

WEBINAR RESOURCES ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION – MAY 2020

Massasoit Community College

- [“Employing Equity-Minded & Culturally Affirming Teaching Practices in Virtual Learning.”](#)

Summary: In response to COVID-19, face to face online and remote courses presents a challenge for our community college faculty, particularly to those who have worked to create a teaching and learning environment that prioritizes equity and equity-mindedness.

This webinar presented trends and issues that complicate the experiences of diverse community college students in online environments. Please see below for insightful teaching and learning strategies that will assist you in further navigating “equity-minded and “culturally-affirming teaching practices.”¹

Highlights:

- **Equity** refers to a heightened focus on groups experiencing **disproportionate impact** in order to remediate disparities in their **experiences and outcomes**. Group examples include:
 - Students of color
 - Students who experience basic needs and security
 - Students with disabilities
- Underserved students face a number of challenges such as **racial macroaggressions, campus racial-gender climate, basic needs insecurities, prior school experiences and structural racism in preparation experiences**. We know that Massasoit has done a great job addressing basic needs and providing a multitude of resources for our students so they can continue to have a successful semester. To continue our efforts:
 - It is important to continue to have authentic relationships with your students and be mindful of effects of implicit bias that could be harmful (e.g. that they intellectually inferior, come from families that don’t value education).
 - These challenges have continued to be present but even more so now that we are in online and remote environments.
- ***How can build a community so that our students are having high quality educational experiences?*** Let’s explore Dr. Randy Garrison’s² – Three Presences for Online Teaching³
 - **Social Presence** – which is the ability to project oneself and establish personal and purposeful relationships. The three main types of social presences is

¹ Presented by: Drs. Frank Harris III, Professor of post-secondary education, San Diego State University, and Co-director, Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL) and Dr. J. Luke Wood, Chief Diversity Officer, Professor of Education & Co-Director & Co-Director of Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL), San Diego State University.

² Dr. Garrison is a retired professor from the University of Calgary. He has published extensively on teaching and online-learning.

³ [Online Community of Inquiry Review: Social, Cognitive, and Teaching Presence Issues.](#)

effective communication, open communication and group cohesion. Social presence is a result of interpersonal communication within a group that fosters trust, openness and a sense of belonging for everyone.

- **Cognitive Presence** – which is the exploration of construction resolution and confirmation of understanding through collaboration and reflection. Information is only good and useful if you can actually apply it. Engaging students in purposeful ways will help them actually apply it.
- **Teaching Presence** – which is the importance of faculty needing to engage in designing facilitation and direct instruction that fosters higher-order thinking. There are things missing that does not allow us to meet the needs of our diverse learners and are identified as:
 - **Invisibility** – some students expressed feeling *invisible* as to what they have to say does not matter so to think about your classes being “culturally relevant.” *Making sure the content is relevant to reach our students of color and to recognize that invisibility takes place so be mindful of everyone’s voice.*
 - **Accessibility** – Lack of resources for our students of color (e.g. laptops, microphone) and locations to complete their work and/or study are even greater. Can the content reach them via their phone? Be creative and ensure that your content is reaching them.
- **External Pressures** – Attendance and time management can sometimes be problematic for our underserved students of color because of various responsibilities they have at home and challenges they encounter (this was also before Covid-19). External pressures are now being experienced by everyone in our society but for our students of color, it is even more in comparison to their peers.
- **Data References:** The Community College Instructional Development Inventory (2018) collected data from faculty members from across the country (teaching primarily online) showed the following:
 - In the area of professional development, the question was asked “what are the areas that you feel like you don’t need training in?” The top numbers indicated that “they don’t need training in racial macroaggressions and intrusive teaching and learning practices.” How can that be? Implicit bias is more prevalent when three conditions are in place; *when we have incomplete information, when our time is constrained and when we’re experiencing stress or in a heightened emotional state. Implicit bias is now more present than ever before.* It may be that it is not important to some but not all and but it is important for all faculty to be race conscious and racially aware even more now than ever before.

