Lesson plan overview

This interactive teaching module, “In Group/Out Group”, provides educators with a sample lesson plan that promotes critical awareness, dialogue, social justice, and embodied learning with the students they work with.

Co-developed by Cecil Whitney, Master’s alumni from the Department of Anthropology, and Elba Moise, Ph.D. student in Multicultural Education, this 90-minute teaching module focuses on interrupting racial and ethnic biases and micro-aggressions in the classroom. The module can be adapted to fit your course learning objectives and your particular students.

Initially focused on bias in faculty hiring, the plan’s scope has been expanded to encompass bias in teaching and mentoring while utilizing the “In Group/Out Group” play as a guiding framework.

Audience

This lesson plan was developed for faculty, staff, and students in higher education, however it can be adapted to fit various audiences, learning objectives, and time frames.

Learning objectives

• To recognize micro-aggressions and mental shortcuts
• To demonstrate possible ways of interrupting micro-aggressions in the classroom through structural shifts and micro-support practices

Participant materials

• Common Mental Shortcuts (PDF)
• Social Identity Profile Worksheet
• Personal Social Identity Worksheet
• Mia McKenzie’s “8 Ways Not to Be an Ally”
Activities and discussions

1. Introductions and common ground (10 minutes)

Facilitators

- Welcome participants
- Provide an overview of the workshop and lesson
- Discuss the approach and philosophy of the workshop and lesson

For introductions

- Consider beginning introductions by welcoming participants and sharing your approach to teaching and facilitation.
- Follow this by introducing yourself as the “facilitator,” along with your gender pronouns.
- Ask participants to introduce themselves by sharing their name, their gender pronouns (if they are comfortable), and what brought them to the workshop.

Sharing gender pronouns can be a way to recognize and validate the variety of gender identities that may be present in the room. Not everyone may identify in the way we may presume.

Examples of personal pronouns (not an exhaustive list):

Facilitator note:
- Consider explaining the purpose of sharing gender pronouns.
- Provide a list of gender pronouns on the board before the session begins so participants have the opportunity to view a variety of different pronouns.
1A. Establishing common ground

Facilitator(s) read a series of statements and participants raise their hands if they feel the statement applies to them. This non-verbal activity will help participants and facilitators recognize and know who is in the room.

Sample prompt with possible statements

To the extent that you are able and comfortable, raise your hand if the following statements are true for you:

- I have taught here at the UW
- I plan to teach here or in another setting in the future
- I have witnessed or experienced oppression here at the UW

Facilitator note: This activity can be adapted to have folks stand or sit in a circle and move into the circle if the statement applies to them.

Statements can include a range of the following:

- Low stakes statements (i.e. place of birth, multiple languages spoken, number of siblings, etc.)
- High stakes statements (i.e. personal experience with discrimination, raised in a single parent household, having inherited money/property, etc.).

Facilitators can include more and/or different prompts that are appropriate for their specific audience.

For more information on low stakes/high stakes statements visit the University of Arizona’s Privilege Walk Exercise pdf.

1B. Sharing workshop goals and agenda

Sample talking points

The goals for today’s workshop are for you to begin:

- Recognizing the everyday effects of micro-aggressions
- Engaging in interrupting micro-aggressions in the classroom

The agenda for today’s workshop:
1. We will begin by discussing some key concepts so we all have a common framework.

2. We will watch a video highlighting oppression in a classroom and use that video as a jumping-off point for further discussion.

3. Throughout the workshop we will engage in embodied activities that keep the blood flowing and deepen our understanding of the issues at stake.

**Embodied activities**

The purpose of the embodied activities are to:

- Provide participants with opportunities to engage in experiential learning in an active learning environment.
- Stimulate deeper learning that facilitates meaning making.

Research suggests that motor information accrued by the body and action experience, can influence learning and development by grounding mental representations in motor areas of the cortex and structuring associated perception. (Kontra, Goldin-Meadow, and Beilock, 2012).

**2. Anti-oppression framework (20 minutes)**

Define and discuss the following terms:

- Micro-aggression
- Power
- Privilege
- Oppression (interpersonal, structural, institutional)
- Intersectionality
- Cognitive bias

**Facilitator note:** If you have any questions about how to adapt the lesson plan or questions regarding terminology, feel free to contact TfC/CTL at: tfcuw@uw.edu.

**Optional post-workshop resource**

Facilitators may choose to share the Implicit Association Test (IAT) with participants as an optional post-workshop resource.
2A. Privilege activity

1. Divide the class into groups of 2-3

2. Each group gets a social identity from the list below:
   - Age
   - Class
   - Race
   - Ethnicity
   - Ability
   - Religion/Spirituality
   - Nation of Citizenship/Immigration Status
   - Gender
   - Sexual Orientation
   - Disability
   - Indigenous Background

3. Participants identify the dominant culture/agent (in terms of structural power) and brainstorm some privileges that come with being a member of that dominant group.

4. Participants write these down on paper or large sticky note pads.

5. The class comes together to discuss the different responses.

Facilitator note: Facilitators may choose to carry out the activity above as it is, or have participants use the Social Identity Worksheet to brainstorm.

Optional activity: Personal Social Identity Worksheet

Prior to beginning the small group activity above, facilitators may choose to have students begin the section by individually filling out their own Personal Social Identity Worksheet.

After students complete their individual Personal Social Identity Worksheets, facilitators can ask the group the following debrief prompts:

- What was the experience of filling in your own personal social identity worksheet like for you?
- What resonated with you and why?
- Can others in the group connect to that experience? If so, how?
3. Define and discuss: Micro-aggressions and shortcuts (15 minutes)

Define 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 targeted at persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. Adapted from Sue Wang’s “Racial Micro-aggressions.”

