

The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander

Addressing Microaggressions in the Classroom

Workshop by:
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We Acknowledge the Land

We are gathered on land that is located in the
Tk'emlups te Secwepemc
territory that is situated in the southern interior
of British Columbia within the unceded
traditional lands of the Secwepemc Nation.

(Acknowledgement provided by Thompson Rivers University Faculty Association)



Welcome & Introductions

- Name and pronouns used
- Your institution/role
- The story of your name

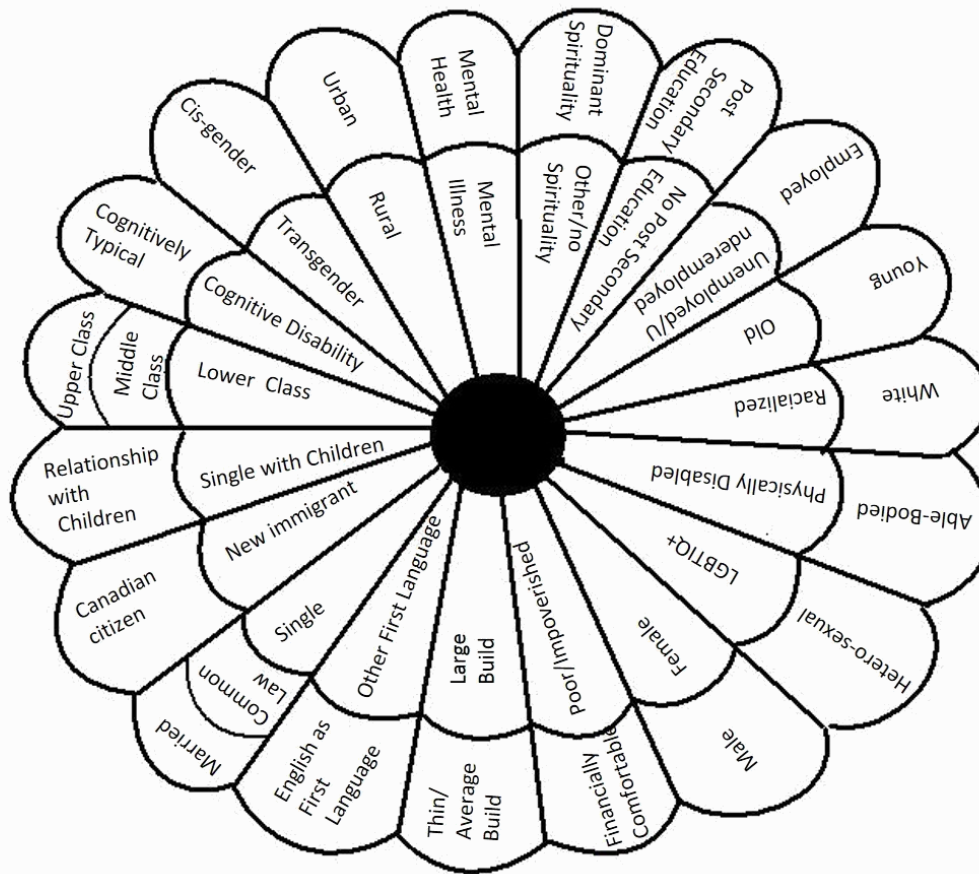


Socialization & Worldview

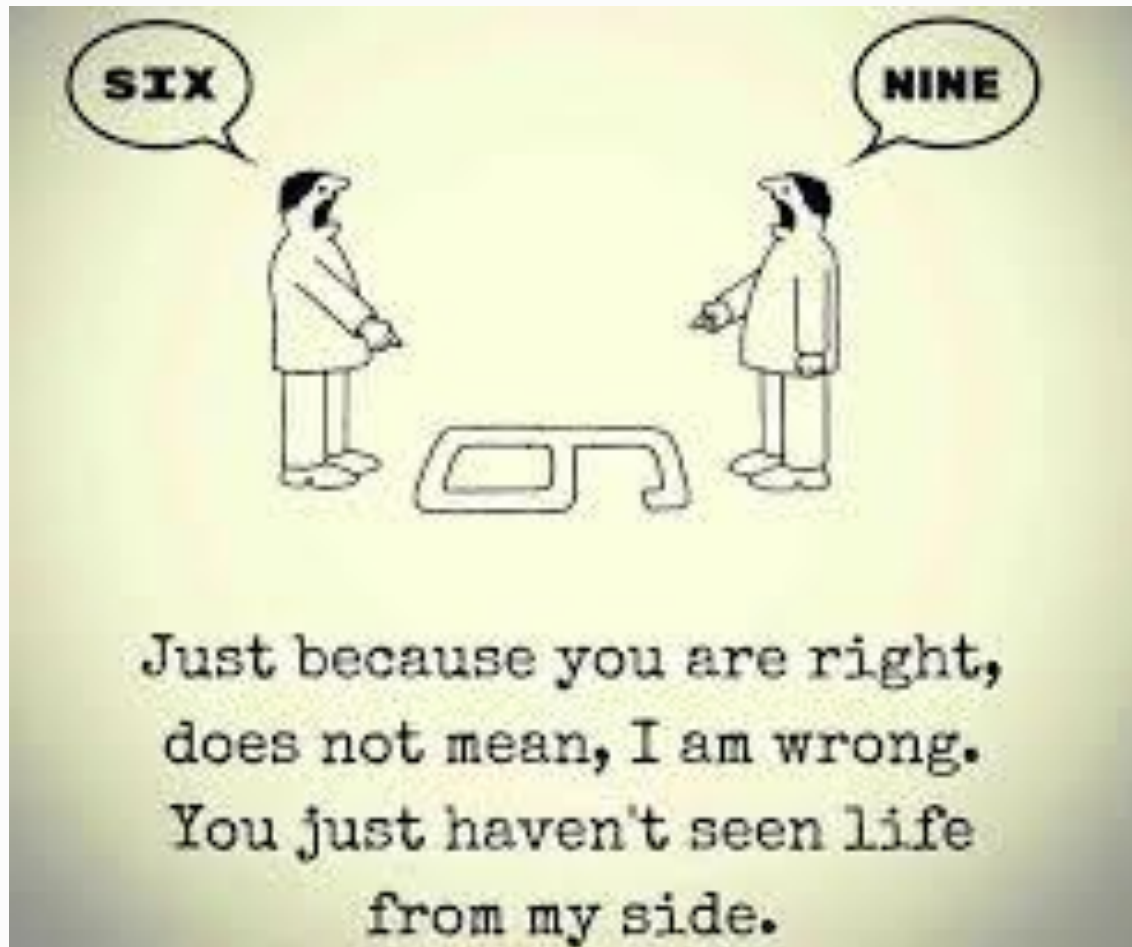
- Social Location
- Positionality
- Intersectionality



Social Location



Positionality



Intersectionality

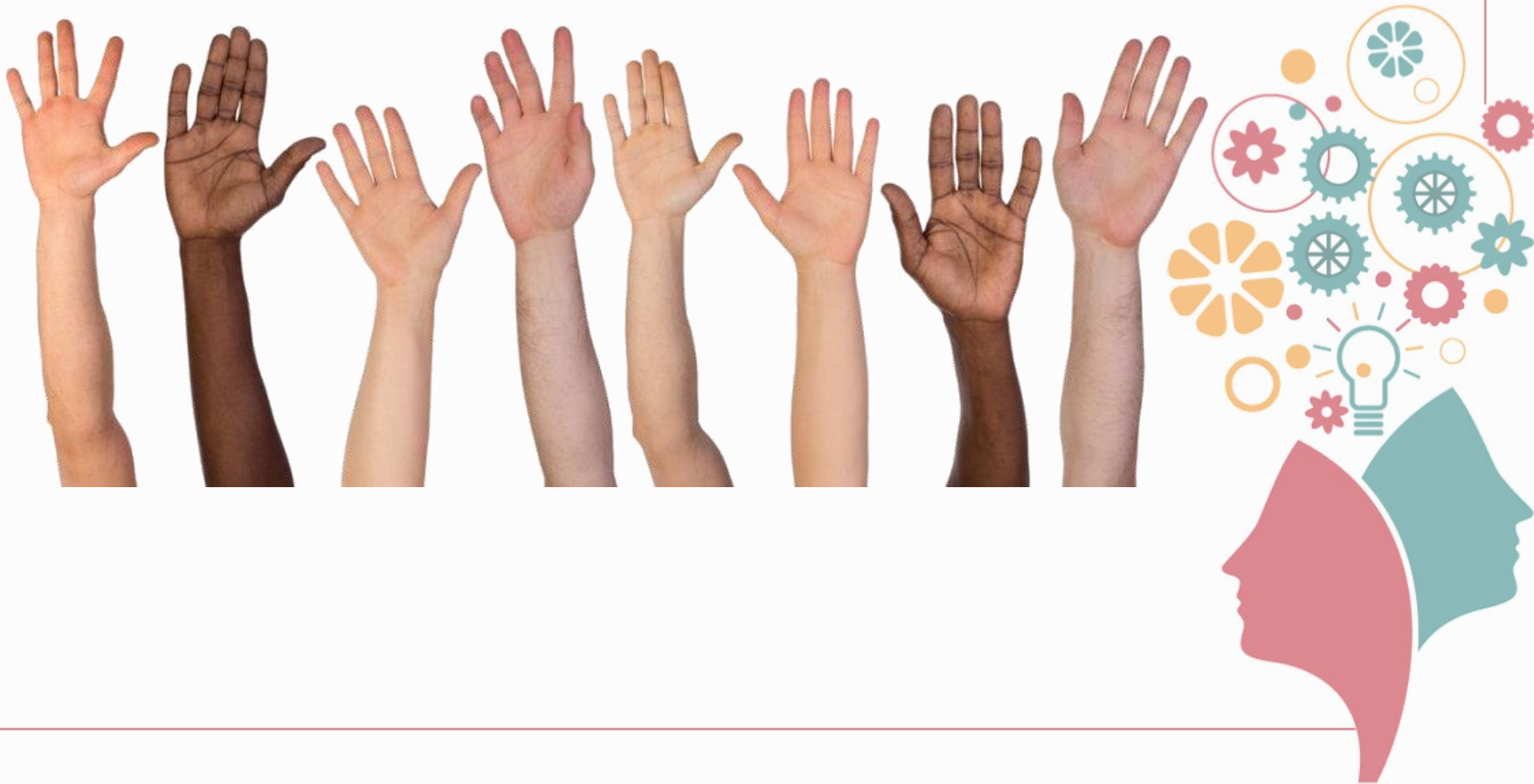
“Intersectionality promotes an understanding of human beings as shaped by the interaction of different social locations.

These interactions occur within a context of connected systems and structures of power.”

- Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw



What is Bias?



Cognitive Bias

- **Anchoring bias:** favouring the first piece of information
- **Availability heuristic:** judging the correctness of information on how easily that information comes to mind
- **Bandwagon effect:** group thinking
- **Confirmation bias:** tendency to search for, interpret, favour, and recall information in a way that confirms one's preexisting beliefs



Bias...

- ...is a prejudice **in favour** of OR **against** a thing, person, or group compared to another – usually in a way that is considered to be unfair.
- ...may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have **negative or positive consequences**.
- **We all have biases.**



Resource: Project Implicit



- Test your unconscious biases.
- Recognize how they may impact your life, work, and decision making.



Biases Impact Actions

Bias

+ Power

= Discrimination/Oppression



Biases Impact Actions

What we assume biased actions/discrimination to be:

- Individual action
- Done consciously
- Intentional



(adapted from DiAngelo, 2018)

Biases Impact Actions

What biased actions/discrimination can be:

- Verbal, Behavioural, or environmental actions
- Often unintentional or automatic
- May occur briefly, with regularity
- Communicate ideas of belonging, importance, value
- These actions are often experienced as

Microaggressions

(Sue, 2010)



Small Group Reflection

At your table, discuss:

- How do you think microaggressions impact the learning environment?
- What are some barriers to addressing microaggressions in the learning environment?



Why Should We Care?

