

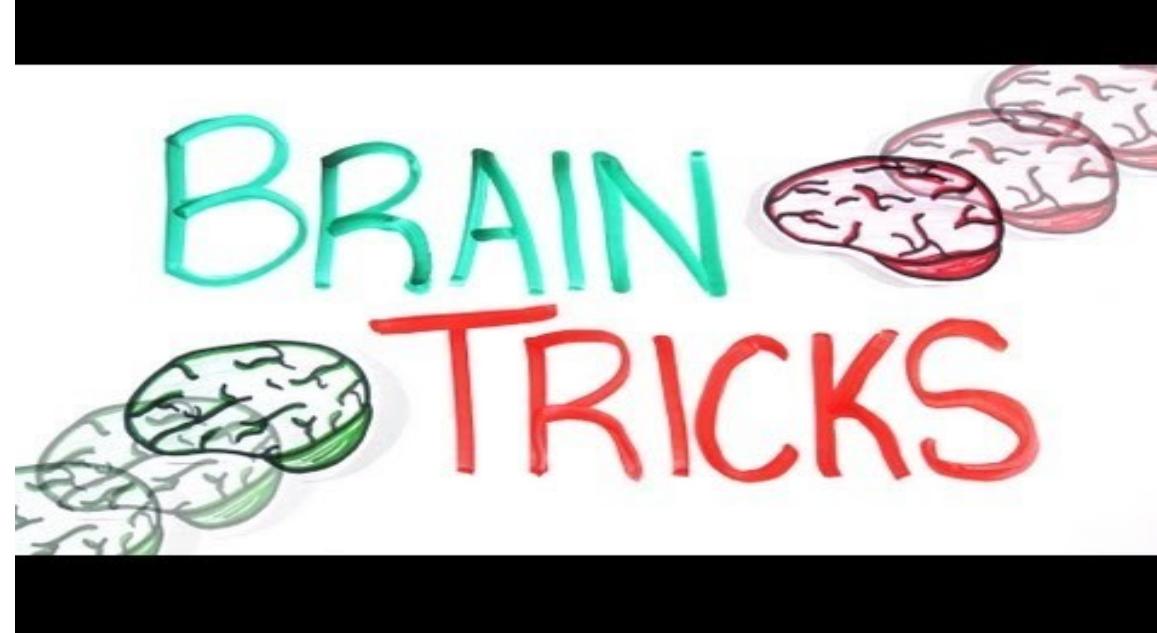
# **REDUCING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING: STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY**

CTRL Noontime Conversation  
October 10, 2018  
12-1:30pm

# LEARNING GOALS

- ✓ Understand why unconscious bias matters in teaching and learning
- ✓ Recognize how unconscious bias may shape our perceptions and pedagogy
- ✓ Explore tools for inclusive pedagogy to apply in our teaching

# OUR BRAINS ON BIAS



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiTz2i4VHFw>

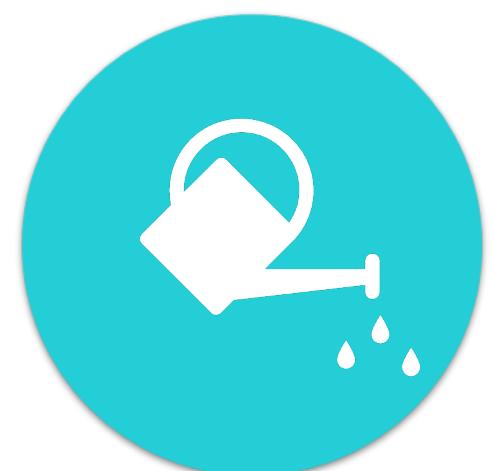
# DRIVERS OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS



UNCONSCIOUS BIAS, ON SOME LEVEL, IS  
NECESSARY AND ADAPTIVE



FLUENCY HEURISTIC—WE PREFER INFORMATION  
THAT IS PROCESSED MORE EASILY, OR FLUENTLY,  
JUDGING IT TO BE MORE TRUE.