View MTV Anti-Bias clips

View two or three brief MTV “Look Different” campaign videos at: https://youtu.be/05BRBKfdDXc

Purpose: The “Look Different” videos are meant to help audiences begin to recognize hidden biases occurring in daily interactions.

Facilitator note: There are several short video clips (30 seconds each) which facilitators can choose from.

3A. Discuss types of micro-aggressions and mental shortcuts

Facilitators define the three types of micro-aggressions and write each category on the board. Then facilitators ask for examples from participants that fall into each category.

Emphasize that participants can give a micro-aggression they have experienced, committed, or witnessed.

Samples and examples of micro-aggressions:

- Micro-assault: slurs, catcalling, intentionally mis-gendering or outing
- Micro-insult: purse grab, “articulate,” “that’s gay,” “what a woman”
- Micro-invalidation: “you don’t look _____,” “you must not be trying hard enough,” “sweetie,” asking about “mom and dad,” unintentionally mis-gendering, “have you had the surgery?”
Define [mental] shortcuts

When making decisions or judgments, we frequently use mental shortcuts to relieve the cognitive load. Shortcuts can be helpful since they allow one to make quick decisions. However, sometimes they result in “cognitive errors” or cognitive biases that burden target groups and bestow advantages on dominant groups. They can lead to erroneous and harmful conclusions about people with target identities.

Forms of shortcuts

- Cloning
- Snap judgments
- Negative and positive stereotypes
- Euphemized bias

Adapted from Interrupting Bias in the Faculty Search Process.

Facilitator note: For more information on shortcuts, see the Common Shortcuts pdf.

3B. Reflective writing

Ask participants to reflect and write (or draw) for five minutes on their own experience with micro-aggressions and shortcuts, either as a target or an agent.

Facilitator note: You can tailor this prompt to refer to a common experience of your audience (i.e. specific department or classroom, work, community setting, etc.)

4. Define and discuss: Micro-support and allyship (10 minutes)
Define allyship/solidarity: The process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized people and/or groups.

Micro-support practices (not an exhaustive list):

- Provide your full attention
- Acknowledge others’ strengths and contributions
- Respectfully ask questions for clarification
- Hold others accountable
- Break the silence

Facilitator Note: The examples of micro-support practices are not necessarily examples of allyship.

For more information and resources (i.e. handouts on micro-support practices and definitions) visit Interrupting Bias in the Faculty Search Process.

4A. Tableaux

Participants make a series of frozen pictures to help break down a story, analyze the sequence of events, identify the important aspects of the story and bring it to life.

Their expressive faces, body poses, and how they pose in relationship to one another creates a living picture or sculpture.

Purpose: A tableau invites participants (i.e. spect-actors in Theater of the Oppressed) to capture a moment in time dramatizing an oppressive situation. The image created by the group then becomes a foundation for critical reflection on social power dynamics.

Tableaux exercise

1. Divide the class into groups of 3-4

2. Ask each group to create two tableaux:
   - One representing a micro-aggression or shortcut
   - One representing an act of micro-support/solidarity that could help to correct/heal/move forward
   *These tableaux can be informed by the experiences group members reflected on
3. Each group shares their two tableaux with the class

5. Frame and view “In Group/Out Group” video (10 minutes)

*The "In Group/Out Group" video is not available at this time, please check back.

This video showcases the “In Group/Out Group” play that came out of the Acting Up: Amplifying Voices Through Interactive Theater as Pedagogy graduate course. The course aimed at using social change theater and arts based pedagogies to promote awareness and community dialogue on social justice issues affecting the UW community.

The play is based on real lived experiences and its aim is to create awareness and begin conversations regarding bias in the classroom and possible ways to interrupt those biases.

6. Discussion (5-10 minutes)

Think-pair-share exercise

1. The facilitator asks participants to individually reflect on the sample prompts below:
   - What did you notice about the interactions between characters in the play?
   - How did those interactions make you feel?

2. Each participant shares their observations with a partner.

3. Participants engage in a large group discussion.

Purpose:

- Providing students time and structure to reflect on the topic
- Allowing students to formulate individual ideas and share with a peer
- Promoting classroom participation by encouraging a high degree of responses in small and large group discussions

Sample follow-up questions:

- Who had privilege in the scene?
- Who was marginalized?
- What forms of micro-aggressions and shortcuts did you see?
7. Interventions (20 minutes)

Recognizing interventions

In small groups, discuss intervenable moments in the video and possible interventions. Interventions could include in-the-moment actions or structural changes that could have prevented the conflict in the video. Then share out to the large group.

Mind mapping

As groups are sharing out, generate a list of practices on the board. Later, this list will be typed up and distributed to attendees.

**Purpose:** An opportunity for participants to consider various ways to interrupt instances of exclusion and oppression that could be transferrable across different experiences.

8. Free write

Attendees reflect and write on three changes they want to implement in their teaching work, curriculum, and language.

9. Closing remarks

The workshop isn’t the work. Having good intentions isn’t enough. We must move beyond thinking and talking to doing.

Handouts:

- [Shortcuts sheet](#)
- [Micro-Support Micro-Aggressions Sheet](#)
- [Mia McKenzie’s “8 Ways Not to Be an Ally”](#)

**Facilitator note:** Consider creating a handout with key terms used during the workshop and distributing it to participants later.