Social Location and Unconscious Bias

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Honouring the Traditional Territory
Session Agreements

• Actively engage in discussions in the spirit of respect
• Confidentiality: what’s shared in the room stays in the room
• Be open to differing ideas and priorities
• Avoid interrupting each other
• Seek clarification through inquiry, not debate
• Listen as an ally
• It’s OK to share alternative perspectives
• It’s also OK to have some FUN 😊
Activity: What is your social location?
Social Location – Your place in space

• Self-awareness

• Perceive a situation

• Personal philosophy

• It impacts how you see/sense the world

• Decisions you make
How and Why does our brains categorize information?
Categorization and Bias
Conditioning

WHITE
Dangers of categorization and conditioning

Can lead to stereotyping

Can lead to prejudice

Can lead to “unintentional incivility” or “micro-inequities”

Can lead to preferring people who are “like us”

Information that goes against the categorization are seen as anomalies
Unconscious Bias

Bias in its simplest terms is a preference. A cause to feel or show inclination or prejudice for or against someone or something. Bias is a tendency to believe that some people, ideas are better than others that usually results in treating some people unfairly.

Unconscious Bias: Automatically triggered responses outside of our control or awareness (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

Bias can be both preferences (providing favourable treatment) and prejudices (providing unfavourable treatment).
An Introduction to Unconscious Bias

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCglRGKAbfc
What Action Can I Take?

1. Find out more about yourself
   - Everyone has bias, be aware of your own
   - Recognize and be particularly vigilant in situations where your own biases will likely be most active such as when you are teaching
   - Take the Implicit Association Test (IAT)
Implicit Association Test (IAT)

Developed at Harvard University

Developed originally as a device for exploring the unconscious roots of thinking and feeling

The IAT is now offered as a tool to gain greater awareness about the users own unconscious preferences and beliefs

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/canada/
What Action Can I Take?

2. Immerse yourself in more diversity

• Expose yourself to positive images or stories prior to entering the classroom

• Actively seek out new experiences, visit new places and interact with a variety of people.

• Have diverse mentors and mentees

• Take workshops/courses/etc to further your understanding of marginalized groups
What Action Can I Take?

3. Treat people as Individuals

• Find out more about your students

• Use active listening skills

• Ensure everyone gets a chance to speak and that no one is dominating

• Lessen your reliance on stereotypes and assumptions
What Actions Can I Take?

4. Challenge the “Gut Feel”

- Recognize and be particularly vigilant in situations when you have incomplete information or are being rushed to make a decision
- Create clear decision making mechanisms
- Be aware when someone is in your “in group” or in an “out group”
What Actions Can I Take?

5. Ensure your classroom is welcoming and respectful

• Ensure your classroom and materials are accessible for everyone – Contact SAS
• Ensure all voices are heard and that no one is dominating discussion
• If you are creating a curriculum or syllabus, ensure you have a diverse offering of readings/teachings and diverse content
• Attend to diverse learning styles
• Ensure that respectful behaviour is explained and any disrespectful behaviour is addressed
Scenario

Find a partner and discuss the scenario and questions provided.
Further Resources

Ted Talk – Are you biased? I am.

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=168&v=Bq_xYSOZrgU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=168&v=Bq_xYSOZrgU)

The Royal Society – Understanding Unconscious Bias

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVp9Z5k0dEE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVp9Z5k0dEE)

Life at Google – Unconscious Bias @ Work

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NW5s_-NI3JE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NW5s_-NI3JE)
For More Information

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