

Fall 2021 NUB Instructor Guide for Block 3b: Diversity and Inclusion

Overview and Objectives

This block introduces students to some of today's most significant topics regarding diversity and inclusion, all of which can be applied to their lives on and off campus. Through videos and guided discussion, students will be able to define and give examples of "unconscious bias" and its effects on themselves, other people, and the workplace/their field of study. On an optimistic note, they will also learn how to confront their own biases and what it means to be an "upstander" rather than a bystander. Note: The first video is 18 minutes long, with journaling and discussion afterwards, so you will want to closely monitor your time.

Peer Mentor Moments

- Peer Mentors should think of a personal, real-world, or hypothetical example of unconscious bias that is relevant to their field of study.
- Peer Mentors should ask the instructor if they should run the journal/discussion of Myers' TEDTalk or the discussion of CNN's "Inside the AC360 Doll Study" video.
- Peer mentors should come to class prepared with an example of unconscious bias in their own discipline or future profession. See question #8 for the second video.

Highlights

- Two videos on unconscious bias; links below, on the NUB website, and in Block 3b PPT.
- Handbook: Verna Meyers journaling activity on p. 129.

Class Outline

There are two approaches for how to teach this material.

- Some people are unfamiliar with these topics and would like all the guidance and help they can get. We recommend Approach One for such people: there's a detailed lesson plan, lecture notes, and a PowerPoint (provided by our very own Dr. Hope Russell) that cover everything in detail.
- Some people chafe at being told what to do, or are opposed to PowerPoints, or don't believe in following detailed lecture notes, and are more comfortable with these topics. Approach Two might be an option for such people: it outlines the key elements that should be covered by everyone who doesn't follow Approach One. Even though Approach Two doesn't provide a full script to follow, it's very important—academically (for the students) and in some cases legally (for you)—that you cover the elements in the outline. This approach is outlined on pp. 5-6 below.

Approach One: Lecture Notes, PowerPoint, Videos, and Discussion (use with Block 3b PPT)

I. Introduction (2 mins., definition, questions, and video URL on PPT): Today we are going to continue our exploration of diversity and inclusion by examining some important concepts related to it. To start, I'm sure you've all heard the term "bias"—it's defined as "a prejudice *in favor of or against* one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair."¹ But what is an "unconscious bias" and what unconscious biases might you or I or other people have? How do unconscious biases affect those who harbor them and the individuals or groups they are directed toward? To help you answer these questions, I'm going to show you two leading videos on unconscious bias. But first, let's define unconscious bias. What do you think this term means? [Students may say something like, "it's a prejudice that a person is unaware of" but get them to take their thinking one step further by pointing out that a person can have an unconscious bias *that affects their behavior*, even though it *contradicts* their conscious beliefs.] Advance to the next PPT slide where there is a similar and more formal definition of the term.

II. Video #1 (18 mins. long; debrief, journal, and discuss for 13 mins.): This video features Verna Myers, a former lawyer and diversity advocate. Tell students to think about how this TEDTalk relates to the definition of unconscious bias you just provided and to watch closely as they will journal and discuss the video afterwards. [Play the 18-minute video. URL below, on the PPT, and on the NUB website at <http://sites.niagara.edu/other/nub/videos/>], or here

Video#1:

http://www.ted.com/talks/verna_myers_how_to_overcome_our_biases_walk_boldly_toward_them#t-443527.

Debrief the video as follows (1 min.): Throughout Myers' TedTalk, she makes frequent references to unconscious bias. First, she implicitly references the second part of its definition we discussed at the top of class—having unconscious bias despite conscious beliefs. This occurs when Myers mentions that people at her diversity workshops tell her that they don't have a biased bone in their body or that even *she* has unconscious biases about women despite her pro-woman beliefs. She also gives many examples of unconscious bias against black men, arguing that "we've been schooled" in stereotypes and prejudices and that violence against black men is "part of our national psyche."

In-class Journaling (3 mins.): Consider having your peer mentor direct this activity and/or the discussion below. Direct students to page 109 in the planner and ask them to journal on the questions therein (taken from the TedTalk and reproduced below). Consider having your peer mentor run this part of class. Tell students (1 min.): During Myers' speech, she asks some thought-provoking questions. So, we want to give you a few minutes to journal about your responses to those questions, which can be found on page 129 of the planner. Your responses might come to you quickly—and that's one big point about unconscious bias, "a prejudice in favor of or against" someone. It's automatic, mechanical even, but it's also learned. And because it's learned behavior, it can also be unlearned. [Advance to PPT slide with the questions.] Myers asks her audience these questions:

1. "Who is your default?"

