



# IDENTITY IN THE CLASSROOM

OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL STUDENT AFFAIRS  
CENTER FOR IDENTITY + INCLUSION  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

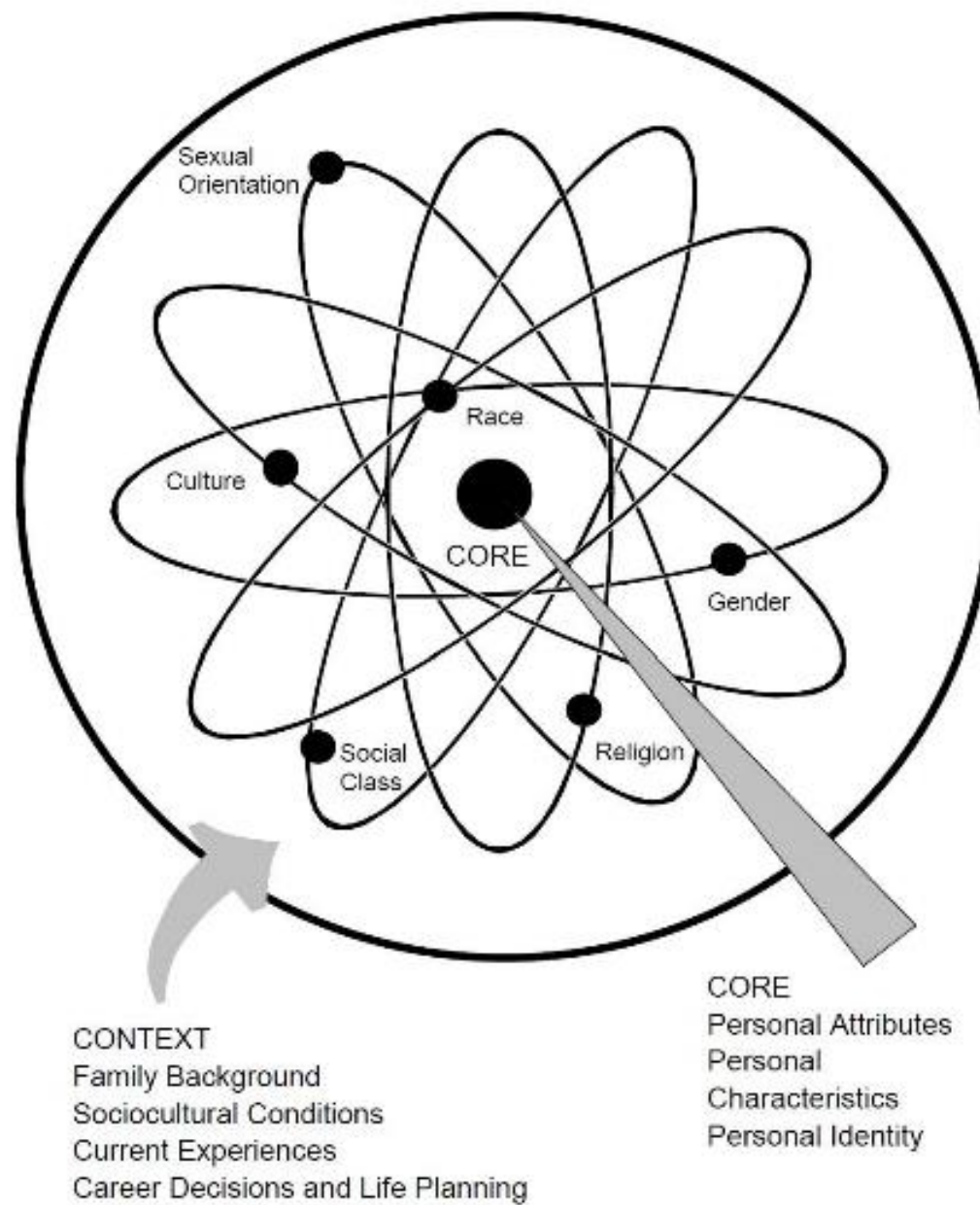


FIGURE 1. Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000)

