

# Engaging with Diversity

## Faculty Development Workshop

Welcome!

Your facilitators for today are:

- Sarah Malik - Equity Educational Advisor (anti-racism and cultural diversity)
- Tynan Jarrett – Equity Educational Advisor (LGBTTO)

## McGill's SEDE Office

- The Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) Office provides information, education and training to all areas of the University in order to cultivate a respectful, diverse and supportive campus.
- Community Engagement, Indigenous Education, and more
- The Equity Educational Advisors work with staff, faculty, and students to provide educational opportunities and resources, to consult on programs and policies, and to build supportive communities

# Workshop Overview

Terminology  
McGill Context  
Scenarios

## Some notes about the space

- Our commitment is to provide an interactive and engaging learning environment where participants and the facilitator address challenging topics openly and honestly
- All contributions are welcome
- It takes courage to make mistakes in a learning environment
- As your facilitator, we are also timekeepers so we may need to interrupt you at some point



# Terminology

## Terminology: Instructions

- A facilitator will give you a card. Discuss the term on the card with your neighbor for two minutes.
  - What do you know about this term?
  - How does it relate to classroom climate?
  - When all else fails, guess!
- We will then bring the discussion back to the larger group.

# Social Location

- Shaped by differences in power, access, and resources across social groups
- Experienced in terms of oppressions, power, and privilege
- Influences what is and is not visible to different people, the knowledge and experiences that different people are exposed to
- Informs all our interactions: student-student, student-supervisor, and colleague-colleague



# Microaggressions

Commonplace forms of discrimination into which we rarely gain insight unless we are members of impacted groups

Relatively recent scholarship from Derald Wing Sue (Counselling Psychology, Columbia University) and others

Comments, actions, or environmental conditions that:

- are unintended and unconscious on the part of the actor, but
- contain a hidden insult or put-down related to a stereotype about marginalized identities

# Microaggressions

Theme	Example	Underlying Message
Colour-blindness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “When I look at you I don’t see colour.”</li><li>• “There is only one race, the human race.”</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Denying a person of colour’s racial/ethnic experiences.</li><li>• Assimilate/acculturate to the dominant culture.</li><li>• Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.</li></ul>

# Safe(r) space

- An area or forum (classrooms, offices, supervisory relationships, etc) where there are stated norms against (certain forms of) exclusion, discrimination, oppression
- A norm of challenging and confronting oppression and discrimination
- Not a space that guarantees comfort or politeness;
- Maintaining safer space norms is an ongoing process that will require greater attention the more porous the area or forum

## Empowered/Ally

- Refusal to accept the dominant ideology that creates subordinate status for some and superior status for others
- Empowered targeted group member: takes action to redistribute social power more equitably
- Could take the form of a student who takes space in a classroom discussion to relate topics back to their own social group, or an instructor who creates courses that centre marginalized groups
- Ally: member of an advantaged group who takes action against oppression out of a belief that eliminating oppression will benefit everyone
- Could take the form of an instructor who works with a student to support their desire to write a paper relating course content to their own marginalized social group, an instructor who supports colleagues seeking to modify course content to be more inclusive, a student who speaks up in class to encourage peers to hear the contributions of marginalized students

## Cis/Trans\*

Trans\*: A term used to describe people whose gender identity does not fully align with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cis: A term used to describe people whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.



# McGill Context

# Diversity at McGill: Staff

*From McGill University's Workforce Analysis (WFA) Summary Report (available online: <https://www.mcgill.ca/hr/employee/working-conditions/employment-equity/fcp-compliance-review-2010-documents>)*

**The following numbers reflect percentages and totals calculated against McGill's total number of 6750 employees, and relative to representation for each designated group (Aboriginal Peoples, Persons with Disabilities, etc.) in the available workforce.**

- Although Women are overrepresented overall (51% of McGill's workforce vs. 48.7% of the available workforce) 105 women are 'missing' from 6 Occupational Groups (OG)
- 38 Aboriginal Peoples are missing from McGill's workforce, an underrepresentation of 62.5%. 100% absence in 3 OGs, and 33 employees missing in the Professional Group
- 330 Visible Minority employees are missing, the greatest number (267) in the Professional OG.
- 181 People with Disabilities are missing from McGill's workforce, with underrepresentation in 12 out of 14 OGs.