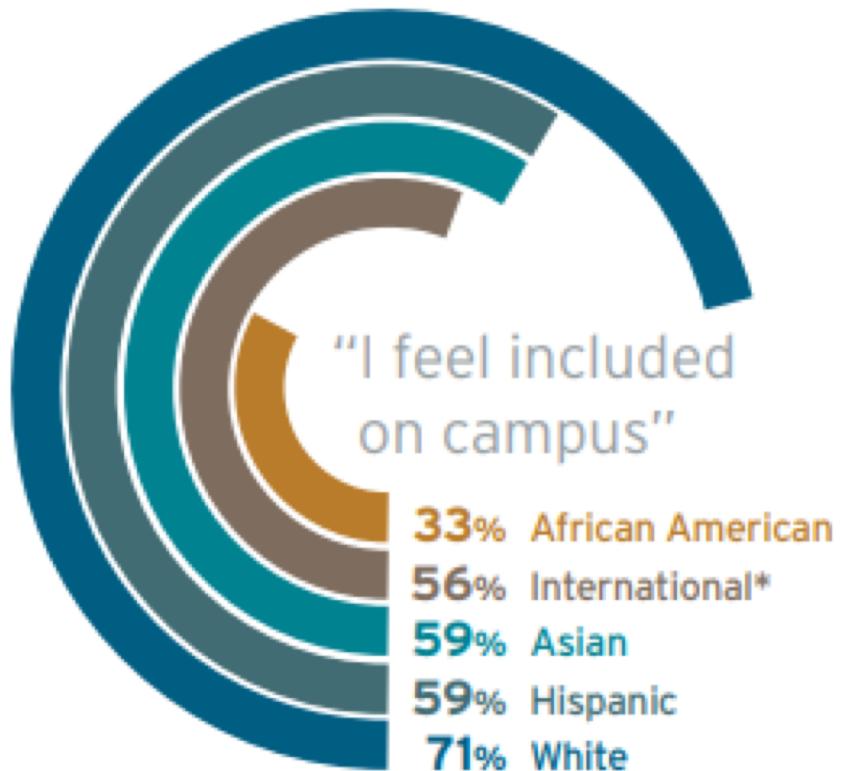


CONFIRMATION BIAS—WE TEND TO  
SEARCH FOR, FAVOR, RECALL, AND USE  
NEW EVIDENCE THAT CONFIRMS  
EXISTING THEORIES

# BEYOND GOOD INTENTIONS

»“Recent studies within cognitive science point us to the conclusion that **most biased decisions are not made by bad people with bad attitudes**, but rather by well-intentioned people who are unaware of the internal unconscious processes that may be affecting their decision-making every day” (Cook Ross, 2018)

# WHY UNCONSCIOUS BIAS MATTERS AT AU



AU Plan for Inclusive Excellence, 2018

# INCLUSION, BELONGING AND LEARNING

If students feel as if they don't belong in a school setting, the cognitive energy that should be used on social engagement and learning is being used to scan for group barriers, discrimination and stereotypes. Stereotype threat uses cognitive resources, diminishing performance.

Students who have a greater sense of belonging have a higher level of engagement in class and higher levels of academic performance.

Teachers and administrators have the power to enforce policies and practices that promote social inclusion to build students' engagement and overall academic performance.

# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE CLASSROOM

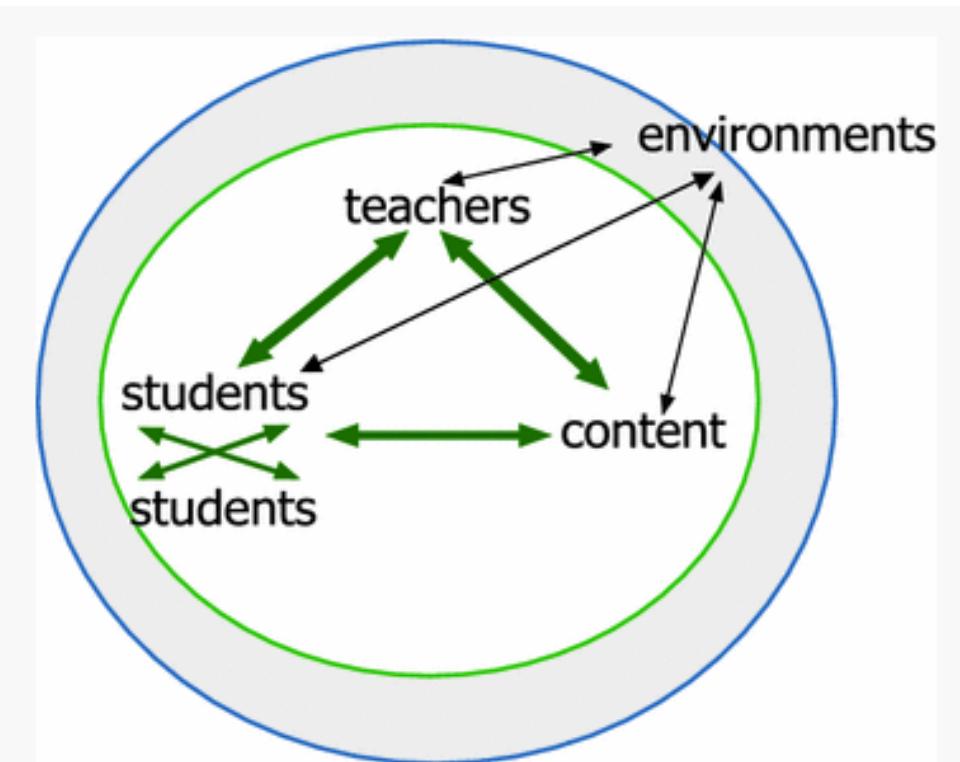


Fig. 1  
Instructional triangle

Cohen, Raudenbush & Ball, 2003

# UNCONSCIOUS BIASES IN THE CLASSROOM

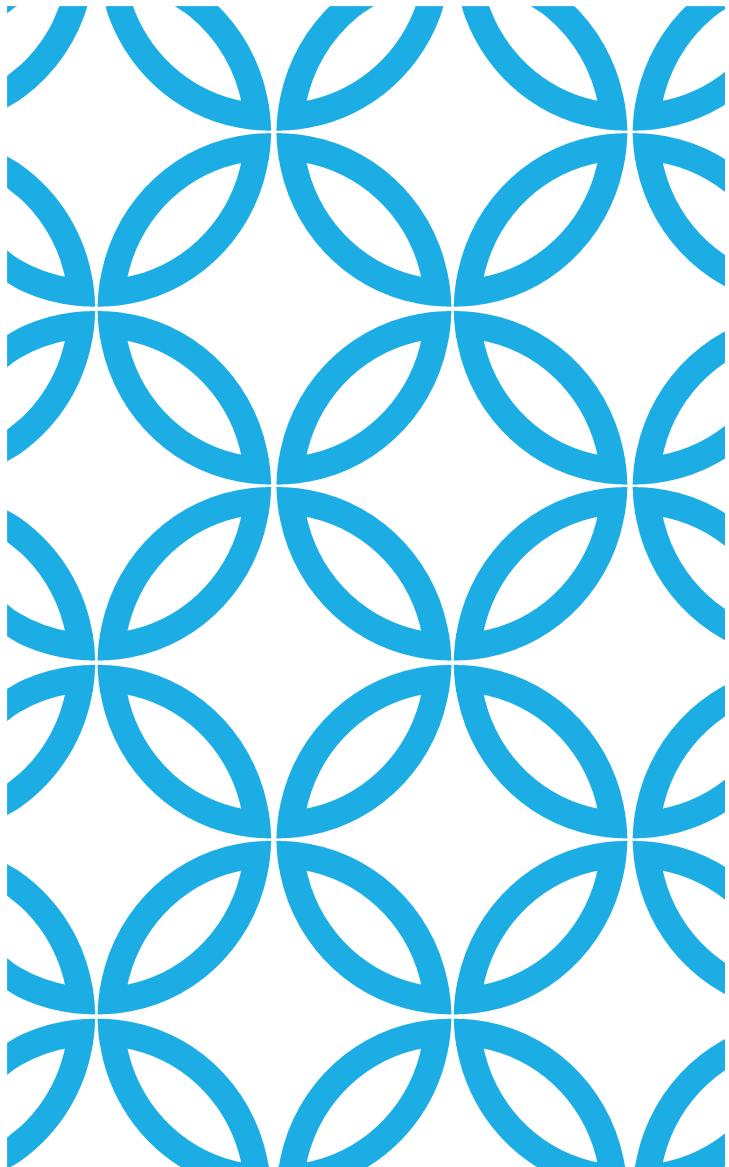
- Assumptions about students' academic preparation, motivation, or intelligence
- Assumptions about who needs more or less attention and why
- Expectations about participation styles, affinities, experiences
- Marginalization of content domains, scholarship, and knowledge forms
- Perceptions of and responses to student behaviors
- Student learning outcomes
- Student self and other-perceptions

# BREAKING THE HABIT OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS



- Substitute your habits with new practices.
- Observe your stereotypes and replace them.
- Get information to see people as individuals.
- Look for situational reasons for people's behavior.
- Get to know people that belong to groups unlike your own.