- **To infuse equity-mindedness and virtual teaching in learning environments, there are five things we should do:**
 - **Be Intrusive** – Which means for us in a *positive way* to intrude and engage students proactively without waiting for them to come to us. To ensure that students are not falling through the cracks. *Massasoit is actively contacting students (call campaign) to check in on them in a positive way!* You can take it a step further and ask students; if this is their first time taking an online course? What concerns do you have about taking this course? And how can you best facilitate their learning in the course? Additional tips to assist students can be to provide asynchronous alternatives, record all class sessions (if possible) and make them available to all students. Using assessment strategies that focus on continuous improvement and progress toward demonstrating proficiency:
 - Smaller assignments with lower point totals vs larger assignments with big point totals.
 - Grade based on effort.
 - Non-text based assignments and activities (e.g., multimedia presentations, speeches, debates, role-plays)
 - **Be Relational** – *Demonstrate to students and letting them know that you care about them and that you are invested in their success.* Building relationships and humanizing yourself talking to students which can be explored by sharing experiences that they may find insightful. The importance here is to engage with students – maybe learn one thing about each student (e.g. hobbies, activities, favorite movies or books).

Validation and positive messaging is important especially for those who have been underserved in education. At a time like this, students want to hear that you believe they can do the work and do what you are asking them to do to be successful. *Encouraging words go a long way!*

- **Be Culturally Relevant & Affirming** – It is beneficial for faculty to be culturally relevant to teach in a way that honors the lives and experiences of the students that we're serving because it addresses their unique cultural experiences and values students and helps to grow their self-efficacy, their confidence, their sense of belonging and their academic abilities. It helps to select literature and reading material that are inclusive of students of color whom often find their voices absent from the literature.
- **Be Community Focused** – How can you build community? How can you continue to be engaged with your online and remote learners? You can create a video, be active in class discussions and forums, and encourage students to form virtual meetups and study groups. You can create a class social media page using hashtags (twitter) so students can share and exchange perspectives. *Be creative and think of ways which you can get students to work*

collaboratively. As you know, there are many advantages to collaborative learning which allows students to learn from each other and identify classmates who may be experiencing similar learning and life challenges.

- If you are intentional about collaborative learning, keep this in mind:
 - ***Self-selection*** is not always the best approach because in online and remote environments, students may not know each other and they may not have had the opportunity to meet each other.
 - Some students may have social stereotypes about certain groups and certain types of students so thinking about some ways in which you can get students to work collaboratively without having them finding a classmate.
- **Be Race Conscious** – Be intentional about providing opportunities to engage racial and equity issues within the context of the course. ***If you are going to engage students in difficult dialogues, stay present, monitor it and intervene when necessary.*** Keep in mind that if you are using a text as a primary tool in a group chat format, that could lead to someone sending something in textual form and have it misconstrued due to that it could be taken out of context. What could be better is to create breakout rooms like Google hangout for students to have conversations.

Lastly, it is your responsibility to ensure that students of color are not being micro aggressed. If you would like more information and tools about this topic, please visit Shawn Harper's [USC Race and Equity Center](#).

Thank you for your diversity, equity and inclusion efforts within your classrooms! I hope that this has been helpful to assist you in your online and remote classroom efforts. If you need additional questions or resources, feel free to contact the Chief Diversity Officer & Title IX Coordinator at 508.588.9100.

- [Addressing Racial Bias and Macroaggressions in Online Environments](#)

Summary: The transition to online and remote instruction and student services due to our current crisis presents challenges among higher education institutions. The most pervasive issues are with racial bias and macroaggressions that could harm students. This webinar addressed these challenges and how to respond to them within an online environment.⁴

Highlights:

- The discussion covered how ratio microaggressions are rooted in our implicit bias and racial microaggressions within the context of COVID-19. Dr. Harris and Dr. Wood introduced a framework they developed that responds to racial bias and microaggressions when they occur within online and remote environments.
- **Implicit bias** is reflected in our unconscious thoughts and assumptions that are derived from our past experience. Even though we're not aware of our implicit biases, they motivate our thoughts and actions. **We all have different implicit biases and we are all susceptible to the effects of implicit bias.** Research tells us that implicit bias is the result of **System One** thinking:
 - **System One** thinking is that we act on our implicit biases without awareness; thus, we can undermine our true intentions. It is often automatic, occurs with very little intent and effortless.
 - **System Two** thinking is characterized as by reasoning that is very conscious and explicit. We are clearly aware of what we're thinking and our actions are motivated by our thoughts.

