




Intercultural Urgencies in International Education



A note about "urgencies"

At this pivotal time in history, we invite you to consider the way we name things that need addressing. Over time words such as 'problems' 'issues' or 'challenges' have been used in reference to changes needed in the field of education. We would like to use the term 'urgencies' as it invites us all to take action in addressing the ways international education can reform.

Bias

Bias refers to the attitude and stereotypes that effect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Bias is linked to stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, in that bias is an expression of our beliefs that we hold about social groups. Biases may be held by individuals, groups, and organizations. Different types of biases exist such as:

- **Anchor Bias:** every decision you make is “anchored” in existing beliefs.
- **Confirmation Bias:** once we’ve made a decision, we ignore data that contradicts our decision.
- **Affinity Bias:** we often have a preference for others who we can relate to and/or who resemble ourselves.

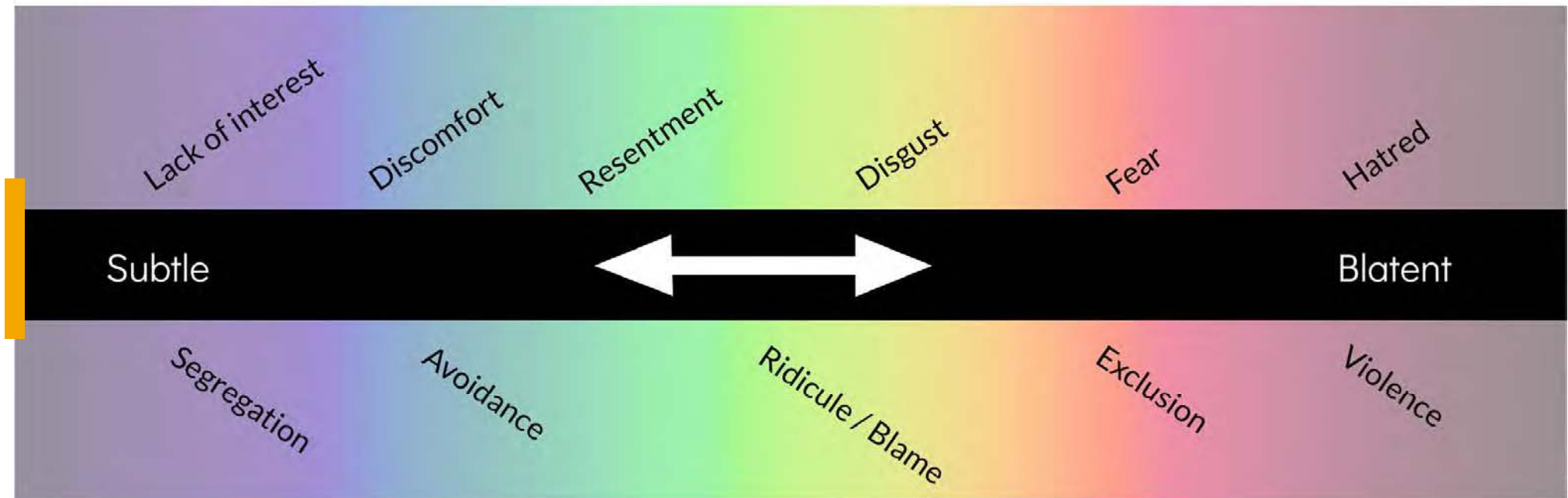




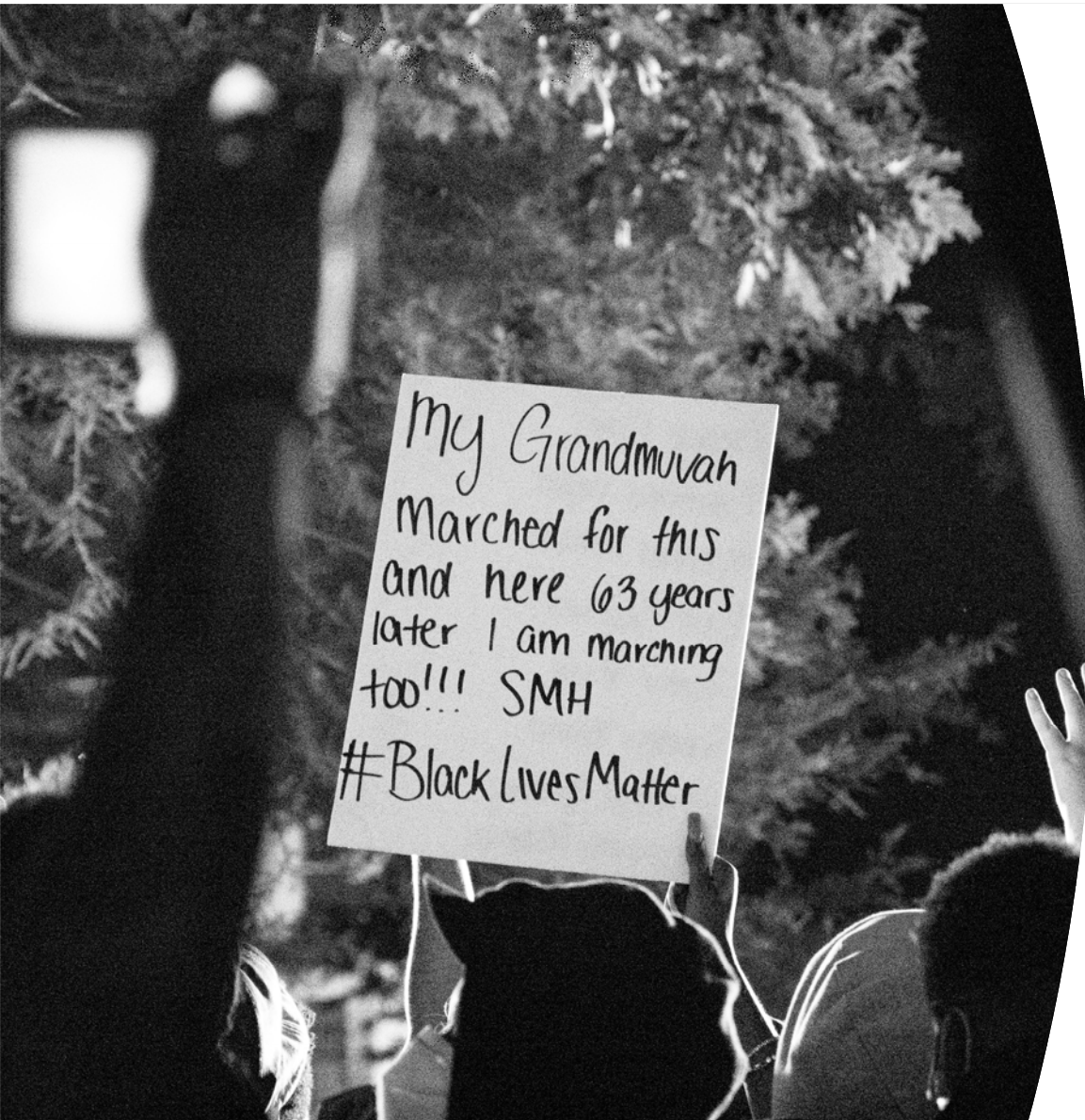
Stereotypes

A stereotype is a belief about a social group at both conscious and unconscious levels. These generalizations are based only on a small aspect of truth, or distorted and over-estimated perspectives, which results in a conscious or unconscious categorization of each member of the group without attention to individual differences. Stereotypes happen, in part, as a way for your brain to process information. However, because stereotypes are often unconscious, they can create problematic social categorizations.