(Drawn from the work of Patricia Devine at U-Wisconsin, Madison)



# STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

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**1. ON THE OUTSIDE** CREATE LABELS TO DESCRIBE THE BEHAVIOR, APPEARANCE AND ASPECTS OF YOUR IDENTITY THAT OTHERS CAN OBSERVE OR EASILY DETERMINE (AGE, GENDER, LANGUAGE)

**2. ON THE INSIDE** LIST ASPECTS OF YOUR IDENTITY THAT MAY NOT BE EVIDENT TO OTHERS AROUND YOU

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## CULTURAL X-RAY



# CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

(LADSON-BILLINGS, 1994)

- Recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning
- Focuses on 3 areas
  1. *Academic achievement* (holding high expectations/standards for all students)
  2. *Cultural competence* (helping students to recognize and honor their own cultural beliefs and practices while acquiring access to the wider culture)
  3. *Sociopolitical consciousness* (finding ways for “students to recognize, understand, and critique current and social inequalities”)

# CULTURALLY AFFIRMING INSTRUCTION

Connected to students' cultural  
and intellectual legacy

Connected to students' lived  
experiences

Curricular Content

Of value outside the classroom

Connected to the students'  
community

# DIVERSE

- Diverse Instructional Materials (windows and mirrors)
- Inclusive
- Variety
- Exploration
- Reaction
- Safety
- Evaluation

# RESOURCE PEDAGOGIES FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

- Creating culturally affirming identities of excellence
  - Counter narratives - challenge dominant ideologies
  - Study a topic of interest to them
  - Tapping the funds of knowledge should be situated in reality (historical, social, political context)
- Incorporating students knowledge and skills in classrooms