System One thinking and thus implicit bias is more likely to be activated when the following conditions are present:

- ✓ ***Situations that involve ambiguous or incomplete information.***
- ✓ ***Circumstances in which time is constrained; and***
- ✓ ***Times of which cognitive control is compromised (e.g., when experiencing stress or insufficient sleep).***

During high stress and high pressure like we are currently experiencing moving to remote learning, can cause us to activate and display our implicit bias. There is a concept of "**Primacy Effect**"

that relates to implicit bias. **Primacy effect** tells us that individuals tend to give more weight to information present earlier when forming opinions and making decisions.

Lastly, we all have to mindful of the factors that influence our thoughts and feelings when our implicit bias is most present. These factors include the media

⁴ Presented by: Drs. Frank Harris III, Professor of post-secondary education, San Diego State University, and Co-director, Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL) and Dr. J. Luke Wood, Chief Diversity Officer, Professor of Education & Co-Director & Co-Director of Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL), San Diego State University.

(television or online), attitudes of friends and family members (YES, we all have experienced that in some way!), interactions with groups who are different from us and observations of social roles. An example of this is when black men are routinely presented as athletes in the media and rarely are they presented or portrayed as doctors, lawyers and even professors.

- **Microaggressions** are behaviors – whether intentional or unintentional that communicates hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults towards people of color. They are subtle forms of discrimination which can be characterized as put downs, snubs and can be dismissive looks. ***People of color experience this behavior in our society daily and it has increased in our current state of the pandemic.*** Within online and remote environments, microaggressions are harder to identify ***due to that facial expressions and mood changes that we would see in person is not present.***
- Students, specifically students of color, who experience microaggressions in their lives likely exhibit the following mental health symptoms and feelings such as:
 - Depression
 - Lower self esteem
 - Self-doubt
 - Anxiety
 - Negative view of the world
 - Lack of behavioral control; and
 - Cause a student to reconsider their academic or career goals.
- Addressing Microaggressions? Let's demonstrate a scenario!

Someone has said something to you that was a subtle racial insult. Then, you address it to the person and confront that behavior. When this occurs, the person has a problem or a challenge in being able to accept that critique because in general, we think of ourselves as good people who are caring and ethical. So, when the behavior that was perceived as either racist or discriminatory, it can be difficult for that person to comprehend what actually happened. They may explain away the microaggression and become defensive or accuse you of offending them.

- There are different types of microaggressions. A **public microaggression** is one that's verbal. For example, a faculty member states to a student of color, "Wow, you're so articulate!" with a sense of surprise. Another example is when a staff member says to a student of color "you're different than the rest of them."

Microaggressions can also be in a nonverbal nature and in a public setting. They are displayed as images that are degrading or memes. Most recently, negative images have been portrayed towards our Asian-American community during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a private manner, nonverbal microaggressions is displayed when a male person of color approaches the elevator and the person steps back. The step back is a function of an assumption of criminality and been trained to perceive the person in that way.

- Microaggressions can be categorized as “**microinsults**” or “**microinvalidations.**” Microinsults are also subtle and have harmful effects on persons of color. Microinsults results in:
 - **Ascription of Intelligence** – Which is assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color based on race or categorized as second class citizens. For example, in a Zoom breakout group, a female student of color answered a question. Then one of the males in the class said, “you’re smart for a Black girl.” He meant it as a joke or a compliment or maybe both but either way, the female student of color didn’t like it.
 - **Assumption of Criminality** –Which is assuming a person of color is dangerous, criminal or deviant. For example, on a discussion board post, a student stated “I’m sorry, I am not trying to be racist but people of color come from neighborhoods with lots of crime. It’s a fact. Just watch the news.”
 - **Pathologizing Culture** – Which is the notion that values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal. For example, a female student of color was on the phone with the Basic Needs Coordinator because she heard that there was emergency money. The Coordinator spoke to her as if she was just for the money (insinuating that she didn’t have essential needs).
 - **Second Class Citizen** – When a White person is given preferential treatment over a person of color. For example, a student of color raised his virtual hand in his Zoom class to get called on. He feels that the professor never calls on him and feels like he doesn’t exist.
 - **Different Norming** – When assuming/having the authority to negatively categorize or uncategorized people of color. An example of this was demonstrated in feedback from an instructor to a student. One of them was “you write well for a second-language learner” and the other was “well done! Why can’t the others be like you?!” The student is not a second-language learner.
 - **Presumption of Defilement** – When communication is rendered to people of color that suggests they are generally debased, physically dirty, infected or diseased. For instance, as a profile icon, some people have uploaded profile icon pictures in a group chat that are not pictures of themselves but of Asian men with gasmasks.
- **Microinvalidations** are comments and behaviors that deny the experiences of people of color. An example can be that a student of color reports to an administrator challenges that they are having with a faculty member and administration was unresponsive.

