INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

DISCUSSIONS AND RESOURCES

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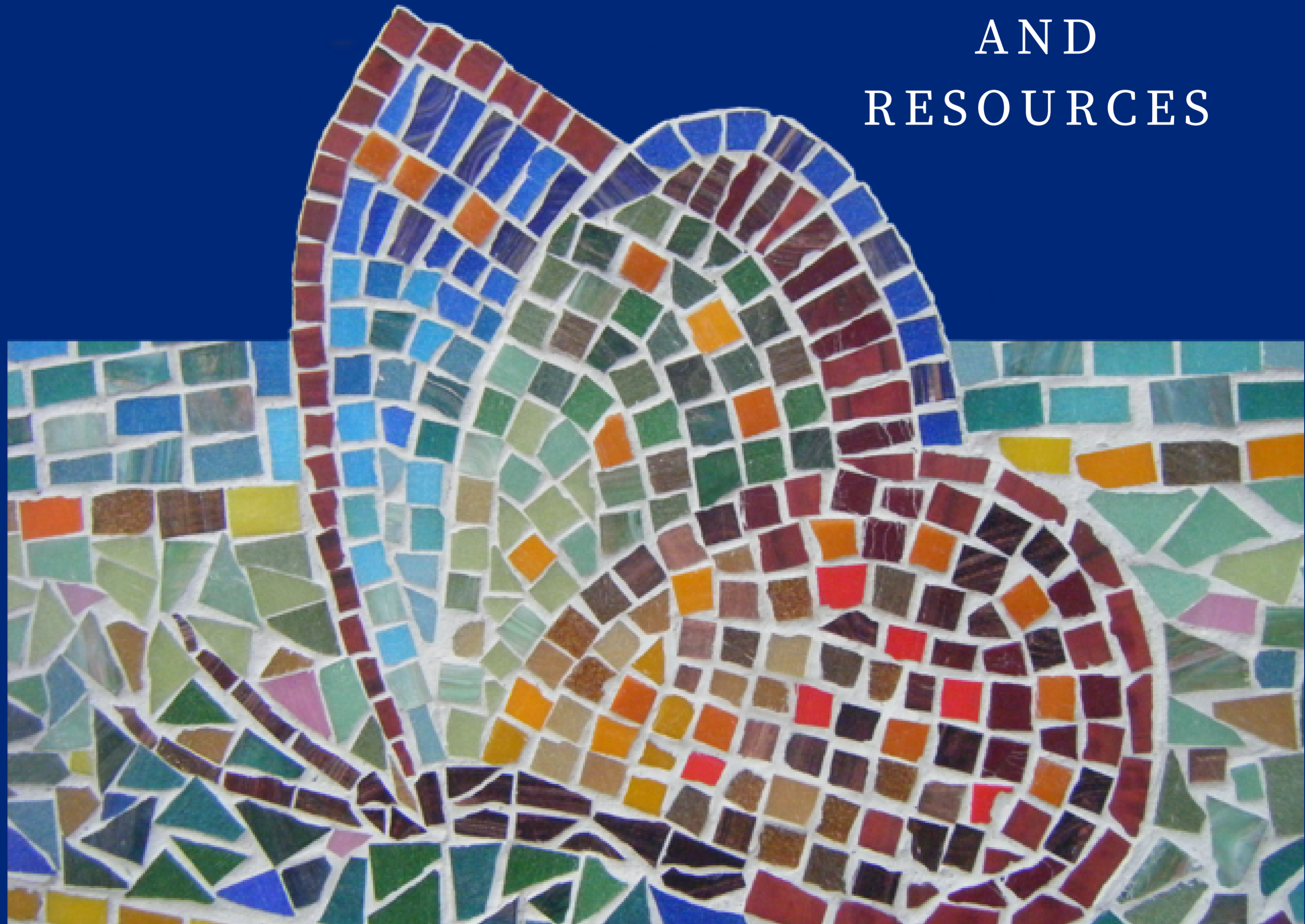
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EMORY UNIVERSITY | Center for Faculty Development and Excellence

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Contents:

Introduction

The Emory University Center for Faculty Development and Excellence (CFDE) is deeply committed to fostering inclusivity, equity, and critical thinking in teaching and learning. We hope this gathering of resources will serve those aims and will contribute to the very important conversations unfolding about inclusive pedagogy.