Prejudice: learned judgement about social groups



Discrimination: action taken based on prejudice



Oppression

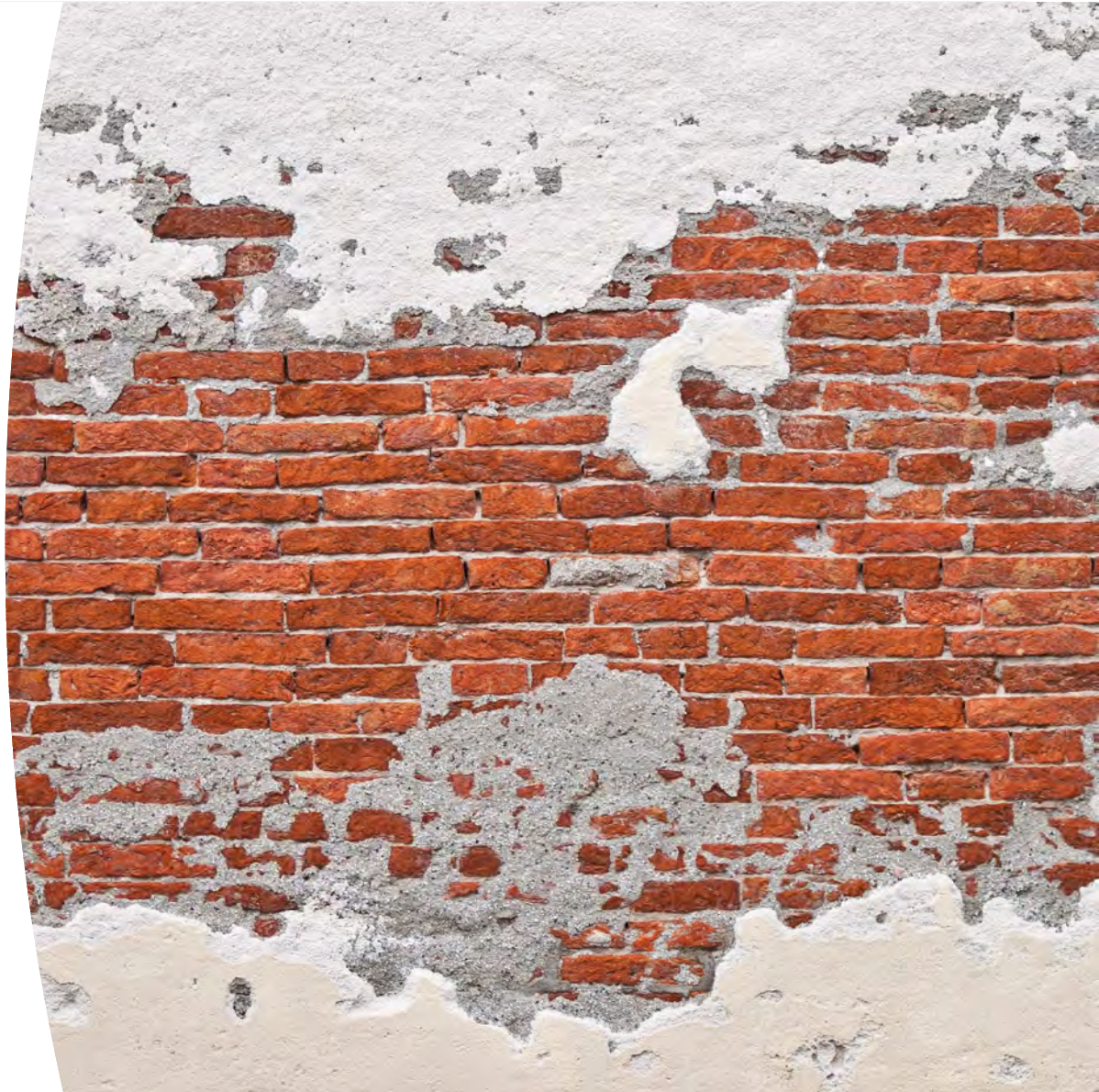
The domination (to press down) of a group of people through prejudice and discrimination within societal and legal systems in daily encounters. These are often grounded in historical, ideological, structural, and institutional types of power relationships. Some types of oppression are classism, ableism, sexism, and racism.