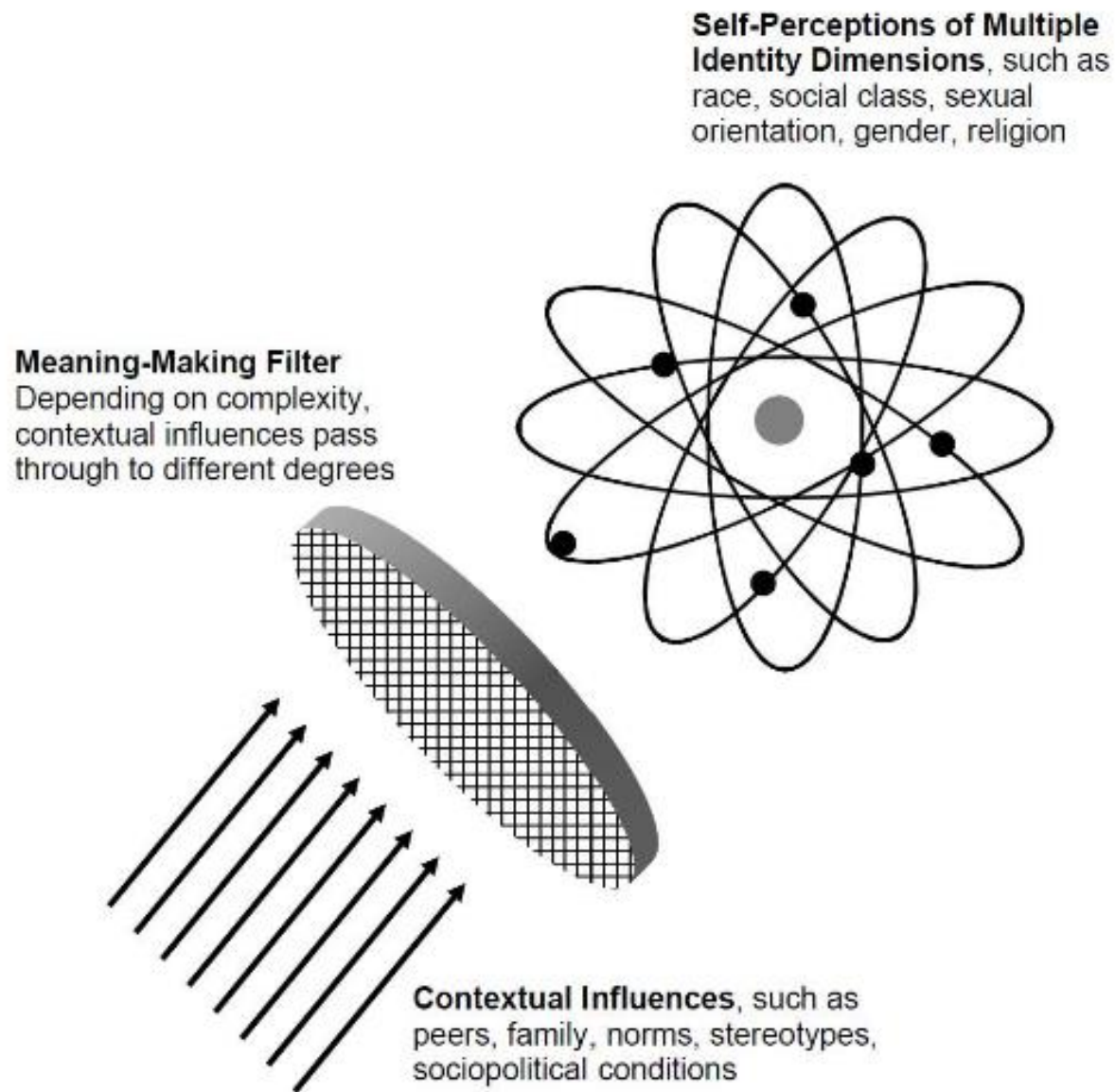


FIGURE 2. Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity  
(Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007)

# COMMON EXPERIENCES/ CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES

- Overt/Covert Racism
- Microaggressions
- Stereotype Threat
- Role strain/Role Conflict
- Racial Climate/Sense of Belonging

# OVERT/COVERT RACISM

- Racism –“A system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians, and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color” (p. 5, Marable, 1992)
  - Overt Racism
  - Covert Racism
- Whiteness –‘Whiteness,’ like ‘color’ and ‘Blackness,’ is essentially a social construct applied to human beings rather than veritable truths that have universal validity. The power of Whiteness, however, is manifested by the ways in which racialized Whiteness becomes transformed into social, political, economic, and cultural behavior. White culture, norms, and values in all these areas become normative natural. They become the standard against which all other cultures, groups, and individuals are measured and usually found to be inferior” (p. 46, Henry & Tator, 2006)

# MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Frequent and reoccurring subtle insults/“Every day racism” –daily experiences with another’s prejudice, stereotypes, and discriminatory behavior (Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald & Bylsma, 2003)
- Examples: bad service, assumptions of capabilities, being stared at (suspiciously or hostile glare), and/or verbal expressions (Swim, 2003)
- Low expectations/Assumptions of being “disadvantaged” or “at-risk” (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson & Walter, 1998; McDougale, Way, & Yash, 2008; Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000)

## MICROAGGRESSIONS

Verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities, intentional or unintentional, conscious or unconscious, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative slights and insults

### Disguised Bias

## MICROINSULT

Communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's heritage and/or identity