This document begins with an overview of what we mean when we speak of "inclusive classrooms." Then it provides context and information on several concerns that frequently arise in conversations about inclusive pedagogy: microaggressions, implicit bias, trigger warnings, safe(r) space, academic freedom and free speech.

All of these topics are the subject of significant, often highly charged debates—not only amongst educators and school administrators but also, increasingly, within public discourse and mainstream media. Therefore, in this document (both in the introductory overviews and in the lists of articles and other resources for further discussion), we have tried to give some sense of the divergent perspectives and arguments that appear in these debates. We do not necessarily agree with all the perspectives represented here. But we do believe it is important to listen closely to what arguments are getting made, and to carefully evaluate the reasoning and implications of these arguments.

This document is continually being updated. Links and topics that are new for 2018-2019 are highlighted in yellow.

Inclusive Classrooms

In higher education, the concept of an "inclusive classroom" recognizes the value and challenges of having many different and diverse students learning together.[1] Instructors who practice inclusive teaching aim to create courses and learning environments that are inclusive of all students, including those historically underrepresented in higher education. Inclusive classrooms are also accessible to all students, including different types of learners, students with disabilities, LGBT students, students of color (at primarily white institutions), ELL (English Language Learner) students and/or first-generation students.

The website of the University of Michigan's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching gives this description of inclusive classrooms:

> Inclusive classrooms are classrooms in which instructors and students work together to create and sustain an environment in which everyone feels safe, supported, and encouraged to express her or his views and concerns. In these classrooms, the

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[1] In the K-12 environment, an "inclusive classroom" is defined as a general education classroom in which students with and without disabilities learn alongside each other (as opposed to a "special education classroom," that serves only students with disabilities).

content is explicitly viewed from the multiple perspectives and varied experiences of a range of groups. Content is presented in a manner that reduces all students' experiences of marginalization and, wherever possible, helps students understand that individuals' experiences, values, and perspectives influence how they construct knowledge in any field or discipline. Instructors in inclusive classrooms use a variety of teaching methods in order to facilitate the academic achievement of all students. Inclusive classrooms are places in which thoughtfulness, mutual respect, and academic excellence are valued and promoted. (Shari Saunders and Diana Kardia, "Creating Inclusive College Classrooms," http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/p3_1)

As this description makes clear, inclusive pedagogy encompasses course content and teaching methods. Inclusive content—whether that be reading assignments, examples used in class, references to scholars in the field, etc.—aims to feature a wider range of human identities and experiences. Inclusive methods incorporate a variety of teaching techniques and media to deliver content, assess student learning, and foster student engagement.

Creating an inclusive classroom requires a high level of awareness and intentional effort on the part of the instructor. In particular, it requires the instructor to pay attention to the impact of cultural and sociological dimensions in the classroom:

Even though some of us might wish to conceptualize our classrooms as culturally neutral or might choose to ignore the cultural dimensions, students cannot check their sociocultural identities at the door, nor can they instantly transcend their current level of development… Therefore, it is important that the pedagogical strategies we employ in the classroom reflect an understanding of social identity development so that we can anticipate the tensions that might occur in the classroom and be proactive about them. (Ambrose *et. al.*, 2010, p. 169-170)

Notably, inclusive classrooms are not places in which conflict or divergent viewpoints are *avoided.* On the contrary, because multiple and varied perspectives are intentionally included, conflicting ideas and beliefs may be more likely to emerge explicitly in the classroom. However, the instructors and students proactively attempt to *engage conflicts constructively.* Inclusive teaching recognizes that encountering conflict and difference can be an important catalyst to learning—but this learning is more likely to effectively occur when all students are included and sufficiently supported.

While inclusive pedagogy appears as a prominent value in many university centers for teaching and learning (see the list on the next page for examples), some educators assert that inclusion alone does not go far enough. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart, a professor of higher education and student affairs, argues that the rhetoric of diversity and inclusion too often becomes a substitute for genuine institutional transformation aimed at greater justice and equity. Stewart characterizes *inclusion* as a concern merely with who is present in the classroom or on campus, whereas *justice* is concerned with redressing harms and changing the conditions that unequally value some persons and voices more than others. This argument raises provocative questions about what are—or what should be—the goals of inclusive pedagogy and the role of higher education in preparing students for social and

civic engagement. (See Stewart, "Language of Appeasement," *Inside Higher Ed*, 30 March 2017, https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/03/30/colleges-need-language-shift-not-one-you-think-essay - .WN02IzSFiB4.facebook.)