- **What are some strategies to address Microaggressions?**
 - Five step process which is the **R.A.V.E.N** (Redirect, Ask, Values, Emphasize and Next Steps) Framework
 - **Redirect** – *First thing to do is to intervene, redirect the conversation and stop any further harm from taking place.* You can pull the person aside and say something like this “hey, Frank, I need to talk to you for a second.”
 - **Ask** – Ask probing question for clarity like “I think I heard you say...what did you mean by that?” or “I want to make sure I understand what you were saying, were you saying that...?” *This is an important step because we want the person to pause and reflect and begin to think critically about what they’re saying.* Remember microaggressions are rooted in implicit bias.
**Give the person a chance to clarify what they meant. Checking on how you may have interpreted the comment.
 - **Values** – This is a clarification of values. This means to remind the person that what they were saying or what they posted was not appropriate and that it does not align with the values or expectations of our classroom, our community and our College. *It is important that we create a space that is safe and welcoming for our students.* This behavior does not support Massasoit’s [Statement of Values](#).
 - **Empathy** – Emphasize your own thoughts and feelings to the person. It can be done by stating “When I hear your comment, I think/feel...” or “Many people might take that to mean...” This is an crucial step because not only is the person directed by the microaggression is impacted but those who observe are also impacted – especially in online and remote environments. *It creates a hostile climate for everyone in that space.*
 - **Next Steps** – Here are some constructive feedback:
 - Give the person some guidance about how they should act the next time they find themselves in a similar situation.
 - Refer them to resources, readings, things they should do, trainings, etc. Contact the [Office of Diversity & Inclusion](#) for additional resources and guidance.

It is important to keep in mind the best thing you can do is to know what you would do in that moment of witnessing microaggressions and how to disrupt them in a positive manner.

Final Thoughts: Take the time to learn about racial microaggressions and how to respond to them. Encourage your students to engage meaningfully with people who are different from them. It will help them grow and mature which is an important life skill in society. **Microaggressions are harmful, so don’t be a bystander...do something.**

- ["My Ethnicity is Not a Virus: Addressing Anti-Asian Racism During COVID-19"](#) *(This panel discussion is posted within Facebook under Harvard University's Common Spaces)*

This was a community discussion on the how current rhetoric is unveiling the underlying anti-Asian racism that has always existed in the United States, and what Asian Americans experiencing or non-Asians witnessing discrimination can do to change the current narrative about Asian Americans in the time of COVID-19. The panelists spoke candidly about their lived experiences facing discrimination while growing up and present day incidents.

Panelists: Moderator, Dr. Josephine Kim, Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Dr. Jean Wu, Professor, American Studies Program, Tufts University, Dr. Paul Watanabe, Professor of Political Science, Director of the Institute for Asian American Studies, UMass Boston and Dr. Liza Talusan, Educator & Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Facilitator. In Fall 2018, Dr. Talusan visited Massasoit Community College and conducted workshops on "How Can Classroom Spaces Work Towards Inclusion and Belonging."

- **Women's March** Presents: [Disability Justice in the Time of Coronavirus](#)

Women's March is a women-led movement providing intersectional education on a diverse range of issues and creating entry points for new grassroots activists and organizers to engage in their local community ties through trainings, outreach programs and events.

This online gathering featured various panelists that spoke about the challenges that folks with disabilities are facing and how they are feeling overwhelmed, isolated and unsure of where to turn for tools, resources and support.

Panelists: Rebecca Cokely, Director, Disability Justice Initiative, Center for American Progress, Mia Ives-Rublee, MSW, Disability Inclusion Consultant, Leslie Templeton, Women's March Disability Caucus Coordinator and Imani Barbarin, Blogger/Communications Director