¹ Source: <https://students.case.edu/division/biasreporting/glossary.html>

2. “Who do you trust and who are you afraid of?”
3. “Who do you implicitly feel connected to? Who do you run away from?”
4. “Who’s in your inner circle? Who’s missing? How many authentic relationships do you have with people who are different from you in terms of gender/sex, gender identity, race, ethnicity, etc.?”

Take about 3 minutes to journal your responses to these questions. Be honest. No one else will know what you write unless you choose to share it.

Ask these questions after the video (9 mins., located on PPT).

This next part of the discussion can be modified to suit your students and their comfort level. If they are willing to share their responses to the above questions that would be a good starting point. However, this will not work in all classes. So, instead you can ask students *one or more* (time permitting) of the following open-ended questions (located on the PPT):

1. **What did you think of Myers’ talk?**
2. **What did you learn from it? What moved or inspired you?**
3. **What examples of analytical speaking (discussed in Block A) did you hear?**
4. **What was Myers’ self-proclaimed “call to action” and what did you make of it?**
5. **What’s the takeaway for you after watching, discussing, and journaling about this talk?**

III. Video #2 (6 mins. long; debrief and discuss for 12 mins.): This next video demonstrates how unconscious bias can form in early childhood. As you watch it, I want you to pay attention to your thoughts, opinions, and observations so we can discuss them afterwards. [Play the 5-minute video. URL below, on the PPT, and on the NUB website at <http://sites.niagara.edu/other/nub/videos/>].

Video#2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYCz1ppTjiM&feature=youtu.be>

Debrief the video as follows (2 min.): This video calls to mind a second definition of unconscious bias. We defined it earlier as “occur[ing] when someone consciously rejects stereotypes and supports antidiscrimination efforts but also holds negative associations in their mind unconsciously.”² Here’s another definition [advance to the next PPT slide]: “Unconscious bias refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control. It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences.”³ [Both definitions are on one PPT slide.] We see this definition of unconscious bias in the video when the children respond so quickly to the questions they’ve been asked. Many of the children didn’t even need to think about the question; they *quickly* and *automatically* pointed to the answer that fit the question they

² <https://students.case.edu/division/biasreporting/glossary.html>

³ https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/ldc/researchers/opportunities/development_support/e_and_d/unconscious_bias/unconscious_bias_-2_june.pdf

were asked. The video also indirectly addresses the topic of internalized racism [advance to the next PPT slide), which is the belief that people of color who are victimized by racism begin to internalize it. They begin to internalize, to inwardly believe and sometimes outwardly act, the beliefs and values of the dominant culture toward their racial or ethnic group. Significantly, internalized racism can be conscious or unconscious—just like bias. In the video, some scholars would suggest that internalized racism is evident in the children of color who pointed to drawings of darker-skinned children as being “mean,” “ugly,” “dumb,” or “bad.” At the same time, it’s important to note that a few of the children of color demonstrated anti-white bias when they pointed to the lighter-skinned drawings in response to these questions. The point is, we all have unconscious bias regardless of our age or race.

Ask some of these other questions after the video, including #8 (10 mins., located on PPT). Choose the questions that work best with your particular group of students.

- 1. What were some of your points of interest or confusion regarding the video?**
- 2. What did you think of the study that was conducted?**
- 3. Did any of the children’s responses make you uncomfortable? Why?**
- 4. What was positive and optimistic about some of the children’s responses?** (Some children responded with race-neutral answers. The girl at the end stated that a person’s race shouldn’t define their beauty, that what matters is who they are. You might follow-up with a question about students’ own beliefs in comparison to their grandparents or parents.)
- 5. Where do you think the children got their beliefs from, whether positive or negative ones?** (Students may say that the children learned their beliefs at home, school, church, or the media. Reiterate the larger point that our biases are learned but so too are our values and beliefs about equality.)
- 6. In the video, Dr. Margaret Beale Spencer states: “Our children are always near us because we’re a society. And what we as adults put out there, kids report back.” What does she mean by this? What are some specific examples where this statement might be true, either hypothetically or in your own experience?** [In the discussion that follows, you can reiterate the point about bias—whether in the form of sexism, racism, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.—being a learned behavior. People are not born sexist or racist; they learn these behaviors from the individuals and institutions in their lives.]
- 7. Were there any aspects of the study itself that you made you uncomfortable? From an academic standpoint, did you observe any potential flaws in the study?** [Students may say that using children as the subjects of the study made them uncomfortable. They might suggest that the researchers were asking leading questions and that the children were telling the researchers what they believe the researchers wanted to hear. You might address some of these concerns, where applicable, by referring back to the second definition of unconscious bias. If a student suggests, for example, that the one white child who pointed to a drawing of a darker-skinned when asked, “Which is the mean child?” was perhaps giving that answer because he had just been picked on by such a child in real life—that he doesn’t necessarily have an unconscious bias against people of color. These valid concerns seems to

speak to the “personal experiences” part of the second definition of unconscious bias: “It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment and *personal experiences*.” Feel free to also share your own responses to these questions, especially to get the ball rolling.]

