Interrupting Racial Microaggressions and Countering Implicit Bias on Campus

Presentation to Engineering Student Success
6 November 2020, 1-3pm MST
Division for Equity and Inclusion
UNM Land Acknowledgement

Founded in 1889, the University of New Mexico sits on the traditional homelands of the Pueblo of Sandia. The original peoples of New Mexico - Pueblo, Navajo, and Apache - since time immemorial, have deep connections to the land and have made significant contributions to the broader community statewide. We honor the land itself and those who remain stewards of this land throughout the generations and also acknowledge our committed relationship to Indigenous peoples.

We gratefully recognize our history.

Art by Jennifer Ober
Workshop objectives

1. Introduce you to presenters from the Division of Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
2. Discuss concepts: Racial Microaggressions (RMAs) and Implicit Bias
3. Share examples of students’ experiences with RMAs and Implicit Bias from published studies
4. Explore ways to interrupt RMAs and Implicit Bias on campus
5. Conclude with your thoughts and discussion about next steps
Workshop schedule

1. 1:00-1:05 p.m. UNM Land Acknowledgement
2. 1:05-1:10 p.m. Introductions
3. 1:10-1:35 p.m. Establish ground rules for the workshop & “break the ice”
4. 1:35-1:50 p.m. Introduce concept of RMAs
5. 1:50-1:55 p.m. [5-minute break]
6. 1:55-2:05 p.m. Examples of students’ experiences with RMAs and Implicit Bias
7. 2:05-2:45 p.m. How to interrupt RMAs and Implicit Bias [break-out session and report-back]
8. 2:45-3:00 p.m. Conclude with your thoughts and discussion about next steps
Dr. Zerai is Professor of Sociology & Vice President for Equity and Inclusion at UNM. She is Prof Emerita at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, where she served from 2002-2019. A decolonial feminist scholar, she has published 5 books examining: multiculturalism, women’s access to safe water, sanitation, & mobile technology, making the work of marginalized scholars more accessible, & MCH.
**Associate VPEI, Professor of Sociology, Co-Founder/Director of the Institute for the Study of “Race” & Social Justice, & the Founding Coordinator of the NM Statewide Race, Gender, Class Data Policy Consortium, Nancy López (nlopez@unm.edu)**

Prof López’s scholarship & teaching are guided by intersectionality--the simultaneity of settler colonialism, structural racism, heteropatriarchy, racial capitalism as systems of oppression/resistance. She focuses developing contextualized solutions that advance justice. She received the Amer. Soc. Assoc. William Foote Whyte Distinguished Career Award for Sociological Practice & Public Sociology. Her current research funded by the WT Grant Foundation is a study in research practice partnerships that examines the role of ethnic studies curriculum and pedagogy in reducing complex intersectional inequalities. She has served on over 75 PhD/MA committees. She is first gen college, NYC-born child of Dominican immigrants; Spanish is her first language.
Lorena Blanco-Silva currently serves Diversity Programs Director for the Division for Equity and Inclusion at the University of New Mexico, where she has worked for over 10 years, 9 with DEI. Ms. Blanco-Silva has spent over 20 years working in higher education, particularly with issues regarding the recruitment, retention and attainment levels for Latino students and faculty. A first-generation college student and native New Mexican, Blanco-Silva received her Bachelor’s Degree in Spanish and Communications from Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, NM and a Master’s Degree in Public Administration with a Public Management Concentration from the University of New Mexico.
Frankie Flores (They) is a first-generation Mexicano from Santa Rosa, Chihuahua. They grew up in Albuquerque, NM in the East San Jose barrio. Frankie grew up in a community surrounded by Queer and Trans people, thus propelling their commitment to Trans justice, especially for Trans women of color. Frankie is currently the Director for the University of New Mexico's LGBTQ Resource Center. When not at the Center, Frankie is also the c4 Board Chair for Equality New Mexico or fundraising for various charities as Lola La Bruja.
Rodney Bowe

Rodney Bowe has been working in higher education for over 25 years as a student and community advocate. He has worked at UNM as a Statistical Analyst in Enrollment Management, an Academic Advisor in University College and Mechanical Engineering, Program Specialist in African American Student Services, and Assistant Director in Student Recruitment and Outreach.

Rodney has been doing diversity work in DEI since 2014 as the Director for the Men of Color Initiative. He is a board member for American Civil Liberties Union NM, Southern Christian Leadership Conference NM, and for the Outpost Performance Space.
After graduating from UNM Ms. Jenrette worked as a programmer/analyst for contractors to Sandia National Laboratories, the Department of Energy, and the City of Albuquerque. She worked at the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) for 12 years prior to returning to UNM as an employee.