For further discussion of inclusive classrooms/inclusive teaching—including helpful strategies and resources—see the following links:

- https://accessiblesyllabus.tulane.edu/

  "Accessible Syllabus" at Tulane University compiles ways to make the language, format and content of a syllabus more accessible to learners with varying styles, preparation, levels of ability and backgrounds.

- Effect of Syllabus Tone: Students' Perceptions of Instructor and Course Harnish and Bridges article about ways to construct your syllabus in order to communicate engagement and approachability to students.
- https://oakland.edu/Assets/Oakland/cetl/files-and-documents/TeachingTips/16-17TeachingTipsBook_Apr5.pdf
- A teaching tips book created by Christina Moore, Victoria Kendziora, and Judith Ableser that covers syllabus creation, and basic inclusive teaching strategies.
- Suggested Practices for Accessibility Statements Wood and Madden article about creating accessibility statements for your syllabus
- Diversity and Inclusion Statements Resources from Brown University on creating Diversity and Inclusion Statements for your syllabus.
- http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/CCC/0683-feb2017/CCCC0683Teaching.pdf This article describes ways to think about how the way that you grade assignments can be more consciously designed to be more inclusive of more students.
- https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25185229 This article describes ways to think about how the course structure has impacts on students, and describes how and for whom increasing course structure works.

- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E3yN_yz7-ZV3UA8WagvfdTm3p7H25YxdwsWPx4a9pZ4/edit

  Short Google Document that provides information on supporting trans and non-binary students at your institution.
- http://crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource_files/CRLT_no38.pdf
- This article provides information on ways to help support students facing mental health challenges.
- https://www.chronicle.com/article/Should-Laptops-Be-Banned-in/241878

  This article summarizes recent debates concerning the use of laptops in classrooms and the effect that banning laptops might have on students with disabilities. For more discussions on the same topic, see

  o "Laptops Are Great. But Not During a Lecture or a Meeting." https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/business/laptops-not-during-lecture-or-meeting.html

- o "When You Talk About Banning Laptops, You Throw Disabled Students Under the Bus"
  https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/when-you-talk-about-banning-laptops-you-throw-disabled_us_5a1ccb4ee4b07bcab2c6997d

- o "Don't Insult Your Class by Banning Laptops"
  https://www.chronicle.com/article/Don-t-Insult-Your-Class-by/241972

- http://www.crlt.umich.edu/multicultural-teaching/inclusive-teaching-strategies

  University of Michigan, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, "Inclusive Teaching Resources and Strategies" — offers concrete strategies and an overview of the research basis for inclusive teaching; includes links to several papers, blog posts, and additional sites

  In particular, here are 2 documents with suggestions about best practices:

  - o "Setting the Tone for an Inclusive Classroom"
    https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HTlROLa_n1DH_uDn9O9B3v6MbrJPvomX-4qx4eCzaio/edit

  - o "Inclusive Teaching Strategies: Reflecting on Your Practice"
    https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QXOsiu5aDsbksadPpt0HqwNLXdLYfQayHa4miQ6PPpM/edit - heading=h.30j0zll

- https://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/building-inclusive-classrooms/index.html

  Cornell University, Center for Teaching Excellence, "Building Inclusive Classrooms" — addresses various aspects of how to teach inclusively and how to positively shape classroom climate

- https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/diversity/

  Vanderbilt University, Center for Teaching, "Diversity & Inclusive Teaching" — emphasizes how to create inclusive classrooms that value and support diversity, particularly in terms of racial, ethnic and cultural identity; gender; sexual orientation; and disabilities

- https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/faculty-accountability-culturally-inclusive-pedagogy-and-curricula

  AACU (Association of American Colleges & Universities) article calling for greater faculty accountability for culturally inclusive curricula and pedagogy

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-akUss3uj0M

  3.5-minute video made by Columbia University, which features students and instructors explaining what they believe inclusive teaching means

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4eJXuCeSjA&t=6s

  5-minute video made by Columbia University, which features students and instructors describing concrete experiences of inclusive teaching

- https://www.chronicle.com/article/5-teaching-tips-from-how/245026
    This article provides five ways to think about your teaching based on research about human development and how humans learn, to help your students get the most out of your course.
- https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2019/05/13/exploring-student-views-inclusivity-campuses-opinion
    This article describes the changing nature of inclusivity in the classroom that comes along with the changing culture of a new generation of students. Many students assume that professors are more adept at managing discomfort and tension in the classroom than many professors may feel they are.
- https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190422070841869
    This article describes ways to create inclusive curricula in higher education, especially for lifelong and lifewide learning.

