

EXPLORING IMPLICIT BIAS

CTL Summer Connection-2020

July 29, 2020

Matthew J. Healey, M.Ed.

Adjunct Professor, Education Department

EDU 317: Diversity and Ethics

OVERVIEW



DEFINITIONS & EXAMPLES



RESOURCES

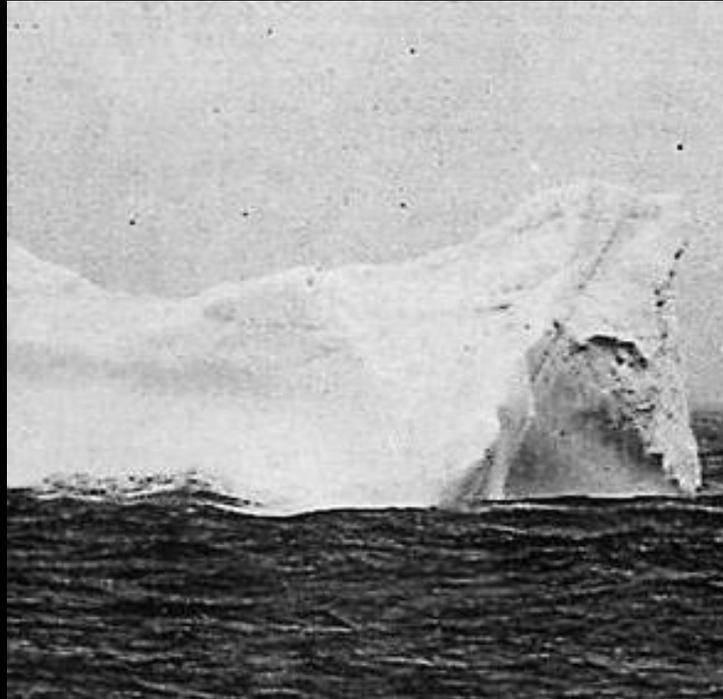


DISCUSSION (COMMENTS
& QUESTIONS)

OBJECTIVE

To consider a variety of strategies and benefits for revealing and addressing implicit bias, both in ourselves and our students.

An iceberg photographed by Stephen Rehorek from aboard the MS Bremen, 20 April 1912, and believed to be the iceberg that sank the Titanic.



<https://titanicfacts.net/titanic-iceberg/>



<https://www.history.com/news/women-and-children-first-on-sinking-ships-its-every-man-for-himself>



Dolly Parton reads *Coat of Many Colors*, a children's book based on one of her signature songs, to a group of children at the Great Hall of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.