Mónica worked with the STEM Collaborative Center upon returning to UNM and she is currently working for the Division for Equity and Inclusion (50%), The Office of Student Affairs, the APLU Students Experience Project, and the NSF ECURE grant (50%).
April Adams is a social justice advocate with a background in creative placemaking, visual storytelling, community engagement, organizational management and art program administration. As a youth advocate in the non-profit sector, her work centered around strengthening community support networks for young people by collaborating with diverse community partners. As an organizer and arts advocate, April contributed to the development of the creative economy in ABQ by curating and coordinating youth-oriented public art projects, programs, installations and events including: The Quantum Bridge Mural, Consumption and Hip Hop Culture Day. She graduated from the University of New Mexico with a degree in Broadcast Journalism in 2010. The new DEI Administrative Coordinator, April serves as executive assistant to VPEI Zerai.
Ground Rules for Today’s Workshop

- Embrace Discomfort
- Expect and Accept Non-Closure
- Speak your Truth, Speak for yourself, Use “I” statements
- Stay Engaged (mentally, intellectually, and physically present)
- Maintain Confidentiality; Don’t share anyone’s info without their permission
- Attack the problem, not the person
- Practice Active Listening
- Share the mic!
- Content may trigger distress. A DEI advocate can speak with you 1:1 if you need support.
- Other?
Zoom Etiquette

- Mute your microphone. To help keep background noise to a minimum, make sure you mute your microphone when you are not speaking.
- Be mindful of background noise.
- Position your camera properly; Keep camera on as much as possible (especially during today’s interactive sections).
- Limit distractions.
- Avoid multi-tasking as much as possible.
- The session is not going to be recorded to provide some privacy.
- Feel free to use the chat function.
- Please use your Zoom hand and/or wait to be called on.
- Directed questions and comments in the chat are not confidential.
History is everybody talking at once, multiple rhythms being played simultaneously. The events and people we write about did not occur in isolation but in dialogue with myriad of other people and events. In fact, at any given historical moment millions of people are talking all at once. As historians we try to isolate one conversation and to explore it, but the trick is then how to put that conversation in a context which makes evident its dialogue with so many others--how to make this one lyric stand alone and at the same time be in connection with all the other lyrics being sung (Historian Elsa Barkley Brown 1992: 297-298).
Please answer one of the following questions:

- When is the first time you realized that racism, sexism, class exploitation, or other marginalized identities impact you or those you care about?
- What was your first act of resistance?

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1. In the chat, provide 2-5 words to jog your memory of the EVENT, PLACE, and the approximate YEAR of the event
2. And in the chat, also write your NAME (if your zoom name is not indicated)
Racial Microaggressions (RMAs) Definition

- Research has shown that racial microaggressions (RMAs), “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue, et al., 2007) are a threat to inclusive climates in higher education.

- Though RMAs can be subtle and are often dismissed by perpetrators, their effects can cause anger and often drain the psychic energy of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

- Unfortunately, RMAs create inequities in education, employment, health care, and housing. Implicit bias can lead to racial microaggressions.
In this workshop, we will discuss these phenomena and provide examples of how Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian (BIPOC) students counter and make strategic decisions about how they cope when they are confronted with RMAs and implicit bias.

Further, the workshop will address ways allies can work with BIPOC students to interrupt bias and build a more inclusive culture to maximize student success both within and outside of the classroom.
“Microaggressions”
Coined by Prof Pierce

- The concept of “microaggressions,” was coined in 1970 by the late Chester Pierce, M.D. a psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School to describe the daily insults and dismissals endured by Black Americans at the hands of whites.

- Dr. Pierce was the first African American full professor at Massachusetts General Hospital.
Professor Derald Wing Sue

- Microaggressions in Everyday Life
- Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice
- Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence
Multicultural Campus: Rhetoric versus Reality
What’s at Stake?

Reproduce structural inequality in ways that are invisible at an institution of higher education

- Limit access to research assistantships
- Decrease quality of letters of recommendation
- Limit reviewers for papers and grant proposals
- Students told to drop classes or switch majors
- Students may withdraw from interactions with faculty, TAs & staff - miss out on key social capital
- Students may leave the university
Racial Microaggressions (RMAs) +

“Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007).

Other types of microaggressions – gender, sexuality, religion, ability status, class . . .
- See RMA handout and references, Sue 2010.
- See handout about LGBTQ microaggressions.
Types of Racial Microaggressions

- **Racial insults**
  - Rude and insensitive actions or comments that insult BIPOC by signaling that the individual is considered *inferior* to a white counterpart, less intelligent, a second-class citizen, and given to behavior and criminality inscribed upon race. Often unconscious.

- **Racial invalidations**
  - Actions or comments that negate or ostracize BIPOC lived realities. Often unconscious.