Microaggressions

The term "racial microaggressions" was first coined in the 1970s by Harvard professor and psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce, who used the term to describe the everyday insults and slights he saw regularly inflicted on Black Americans. In the 1974 *American Handbook of Psychiatry* Pierce asserts, "The subtle, cumulative mini-assault is the substance of today's racism" (p. 516). In 1973, Mary Rowe, adjunct professor and ombudsperson at MIT, extended microaggression theory with the term "micro-inequities," which she defines as "apparently small events which are often ephemeral and hard-to-prove, events which are covert, often unintentional, frequently unrecognized by the perpetrator. Micro-inequities occur wherever people are perceived to be 'different'" (Rowe, 1990, p. 2). Rowe has written about instances of micro-inequities grounded in sexism, homophobia, and discrimination on the basis of religion, ability, or appearance.

More recently, the language and concept of microaggressions has entered popular culture, largely due to the work of psychologist and educator Derald Wing Sue, who edited the 2010 book *Microaggressions and Marginality*. Sue defines microaggressions as "the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership" (p. 3). He contrasts these with overt, intentional acts of bigotry, such as racial slurs or hate crimes. Microaggressions, he explains, are often committed by "well-intentioned individuals who are unaware that they have engaged in harmful conduct toward a socially devalued group" (p. 3).

Examples of microaggressions include: statements or nonverbal behavior that subtly demean a person's identity, that reflect or reinforce stereotypes, that overlook or render someone or their contribution invisible, that express discomfort with a minority group, that position the dominant culture as "normal" and others as "abnormal" or even pathological, that minimize the existence of discrimination, or that attempt to deny the microaggressor's

own bias. While microaggressions are often brief interactions or remarks and may on the surface appear trivial, research indicates they have a powerful, cumulative, detrimental impact on the wellbeing of marginalized groups.

In addition, researchers have begun to study "intersectional microaggressions," or microaggressions endured by people who are marginalized or oppressed on the basis of multiple, intersecting aspects of their identity, such as race and gender. As researcher and writer Maya Goodfellow explains, "The particular intensity of misogyny directed at black women is so commonplace that it was given a name by academic [and Emory alumna] Moya Bailey: misogynoir." (See Goodfellow, "Misogynoir: How social media abuse exposes longstanding prejudices against black women," *New Statesman,* 27 February 2017, http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2017/02/misogynoir-how-social-media-abuse-exposes-longstanding-prejudices-against-black.)

Not only are researchers and administrators paying increasing attention to the impact of microaggressions and micro-inequities; they are also concerned with how to prevent and counteract such harms. As Mary Rowe recognizes, since micro-inequities are often unconscious, they can be difficult to "catch" and stop in one's own behavior. So she proposes the practice of "micro-affirmations," which are similarly everyday, usually brief acts—yet aimed toward positively building up others and motivated by the desire to help others thrive. She gives the following examples:

> Micro-affirmations are tiny acts of opening doors to opportunity, gestures of inclusion and caring, and graceful acts of listening. Micro-affirmations lie in the practice of generosity, in consistently giving credit to others—in providing comfort and support when others are in distress, when there has been a failure at the bench, or an idea that did not work out, or a public attack. Micro-affirmations include the myriad details of fair, specific, timely, consistent and clear feedback that help a person build on strength and correct weakness. (Rowe, 2008, p. 4)

Rowe believes micro-affirmations are an important practice especially for mentors and managers to cultivate. Because micro-affirmations are consciously practiced, over time they can become habitual patterns of positive behavior, potentially even spreading throughout an organization and shifting that organizational culture.

Scott Lilienfeld, professor of psychology at Emory University, argues that the scientific research on microaggressions is not yet solid enough to support the implementation of microaggression training programs. Lilienfeld has recommended a moratorium on such programs, citing research that they can do more harm than good.