Shawn Miller/Library of Congress

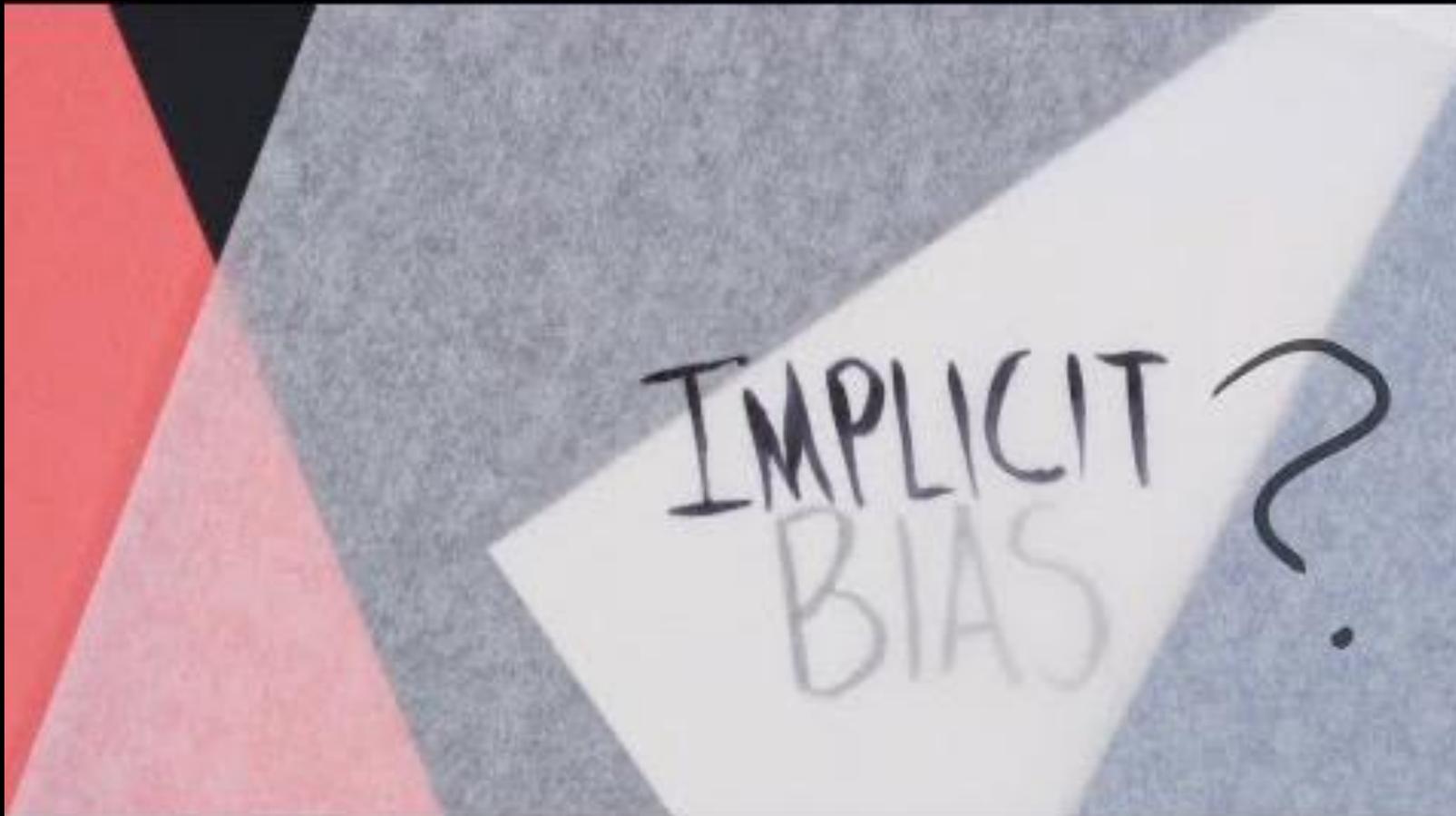


Dolly Parton entering White House reception as one of the Kennedy Center honorees.



Joshua Roberts / ReutersSinger

IMPLICIT BIAS: PEANUT BUTTER, JELLY AND RACISM



What is implicit bias? NYT/POV's Saleem Reshamwala unscrews the lid on the unfair effects of our subconscious. <https://nyti.ms/2jSAhZe>

BIAS

- A tendency, inclination, or prejudice toward or against something or someone
- Biases are often based on stereotypes or misconceptions, rather than actual knowledge of an individual or circumstance
- Implicit (Unconscious)
- Explicit (Conscious)



IMPLICIT BIAS

Implicit bias refers to unconscious attitudes, reactions, stereotypes, and categories that affect behavior and understanding. (Boysen, et. al 2009).

- Erroneous thoughts that stick in our minds even when we consciously “know better”
- Leads to perceptual bias
- Influences how we see, feel, remember, “know”, judge

Instructors can hold assumptions about students’ learning behaviors and their capability for academic success which are tied to students’ identities and/or backgrounds, and these assumptions can impede student growth. (Staats, et. al, 2017).