- **Racial assaults** – similar “old fashioned racism”
  - Typically are conscious actions meant to demean a person through deliberate and overt racial discrimination, which can be violent verbal or nonverbal attacks, often hidden.
Types of Racial Microaggressions: We invite you to share examples in the chat

- **Racial insults:** “You speak well” (communicates you are a perpetual foreigner)
- **Racial invalidations:** “When I look at you, I don’t see color.” (Denying BIPOC racialized experiences)
- **Racial assaults:** “NGH” image with noose embedded; lynching threat against Black instructor at UNM
Environmental or Institutional RMAs

- Courses where all of the readings, lectures, and content reflect a white Eurocentric perspective and/or do not include BIPOC and women authors
- Mostly or all white and male portraits in places of honor
- Environmental symbols like offensive mascots, monuments, building and street names, etc
- College majors, classes, meetings, etc. that have one or a fewer BIPOC students and faculty
5-Minute Break

See you soon!
Study of Racial Microaggressions on Campus

Co-authors of study on RMAs in the classroom at the University of Illinois are, from left, Ruby Mendenhall, Margaret Browne Huntt, Stacy Harwood, Moises Orozco, and Shinwoo Choi. Photo by L. Brian Stauffer
RMA Online Survey, 2011 - 2012
(N = over 4,500)

- Focus: US-Born Students
  - Asian (35%)
  - Biracial or Multiracial (27%)
  - Black or African American (19%)
  - Latinx (19%)
  - Native American (<1 %)
- Undergraduate students (68%)
- Humanities and Social Sciences majors (63%)
- STEM majors (37%)
Online Survey – Quantitative Summary: Experiences of Racism on Campus

- 60% of BIPOC students reported experiencing racism on campus.
- 59% of BIPOC students reported having stereotypes made about them in the classroom because of race.
“In a small seminar classes where I am the only black person present, when someone starts to talk about issues related to black people (and not even in a bad way), there is that moment in which they look at you involuntarily. It only lasts a split second, but it is enough to remind you of your blackness and its under-representativeness within that context.”
“Here (on campus) it's just kinda like they’re (white people) more dominant, ... and they act like sometimes they’re gonna walk through me. Like, ... literally, there was one time I was in the Union and someone was coming to me and I stopped walking because this man was not moving. He wasn’t looking. He wasn’t doing anything and I said, are you serious? [He said] ‘Oh my god, I’m so sorry, I didn’t...’ but I, I think ... you can see me so what’s the issue...”

Black Female Undergraduate Student
“I took the midterm and I was like “Wow, I did so good on this.” Then I got an email from my professor saying you didn’t do too great on your midterm. If you want you can drop the class, tomorrow’s the last drop date. I was like “Oh, ok.” It was interesting because I was talking to two of my friends and they also, they were Latina, and they too had received the same email. They too had done bad on the midterm but we all thought we did good. So I went to him and I talked to him during office hours. I wanted him to go through my exam and tell me what I did wrong. Because it wasn’t like multiple choice or anything, it was you know you fill it in...”

Latino Male Student
“The only explanation he could give me was “Oh, you had the answers right, it’s just that compared to what other students gave me, this is not enough.” I was like okaaay. You can’t tell me what I did wrong? You’re just telling me, compared to what other students gave me? It was interesting because one of the girls in front of me, she was white, she got 110% on her exam and there was no extra credit. How does that happen?”

— Latino Male Student
When I was a freshman, I went in to see my academic adviser to help schedule my classes for next semester. When I walked into her office her expression immediately changed. Throughout the meeting, she kept questioning me on whether I could stay in the major. It seemed like when she realized I was African American, in her mind, I wasn’t able to successfully complete the major. I felt insulted and disrespected by that meeting and every other meeting I had with her.
My freshman year adviser kept trying to convince me to drop my major and instead take on a different major [one of the ethnic studies majors] and a minor in [a language]. I voiced my anger to him and the department head and got a new adviser who was very supportive of me.
Implicit Bias

- **Bias** is the process by which the brain uses "mental associations that are so well-established as to operate without awareness, or without intention, or without control."

- Harvard University Project Implicit
Implicit Bias: Einstein of Cognition

- Nobel Laureate, Daniel Kahneman, Emeritus Professor of Psychology and Public Affairs at Princeton University, and a fellow of the Center for Rationality at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

- Challenged rational choice theory and provided research basis of our understandings of implicit bias.
Recent work in cognitive psychology, social identity studies, and neurological research has allowed us to see how unconscious bias is "wired" into our thought processes.

Each of us has some personal collection of unconscious biases gathered over time from our families, from our culture, from our socialization, from our experiences, from the media, and from our friends.

95% of mental processing happens before conscious thought kicks in.

