



Microaggressions, Implicit Bias & School Climate

What do we need to know about our systemic, dominant culture and those it best and least serves in order to build positive school-centered cultures for all?

ECHO CHANGING THE PARADIGM CONFERENCE
—SOCIAL & HISTORICAL TRAUMA


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Block Party

- Roam** the room, mingle and **read** the quotes
- When a quote resonates for you, **stop** and **discuss** its meaning and importance with someone near around you
- Repeat** for 2-3 quotes
- Debrief**



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Objectives: We will...

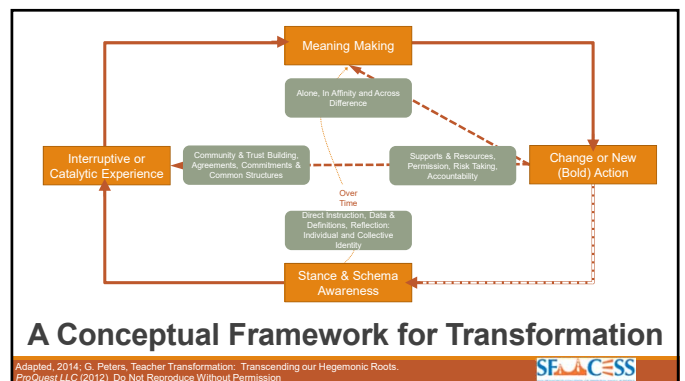
- Deepen our understanding of **implicit bias and micro-aggressions**, and how they relate to social & historical trauma
- Begin to **engage in inquiry** – individually and collectively about the role bias and micro-aggressions play in our lives in “the skin we are in” and across our professional relationships (colleagues, students, staff, faculty, admin, etc.)

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Agenda

- Opening Moves** – Block Party, Framework for Transformation and Community Builder
- Focused Work** – Calibrating Context and Language: School Climate, Implicit Bias and MicroAggressions
- Focused Work/ Collaboration** – Discourse I and Discourse II
- Closing Moves** – Implications and Commitments, Evaluations

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“Who Am I?”

CE Find a partner; ID who will speak first.


- 30" each: "Who am I?" - uninterrupted
- Reflection: *How was that? What came up for you doing that?*

CE Find a new partner with whom you usually don't talk; ID who will speak first.

- 60" each: "Who am I?" – uninterrupted, repeating nothing said in 1st round
- Reflection: *What was different this time about what you felt or shared?*

CE Find a new partner specifically across difference – racial difference if possible.

- Who spoke first/second both of the last times?
- 75" each: "Who am I?" – uninterrupted, repeating nothing from 1st two rounds
- Reflection: *Why did we do this work in the way we did?*




Discourse is Essential

Much of our discourse assumes common definitions and similar experiences – and feelings – about our terminology and concepts. Increased and shared understanding increases our efficacy and capacity to problem solve.

Towards this, leadership is essential in:

- CE** Calibrating our language
- CE** Developing and practicing shared discourse norms
- CE** Modeling, scaffolding to and practicing equity-centered discourse and collaboration

When we are better at engaging in radical discourse, we increase opportunities to identify, address and heal from microaggressions.



“

*Why do you keep using that word?
I do not think it means
what you think it means.*

Inigo Montoya, The Princess Bride

MS1

Stand Up – Sit Down (and look around)


- 1) I am **experienced** with the subject of MicroAggressions
- 2) This past week, I have **witnessed** a MicroAggression
- 3) This past week, I have **experienced** a MicroAggression



What brings us to this conversation (in the skin we are in)?



In 1779, Thomas Jefferson proposes a two-track educational system, with different tracks in his words for "the laboring and the learned." Scholarship would allow a very few of the laboring class to advance, Jefferson says, by "raking a few geniuses from the rubbish."

- CE** **Historically**, the very design of public education intend to serve some better or worse than others.
- CE** **Professionally**, we espouse a commitment to equitable outcomes for every student regardless of demographic predictors.
- CE** **Personally**, our own formative experiences – **in the skin we are in** – inform our work and relate results. Our own includes those as students (**invisible**), teachers (**throw-away kids**) and leaders (**ally-activist**).



What brings us to this conversation in relation to our work?

The conversations we live in.

What is Mental Health and Wellness?




Surface: Behaviors

Under the surface: thoughts, feelings, needs, past history (conscious and unconscious)




What is [School] Climate?

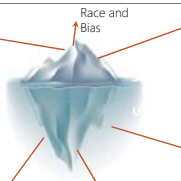


Programs, Interventions, Services, and Curricula

Beliefs, Norms and Values expressed in day-to-day experiences



An Intersection Between Microaggressions, Bias, Mental Health, and Wellness



Programs, Interventions, Services, and Curricula


Race and Bias

Behaviors

Thoughts, Feelings, Needs, Past History (conscious and unconscious)

Beliefs, Norms, and Values (expressed in day-to-day experiences)

Dominant Culture




Implicit Bias:

The attitudes and stereotypes that unconsciously affect people's perceptions, actions, and decisions

- **Disproportionality in discipline:** Policies that appear racially neutral, but result in the over-representation of students of color -- particularly black boys -- in suspensions, expulsions, and referrals for subjective infractions like "defiance"
- **Disproportionality in special education:** Misguided placements that result in the over-representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in SPED programs
- **Educator mindsets and beliefs:** Underestimating the intellectual capacity of culturally and linguistically diverse students, and often girls, inside the classroom
- **Tracking:** School policies that automatically place students of color in remedial or low-track courses
- **Dominant discourse:** Ways of thinking and talking about students and families that diminish, underestimate, or even pathologize them (also referred to as deficit based).