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

KIRWAN INSTITUTE FOR THE
STUDY OF RACE AND ETHNICITY

- Implicit biases are pervasive. Everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as judges.
- Implicit and explicit biases are related but distinct mental constructs. They are not mutually exclusive and may even reinforce each other.
- The implicit associations we hold do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.
- We generally tend to hold implicit biases that favor our own ingroup, though research has shown that we can still hold implicit biases against our ingroup.
- Implicit biases are malleable. Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of debiasing techniques.

The power of implicit bias is unconscious and is very dangerous because it drives our behaviors, but we are not aware of it.

–Dr. Robin DiAngelo

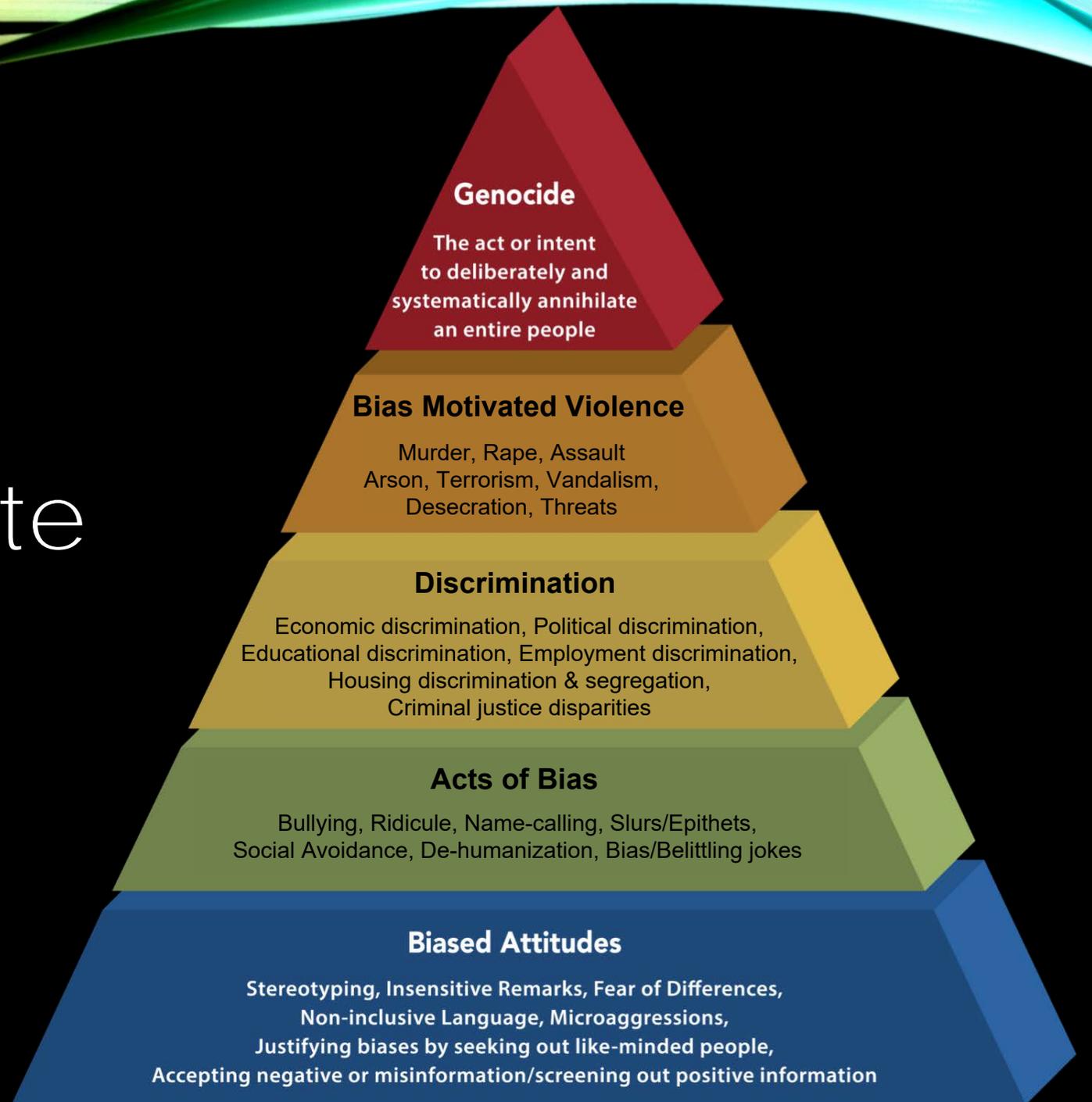


- Gender
- Race
- Religion/Lack thereof
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Weight/Physical Attributes
- Ability Status

