“...DID THEY REALLY JUST SAY THAT?!”

NAVIGATING BIAS IN THE CLASSROOM

Lena Tenney, MPA, MEd. | Coordinator of Public Engagement
Pronouns: they/them/theirs | Honorific: Mx. Tenney
OSU New Faculty Orientation | August 16, 2018
Well, this has been sufficiently awkward.

Oh no baby, what is you doing???
YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

• In the last 2 months, have you experienced or observed a comment that made you uncomfortable or was inappropriate?
  – 62% yes
  – 38% no

• Did anyone intervene?
  – 20% yes
  – 70% no
YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

• If you chose not to intervene, please select why:
  – 11% fear for safety
  – 6% fear of judgement
  – 46% did not know what to do or say
  – 31% did not feel comfortable intervening
Benefits of Inclusive Learning Environments

- Outcomes for all students
- Student engagement
- Cognitive complexity in problem solving
- Innovation in problem solving in team environments

Milem and Hakuta, 2000; Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado et al., 2003; Milem, 2003; Antonio et al., 2004; Page, 2007; Page, 2010
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER?
The Bystander Effect

- Diffusion of responsibility
  - The more people who are present, the less likely that someone will take action during a situation

- Social influence
  - Groups monitor behavior, individuals don’t want to violate norms

**Who Can Be an Active Bystander?**

- You can be an active bystander in relation to your own identities and identities that you do not hold
  - Self-empowerment
  - Allyship

- What roles do you play?
- How do these roles influence the way people interpret what you say?
CONTEXT MATTERS

• Safety
• Power dynamics
• Self-preservation
• Identities of those present and absent
• Your personal values and priorities
WHY BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER?
Implicit bias can turn even our best intentions into unwanted outcomes.

Intent → Effects of Implicit Bias → Outcome
Defining Implicit Bias

Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.
Understanding Implicit Bias

- Automatically activated
- Associative in nature
- Not always based on accurate or objective information
- Formed through repeated exposure
- Does not always align with explicit intentions
Implicit Bias Can Be Activated By Any Perceived Social Identity

Race/Ethnicity

Religion

Gender

(Dis)Ability

Age

Sexual Orientation

Socioeconomic Status
DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND JUSTICE

Inclusion vs Justice

Inclusion Asks...

“Has everyone’s ideas been heard?”

Justice Responds...

“Whose ideas won’t be taken as seriously because they aren’t in the majority?”

Adapted from the "Colleges need a language shift, but not the one you think" by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart in Inside Higher Ed.
Inclusion vs Justice

Inclusion Asks...

“Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?”

Justice Responds...

“Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing views?”

Adapted from the "Colleges need a language shift, but not the one you think" by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart in Inside Higher Ed.
MICROAGGRESSIONS

“...brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group.”

MICROAGGRESSIONS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd3bzA7450
FREQUENCY OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

- 78% of participants experienced at least 1 racial microaggression over the two week study period
- Participants reported microaggressions occurred approximately once per week
- Students of color reported experiencing an average of 291 microaggressions in the past 90 days
- About a quarter of instructors and half of students perceived bias in their classrooms in the last year
- 34% of undergraduates reported perceiving themselves as a target of subtle bias in the classroom in the last year

Ong et al. (2013); Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny (2012); Boysen, Vogel, Cope, & Hubbard (2009).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Bias</th>
<th>Professor % (n = 333)</th>
<th>Graduate % (n = 443)</th>
<th>Undergraduate % (n = 1,747)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived overt bias</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived subtle bias</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>63</td>
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**Target of bias**

<table>
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<th>Professor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
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<td>Race</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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**Type of bias**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Undergraduate</th>
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<td>Stereotype</td>
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<td>Offensive humor</td>
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<td>Isolation</td>
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<td>Slurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insults</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Effects of Microaggressions

• Psychological distress
  – Anxiety
  – Depression
  – Suicidal ideation
• Binge drinking
• Pain, fatigue, physical illness

Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny (2012); Smith (2004); Hwang & Goto (2009)
How Can I Be an Active Bystander?
Steps to Being an Active Bystander

• Notice that something is happening

• Decide that something needs to be addressed

• Speak out
STRATEGIES FOR SPEAKING OUT

• Use humor

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWynJkN5HbQ
STRATEGIES FOR SPEAKING OUT

• Be literal/refuse to rely on the assumption being made

  – A lot of common phrases rely on figurative language, unspoken assumptions, and stereotypes. Being literal can illustrate how these phrases don’t actually make sense and can be harmful
Strategies for Speaking Out

• Ask questions that invite discussion
  – Asking questions can bring further clarity to the person’s intentions and what they’re trying to communicate
  – Questions can help to open up dialogue by inviting the person into a conversation where they feel heard rather than shut down
STRATEGIES FOR SPEAKING OUT

• State that you are uncomfortable
  – This can serve as a speedbump in the conversation: slowing it down to acknowledge that something is amiss and opening up discussion in the present or future
  – You can elaborate on why or keep it simple
  – This can cue other people to chime in and state that they are also uncomfortable
STRATEGIES FOR SPEAKING OUT

• Use direct communication
  – Speak honestly and from the heart, using “I statements” to communicate how you are feeling, why that is the case, and what could be done
CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

• Offer support to people who may have been directly affected by the biased comment

• Consider what could be done in order to prevent the situation next time

• Be a consistent champion of challenging bias
Let’s Practice!
SCENARIO

• When choosing groups for the semester-long collaborative project, a student says that they “don’t want to work with that guy who looks like a football player. He’ll probably drag our group down and we’ll end up having to do more work.”