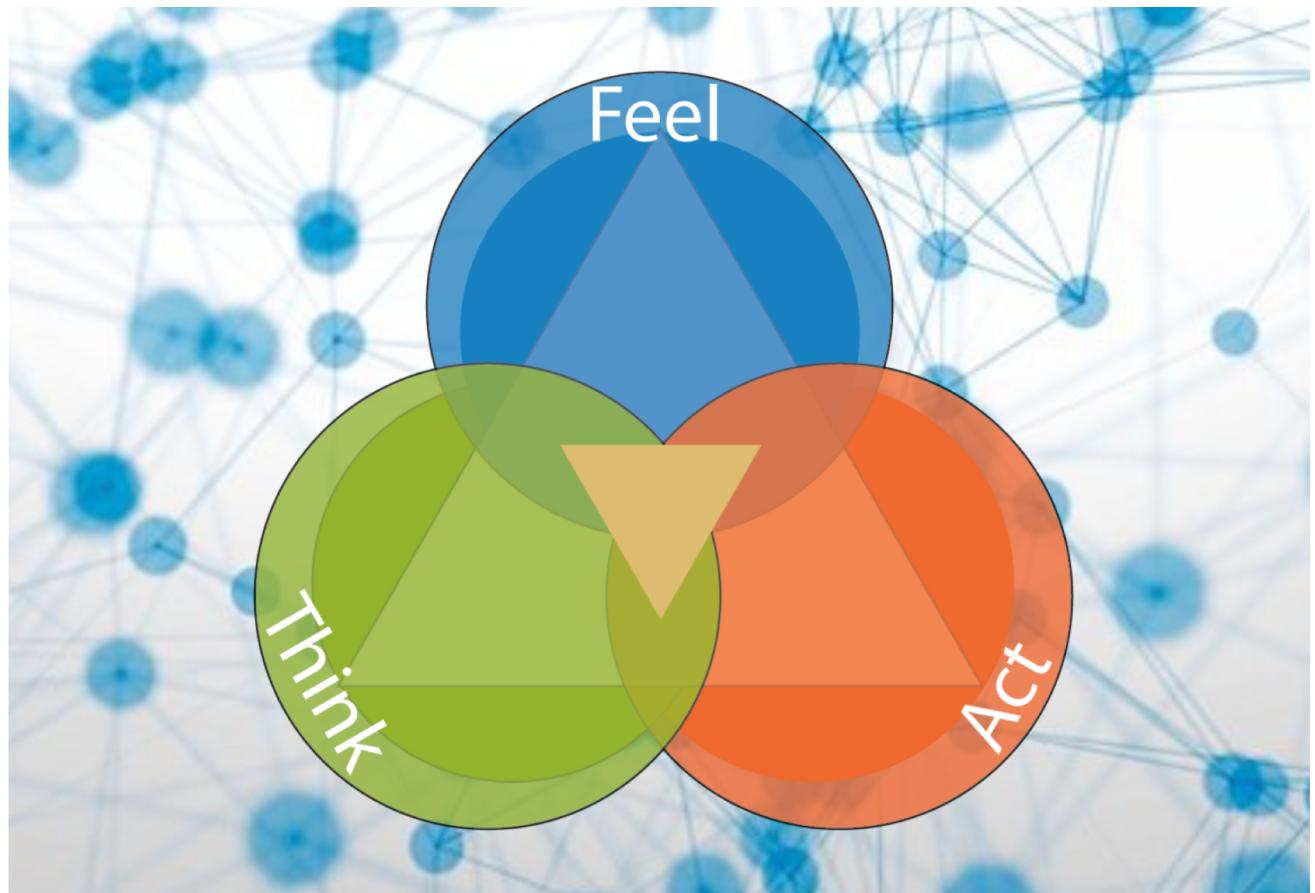
# WAYS TO INTERRUPT BIAS

- Seek to identify and consciously acknowledge real group and individual differences
- Cultural X-ray activity
- Student questionnaire/survey
- Build relationships with students outside of the classroom
- Learn to question and suspend assumptions and judgments (implicit biases become explicit action)

# HOW DO WE MOVE FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION?

Experiences as an administrator, teacher, and yes, learner

(Picture: Six seconds: The emotional Intelligence Network)



# EXPERIENCE AS AN ADMINISTRATOR: LEARNING HOW TO IDENTIFY AND INTERRUPT BIAS

 Language placement, student identity and bias.

 Identifying students that speak Spanish as a heritage language.

 Challenge, because we encounter unconscious bias at multiple levels: Instructor, system, and student's perceptions of their situation.

 Conversations with peer instructors: What to do (and not do!), what to say, how to help.

 Recognize how our own perceptions can shape a decision, path for a student.

# WHAT IS A HERITAGE SPEAKER OF A LANGUAGE?

“A student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or merely understands the heritage language and who is to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language”

(Valdés, 2000)

# INTERRUPTING BIAS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Student self-  
identification vs  
external  
classification



*In a conversation,  
not a score, not a  
form.*

# SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO SELF-IDENTIFY AS HERITAGE SPEAKERS:

- Do you understand Spanish, but you would like to communicate in Spanish the same way you communicate in English?
- Do you speak some Spanish at home with your parents, *abuelit@*s or other immediate family?
- Have you studied in the United States since an early age, with most of your formal education conducted in English?
- Do you seek to learn Spanish not as a foreign language --since you already understand it and speak it-- but because you feel you may benefit from being in a space where you can use the advantage you have to move from one language/culture to another?

# CREATING A SAFE, NON-JUDGMENTAL CLASSROOM: A LANGUAGE COURSE FOR HERITAGE SPEAKERS

- ✓ Bilingual and transcultural identities: Advantage instead of a drawback.
- ✓ Cultural enrichment and empowerment
- ✓ Solidarity of experience afforded by the other members of the cohort.  
(Students are co-creators, you learn from them too!)
- ✓ Academic/intellectual space
- ✓ Solidarity of experience, place that is tangible
- ✓ Horizontal rather than vertical approach.

