Creating Space for Diverse Dialogues

Audrey J. Murrell, PhD and Ray Jones, PhD

College of Business Administration, University of Pittsburgh

UNDERSTANDING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Can take many forms as validated by empirical research
- Implicit forms of prejudice (e.g., stereotyping)
- Bias in favor of one's group
- Tendency to over-claim credit
- Illusory correlations and biased heuristics
- Aversive racism/subtle discrimination
- Social identity and categorization

Can create "difficult spaces" for diverse dialogs within the classroom
- Most of us believe that we are ethical and unbiased decision makers, able to objectively evaluate a job candidate or create a reasonable solution that is everyone's best interests.

- More than two decades of research show that we are deluded by what researchers call the "*illusion of objectivity*" or the belief that we are free of the biases that we can recognize in others.

- These unconscious, or implicit, biases can be contrary to our consciously held, explicit beliefs – thus, we may believe with confidence that we are immune to conflicts of interest, stereotyping, or other forms of biases.

Can be driven by dimensions of social identity processes
- **Socio Economic Hierarchy**
  - varying levels of occupational attainment, education and income)
  - individuals experience life differently based on the specific roles that they occupy/come in contact with in life (e.g., "dirty work)

- **Racial Ethnic Hierarchy**
  - strata distinguished by cultural and physical characteristics)
  - activated by Identity triggers (e.g., individualization, social competition, comparison dimensions that are "coded"; illusory correlations)

- **Differential Access**
  - **Power** (the ability to influence one's own and other's lives)
  - **Economic Life Chances** (probability of maximizing economic accumulation)
  - **Social Honor** (prestige in the eyes of others)

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CLASSROOM PEDAGOGY AND APPROACHES

Experiential/Situated Learning:
- Process of learning through experience, and is more specifically defined as "learning through reflection on doing".
- Experiential learning is distinct from rote or didactic learning, in which the learner plays a comparatively passive role.
- Supports students in applying their knowledge and conceptual understanding to real-world problems or situations where the instructor directs and facilitates learning.
- Can include classroom applied exercises, laboratory, or studio, case studies and problem-based studies, guided inquiry, simulations, experiments, or service learning projects.

Research on the benefits of out-of-classroom experiences include:
- cognitive complexity (critical thinking, intellectual flexibility, reflective judgment)
- knowledge acquisition and application
- humanitarianism (interest in the welfare of others);
- interpersonal and intrapersonal competence (self-confidence, identity, ability to relate to others)
- practical competence (decision making, job preparedness)
- Out-of-class experiences linked to persistence and educational attainment
- Living in an academic-theme residence is associated with gains in critical thinking, intellectual development, student retention and satisfaction

Background Readings:

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