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Pedagogical Considerations in Teaching Implicit Bias

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Pedagogical Considerations in Teaching Implicit Bias

presented at
10th Annual SoTL Commons Conference
Savannah, GA
March 29, 2017
• Six faculty members from three disciplines
  – Social Work
  – Communication
  – Education
Study Rationale

- Recognition of increasing racial tensions
- Desire to develop cultural competence among students
- Understanding that recognizing implicit bias is a first step in becoming culturally competent
Study Rationale

- Professionals who espouse egalitarian attitudes unconsciously rely on stereotypes in making professional decisions and judgements (Green, Carney, Pallin, Ngo, Raymond, Lezzoni, & Banaji, 2007; Stone & Moskowitz, 2011)
Study Goals

• Help students understand, recognize, and address their implicit bias

• Help students develop cultural competence

• Promote positive attitudes toward diversity
Defining Implicit Bias

- Implicit bias, or bias that is unconscious or under our radar, influences the way we interact with others, even when we consider ourselves to be fair and objective (Staats, 2014).
Reducing Implicit Bias

Boscardin (2015) recommends following four key factors for curriculum aimed at reducing implicit bias:
1. increasing self-awareness through self-reflection
2. creating an inclusive learning environment
3. increasing chances for positive interactions with diverse people
4. developing empathy skills.
Implicit Bias Lesson

- Interactive lesson on aspects directly impacting implicit biases:
  - Stereotypes
  - Discrimination
  - Prejudice
Student Lesson on Implicit Bias

- Discuss stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and explicit and implicit bias.
- Evaluate their own implicit bias through Harvard's Implicit Association Test (IAT)
- Examine data that documents real life effects of implicit bias
- View videos of examples of effects of implicit bias

(Boscardin, 2012; Casey, Warren, Cheesman, and Elek, 2012; & Stone and Moskowitz, 2011)
The Lesson (cont’d)

- Brainstorm participants’ examples of bias and strategies for addressing bias

- Exit component asked participants to
  - Rate likelihood of addressing implicit bias on a scale of 1-10 (10 = most likely)
  - Explain why they had not picked the number just lower than the one they chose (Pink, 2012)
Sample Slides from the Lesson
Slides from the Lesson

- Culture
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Seniority
- Income
- Education
- Physical ability
- Upbringing
- Mental ability
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Marital status
Stereotype

• A judgement process in which a person is treated as though they embody all characteristics of the group they are associated with.

• **Video Example**

• Examples
  
  • Age=Ability
  
  • Men=Masculine

• What else?

"Are you sure he's a plumber? I can't see his butt-crack."
Implicit Bias

Preferences and attitudes for or against a group that are either at a subconscious level or that we believe we have suppressed.

Triggered by stereotypes and attitudes we may not realize we hold and run contrary to our stated beliefs and attitudes. Result in discriminatory behaviors that may also be at the subconscious level.
WHAT IS THAT? A tool for measuring implicit bias

Short computer-based evaluation of responses to pictures and words. The results reveal bias by measuring the amount of time it takes the test taker to make an association between two concepts displayed as either words or images.
“It is probably not possible for us to get rid of all our biases, nor is it desirable. Our brain’s way of sorting through lots of stimuli quickly is what allows us to move through the world and survive. What we need to learn is how to slow down the biases that betray our values long enough for us to act in a way that is more aligned with what we believe.”

**Video: Importance of Understanding our Biases**
School Suspension by Race

**Frequency and Racial Disparity**

School suspensions have risen steadily since the early 1970s, and racial disparities have grown considerably as well.²⁸

![Bar chart showing the percentage of enrollment by race suspended out-of-school one day or more.](chart)

**Figure 1. Racial Impact of the Rising Use of Suspension²⁹**
Reducing Implicit Bias: Not done overnight!

1. Educate yourself!
2. Recognize a response as stereotypical
3. Know your responses. Do they show implicit bias?
4. What could you have said?
5. Seek diverse experiences
6. Interact with people that provide diverse experiences
Statement: “I have a friend who’s a math major in college.”
Response: “Oh, really? What’s his name?”

Recognize you assumed the friend is male

Reflect I guess I thought your friend was male because all of my math teachers in school were male!

Replace Wow, that was silly! Females can do math, too!