Role Stereotyping  
Objectification  
Assumption of Abnormality

## MICROINVALIDATION

Communications that exclude, negate or nullify a person's psychological thoughts, feelings or experiential reality

### Uniqueness

### Ascription of Intelligence

Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person based on their identity

### Second Class Citizen

Treated as a lesser person or group

### Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Style

Notion that the values and communication styles are abnormal

### Assumption of Criminal Status

Presumed to be a criminal, dangerous or deviant based on identity

### Alien in Own Land

Belief that visible identities are foreign

### Color Blindness

Denial or pretense that identity is not seen

### Myth of Meritocracy

Statements that assert that identity plays a role in life success

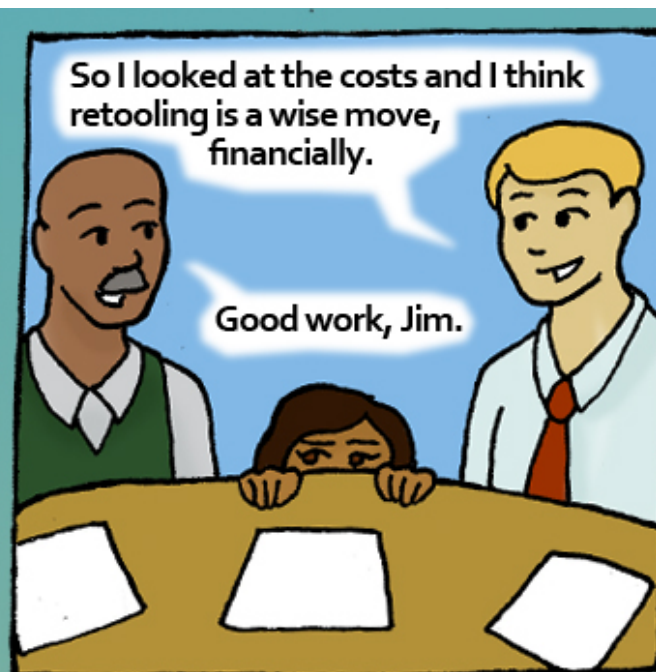
### Denial of Individual Bias

Denial of personal bias

















What are microaggressions? They're little things; subtle statements, interruptions and assumptions, that all add up to make you feel small.



You can heal from a thousand tiny cuts, but it's too much to ask that everyone who is hurt spend all their time self-healing.

It's time we learned enough to stop hurting people in the first place.

# STEREOTYPE THREAT

- “Threat... of self-fulfilling” a stereotype (p. 798, Steele & Aronson, 1995)
- “Threat... of possibly being judged and treated stereotypically” (p. 798, Steele & Aronson, 1995)
- Pressure of proving oneself (Fries-Britt, 2004; Steele & Aronson, 1995)

# ROLE STRAIN/CONFLICT

- “The felt difficulty of fulfilling role obligations” (p. 483, Goode, 1960)
- Expectations of disconnecting family/home community in order to be fully engaged/integrated in campus/university life (Robinson, 2013; Waterman, 2012)

# RACIAL CLIMATE/SENSE OF BELONGING

- “Onlyness” - finding oneself as the one of, if not the only, SOC in a given classroom and often notice the low numbers of faculty of color (Harper, 2012; Fries-Britt & Griffin, 2007).
- Representation of the entire community (speaker for all Black students, speaker for all Latino students, etc.) (Fries-Britt, 2004)
- Feeling invisible within the classroom (Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000)
- Challenges within the classroom (not getting selected for group projects, assumptions of being lazy, “let in” or unwilling to do the work) (Harper, 2012; Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Fries-Brit, 2004; Strayhorn, 2009)



# AFFIRMATION & SUPPORT

- Active listening, recognizing, affirming and validating student experiences
  - Create space for students to share concerns without feeling judged (Mitchell, Wood, and Witherspoon, 2010)
  - Avoid making excuses or questioning if the situation was “actually about race” or Whitesplaining (Johnson, 2016)
- Empathize with their frustration, pain, etc.
- Celebrate successes of your students
- Use inclusive and person-first language
- Remain genuine, sincere, and vulnerable

# INSTRUCTOR/FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

- Ensure that the diversity of our community is reflected in your syllabus whenever possible
- Introduce diverse speakers and scholars through departmental programming
- Encourage students to take advantage of University programming, especially if aligned with your subject matter
- Encourage teamwork and share value of multiple perspectives
- Engage students in conversation about academic freedom, freedom of speech, and debate vs. dialogue
- Encourage self-reflection and assessment
- When time permits, build relationships and engage outside the classroom
  - Attend a workshop on a topic of interest, such as supporting undocumented students
  - Share your expertise as a panelist or speaker at one of our events
  - Advocate for/with your students via conversations with faculty, staff, admin
- Review campus and community resources available to students

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