8. **What are some examples where unconscious bias might be evident in—or affect--your own discipline and future profession? The instructor and peer mentor should share examples of their own as a starting point.**

9. **What’s the takeaway for you from this video and larger topic of unconscious bias?**

V. Assignment Reminder (2 mins.) Remind students that the group presentation assignment is due in Blocks 5a and/or 5b. Ask them if they have any questions or concerns.

VI. Closing Thoughts (2 mins.) As today’s videos point out, we all have some degree of unconscious bias swirling about in our brains, and becoming *aware* of our biases and consciously working to eliminate them is one way to produce individual and social change. Again, because our biases are learned behavior, they can also be unlearned. So on a positive note, what were some of Myers’ suggestions for eliminating our biases? Myers suggests that “looking within and changing ourselves” is the first step. We must face our bias, have relationships with people who are different from us, go against the stereotypes, cultivate positive imagery and associations, and so forth. *Most importantly, as we will continue to discuss next week, Myers encourages us to be an upstander (an advocate or an ally) rather than a bystander—to say and do something when we hear others express their bias. As we discussed in Block A, this is yet one more way to ensure that our campus community is a safe and welcoming place for all people.* [This italicized point (located on the PPT) is an important note to end class on.]

Approach Two: No Lecture Notes, No PowerPoint, Just Videos and Discussion

- 1) Discussion about conscious and unconscious bias (4 mins).
 - a. As a group, attempt to define ‘bias’—a prejudice for or against a person, group, or thing, usually in a way perceived to be unfair.
 - b. As a group, attempt to define ‘unconscious bias’. Make to discuss the fact that unconscious biases can run against one’s conscious beliefs and still affect behavior.
- 2) Play and discuss the Verna Meyers Video (33 mins)
 - a. The video (18 mins) can be found here: <http://sites.niagara.edu/other/nub/videos/> or here http://www.ted.com/talks/verna_myers_how_to_overcome_our_biases_walk_boldly_toward_them#t-443527.
 - b. Follow up discussion (2 mins): Ask students about examples of unconscious bias that come up in the video.
 - c. Journaling (5 mins): Have the students write out answers to the questions on p. 129 of the planner.
 - d. Discussion about the students’ answers to those questions (if they are comfortable) and/or general discussion about the video (8 mins). Some potential discussion questions:
 - i. What did you think of Myers’ talk?
 - ii. What did you learn from it? What moved or inspired you?
 - iii. What examples of analytical speaking (discussed in Block A) did you hear?

- iv. What was Myers' self-proclaimed "call to action" and what did you make of it?
 - v. What's the takeaway for you after watching, discussing, and journaling about this talk?
 - e. Make sure to cover the positive aspect of Meyers' message: what we can do to change things for the better.
- 3) Play and discuss the AC 360 Doll Study Video (16 mins)
- a. Play the video (6 mins): <http://sites.niagara.edu/other/nub/videos/> or you can find it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYCz1ppTjiM&feature=youtu.be>
 - b. Video debriefing (2 mins). Ask students:
 - i. How does the video illustrate the concept of unconscious bias?
 - ii. Do you think unconscious biases has a greater effect on fast or slow decisions? (Note that the children are answering questions quickly.)
 - c. Video discussion (8 mins). Some potential discussion questions:
 - i. What were some of your points of interest or confusion regarding the video?
 - ii. What did you think of the study that was conducted?
 - iii. Did any of the children's responses make you uncomfortable? Why?
 - iv. What was positive and optimistic about some of the children's responses?
 - v. Where do you think the children got their beliefs from, whether positive or negative?
 - vi. In the video, Dr. Margaret Beale Spencer states: "Our children are always near us because we're a society. And what we as adults put out there, kids report back." What does she mean by this?
 - vii. Were there any aspects of the study itself that you made you uncomfortable? From an academic standpoint, did you observe any potential flaws in the study?
 - viii. What are some examples where unconscious bias might be evident in—or affect--your own discipline and future profession? The instructor and peer mentor should share examples of their own as a starting point.
 - ix. What's the takeaway for you from this video and larger topic of unconscious bias?
- 4) Remind your students about group presentations and engagement assignment

Note: If you have any questions, see the detailed lesson plan above!

Compiled in Summers 2015, 2016, and 2017 by Dr. Hope L. Russell, Adjunct Professor of Women's Studies, and Drs. Levin and Keller, NUB Co-Directors.