TYPES OF IMPLICIT BIAS

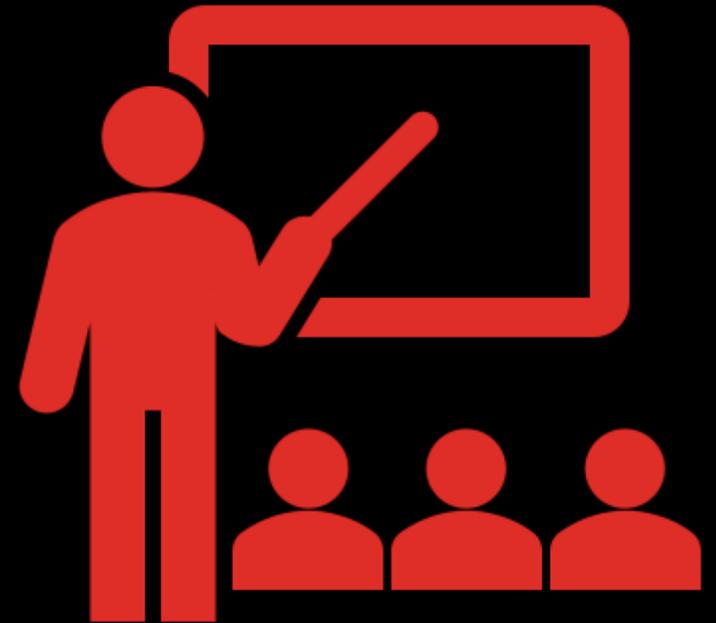
Pyramid of Hate

© 2018 Anti-Defamation League



EXAMPLES IN THE CLASSROOM

- Overgeneralizing
- Mispronouncing names
- Referring to a student by the wrong pronoun (he/she/they)
- Calling on males or white students for in class discussions
- Using heteronormative examples (male and female) or the assumption of heterosexuality vs homosexuality
- Assigning projects that disregard socioeconomic regards



ASSUMPTIONS

Assumption: *Students will seek help when they are struggling with a class.*

For a number of reasons, students do not always feel comfortable asking for help. In order to address this issue, you can request meetings with students as problems arise or make office hour meetings part of the course requirement (e.g., each student will meet with you after receiving his or her grade on the first assignment). The latter is an ideal method because it allows you the opportunity to meet one-on-one with every student. It also removes the stigma attached to going to office hours.

Assumption: *All students from a particular group share the same view on an issue, and their perspective will necessarily be different from the majority of the class who are not from that group.*

You can regularly encourage all students to express different perspectives on issues, and you should not express surprise when people from the same "group" share opposing views or have a view consistent with the majority of the class. It is important to understand, however, that some students who are part of a "group" will feel hesitant to share views publicly that differ from the "anticipated group position" for fear of being admonished by members of their "group" or isolated from the "group" (e.g., an African American student expressing an anti-affirmative action view).

Center for Research on Learning and Teaching
University of Michigan

http://crlt.umich.edu/gsis/p3_1

CLASSROOM IMPLICATIONS

- Instructors may assume that students from certain backgrounds or social groups have differing intellectual abilities and/or ambitions. Instructors may expect students who speak with certain accents to be poor writers.
- Students with substandard writing abilities may be stereotyped as lacking intellectual ability.
- Instructors might treat students with physical disabilities as if they may also have mental disabilities, and thus require more attention.
- Students who are affiliated with a particular identity group may be treated as experts on issues related to that group.
- Students of certain groups may be expected to have certain participation styles (quiet, argumentative, agenda-oriented).