# ON THE FIELD: CO-MANAGING A HERITAGE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM



THE NEW  
3 Rs

# 1. CREATING A SAFE, NON-JUDGMENTAL CLASSROOM: PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS

## RELATIONSHIPS

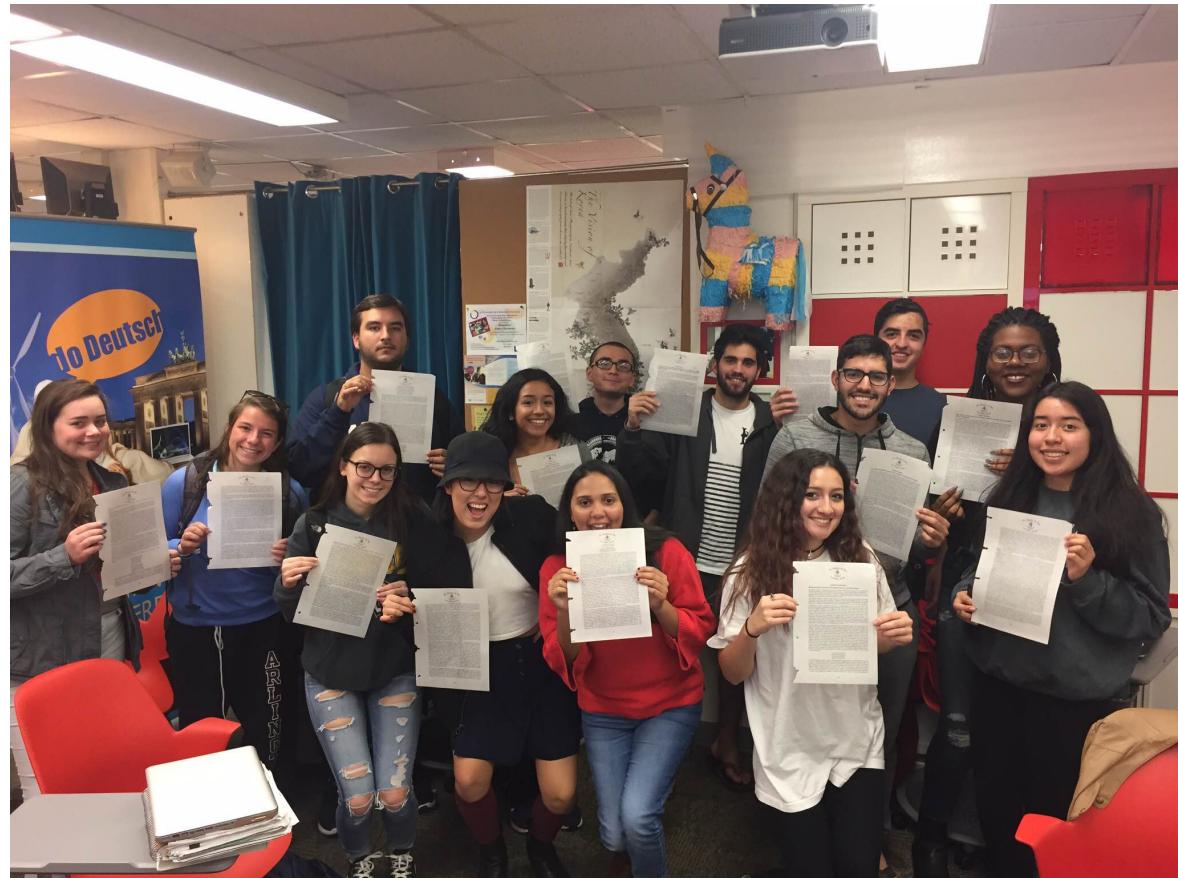
- ✓ Physical surroundings matter.
- ✓ Encouraging in-class exchanges.
- ✓ Creating opportunities for interaction outside the classroom. Buddy system.
- ✓ Raising positive awareness of differences and similarities to build trust.  
View diversity as an asset  
Teamwork across differences.



## 2. CREATING A SAFE, NON-JUDGMENTAL CLASSROOM: BUILDING A SAFE-PLACE, CREATING A CLASSROOM CULTURE

### RESILIENCE

- ✓ Classroom policies
- ✓ Awareness of vulnerabilities.
- Importance of social-emotional skills.
- ✓ Honor student experience
- ✓ Development of intergroup awareness and understanding.
- ✓ Structuring Academic/intellectual space to support individual growth.



# 3. CREATING A SAFE, NON-JUDGMENTAL CLASSROOM: INTRODUCING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

## REFLECTION

- ✓ Text-to-text, Text-to-self, Text-to-World
- ✓ Connections to
  - Identity
  - Justice
  - Action

The screenshot shows a blue-themed web page for 'RADIO AMBULANTE'. At the top right, the title 'RADIO AMBULANTE' and episode information 'El área gris' (Season 2, Episode 16 · January 9, 2018 · 7:00 AM ET) are displayed. Below the title is a question: '¿Hasta qué punto somos nuestros genes? ¿Qué pasa cuando lo que heredamos se siente como una sentencia?' To the left of the text is a large, abstract blue and white image of what appears to be DNA or a complex network. On the far left, there's a sidebar with a play button icon, the duration '29:14', and buttons for '+ QUEUE', 'DOWNLOAD', 'EMBED', and 'TRANSCRIPT'. Below these are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Email.