Educate yourself. Find out how many females are graduating in the math/science fields
End of Lesson Sample Slides
Methods

- Lesson presented to six classes of undergraduate students across three disciplines
- Control group of six classes given an article to read on implicit bias
Participants

• Pre-Test N=259         Post-Test N=192

• Age: M= 20.56 years (Range: 18-46 years)

• Gender:
  – Female (71.8%)
  – Male (27.8%)
  – Other (.4%)
Participants

• Race/Ethnicity:
  – Caucasian (81.6%)
  – African American (6.9%)
  – Hispanic/Latino (5.4%)
  – Asian (1.2%)
  – Native American (3.9%)
  – Multiracial (3.9%)
Participants

- Classification:
  - Freshman (28.2%)
  - Sophomore (13.9%)
  - Junior (29.7%)
  - Senior (28.2%)

- Majors: Art, Education, Health and Human Sciences, Technology, and “Undecided”
Study Methods

• Mixed Methods
  – Survey (with open-ended responses)
  – Exit Tickets (out-the-door responses)

• Effect of the lesson on students’ knowledge, attitudes, and commitment to address their own implicit bias
Study Methods

• Pre and post tests included multiple choice and open-ended items

• Exit tickets:
  – How committed to addressing implicit bias? 1-10
  – How would you address it?
## Quantitative Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Correct Answers (Pretest)</th>
<th>Correct Answers (Posttest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Bias</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotyping</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>40.2 %</td>
<td>58.9 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Quantitative Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Incorrect</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> In your opinion, is there implicit bias in the following statements?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many African American males (and females) are not exposed to a literacy-rich environment before entering school. They have not been read bedtime stories or exposed to a rich vocabulary since birth.</td>
<td>211 (81.5%)</td>
<td>48 (18.5%)</td>
<td>259 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77% of mothers breastfeed their babies.</td>
<td>229 (88.4%)</td>
<td>30 (11.6%)</td>
<td>259 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black wife/white husband are 44% less likely to end in divorce than white wife/white husband over the same period.</td>
<td>81 (31.3%)</td>
<td>179 (68.7%)</td>
<td>259 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women don’t know much about cars and how much they should cost.</td>
<td>237 (91.5%)</td>
<td>22 (8.5%)</td>
<td>259 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Question:** In your opinion, are following statements likely a result of implicit bias? |               |               |              |
| A doctor is less likely to recommend lesbians to specialists for medical treatment. | 198 (76.4%)   | 61 (23.6%)    | 259 (100%)   |
| Judges have been found to grant dark-skinned defendants sentences up to eight months longer for identical offenses. | 187 (72.2%)   | 72 (27.8%)    | 259 (100%)   |
Quantitative Results

- **Satisfaction with Lesson**
  - 43.5% extremely satisfied
  - 42% somewhat satisfied.

- 73.9% of students reported they would be likely to address their implicit bias as a result of participation

- 49.7% of students took additional Implicit Association Tests (IAT)
Qualitative Results

Qualitative Data revealed five themes:

1. Commitment and lack of commitment
2. Strategies for addressing implicit bias
3. More diverse experiences
4. Acts of discrimination
5. Experiencing discrimination
Qualitative Results

• 83 completed exit tickets regarding commitment to address bias
  – Most expressed commitment
  – 68 indicated 6 or above

• Open-ended Questions on Pre & Post
Qualitative Results

10 reported a middle of the road response of 5

“I feel motivated to address my own biases but I won’t go far out of my way. If someone points out my bias, I’ll be more open-minded. 5 is in the exact middle. I feel neutrally inclined.”

“I think more exposure to more diverse experiences would be the best way to address and affect my own implicit biases. It all starts with recognition and reaction so it would push my limits further on being comfortable and losing the implicit bias.”
6 students demonstrated a lack of commitment

A single student chose “0” and simply replied “I can’t”

A student who chose “1” indicated a lack of need for improvement rather than a lack of commitment with the response “Because I already recognize & respond accordingly in a respectable manner.”

One student commented “I don’t want to think about it. It doesn’t really bother me. It’s my opinion. My choice.”
Qualitative Results

Students showed commitment to addressing their implicit bias by engaging in several strategies:

• Being more reflective about their thoughts and actions
• Gaining personal awareness by educating themselves on the issue
• Exposing themselves to more diverse people, ideas, and experiences
Qualitative Results

Being more reflective about their thoughts and actions

- I actually want to open my mind and addresses biases. If I start addressing my own, I can be that one person that starts to make the world a better and more understanding place.