For further discussion of this topic, see:

- https://aeon.co/essays/why-a-moratorium-on-microaggressions-policies-is-needed
  Lilienfeld critiques the research behind microaggressions and recommends a moratorium on training programs.
- https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1745691616659391?journalCode=ppsa

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- https://www.holycross.edu/sites/default/files/files/centerforteaching/interrupting_microaggressions_january2014.pdf

  A tool that provides examples and guidelines for interrupting microaggressions

- https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/events/documents/Microaggressions_InterruptHO_2014_11_182v5.pdf

  A tool that provides examples and guidelines for interrupting microaggressions as a third-party observer

- https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/09/05/study-delivering-microaggressions-linked-harboring-racist-attitudes

  Discusses a study in *Race and Social Problems* that suggests microaggressions indicate underlying racism in aggressors

- http://www.apa.org/monitor/2009/02/microaggression.aspx

  APA (American Psychological Association) article about racial microaggressions and their psychological impact on people of color

- http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/22/us/as-diversity-increases-slights-get-subtler-but-still-sting.html

  Details the growing attention to microaggressions in public discourse and on university campuses

- http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/the-rise-of-victimhood-culture/404794/

  Discusses how microaggressions relate to what a recent sociology publication has identified as the rise of a "victimhood culture" on college campuses

- https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/10/25/teaching-controversial-topics-age-microaggressions-trigger-warnings-and-tweeting

  A professor's reflections on how he can best teach controversial material in the classroom "in an age of trigger warnings, microaggressions and tweeting"

- http://www.microaggressions.com/

  Tumblr blog about microaggressions, power, and privilege as they manifest in everyday life

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Discusses a case study exploring how individuals think about and perceive safe spaces, and how this may not be the terminology we want to use for fruitful classroom discussions. Opens discussion about "brave spaces."

- https://vimeo.com/204588115
  Video on students' experiences of microaggressions in the classroom.

- https://www.lifescied.org/doi/full/10.1187/cbe.18-01-0011
  An article on the importance of language when considering microaggressions in science. Language can help students to feel they belong, but it can also serve to invalidate students as well.

- https://world-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/7-Racial-Microaggressions-in-Everyday-Life.pdf
- Derald Wing Sue et al. 2007 article on racial microaggressions in everyday life, and the implications this has for individual's lives and clinical practice. Provides many useful case studies and a definition of key terms in the microaggressions debates.

- https://www.radicalabolitionist.org/radical-abolitionist/2019/2/15/26-ways-to-make-the-world-less-hostile-to-mad-neurodivergent-and-psychiatrically-disabled-people
  This article describes additional ways to restructure the ways that we think about our students and who is "qualified" to be a teacher, student, or even a part of a college population. The types of characteristics and qualities that we consider to be required or important for a life in academia are important to recognize and acknowledge.

Implicit Bias

Microaggressions may be a manifestation of implicit bias (or unconscious bias), which refers to social stereotypes and judgments that get formed outside of one's conscious awareness. In fact, these judgments resulting from unconscious bias may even clash with one's consciously held values. Implicit bias gets triggered as the brain processes new information by using past knowledge to make assumptions.

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity (at Ohio State University) publishes a yearly *State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review* that overviews current public discourse and recent scholarly publications about racial and/or ethnic implicit bias. Grounded in research from the neuro-, cognitive, and social sciences, these annual reviews document the social disparities caused by implicit bias. The 2016 report reviews trends in criminal justice, health, employment, education, and housing.

Shaped by cultural environment and personal experiences, unconscious biases develop in childhood but appear to be malleable. So steps can be taken to address implicit bias and to limit its impact. The Kirwan Institute's *State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2016* suggests

such steps as: educating oneself through the Implicit Association Test (IAT), increasing contact with people outside one's own demographics, holding oneself accountable for the impact of one's biases, and shifting unconscious associations and thought patterns through in-depth trainings or mindfulness mediation. All editions of the *State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review* are available on the Kirwan Institute website: http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/researchandstrategicinitiatives/implicit-bias-review/.

As implicit bias has become a topic of greater public attention, many organizations have begun to implement trainings to address implicit bias and to mitigate its harmful effects in the workplace.[2] Particular areas of concern include recruitment and hiring practices, performance reviews, opportunities for promotion, mentoring or management styles, and organizational decision-making policies.

For further discussion of this topic, see:

- https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

  Project Implicit is a non-profit organization developed by researchers who study social cognition. Goals of the organization include raising public awareness about hidden biases and gathering further data on this topic. They have developed several versions of an Implicit Association Test (IAT), which can be taken online.