# LEVERAGE THE FULL POTENTIAL OF DIVERSE STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Students are invited to:

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Think before you speak: Avoid making quick decisions

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Use metacognition: Analysis of what you are thinking and why you are thinking about something this way? (Parallel discussion)

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Listen with empathy and compassion: Focus your energy on understanding other opinions and emotions.

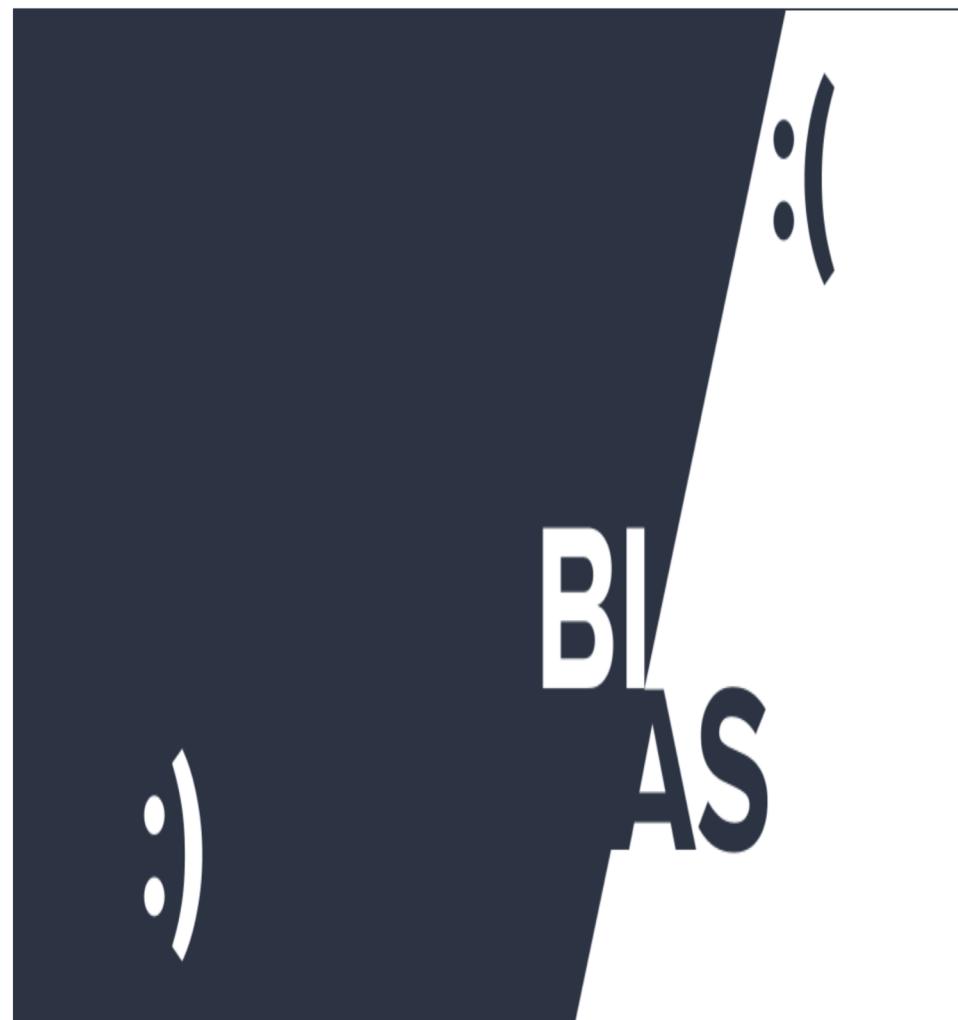
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Try to understand yourself and recognize your own cultural beliefs, and be open to see other points of view without negative conclusions.

# CRITICAL PRACTICES

- Honoring student experience
- Thoughtful classroom set up and structure
- Shared inquiry and dialogue
- Social and emotional safety

From Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education  
[perspectives.tolerance.org](http://perspectives.tolerance.org)



# DISCUSSION



- Have you ever tried these ideas in your courses?
  - If so, what did you do? What were the outcomes?
  - If not, what barriers or challenges prevented you from doing so?
- What ideas do you have about how to interrupt unconscious bias in teaching and learning or using inclusive pedagogy?