Adapted from: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/keys-to-challenging-implicit-bias-shane-safir>



A Case of Bias – One District

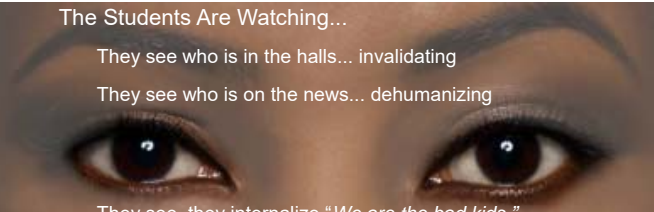


Category	Percentage
STUDENTS	~10%
SPED	~25%
ED	~40%
SUSPENSIONS	~60%
SUSPENSIONS	~80%

What is your story?



The Case of Bias - Implicit or Explicit?



The Students Are Watching...

They see who is in the halls... invalidating

They see who is on the news... dehumanizing

They see, they internalize "We are the bad kids."


The Students Are Watching... ALL The Students

SP.811

One Undercurrent: Microaggressions

- Perpetrators often unaware of such communications with people of marginalized groups
- Cut across all social identities
- Intention does not always equal IMPACT
- Microaggressions are: *"Brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults towards people of marginalized groups."*


Sun, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271-280.



MicroAggressions


Micro-assault (~conscious)	Micro-invalidation (~unconscious)	Micro-insult (~unconscious)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicit identity-based derogations characterized primarily by a violent verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of people who represent different groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviors, actions, or verbal remarks that convey rudeness, insensitivity, or demean a person's group or social identity or heritage.

Interpersonal and Environmental



A Different Discourse Is Needed

<p>DISCOURSE I</p> <p>The language typically used to talk about, question and plan the work of schools, change or reform.</p> <p>Discourse I dialogue supports and maintains the status quo without appearing unresponsive to outside demands for improvement.</p>	<p>DISCOURSE II</p> <p>The language that tends to be about uncomfortable, unequal, ineffective, prejudicial conditions and relationships in schools.</p> <p>Discourse II opens up space for ambiguity and change to be part of a purposeful structure.</p>
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Closing: *Implications and Commitments*

Creating Conditions for Radical Discourse and Interruption


- Personal & Organizational Commitment**
 - Shared Buy-In/ Community Norms/ Agreements
 - Calibrated Expectations of Necessary Work
- Equity-Centered Structures & Strategies**
 - Rituals and Protocols (i.e. Equity-Based iGroups)
 - Common Language (i.e. "Discourse 2", Equity, Accountability, Success)
- Community & Trust Building**
 - Sharing Stories of Difference and Shared Struggles
 - Constant and Continuous Cycles Work



Green, yellow, red lights




- What are some of the challenges you face** in your own practices and belief systems? What needs to be disrupted?
- What are you thinking now about **what we might need to be more intentional** about when it comes to disrupting dominant discourse?
- What do you need to keep doing? What do **your least-reached students need you** to start doing?



Looking Ahead: Integrating the Work

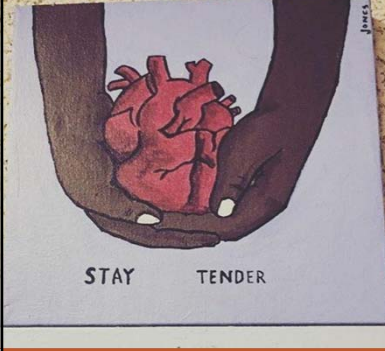
- 1) What challenges come to mind when thinking about your perspective and approach to interrupting dominant discourse?
- 2) What challenges come to mind when thinking about your colleagues' perspectives and approaches to interrupting dominant discourse?
- 3) What might be some strategies to speak to areas of challenge?
- 4) How might you create meaningful opportunities for ensuring a school-culture/climate that values engaging in these hard conversations?
- 5) What are you already doing to cultivate a climate of discourse disruption, and what else can we do?
- 6) What we need more help with or have questions about?



CLOSING & REFLECTION

WE DO NOT LEARN FROM
EXPERIENCE; WE LEARN FROM
REFLECTING ON EXPERIENCE.
-JOHN DEWEY

"I discovered..."
"I re-learned..."
"I was surprised to learn..."
"I forgot that..."
"I noticed that"..."
"I plan to..."
"I will tell colleagues about..."





STAY TENDER

Thank You for Investing & Engaging.

For more information, contact


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Resources

- <https://www.weareteachers.com/things-every-teacher-know-classroom-microaggressions>
- http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus_program_materials.page (Olweus Bullying Prevention Program Materials for Educators)
- <https://psychologybenefits.org/2013/07/31/is-it-you-or-is-it-racist-the-insidious-impact-of-microaggressions-on-mental-health>
- <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/microaggressions-matter/406090>
- <http://www.microaggressions.com/>
- <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/keys-to-challenging-implicit-bias-shane-safir>



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Stance and Schema Awareness: <i>Identify work about our individual and shared history</i>	When in your life has your own awareness or unawareness of yourself, in the skin you are in, been keenly influential to you and/or your work?
Conditions for Interrupting Inequities: <i>Developing Community as well as shared agreements and practices</i>	When have you faced an interruption in your schema-to the way you viewed the world and your relationship to it?
Making New Meanings: <i>Working Alone, In Affinity and Across Difference</i>	When do you study-intentionally, on your own, in affinity or with allies to help make new meaning of the world and your relationship to it?
Radical Change/ Bold Actions: <i>Fostering conditions and relationships to shift practice and results</i>	What radical new action have you ever taken because of a transformation you have experienced?

Appendix: Stages of Transformation with Reflective Questions for Leaders

