have white privilege. This paper is a partial record of my personal observations, and not a scholarly analysis. It is based on my daily experiences within my particular circumstances.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern which Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives a morally neutral, normative, and average and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow "them" to be more like "us." It is crude work, at this stage, but I will give here a list of special circumstances and conditions I experience which I did not earn, but which I have been made to feel are mine by birth, by citizenship, and by virtue of being a conscientious law-abiding "normal" person of good will.

List of White Privileges

1) I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2) I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
3) When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
4) I can be casual about whether or not to listen to another woman's voice in a group in which she is the only member of her race.
5) I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.
6) I can swear, or dress in secondhand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
7) I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
8) I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
9) I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
10) I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.

Excerpted from Peggy McIntosh's Working Paper 189, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (1988)

Discussion Questions:

• McIntosh talks about privileges based on race. Can you think of unearned privileges you have based on other categories, such as age, sexual orientation, class background?

• How might the privilege/lack of privilege of your students affect classroom discussions? the ways that students relate to you as an instructor?

• What are some ways to address unacknowledged privilege in the classroom?

Six Types of Bias

Despite our best intentions, our particular social locations and life experiences are bound to influence the choices we make in preparing our classes and interacting with our students. Considering some of the ways bias can be expressed is an important first step to identifying and addressing bias in our course materials and classroom practices. The following are six ways bias can be expressed in the classroom:

1) *Linguistic bias*: Using language in a way that is ***exclusive*** to particular groups (using "he" to refer to an unknown person or "mankind" to refer to humanity; asking a student if he is married) or ***carries negative or trivializing connotations*** about particular groups ("she was blind to the facts"; "he throws like a girl"; "what a crazy idea"; "that's so gay").

2) *Stereotyping*: Assuming that all members of a certain group think or behave in a certain way.

3) *Invisibility*: Lack of examples using women or non-white ethnic groups. Consider, for example, that "students who never hear of a woman philosopher have trouble believing in such a creature" (Minnich 1990: 78).

4) *Imbalance*: Offering only one interpretation of an issue or situation.

5) *Unreality*: Avoiding negative facts history or contemporary life by, for instance, uncritically presenting European settlement of America without discussing the colonization of Native Americans.

6) *Fragmentation*: Including contributions of women or non-white ethnic groups as "special" topics; "fragmentation communicates to readers that women [or minorities] are an interesting diversion but that their contributions do not constitute the mainstream of history and literature" (Sadker 1993: 113).

Discussion Questions:

- What other examples of bias have you encountered in your experience as a student and/or teacher?

- What strategies have you used/can you imagine using to avoid bias in your teaching?

- How would you imagine addressing student feedback that you or your course material has been biased in some way?

This handout relies heavily on the following sources:

Sadker, Myra, David Sadker, and Lynette Long. (1997). "Gender and Educational Equality." In *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, ed. James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, pp. 109-128.

Minnich, Elizabeth Kamarck. (1990). *Transforming Knowledge*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Strategies for the Inclusive Classroom

- Get to know your students. The more you can learn about your students' backgrounds and experiences, the better equipped you are to anticipate how they will engage with your class. Even just learning students' names can go a long way towards fostering more productive learning relationships. Remember, though, that traditionally marginalized students may have very good reasons for not trusting you with personal information, so be careful of the kinds of questions you ask and make sure students have a means for opting out if they'd rather not respond.

- Foster classroom community. It's also important that students get to know each other as people. Doing one or two "ice breaker" activities, telling students you expect them to learn each others' names, and planning small group activities can all help build classroom community.

- Remember that many social categories are invisible. Always assume that you have at least one student in your class who is gay or lesbian, Muslim, disabled, working class, of mixed racial heritage, etc.

- Avoid singling students out as the "native informant" on a topic. Make space for students to bring their personal experiences into the class, but don't put a student in the position of having to "speak for" their group. Also, when assigning students to groups for collaborative work, avoid stranding traditionally marginalized students alone in groups of "mainstream" students (for example, assigning an African American student to.a group of white students).

- Intervene when students make inappropriate comments. One way to address inappropriate statements is to separate the statement from the student. Saying, "It's interesting that you bring that up, since we know that many people share that perception. How do you think those kinds of ideas are formed in our society," allows you to address the comment without shaming the student who made it.

- Phrase course policies in terms of "promoting inclusivity" rather than "avoiding offense." If "offense" becomes the measure for appropriateness, it opens the way for accusations of "over-sensitivity" on the part of minority students: "It wouldn't offend me if a sports team called themselves 'the Honkies,' so why do Native Americans care about The Redskins?"

- Teach the conflicts. Framing a course so that students can see how particular topics or ideas are debated in a discipline can demonstrate your own devotion to having multiple perspectives explored in the class and can encourage students to bring up ideas they may feel are oppositional.