## Diversity at McGill: Student Body

- Data on diversity at McGill comes from surveys, not censuses
- McGill is diverse in some ways, and not as diverse in others
- Some data has been gathered on students' experiences of discrimination on campus, both by the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) and via Dr. Spanierman's Diversity Lab

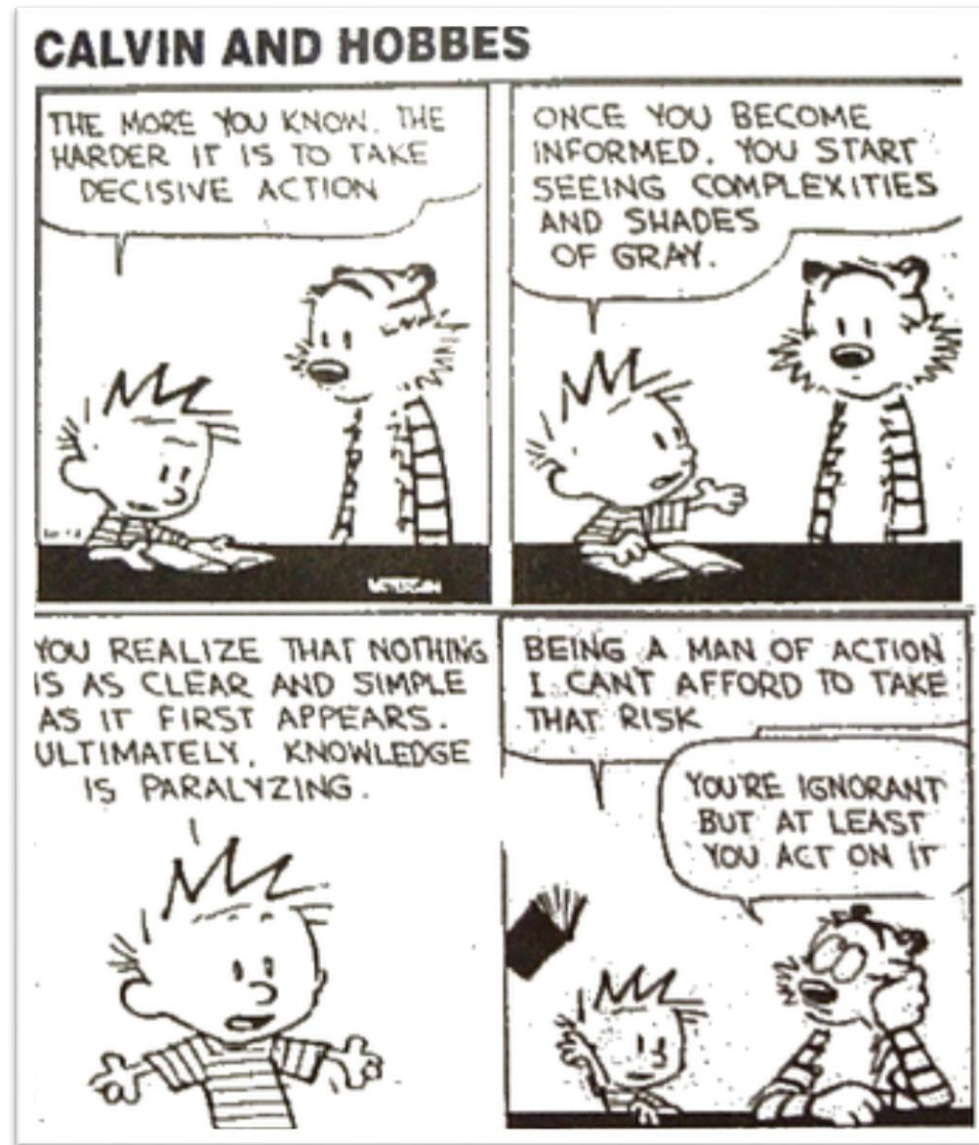
(<https://www.mcgill.ca/studentlifeandlearning/diversitysurvey>)