- The test shocked me so I am definitely going to be way more conscious about what I say / do / think but I didn’t put 10 because I’m not going to like write a research paper or go get psychologist help or something like that.
Qualitative Results

Being more reflective..

After the lesson on implicit bias, I have come up with a few ways to address my implicit biases and change them. One way is to consciously contrast negative stereotypes with specific counter examples. For example, when I hear or think of a negative stereotype about African Americans, I can compare that stereotype to someone like Oprah or Obama. Another way is to ask myself what my perspective might be if I was in the other’s situation. I will also make sure that I consciously reflect on my biases to make sure that I am not letting them affect my teaching and or perspective of people.

First, I think I need to take a step back to understand my biases and then in order to get rid of them, I need to think before I respond or do something. So, instead of letting myself say the first thing that comes to mind, I should stop and think if what I’m going to say falls under my bias. And if it does, then I need to change my response.
Qualitative Results

Gaining personal awareness by educating themselves on the issue

– “Ways that I could reduce some of my own implicit biases would be to do further research when hearing about generalizations about groups of people.”

– “I feel that learning more about implicit bias and some of the biases that I carry would be a great way for me to reduce some of my own thoughts that are driven by bias.”

– Several students wrote that they were interested in learning more about their own personal biases by taking more Implicit Association Tests. One student wrote, “I’m curious to find all my biases and figure out why [I have them].”
Exposure to more diverse people, ideas, and experiences

- I believe that I don’t hang out with enough colored people. My implicit bias said I moderately prefer white people. I want to fix this because I truly want to see everyone as equal. If I were to hang out with more colored people, my implicit bias would be easily recognized.

- ‘meet and be purposefully open with people I have biases towards to give my subconscious evidence against the negative or positive bias”

- “I think a good way to recognize my own implicit biases would be to put myself in environments where I've noticed them occurring, and get more comfortable with that certain group of people.”

- Instead of ignoring my possible biases, I’d like to address them and debunk them by immersing myself in situations that are different for me.”
Qualitative Results

• Participants experienced discrimination as a result of implicit bias:
  – gender,
  – race/ethnicity
  – socioeconomic status
Qualitative Results

• Participants engaged in discriminatory action toward others mostly as a result of their bias toward
  – people’s appearances
  – gender
  – race/ethnicity
Implications for Future Research

• More educational tools need to be developed and studied in order for educators to be equipped with effective teaching tools and lessons on implicit bias
  – For instance, efforts should be made to discover educational interactive activities to be implemented in the classroom and best examples to be shared with students on the issue of implicit bias
Implications for Future Research

• Collaborative efforts among educators in various disciplines
  – Reach broad base of students
  – Deliver comprehensive teaching strategy to increase awareness and knowledge around diversity and cultural competence
Implications for Future Research

• Increased institutional support for collaborations for scholarship on teaching could strengthen a university’s capacities to promote diversity and inclusiveness among campus communities

• More experiences with diversity are required for students
Limitations

• Awkward phrasing of some questions provided opportunity for skewed results
  – “In what way(s) have you experienced discrimination as a result of implicit bias?”
  – Responses ranged from actual discrimination, types of prejudice, and examples of stereotyping
  – Will review and resolve
Limitations

• System design flaw did not allow matching of pre- and post-survey results
  – Can not attribute changes in post-test scores to lesson or reading
  – Possibly altered results from experimental and control group
  – No cross-comparison analysis using demographics
Limitations

- Discussion was rushed
  - More time needed to effectively implement lesson for deep, rich discussion
  - Out-the-door comments were very brief
Limitations

• “Live” link to the IAT inadvertently given to control group
  – Unable to determine how many control participants clicked link

• Responses gathered may have been given with reservation
  – Social desirability questions not included
Lessons Learned

• Weekly meetings created collaborative moments.
  – Enriched own teaching & learning
  – Potential for influencing other faculty members
Lessons Learned

Perhaps the most profound and enriching lesson to us, as individuals representing diverse backgrounds and disciplines, was learning that we had a common goal to effect positive change in our campus community during an era of increased ethnocentrism and incivility.
Questions and Discussion


Thank You