

Teaching & learning strategies to outsmart bias

Negative bias is evidenced not only in majority people about non-majority groups, but is also internalized by the people in those groups, with a significant impact on the academic success of non-majority students (Harper, 2012). This workshop will include a brief overview of relevant theory, demonstrations of simple classroom interventions to counteract the negative influences of psycho-sociological 'underminers' on academic performance, and summaries of results from using these interventions with our own students.

At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Identify direct and indirect sources of bias that have a negative impact on academic success of non-majority students
2. Understand and conduct course-integrated interventions to counteract the effects of bias on students performance and perceptions of themselves and their learning potential

The workshop demonstrations will include:

I. Pecha Kucha Life Reports to reduce belongingness uncertainty and promote growth mindset: Using Pecha Kucha (www.pechakucha.org) Life Reports works well for students whose cultures value oral tradition over the written word, and promotes understanding and empathy to help challenge bias based on ignorance and misinformation. It reduces belongingness uncertainty (Walton & Cohen, 2007), increases hope, and promotes a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) as students tell about the challenges that they have overcome on their path to college.

II. Values Affirmation activities to address stereotype threat and pejorative attributions for failure: Involves students sharing struggles that are common and often a part of transitions and stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), rather than personal failing (Walton & Cohen, 2007; Wilson & Linville, 1985), and addresses issues of belongingness through values affirmation (Cohen et al, 2009), and 'indirectly' hope.

III. Implicit Association Tests and neurobics to outsmart implicit bias: This intervention for both face-to-face and online students involves completing online Implicit Association Tests (<http://implicit.harvard.edu>) to build awareness of biases (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995) about stigmatized groups, engaging in individual reflective writing, group brainstorming about the societal shapers of implicit bias, and developing and practicing neurobics (Watson, 1988; Katz & Rubin, 1999) to outsmart these biases (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013).

IV. Modified Monopoly to recognize the impacts of social injustice and low hope: Helps students recognize power differentials between sub-groups, the underlying social injustices that impact their experiences, and how marginalized groups are deprived of a voice in decision-making processes (Snyder et al, 2002; Aronson et al, 2013).

At the conclusion of the demonstrations, Drs. Verschelden and Bhargava will share their results from using these interventions for the past two years with first-year experience and upper-level sociology students at University of Central Oklahoma, and undergraduate public health students at Kent State University in Ohio, respectively.