# Diversity Survey Follow-up

- Focus groups conducted in 2011-2012 by Prof. Lisa Spanierman
- Preliminary findings:
  - Over-all sense of un-belonging
  - Lack of support for diversity at McGill
  - Racial microaggressions (covert, unintended, everyday racism) occur regularly on campus
- Results from more focus group and additional diversity survey to come.

# Scenarios



# Scenarios

- Get into groups of 3 or 4.
- Discuss the scenario that your group is given. Please pay particular attention to developing the exact language you might use in a given situation
- You'll be given one scenario at a time. Flag down Sarah or Tynan if your group is ready to move on to the next scenario.

# Overheard Comment classroom scenario

You are an instructor in a class of about 120 students. During the first lecture, you mention that students with disabilities who feel they will need additional time on the midterm must submit the appropriate forms to the Office for Students with Disabilities at least 8 days in advance. You overhear one student in the class groan and say “How come they get special treatment? That’s so unfair.” to the person next to them.

# Overheard Comment classroom scenario

## Questions

1. Identify the underlying stereotypes in the overheard comment.
2. Would you address the question of special treatment by:
  - a) saying nothing? After all, it's not your job to police side conversations in class, and it would be impossible to do so.
  - b) taking the student aside and speak to them privately after class? You don't want to put the students on the spot.
  - c) addressing them in front of the class? Others in the class have the right to know where you stand on this issue.
  - d) doing something else?
3. What are the pros and cons of each response? What specific language might you use for options b, c, and d?
4. Aside from responding to their learning needs, what can you do to make sure that students with disabilities feel included in the class?

# Overheard Comment classroom scenario

- Verbal and non-verbal messages can contribute to our sense of belonging or alienation – both the overheard comment and your response or non-response will have an impact on classroom climate.
- Instructors have a responsibility to ensure an inclusive classroom for all students; silence on this issue does not communicate a clear message to the class.
- Talking to students individually, after class has ended, gives you the opportunity to engage meaningfully with them.
- Addressing the students after class is not visible to your other students. Stating your position publicly is the only way to ensure that all your students know where you stand.
- Communication about inclusion can come in many different forms – text in syllabi; books, posters, and other signage in an office; the language you choose and the way we engage

## Interacting with Students Classroom Scenario

You are the instructor for an undergraduate course. During an in-class discussion, John, a white student, says “Well, I’ve done two summer internships in Ghana, so I know the culture pretty well. Everything is about who you know there, or, I guess, who you pay.” Raisso, a black international student responds by saying “I find that really offensive. That’s a really broad generalization about African society.”

# Interacting with Students Classroom Scenario

- What are some of the barriers Raisso might have to consider before speaking up?
- What impacts might this experience have for Raisso? For John?
- What can you do, as the instructor, to support students who speak up from a marginalized perspective?
- What steps can we take in our classrooms and courses to ensure a space for dialogue that is safe and respectful for all students?



# Interacting with Students Classroom Scenario

- Many racialized and international students have expressed frustration at the way that false or generalized beliefs about cultures and countries go unchallenged in class
- Raïso runs the risk of being stigmatized for speaking up; she may not have the right words available to her; she may have concerns about repercussions in grading
- If we apply an equity lens, it is apparent that expecting members of marginalized groups to take on the responsibility of educating about and responding to stereotypes and discrimination places an unfair burden on these students

# Interacting with Students Classroom Scenario

- In the moment:
  - stop, breathe, take the time to think;
  - don't personalize – recognize that the interaction is a part of the messy process of learning, and your role as instructor is to guide your students through it;
  - consider how the opinions expressed fit into your broader learning objectives in your course;
  - if necessary, acknowledge the troubling nature of the comment and put the discussion on hold until you have thought through how to address it
- General steps:
  - ensure that the syllabus includes a diversity of perspectives;
  - have a frank discussion with students about engaging equitably and respectfully in class early in the semester;
  - predict potential hot spots and prepare accordingly;
  - talk to colleagues, peers, and resources people about experiences you have had in the classroom to get their feedback

