Creating an Inclusive Classroom: Minimizing Microaggressions and Implicit Biases

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Outline

• Student Diversity at Wesleyan Identities
• A Word about Pronouns
• Challenges
  • Implicit Biases
  • Microaggressions
  • Culture Shock
• Stereotype Threat and Imposter Syndrome
• Fostering Learning:
  Tips for Inclusive Classrooms
• Office for Equity & Inclusion- How We Can Help.
Dimensions of Diversity (visible and invisible)

- Age
- Race
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Physical abilities/qualities
- Sexual orientation
- Educational background
- Geographic location
- Income
- Marital status
- Military experience
- Parental status
- Religion
- Work experience and job classification
- Immigration Status

Waterline of Visibility
Benefits of Diverse Groups

Diverse working groups are more productive, creative and innovative
Herring 2009; Page 2007; van Knippenberg & Michaela 2007; Chang et al., 2003

Diverse groups engage in a higher level of critical analysis
Sommers 2006; Antonio 2004; Nemeth 1986, 1995

Diverse scholars and professionals can invigorate and expand disciplines
Schiebinger et al. 2013; Catalyst, 2013

Mentors for all
Nat. Acad. Sci. 2007

Fairness and Equity
Nat. Acad. Sci. 2007

Strengthens communities and the workplace
The Value of Diversity to a Liberal Arts Education

- Diversity challenges stereotyped preconceptions;
- Encourages critical thinking;
- Helps students learn to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds;
- Fosters mutual respect and teamwork;
- Engagement with and challenge from multiple, differing perspectives are incubators of critical thinking and social responsibility.
- Helps build communities whose members are judged by the quality of their character and their contributions.
- Strengthens communities and the workplace
- Enhances economic competitiveness

Through our pedagogies we set out to realize the transformative power of education.
Profile of Students Offered Admission for Fall 2021

- 19.3% admission rate (2,540 out of 13,145 Applicants Admitted)

Of those admitted:

- 43% male, 57% female
- 11% live in 64 other countries including Bahrain, Egypt, Ghana, Jamaica, Lebanon, Oman, Morocco, Somalia, and Zimbabwe
- 15% report that English is their second language
- 42% are domestic students of color
- 49% overall are students of color (including international)
- 13% are the 1ST generation in their family to attend college
- 45% applied for need-based aid
  (Wesleyan meets the full demonstrated need of all those admitted.)
- 20 are QuestBridge National College Match Finalists (13th year)
- 9 are Posse Veteran Scholars (8th year in partnership with Posse)

Wesleyan Students

From diverse socioeconomic backgrounds- Wesleyan 13th on the most economically diverse colleges list.

  - 15% Pell Grant Eligible
  - Homeless

Represent the spectrum of gender identities
Veterans
Undocumented

~ 15% International Students (54 countries)
~ 12% English is not their first language
~ 21% First Generation College
~ 17% Registered As Having a Disability
~ 28% Varsity Athletes
Wesleyan Student Race and Ethnicity

- White: 54%
- Hispanic/Latino: 12%
- Black or African American: 6%
- Asian: 7%
- American Indian or Alaska Native: <1%
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander: <1%
- Two or more races: 6%
- Nonresident aliens: 12%
- Unknown: 3%

WesU Student Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual: 68%
- Gay/lesbian: 6%
- Bisexual: 15%
- Unsure: 6%
- Other: 5%
- Gay/lesbian: 6%
Preferred Gender Pronouns (PGP’s)

**MALE**
He, Him, His

**FEMALE**
She/Her/ Hers

**GENDER NEUTRAL**
They/Them/Theirs
“Xena ate their lunch because they were hungry.”

Ze, irs, ir

*Ze* pronounced “zee” and can also be spelled zie or xe and replaces she/he/they

*Hir* is pronounced like “here” and replaces her/hers/him/his/they/their
Use Gender Neutral Language

Avoid making assumptions about how a person identifies based on the name or image. If unsure, use gender neutral language

- “Humankind” rather than “mankind”
- “The person…”/ “The author…”/ “The original poster”
- “They/them/their”
- Avoid “he/him/his” or “she/her/hers”
- Use names

General Etiquette

- Do not Assume!
- Do not “out” a student (of any identity).
- Discuss issues privately at first. Trans* and undocumented students especially should retain control of their information / histories.
- Always use the name, gender identity, and/or pronouns the student prefers.
- Be open to future changes and fluidity.
- Acknowledge that there may be a difference between how a student identifies and how the college legally recognizes them.
- Continue educating yourself about identities different than your own
- If you make a mistake, acknowledge, apologize and move on. Attempt to be better in the future.
MISTAKES HAPPEN!

So what can you say when someone corrects the way you talk about gender or sexuality?

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My bad! I’ll work on it. I want you to feel seen, valued, and heard.

Thank you for correcting me.

Got it! I’ll do better next time.

I’m sorry. I’m still learning and will continue to do so.

Adjusting your language is a simple, but meaningful way to support LGBTQIA+ folks! Be sure to back it up with action.

Implicit (or Unconscious) Bias

This means we all hold unconscious associations and evaluations about:

“the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner”
IMPLICIT BIAS

• Developed as survival mechanism
• Implicit biases are pervasive
• People are often unaware of their implicit bias
• Implicit biases predict behavior
• People differ in levels of implicit bias

Source: Project Implicit (www.projectimplicit.net)

Implicit (or Unconscious) Bias

• A preference for groups (positive and negative)
• Often operating outside of our awareness
• Based on stereotypes and attitudes that we’re taught
  tend to develop early in life
• These biases are widely culturally shared.
• Biases can be subtle but systemic.
• Strengthen over time
• We rely on these preferences/biases more when under time pressure or in ambiguous situations

(Valian 1998; Gladwell 2005)
**Implicit (or Unconscious) Bias**

**Everyone** has implicit bias: having unconscious bias does not make you a bad person, it makes you human.

Originates in flight or fight response.

Often conflict with consciously held or “explicit” attitudes.

Both men and women hold biases around gender.

Both white people and people of color hold biases around race.

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**Non-conscious Bias Impacts:**

- the way people interact with you
- the way *you* interact with others
- the accumulation of advantage/disadvantage

Unconscious bias is *NOT* discrimination

People are often not aware of it.
Bias Every Day

- We all have implicit biases.
- Implicit biases are measurable.
- Implicit biases change over time.
- We face unconscious bias every day.
- We must be proactive to combat bias, both within ourselves and others.

Where might bias operate?

- Hiring
- Resource allocation
- Task assignment
- Performance evaluation
- Promotion and bonus allocation
- Organizational climate

- Brian Nosek (Oct. 16, 2012)
### Evaluation of CVs

**Is Emily more employable than Lakisha?**

Applicant: Brendan, Greg, Emily & Anne

Applicant: Tamika, Aisha, Rasheed & Tyrone

It took 50% more applications from the African American named group to get a call back.


### Example of Unconscious Bias- Race

987 applications with a white name,

10.7 % received a positive response.

1974 applications with an ethnic minority name

6.2 % received a positive response

*Net Difference of 4.6 percentage points.*

For a successful outcome

16 applications from ethnic minorities had to be sent

9 applications from whites

**74 % more applications from ethnic minority candidates needed to be sent for the same level of success.**

(Wood et al, 2009: p11)