- Be aware of how course materials may impact students. When "teaching the conflicts" there will be times when we may want to bring explicitly biased, or otherwise emotionally charged, material into our classrooms. We need to be aware, however, how such material can cause harm to our students. For example, a woman who has been raped may find it extremely traumatizing to watch a film depicting a rape. Such potentially harmful materials should be avoided whenever possible. If their inclusion is necessary, then students should be given advanced notice of what to expect and be given the option not to participate in that part of the class.

- Consider the difference between "tokenism" and "integration" when modifying course content. Don't merely tack on a text that is clearly outside the work of the class, but added to make the course appear more "diverse." Make sure all texts clearly have a place in your class.

- Make space for students to provide you confidential feedback about the class. An anonymous survey using the Catalyst WebQ tool or a mid-quarter feedback session facilitated by a CIDR consultant can be invaluable in learning about how your course is impacting particular students.

Diversity Resources

A good starting point is the UW Diversity Homepage. Here you can find a letter from the president regarding diversity, as well as many links to other diversity-related sites on campus.
http://www.washington.edu/diversity/

UW RESOURCES *(In Alphabetical Order)*

Center for Curriculum Transformation

"The Center assists both individual faculty members and academic departments in developing courses and curricula that include the study of race, gender, ethnicity, nation and nationhood, class, disability, sexuality and religion and their intersections." http://depts.washington.edu/ctcenter

CIDR Inclusive Teaching Website

http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/inclusive/

Disability Resources for Students

Disability Resources for Students will assist you in accommodating special needs of your students.
543-8924, uwdss@u.washington.edu

DO-IT: Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology

"DO-IT is… People with disabilities successfully pursuing college and careers, including challenging fields in business, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). -Resources to promote the use of accessible electronic and information technology and universal design…"
http://www.washington.edu/doit/

Ethnic Cultural Center and Theatre

http://depts.washington.edu/ecc/

GO-MAP: Graduate Opportunities and Minority Achievement Program

http://www.grad.washington.edu/gomap/

Office of Minority Affairs

"The Office of Minority Affairs is guided by the core principle of educational equity to ensure a welcoming climate in which all students will realize their full potential. These pages provide a glimpse of the many outreach and academic support services that are available to students at the University of Washington. Over 10,000 students have participated in OMA and are now established leaders in their chosen professional fields. We hope you will join the ranks of these outstanding individuals."
http://depts.washington.edu/oma/

The Q Center

"The Q Center facilitates and enhances an open, safe, inclusive, and celebratory environment for bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer, Two-spirit, transgender, intersex, questioning, same-gender-loving, differently oriented, and allied students, faculty, and staff." The Q Center also organizes the "Safe Zone" project, which supports the UW community in becoming effective GLBTQ allies.
http://depts.washington.edu/qcenter/about.html

WISE: Women In Science and Engineering
"Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) is a university-level program housed within the Center for Workforce Development, designed to increase the recruitment and retention of women of all ethnic backgrounds in science and engineering (S&E) and to create an academic and social climate at the UW which is conducive to both men and women in S&E at the undergraduate and graduate levels."
http://www.engr.washington.edu/wise/programs.htm

Women's Center
"For the past 25 years the Women's Center has had the privilege of working with individuals in order to better their lives. *Ours is a vital center where women and men partner to build a culture of social justice, equity and non-violence, both domestically and globally.* We achieve this goal through educational programs, advising, counseling, life skills training, and encouraging positive change in public policy." http://depts.washington.edu/womenctr/

DEPARTMENTAL SITES

Many departments also have their own page of diversity information and resources. For example:
> The **Information School** has a page with extensive links to other sites, both on and off-campus.
> http://www.ischool.washington.edu/services/div-resources.htm
> The **Computer Science and Engineering Department** also has it's own diversity site:
> http://www.cs.washington.edu/diversity/

The following academic units focus specifically on issues of social inequalities based on race, class, gender, and other categories.
> **American Ethnic Studies:** http://depts.washington.edu/aes/
> **American Indian Studies:** http://depts.washington.edu/~native/
> **Women Studies**: http://depts.washington.edu/webwomen/

Also, make sure to see what diversity information and resources *your* department provides.

ADDITIONAL WEB RESOURCES

"Including all Students." Center for Teaching and Learning at UNC: http://ctl.unc.edu/tfi2.html

University of Maryland's Diversity Database: http://www.inform.umd.edu/EdRes/Topic/Diversity/

Multicultural Education Pavilion: http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/

"Gender Issues in Teaching" *Speaking of Teaching*: http://ctl.stanford.edu/Newsletter/gender.pdf

"White Whine: Reflections on the Brain-Rotting Properties of Privilege" by Tim Wise:

http://www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/2004-04/20wise.cfm