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

Creates an uncomfortable environment for students

Health implications (stress)

Lack of inclusion

ASSESSING YOURSELF & YOUR SCHOOL CHECKLIST



Provided by: ADL's
Education Department
A WORLD OF
DIFFERENCE®
Institute

Part I. Assessing Yourself

How effective are you in promoting a bias-free educational environment?	I haven't thought about this.	I need to do this better.	I do this well.
1. Have you recently read any books or articles, or watched any documentaries to increase your understanding of the particular hopes, needs and concerns of students and families from the different cultures that make up your school community and beyond?	[]	[]	[]
2. Have you participated in professional development opportunities to enhance your understanding of the complex characteristics of racial, ethnic and cultural groups in the U.S.?	[]	[]	[]
3. Do you try to listen with an open mind to all students and colleagues, even when you don't understand their perspectives or agree with what they're saying?	[]	[]	[]
4. Have you taken specific actions to dispel misconceptions, stereotypes or prejudices that members of one group have about members of another group at your school?	[]	[]	[]
5. Do you strive to avoid actions that might be offensive to members of other groups?	[]	[]	[]
6. Do you discourage patterns of informal discrimination, segregation or exclusion of members of particular groups from school clubs, committees and other school activities?	[]	[]	[]
7. Do the curricular content and wall displays in your classroom reflect the experiences and perspectives of the cultural groups that make up the school and its surrounding community?	[]	[]	[]
8. Have you evaluated classroom materials and textbooks to ensure they do not reinforce stereotypes and that they provide fair and appropriate treatment of all groups?	[]	[]	[]
9. Do you use classroom methods, such as cooperative learning, role-playing and small group discussions to meet the needs of students' different learning styles?	[]	[]	[]
10. Do students have opportunities to engage in problem-solving groups that address real issues with immediate relevance to their lives?	[]	[]	[]
11. Do you use a range of strategies, in addition to traditional testing methods, to assess student learning?	[]	[]	[]

WHAT CAN WE DO?



Self-Assess Implicit Biases- Self-reflect on your own biases



Cultivate Inclusivity- Work to develop an inclusive classroom culture and inclusive teaching practices, which can mediate potential biased attitudes, and support developing sensitivity and deepening self-awareness.



Solicit Feedback from Outside Observers- Set up time with a colleague to visit your classroom, observe your student-teacher interactions, and provide feedback.



Solicit Feedback from Students- Use a feedback from students, through course evaluations or small group sessions, to assess whether your unconscious biases manifest in your classroom interactions.



WHAT WILL I DO?

- Have an open mind and heart
- Avoid making assumptions
- Be mindful about acknowledging your own biases

- Implicit Bias Test
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- Educators for Equity (Facebook Group)
- Implicit Bias Resources (OneNote-M. Healey)
[Implicit Bias Resources - Videos, Articles, Text and Tools](#)
- Anti-racism and Diversity Resources for Educators (UT Dept. of EDU)
<https://www.ut.edu/academics/college-of-social-sciences-mathematics-and-education/department-of-education---education-degrees/anti-racism-and-diversity-resources-for-educators>
- Diversity Opportunities (UT Diversity and Inclusion) <https://www.ut.edu/campus-life/leadership-and-engagement/diversity-opportunities->

RESOURCES

THANK YOU!



Contact Information
Matthew Healey, M.Ed.
Adjunct Professor, Education Department
mhealey@ut.edu

Discussion
Comments and Questions

REFERENCES

- Boysen GA and Vogel DL. (2009). Bias in the Classroom: Types, Frequencies, and Responses. *Teaching of Psychology*, 36(1): 12-17.
- Staats Cheryl et al. (2017). State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2017. Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity.