

UNDERSTANDING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS: COMBATting SOCIETAL CONDITIONING

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OUTCOMES - PARTICIPANTS WILL

- Understand what is meant by the terms ***unconscious bias*** and ***micro-aggression***
- Explore the effects of unconscious bias on students, parents and disadvantaged communities
- Identify what unconscious bias looks and sounds like in the education profession
- Build skills and awareness to interrupt the impact of unconscious bias in the learning environment in both current and future learning environments

UNCONSCIOUS/IMPLICIT BIASES

- Are the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions **in an unconscious manner.**
- Are pervasive. **Everyone has them.**
- Do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs.
- Tend to favor our own ingroup.
- Are malleable. We can **interrupt and change** them.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS



Where Does It
Come from?

SOCIETY'S IMPLICIT MESSAGE

- We learn the subtext of our culture's messages early.
- Children don't have a choice about accepting or rejecting these conceptions since they're acquired well before they have the cognitive abilities or experiences to form their own beliefs.

Annie Murphy Paul, *Psychology Today*

And no matter how progressive the parents, they must compete with all the forces that perpetuate these stereotypes: peer pressure, mass media, the actual **balance of power in society**. In fact, prejudice may be as much a result as a cause of this imbalance.

WE LEARN THEM FROM OUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

- Psychologists once believed that only bigoted people used stereotypes.
- The study of **unconscious bias** is revealing the unsettling truth: We all use stereotypes, all the time, without knowing it.
- We have met the enemy of equality, and the enemy is us.

Annie Murphy Paul, *Psychology Today*

THE DANGER OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN SCHOOLS

Bias

+ Power

= Discrimination and Oppression

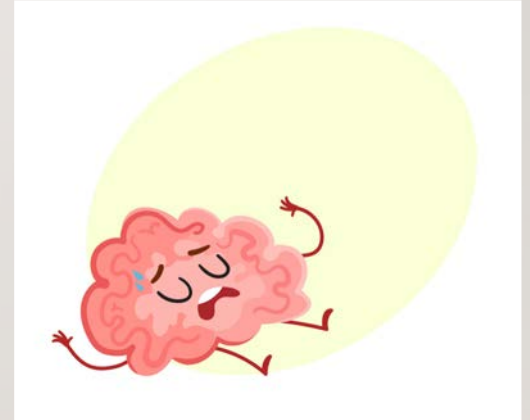
WE TEND TO RELY ON BIAS WHEN WE...

Have to make quick decisions



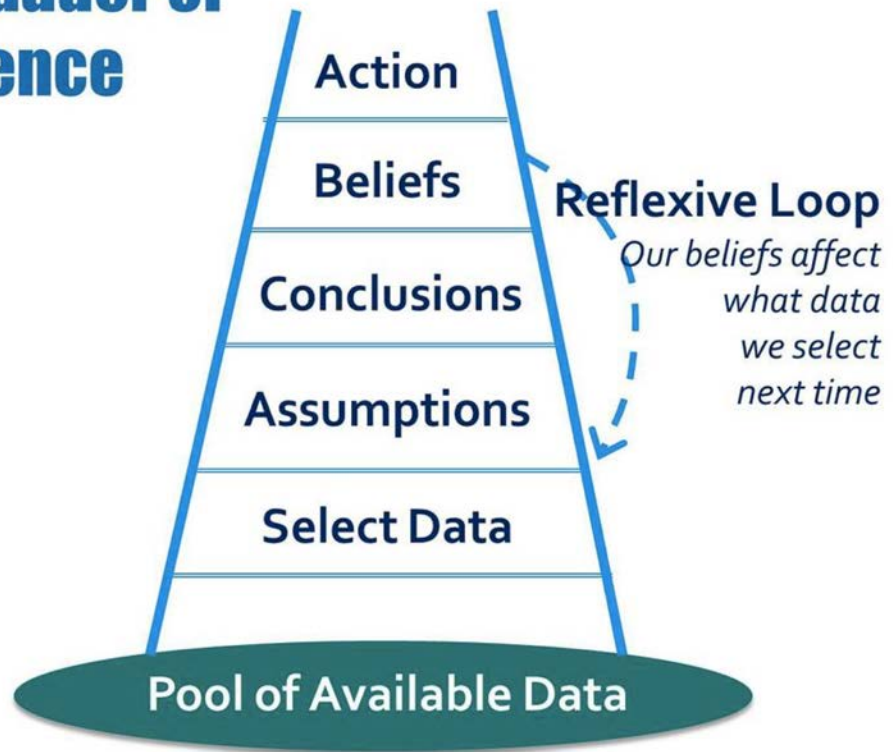
Have incomplete information

Are tired or stressed



*What explicit and implied messages
inform our biases?*

The Ladder of Inference



TWO RESIDENTS WADE THROUGH CHEST DEEP WATER AFTER FINDING BREAD AND SODA...

Yahoo! News Photo

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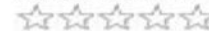
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Two residents waded through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)

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A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it

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*How do our biases impact students of color
in the schools we serve?*

Preschool teachers' implicit bias impacts black boys most, study says

DISCIPLINE

Preschool teachers look for disruptive behavior where they expect it — and they expect it most from black boys, new research from the [Yale Child Study Center](#) suggests.

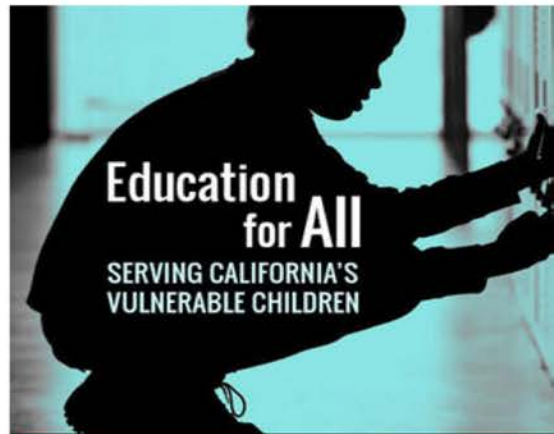
The study's findings are especially important in the context of federal data showing that black boys are more likely to get suspended or expelled from preschool than other children.

Implicit bias — which was defined as “automatic and unconscious stereotypes that drive people to behave and make decisions in certain ways” — was central to the new study: “[Do Early Educators' Implicit Biases Regarding Sex and Race Relate to Behavior Expectations and Recommendations of Preschool Expulsions and Suspensions?](#)”

SEPTEMBER 29, 2016



JEREMY HAY



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People See Black Men as Larger, More Threatening Than Same-Sized White Men

Findings could help explain why black men more likely to be shot by police, study says

Read the journal article

- [Racial Bias in Judgments of Physical Size and Formidability: From Size to Threat \(PDF, 350KB\)](#)

WASHINGTON — People have a tendency to perceive black men as larger and more threatening than similarly sized white men, according to research published by the American Psychological Association.

"Unarmed black men are disproportionately more likely to be shot and killed by police, and often these killings are accompanied by explanations that cite the physical size of the person shot," said lead author John Paul Wilson, PhD, of Montclair State University. "Our research suggests that these descriptions may reflect

stereotypes of black males that do not seem to comport with reality."

Wilson and his colleagues conducted a series of experiments involving more than 950 online participants (all from the United States) in which people were shown a series of color photographs of white and black male faces of individuals who were all of equal height and weight. The participants were then asked to estimate the height, weight, strength and overall muscularity of the men pictured.

WHAT ARE MICRO-AGGRESSIONS?

Micro-aggressions are the **everyday** verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

Derald Wing Sue



STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING MICRO-AGGRESSIONS

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

- **Inquire**

“Can you elaborate more on that idea?”

“Can you tell me more about why you believe _____?”

- **Preference Statements**

“I think ____ about what you said/did and would rather _____ was_____”

“It would be helpful if you said it this way in the future”



STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING MICRO-AGGRESSIONS

- **Reflect**

“To me it appears that you believe....”

“I want to make sure I understood you correctly, in my own words what you said was _____”

- **Reframe**

“How would you feel if this occurred to your”

“What if we looked at the situation in this way...”

- **Revisit**

“I wanted to talk about something that was said the other day.”

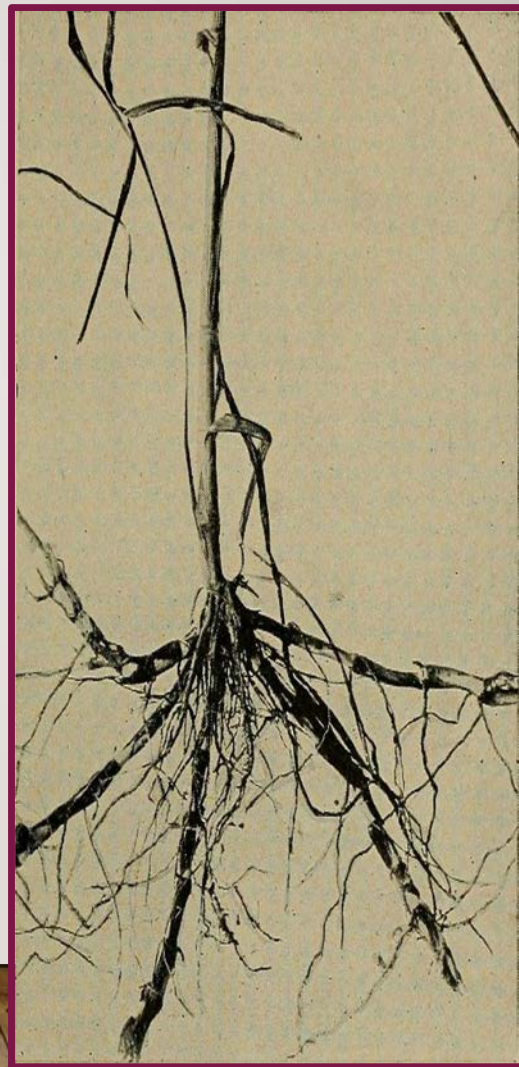
“Do you remember our conversation when you mentioned _____?”



As you watch the video clip of students talking about microaggressions, what resonates with you?

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ji8Qae9keY

***SO HOW DO WE GET RID
OF THE ROOTS?***



EVERYONE



CHECKING OURSELVES

- Reflect on times when we default to bias
- Become aware when we are stressed, or having to make rapid decisions
- When do we make assumptions, rely on stereotypes?
What information are we missing?
- Above all, listen

OVERCOMING BIAS IN SCHOOLS

1. Increase Your Contact With the Relevant Group
2. Blind Yourself
3. Structure Your Decision-Making
4. Counter the Stereotypes
5. Be Conscious

EDUCATIONAL LEADERS



- Hold **professional development** that includes all staff to learn about unconscious bias and micro-aggressions
- Learn and share **Glenn Singleton's** protocol for **Courageous Conversations** about Race to have productive conversations
- Hold time in **staff meetings** to practice using the **conversation protocol**
- **Coach teachers** in recognizing their biases and micro-aggressions
- **Invite students and community members** to become part of a task force to interrupt bias



TEACHERS/PARA EDUCATORS



Make the “Invisible” Visible

If you can name it, you can tame it.”

- 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 behavior



- Agree with your colleagues to notice and **share with each other** when you notice a micro-aggression
- Practice using a **protocol to have a productive conversation** with your colleague or students
- **Bring the topic of bias into your curriculum** - create a safe classroom where there is equity of voice and permission to speak their truth
- **Invite students to examine their own biases**, experiences with micro-aggression, and how to have conversations with others when they notice



COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

Use the 90/10 Principle. Possible Questions:

- Tell me about your child. What does (s)he love to do after school?
How does (s)he learn best?
- Tell me about a time when your child was successful in school.
What do you think made that possible?
- What are your biggest concerns about your child?
- What do I need to know to be their advocate?

PARENTS



- Hold educators accountable by identifying themselves as a **concerned parent**.
- **Help educators** learn more about their children and community
- **Advocate** for a role in making decisions
- Focus on **interrupting bias** for their kids
- **Form parent groups** to meet with educators



REFLECT AND SHARE...

- Think of a time that someone or something challenged a bias you had? What made you rethink it?
- How might bias and micro-aggressions show up in your schools, classrooms, districts and community culture?
- How can we bring our implicit biases to our consciousness?
- How can we be sure that our biases don't become micro-aggressions both in face-to-face and virtual schooling?

RESOURCES TO INTERRUPT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- *The Listening Leader: Creating the Conditions for Equitable School Transformation*, Safir, Shane, Jossey-Bass, 2017.
- *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools, Second Edition*, Singleton, Glenn, Corwin, 2015.
- Project Implicit, studying implicit bias
(<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/index.jsp>)

YOUR **FEEDBACK** IS APPRECIATED

If you have additional thoughts, suggestions or ideas, please write them in the chat box.

Thank you.



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