# Equity and Policy Development University Committee Scenario

You have been asked to participate in a new Principal's Taskforce focusing on access to education. Using your equity lens, you are conscious of the need for diversity, both in terms of perspectives and composition of the Taskforce. However, after studying the Employment Equity statistics for the University, you are well aware of the fact that there is a significant underrepresentation of people of colour at McGill.

# Equity and Policy Development University Committee Scenario

- What dilemmas does this raise?
- What particular impacts does this situation have on employees of colour?
- What kinds of consequences do these dilemmas pose for the results of the Taskforce?
- What possible strategies could the University or members of the Taskforce use to address this situation?

# Equity and Policy Development University Committee Scenario

- Inclusion at the earliest stages and throughout the work of a committee is an important precursor to equitable decisions and outcomes
- Risks include: tokenization or overburdening of people of colour; failure to hear, include, and address issues of racial inequality in the work of the Taskforce
- Possible strategies: prioritize hiring people of colour; contract a consultant or bring on a committee member from another university; allocate resources for research focused on racial inequity and access to education within the Taskforce

# Course Development

- You sit on a committee that's been tasked with developing a resource on course development for sessional instructors at DISE. One of the objectives of the resource is to help instructors think about integrating social justice in their course design in order to address the marginalization of diverse learners.

# Course Development

- What kinds of recommendations might the resource include with regards to
  - A) curricula
  - B) pedagogical processes
  - C) student to student interactions
  - D) role of instructorPlease give examples.

# Course Development

- De-centre the dominance of privileged social groups in the focus of the course
- Ensure that the syllabus includes a diversity of perspectives (in addition to readings, guest speakers, videos, and field trips can be used to broaden exposure)
- Be conscious of identity/social location – your own and students’ – and how that shapes classroom interaction
- Recognize and be accountable to the power of the instructor’s role in shaping the climate of the learning environment
- Communicate commitments to an equitable and respectful learning space early and continuously
- Practice and prepare for managing difficult conversations
- Encourage critical thinking rooted in social and historical context



# Course Development

- Model good listening and intervention behaviours
- Incorporate multiple means of engagement.
- Create assignments that encourage/allow students to relate ideas from the course to their own life context
- Offer variety in assessments, and ensure that requirements are made clear
- Offer a wide range of tools and information to support the development of technical skills
- Create/integrate course structures that enhance access to every aspect of course learning
- Communicate to students that you are open to accommodating specific needs not already addressed in course design and let them know how to inform you

# Resources

## Web Resources

- *The Genderbread person – a resource for understanding sexual orientation and gender identity diversity:* <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2012/03/the-genderbread-person-v2-0/>
- *Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Educators Network Educator Resources:* <http://glsen.org/educate/resources>
- *Deepening Knowledge: Resources for and About Aboriginal Education:* [http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/Teacher\\_Resources/index.html](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/Teacher_Resources/index.html)
- *McGill's Office for Students with Disabilities Faculty Resource Page:* <http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/facultyinfo>

## Article

- *Racial Microaggressions in everyday Life:* <http://www.consumerstar.org/resources/pdf/RacialMicroaggressions.pdf>

## Books

- Adams, Maurianne, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin. 1997. *Teaching for diversity and social justice: a sourcebook*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ouellett, Mathew L. 2005. *Teaching inclusively: resources for course, department & institutional change in higher education*. Stillwater, Okla: New Forums Press.
- Sue, Derald Wing. 2010. *Microaggressions in everyday life: race, gender, and sexual orientation*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley.
- Sue, Derald Wing. 2010. *Microaggressions and marginality manifestation, dynamics, and impact*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley. <http://public.eblib.com/EBLPublic/PublicView.do?ptID=588930>.

Thank you!

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