- http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2017/01/psychologys-racism-measuring-tool-isnt-up-to-the-job.html

  Detailed *New York Magazine* piece about the history of the IAT; criticizes the test's methodology for failing to meet scientific standards of reliability and validity

- https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/unconscious-bias-resources

  List of resources to learn more about unconscious bias; includes "comprehensive list of recent and classic implicit bias literature"

- https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/09/opinion/sunday/the-roots-of-implicit-bias.html?_r=0

  New York Times piece written by psychology researchers studying the roots of implicit bias and ways to overcome that bias

- https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000004818663/peanut-butter-jelly-and-racism.html

  The *New York Times* has published a series of six brief videos about recognizing and overcoming implicit bias. This link takes you to the first video in the series, and on that site are links to the other five.

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[2] See, for example, the Unconscious Bias Training offered by Emory's Office of Equity and Inclusion: http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/diversity/programs/unconscious-bias.html. As the OEI website notes, these training sessions are "open to all faculty and are particularly recommended for those serving on search and appointments committees."

- <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/tag/implicit-bias>

  APS (Association for Psychological Science) listing of recent scholarly and public media references to and discussions of implicit bias
- <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/voices/how-implicit-bias-and-lack-of-diversity-undermine-science/?utm_medium=social&utm_content=organic&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=SciAm_&sf204474118=1>
  The *Scientific American* has published an article looking at how implicit bias and a lack of diversity undermines science and the culture of STEM.
- <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Can-We-Really-Measure-Implicit/238807/>
  The Chronicle of Higher Education published an article about how we attempt to measure implicit bias, and what these measurements can (and cannot) tell us about how implicit bias has effects on our actions.
- <https://www.edutopia.org/article/look-implicit-bias-and-microaggressions>
  This article looks at the impact of implicit biases in schools and how they can be expressed by students and faculty, and particularly how these implicit biases can create microaggressions for students.

Trigger Warnings

A trigger warning is a statement given at the beginning of a text or video that alerts the reader or viewer to potentially distressing material (images, graphic writing, etc.) in the text or video that follows. Trigger warnings first developed on the Internet as a way to flag content that graphically depicts or discusses causes of trauma, such as military combat, torture, sexual assault, or other forms of violence or abuse. Such warnings may be helpful to readers or viewers who have a particular sensitivity (including post-traumatic stress disorder) to that subject matter, by either allowing them to avoid it or by helping them to better prepare for and manage their reactions as they read or watch.

As trigger warnings have become more prevalent in higher education and have begun to encompass a wider range of topics, they are sometimes critiqued because they're perceived as a form of censorship or as "coddling" overly sensitive students, allowing these students to avoid material that makes them feel uncomfortable. A 2014 AAUP (American Association of University Professors) report argues, "The presumption that students need to be protected rather than challenged in a classroom is at once infantilizing and anti-intellectual." This report also expresses the concern that mandatory trigger warnings (i.e. requiring teachers to provide warnings for any assigned material that may trigger difficult emotional reactions) threatens academic freedom—especially for non-tenured or contingent faculty—and creates a repressive climate for critical thinking. (See "On Trigger Warnings," Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure," AAUP, <https://www.aaup.org/report/trigger-warnings>.)

On the other hand, philosophy professor Kate Manne argues that trigger warnings, rather than excusing students from engaging with challenging ideas, actually *help* students to better

exercise rational and critical thinking. Manne explains that when someone who has experienced trauma gets "triggered," that person undergoes intense mental and bodily reactions, such as flashbacks or panic attacks, and is unable to fruitfully engage any other matter. So giving a trigger warning may allow "vulnerable students [to] be able to employ effective anxiety management techniques" prior to and during potentially triggering reading assignments and class discussions. Although Manne does not believe the use of trigger warnings should be mandated by the administration, she does see a willingness to use them as a pedagogical best practice. (See Manne, "Why I Use Trigger Warnings," *New York Times*, 19 Sept 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/20/opinion/sunday/why-i-use-trigger-warnings.html?_r=1.)

For further discussion of this topic, see:

- http://ncac.org/resource/ncac-report-whats-all-this-about-trigger-warnings

  The National Coalition Against Censorship conducted a 2015 survey of over 800 college educators to gather their experiences with and perspectives about trigger warnings. This report summarizes findings from that survey, highlighting both concerns about trigger warnings and reasons for using them.

- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/university-of-chicago-trigger-warning_us_57bf16d9e4b085c1ff28176d

  A response to the University of Chicago's widely publicized stance (in August 2016) against trigger warnings; this piece attempts to clarify what trigger warnings are intended to do and how they relate to mental health.