As teachers, advisors and role models, it is important that we become aware of our own biases so that we can mitigate our automatic responses and choose to make well-considered decisions when it comes to the development of those we work with.
Even if we have strong egalitarian values and believe we are not biased we may still behave in discriminatory ways (e.g., Dovidio, 2001)

Judgments shaped by:
- Biology of efficiency: the brain is designed to predict, fill in blanks
- A lifetime of experience and cultural history

Leads to implicit bias and stereotyping

Applies to a variety of physical and social characteristics associated with race, gender, age, & ethnicity--even height
Research shows that implicit bias affects our selection of finalists in academic job searches
And it affects the types of students we select to mentor
And it has an impact on students’ sense of belonging and access to opportunities in higher education
How do students cope with experiences with RMAs and affects of implicit bias?
BIPOC Students Coping Strategically

“You have to pick and choose your battles... There are times when you have to confront them... then there’s other times when it’s in your best interest not to say anything, hold your tongue.” (Latino)

- Do or say something to the person
- Make strategic decisions about when and what to say
Safe Places and Networks

“...[the Cultural House], it’s like another home here. ”

Latina Undergraduate Student

- Students of color are resistant, resourceful, and resilient
- Cultural/Ethnic Houses, Cultural Student Organizations, Cultural Greek Letter Organizations, and Cultural Studies Courses as ‘safe places’ to momentarily escape.
Reflect on Your Classroom Practices

- Classroom Sense of Belonging
  - Who do you informally interact with before and after class? Who do you ignore?

- Class Participation
  - Who do you call on? Who volunteers? Why are some students silent? Do you incorporate student ideas into lecture?

- Monitor Group Projects
  - Do you form the groups or do you let students form their own? How do you monitor group work?

- Intervene in Class Discussion
  - How do you respond to stereotypes? Do you respond with nervous laughter? Do you create a learning opportunity? Do you have a plan?
Students are often upset because faculty do not intervene.

Give students power. Tell them it is o.k. to speak up when you do or say something that is offensive.

Possible Statement on Syllabus:

“All students are encouraged to let me know if I say or do something that makes you feel uncomfortable at any point in this class. Please tell me after class, during office hours or feel free to leave an anonymous note under my office door or in my mailbox.”
Break-Out Sessions

- Take a look at the handout, “Interrupting RMAs”. Create 1-2 scenarios with your group and plan a skit in which you interrupt a racial, SOGIE (sexual orientation and gender identity and expression), gender/sex, religious, PWD (Persons with Disabilities)-targeted microaggression.

- Plan to share your skit with the group

- You will have 15 minutes to plan

- Then we will report back and you will have an opportunity to share one of your skits or scenarios with the group
What did you learn from the break-out sessions?

- Reason for break out sessions: The only way to get comfortable with interrupting RMAs is by practicing!
- What did you learn?
- Would you like to share a skit or scenario?
- How would you like to follow up on this workshop?
- What are your next steps?
Conclusion

- We appreciate the opportunity to discuss RMAs, and ways to reduce the impact of RMAs implicit bias in the classroom.
- We are happy to partner with you over the next several months as you determine your next steps.
- Inclusion today is the key to innovation tomorrow. Our efforts will help us to grow the reputation of UNM and produce leaders in the work force who enhance both equity and inclusion in their respective fields.
- THANKS again for participating!
Resources from DEI

- Handouts:
  - RMAs: An Overview
  - Interrupting RMAs
  - SOGIE microaggressions: overview

- Post-election resources ~
  http://diverse.unm.edu/resources/post-election-resources.html

- Preventing and Responding to Doxing, Trolling, and Zoom Bombing ~
  https://webmeetings.unm.edu

- LGBTQRC.UNM.EDU Confidential Advocate

- Climate in COVID-19 Webinar Series ~
  http://diverse.unm.edu/resources/covid-19.html
SHAC & TAO-Therapy Assistance Online
EthicsPoint
AGORA Crisis Care
CARS

See links for these critical campus resources

- [http://shac.unm.edu/services/mental-health/index.html](http://shac.unm.edu/services/mental-health/index.html)
- [https://thepath.taoconnect.org/local/login/home.php](https://thepath.taoconnect.org/local/login/home.php)
- [http://compliance.unm.edu/resources/ethics-toolkit/index.html](http://compliance.unm.edu/resources/ethics-toolkit/index.html)
- [http://www.agoracares.org/](http://www.agoracares.org/)
- [https://cars.unm.edu/](https://cars.unm.edu/)
Thank you!

WE INVITE YOU TO CONTACT DEI:

LGBTQ Resource Center
505.277.54288
lgbtqrc@unm.edu

The Men of Color Initiative
505.277.2015
menofcolor@unm.edu

Institute for the Study of “Race” and Social Justice
race.unm.edu

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