• What would you do? Discuss with a neighbor.
SCENARIO

• During a class discussion, Tommy uses incorrect pronouns when referring to Sarah by saying, “I disagree with him. I think that [continues sharing opinion].” Sarah has previously informed her classmates that she is transgender and that her pronouns are she/her/hers.

• What would you do? Discuss with a neighbor.
BEING AN ACTIVE Bystander
WAYS TO CHALLENGE THE EXISTENCE OF BIAS

THE KIRWAN INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF RACE & ETHNICITY | 2017

Thank you for your commitment to challenging explicit and implicit biases in your professional roles and day-to-day life. It can be difficult to know what to say when a family member, friend, colleague, or acquaintance makes problematic comments. However, we will only be able to dismantle racism in its current forms if we are brave enough to challenge racism in all of its most common forms. The Kirwan Institute invites you to utilize these strategies in order to empower yourself to speak up against biased comments. In the words of Audre Lorde, “When we speak we are justified, our words will not be honored or welcomed, but when we are silent, we are still judged.”

Below is a description of how individuals can be active bystanders when faced with the emergence of bias in interpersonal interactions. These suggestions encompass a variety of approaches to opposing a conversation about bias. Each person should consider which strategy or strategies might be most appropriate to employ based upon the content of the situation, as well as their own personal strengths and comfortability with using the strategy. This document is intended to provide some tools for being an active bystander while recognizing that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to challenging every manifestation of bias.

Steps to Being an Active Bystander

- Identify the emergence of bias.
- Decide to address the situation.
- Take action.
  - The goal of these strategies is to educate people and make them do better, rather than to criticize or ostracize them. They are intended to help address the situation while avoiding making the person defensive, a common reaction to challenging bias.
  - There is a difference between calling someone on (pointing out) and calling someone out (shouting down the conversation). Both approaches can be valid in various circumstances, so choose which one is most appropriate for the situation.
- Continue the conversation.

Strategies for Speaking Out

- Use humor.
  - “What are you?” “Human! How about you?” “Your accent is so great!” I should hope so since it’s the language I’ve been speaking my entire life!”

BEING AN ACTIVE Bystander
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EDUCATING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity | 2017

At the Kirwan Institute, we know that education is vital to challenging racism and all forms of oppression. Addressing everyday bias is a form of education, as it can open up conversations regarding topics that are often avoided or uncomfortable. We invite everyone to educate themselves continually on issues of race, racism, and how to effectively work toward racial equity. To that end, the Kirwan Institute has compiled this list of educational resources that individuals and communities can use to educate themselves and those around them.

These educational resources largely focus on the ways in which bias emerges in everyday situations and conversations and how we can speak out in response to bias. These resources are drawn from a variety of sources and include videos, articles, blogs, and more in order to increase accessibility that may not be present in traditional academic sources. They address a myriad of topics and teach us many different aspects of racial identity and recognition. While this resource list is far from comprehensive, it can be used as a starting point as we strive to not only work against racism but also work toward racial justice and equity.

General Resources

- “Guidelines for Inclusive Language”
- “Stop Being So Attached: A Beginner’s Guide on Problematic Language”
- “What’s in a Word: Navigating Language as an Activist”

Specific Words: History, Meanings, Alternatives

- “Words That Hurt”
  - [http://streets.unc.edu/advanced/words.html](http://streets.unc.edu/advanced/words.html)
- “Get the Facts Right! Why ‘Colored’ is a Racist Expression”
  - [http://www.snopes.com/2010/05/16/colored-racism/](http://www.snopes.com/2010/05/16/colored-racism/)
CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Did They Really Just Say That?! Responding to Bias in the Classroom

When: September 12, 2018 at 10:30am – 12:00pm
Where: 220 Younkin Success Center

Co-sponsored with The Kirwan Institute

Have you ever been in a class discussion when a student said something biased, but you were not sure how to respond as the instructor? As educators, we must be empowered to take action when bias manifests in our classrooms so that we can build inclusive connections. This session will incorporate research related to the bystander effect, microaggressions, perceptions of bias in college classrooms, and benefits of creating inclusive learning environments. This session will equip participants with actionable skills to facilitate educational conversations in response to bias incidents in ways that support our students. Participants in this session will thus learn how to communicate effectively in challenging situations through the employment of strategies that can be tailored to the circumstances at hand.

← Back to Events On Teaching

https://ucat.osu.edu/events/really-just-say-responding-bias-classroom/
CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

• Kirwan Institute Weekly Forums

• Thursdays from 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM

• 33 W. 11th Ave., 1st floor conference room

http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/weeklyforum/
“When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak.”

—Audre Lorde
Questions and Answers
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
KIRWANINSTITUTE.OSU.EDU