- http://www.npr.org/2016/09/23/495226526/university-of-chicago-freshmen-react-to-letter-denouncing-trigger-warnings

  An interview with two University of Chicago freshmen responding to the U of C's letter criticizing trigger warnings and safe spaces

- http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356/

  An oft-cited 2015 article in *The Atlantic;* the two authors (a constitutional lawyer and a social psychologist) argue that trigger warnings and other forms of "vindictive protectiveness" are disastrous for higher education and for students' mental health.

Safe(r) Space/Brave Space

The origins of the concept of "safe space" have been traced to the 1960s and 70s, specifically to gay and lesbian bars and to "consciousness raising" groups in the women's movement—all of which were intended to provide spaces where marginalized people could find and nurture community, empowerment, and resistance to social repression. As Malcolm Harris points out, such "safe spaces" were neither free from risk nor free of internal disagreement.

Rather, they were characterized by shared commitments to political goals of resistance and social change. (See Harris, "What's a 'safe space'? A look at the phrase's 50-year history," *Fusion,* 11 Nov 2015, http://fusion.net/story/231089/safe-space-history/.)

Wikipedia notes that, in educational institutions, "safe space" and related terms (e.g. "safer-space" and "positive space") were originally used "to indicate that a teacher, educational institution or student body does not tolerate anti-LGBT violence, harassment or hate speech, thereby creating a safe place for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safe-space, accessed on 11 April 2017). Safe space campaigns and trainings still often focus on promoting a safe and affirming environment for LGBT persons.[3]

However, as the term has evolved and become more prevalent, particularly on university campuses, the concept of "safe space" has been extended to express concern for the wellbeing of any individual who experiences systemic marginalization. For example, the online forum The Safe Space Network (TSSN) defines a safe space as:

> a place where anyone can feel at ease and be able to fully express, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, or physical or mental ability. Basically, a place where the rules guard each person's self-respect and dignity and strongly encourage everyone to respect others.
> (http://safespacenetwork.tumblr.com/post/23095736498/welcome-to-the-safe-spaces-network)

Such safe spaces may be online virtual spaces, such as the TSSN, or they may be physical locations, such as classrooms, offices, or campus community centers. Sometimes "safe space" refers to a designated place on campus for members of a particular identity group to gather and hold activities. Sometimes "safe space" indicates a commitment to practice awareness, respect and welcome towards members of historically marginalized groups.

What these spaces all have in common is their participants' attention to—and attempts to resist and overcome—discrimination and unequal power relations. Some people prefer the phrase "*safer* space" because of how this phrase acknowledges that no space is entirely "safe," since challenging and eliminating discrimination is an ongoing process, rather than an already accomplished goal. In addition, some proponents of safe space emphasize that "safe" is not the same thing as "comfortable," and that safe spaces will not necessarily be free from controversy and conflict.

Like trigger warnings, "safe space" has been criticized as being contrary to free speech and to academic freedom. Recent articles and opinion pieces have pointed to ways that the

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[3] See, for example, the training offered by Emory's Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/ Transgender Life: http://lgbt.emory.edu/programs_events/safe_space/index.html.

rhetoric of "safe space" may get leveraged on campuses in order to quash debates or to silence people who have divergent or unpopular opinions. Some educators and college administrators, such as Judith Shapiro, worry that safe spaces "over-protect" or "infantilize" students and thus hinder critical learning and growth. Shapiro suggests that designated "safe spaces" imply that all other places on campus will be "unsafe," at least for certain students, and that this will disproportionately magnify their "sense of personal danger" and ultimately impede their development of "authentic courage." (See Shapiro, "From Strength to Strength, *Inside Higher Ed,* 15 Dec 2014, https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2014/12/15/essay-importance-not-trying-protect-students-everything-may-upset-them.)

More recently, higher ed spaces have begun to engage with the idea of "brave" spaces. These type of spaces emphasize courage over safety and reminds students that learning often requires discomfort. Dr. Robert Boostrom, Professor of Teacher Education, explains that "learning necessarily involves not merely risk, but the pain of giving up a former condition in favor of a new way of seeing things" (Boostrom 1998:399).

For further discussion of this topic, see:

- Safe Spaces and Brave Spaces: Historical Context and Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals: https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Policy_and_Practice_No_2_Safe_Brave_Spaces.pdf
- From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice: http://www.sjti.org/participant/Brave-Space-Arao-Clemens.pdf
- https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/07/24/debate-over-art-teaching-and-prejudice-school-art-institute-chicago

  Michael Bonesteel, an adjunct assistant professor at the School of Art Institute of Chicago, resigned after an investigation that found Bonesteel's conduct with a student constituted harassment based on gender-identity. SAIC objected to the professor's ridiculing the student for requesting a trigger warning and associating the trans student with another trans student with whom the professor was having difficulties. In resigning, Bonesteel complained of being targeted by militant LGBT students with an authoritarian agenda.