Learning environment is deeply impacted:

- Disengagement
- Dissatisfaction/burnout
- Impact sense of belonging/safety
- Psychological impacts
 - Anxiety and depression
 - Diminished confidence
 - Loss of academic drive
 - Diminished cognition

(Banks, 2015; Murphy, 2012; Sue, 2010)



Addressing Microaggressions in Ourselves

- Constant Vigilance (check your own biases when they arise)
- Experiential Reality (believe the lived experiences of others when they tell you)
- Check defensive reaction
- Discuss your own attitudes/biases
- Be an ally

(Sue, 2010)



Addressing Microaggressions in Our Classrooms

First, **acknowledge** that the microaggression exists, even if you do not see it

- Inquire
- Impact/Preference Statements
- Reflect
- Reframe
- Revisit



Inquire

- Purpose: To have the microaggressor explain more their way of thinking
- Example phrases:
 - “Can you elaborate more on that idea?”
 - “Can you tell me more about why you believe _____”
- How this helps: Gives the microaggressor a chance to elaborate on specific feelings or emotions, occasionally allows the aggressor to realize the implications of their comment



Impact & Preference Statements

- Purpose: Describe HOW you feel and WHAT you would prefer had happened instead
- Example phrases:
 - “I think ____ about what you said/did and would rather ____ was____”
 - “It would be helpful if you said it this way in the future”
- How this helps: Allows the microaggressor to understand the impact they have had on another individual and gives that person a strategy for communicating differently in the future



Reflect

- Purpose: To paraphrase (in your own words) what the microaggressor has stated, giving them a chance to know that you understood the comment
- Example phrases:
 - “To me it appears that you believe....”
 - “I want to make sure I understood you correctly, in my own words what you said was _____”
- How this helps: Enables the microaggressor to feel heard and then gives them the chance to hear the way in which the statement is received



Reframe

- Purpose: To develop an awareness for alternative ways to looking at and understanding a situation
- Example phrases:
 - “How would you feel if this occurred to your
 - “What if we looked at the situation in this way...”
- How this helps: Creates an environment open to alternatives



Revisit

- Purpose: To discuss a prior microaggression after the fact
- Example phrases:
 - “I wanted to talk about something that was said the other day.”
 - “Do you remember our conversation when you mentioned _____?”
- How this helps: Albeit delayed, this can still show the microaggressor that prior actions/words/inactions actually were not well-received and accepted



Things to Consider

- Non-verbal cues
- Tone of voice/delivery of message
- Desire to assign blame
- Critique idea/action not the person
 - Consider difference between
“You’re a racist for saying that,”
versus
“That might be perceived as a racist idea.”



Small Group Activity

- In small groups, discuss the scenarios
- Share discussion key points with all



Make the “Invisible” Visible

If you can name it, you can tame it.”

Set the stage:

- Name power structures in your classrooms
- Encourage students to speak up when they're uncomfortable
- Empower learners to speak up for one another

Model the behaviour:

- If you've experienced MA, share your story
- Keep an open mind

Recommend Resources/Tools

- Bring in education opportunities that dovetail with your curriculum
- Ask learners for critical reflections



(Sue, 2010)

Microaggressions

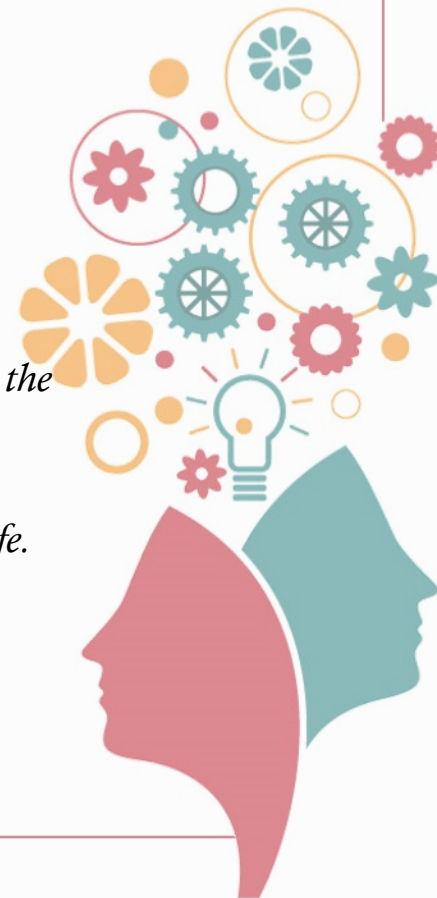


FOR PEOPLE WHO STILL DON'T THINK



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Thank You!



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