- https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/feb/06/safe-space-or-free-speech-crisis-debate-uk-universities

  This 2015 article in *The Guardian* reports on recent controversies at UK universities, which are experiencing a "wider battle for the nature of student life – should university be a 'safe space' for all, or a place where anything can be debated?"

- http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/22/opinion/sunday/judith-shulevitz-hiding-from-scary-ideas.html

Opinion piece arguing that "safe spaces" in higher education tend to repress critical thinking and reinforce insularity

- https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/brown-university-president-safe-spaces-dont-threaten-freedom-of-expression-they-protect-it/2016/09/05/6201870e-736a-11e6-8149-b8d05321db62_story.html

Opinion piece offering the counter argument: that safe spaces on campus offer an "anchor in an unfamiliar environment" and thus actually support critical reflection and academic freedom

- https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/08/29/students-deserve-safe-spaces-campus-essay

Argues that students "deserve" safe spaces on campus "because the absence of such spaces is counter to the very mission of higher education"

Academic Freedom/Free Speech

The online Encyclopedia Britannica defines academic freedom as "the freedom of teachers and students to teach, study, and pursue knowledge and research without unreasonable interference or restriction from law, institutional regulations, or public pressure" (https://www.britannica.com/topic/academic-freedom, accessed on 11 April 2017). That is, members of the academic community should be free to study the topics and research questions that are of interest to them, to present and publish their findings and conclusions, to evaluate the soundness and value of each other's conclusions, and to engage in intellectual debate—all without fear of censorship or of reprisals for expressing ideas that are unpopular or inconvenient to external authorities. Academic freedom also concerns teachers' freedom in choosing how to teach and in discussing their subject matter in the classroom.

In the United States, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) is a leading proponent of academic freedom. In 1940 the AAUP, along with what is now the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), jointly authored a "Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure," which continues to ground current notions of academic freedom. (For the full statement, see https://www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure.) This statement supports faculty members' freedom in research, publication, and teaching—as well as their freedom to write or speak out as private citizens—but it also acknowledges certain limitations. For example, an institution may limit academic freedom due to "religious or other aims" but should clearly state such limitations "in writing at the time of the appointment." The 1940 statement also urges teachers to avoid introducing into the classroom "controversial matter" unrelated to their subject. It further urges faculty members, when they speak out as citizens, to take care to be accurate, appropriately restrained, respectful, and clear that they are not speaking for the institution.

While academic freedom seems to be a central principle and widely supported in higher education, it is a contested issue. This emerges most vividly when academic freedom appears to clash with civility or even justice—when a member of the academic community is expressing ideas or opinions that others find inflammatory, offensive, damaging, and/or oppressive.

For further discussion of this topic, see:

- http://op-talk.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/02/steven-salaita-and-the-quagmire-of-academic-freedom/?_r=0

  Examines the controversy (and implications for academic freedom) sparked by the University of Illinois' decision to rescind their hiring offer to Dr. Steven Salaita due to his anti-Israel tweets

- http://www.thecrimson.com/column/the-red-line/article/2014/2/18/academic-freedom-justice/?page=1

  Opinion piece arguing that "academic justice" should trump "academic freedom"

- https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2010/12/21/defining-academic-freedom

  AAUP president attempts to clarify the concept of academic freedom by listing what it does and does not do.

- https://www.aaup.org/our-programs/academic-freedom/resources-academic-freedom

  The AAUP considers its core mission to be protecting academic freedom and has developed various policy statements on topics ranging from tenure, to controversy in the classroom, to free speech on campus.

- https://www.aacu.org/about/statements/academic-freedom

  AACU statement that supports professors' academic freedom, linking such freedom to the professors' educational responsibilities to students

- https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/08/31/n-word-simply-be-avoided-or-emory-wrong-suspend-law-professor-who-used-it
  Inside Higher Ed article on Emory Law Professor debate on speech used in the classroom as a part of a lecture.
- https://www.chronicle.com/article/Charlie-Kirk-s-New-Book-a/244765
  Inside Higher Ed article on Charlie Kirk's new book about free speech on campus, and ways that Conservatives struggle with feeling their ideas are welcomed on campus.

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