Prejudice and Discrimination + Power =
Oppression

Systemic Issues

This type of oppression occurs within societies, often via institutionalized laws, policies, and procedures. Systematic behaviours are organized oppressive actions taken towards cultures that are grounded in systemic issues, for example, colonial invasions, economic sabotages, global injustices and exploitation.

"To not be cognizant of these histories is to be complicit in the naturalization of the present order" (Alexander et al., 2014).



Colonization

Derived from and tied to European imperialism (political and economic control), colonization is the practice of domination which subjugates one people to another. It has been and continues to be a form of one nation conquering another, including the exploitation of people and cultural appropriation, and the imposition of culture values.





Indigenization & Decolonization

Integration of Indigenous ways of knowing, ways of being, processes and content are referred to as Indigenization. This is more than just adding Indigenous authors to syllabus. It is about engaging in the process of decolonization that is important.

Decolonization places more emphasis on power relationships within education and deconstructs past colonial systems by recreating new ones based on equity and Indigenous principles such as Two-Eyed Ways of Seeing.

Cultural Appropriation

The act of using or adopting aspects of a culture by those external to it. Superficially, it may appear to be cultural exchange but the concerns manifest when the aspects of the culture are erroneously adapted and adopted without consent or acknowledgement from the originating culture. Further, misuse occurs when the culture is appropriated for financial benefit.



Racism

A form of systemic oppression that marginalizes Black, Indigenous, and People of Color based on a socially constructed hierarchy of race that gives power and privilege to White people. Some ways racism shows up in international education in recruiting White teachers, and/or centering of White people in marketing materials and textbooks that perpetuate stereotypes.

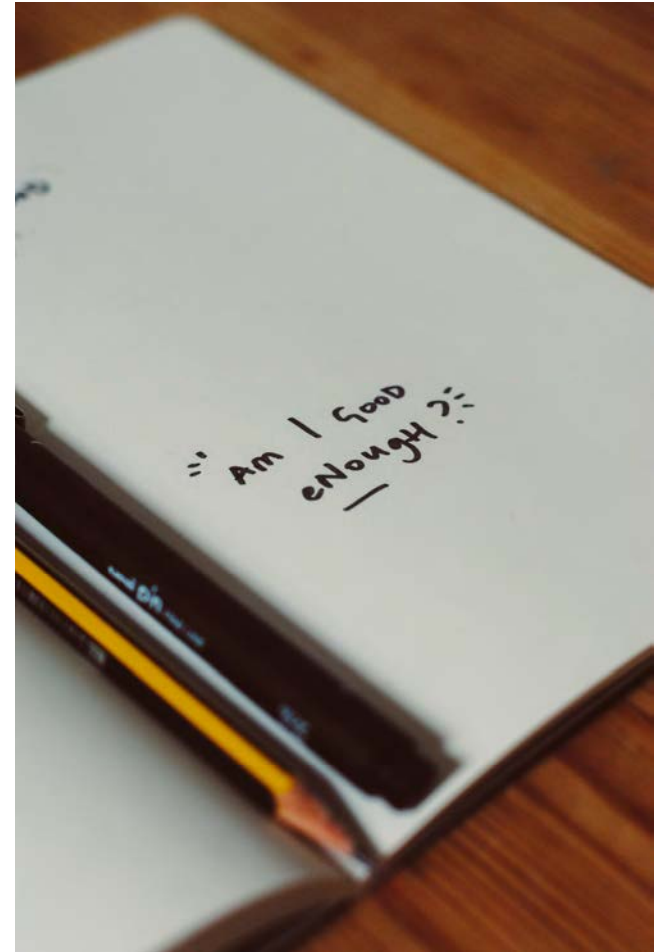
Microaggressions

Privilege and power are often underneath the surface of our cultural iceberg, and unless explored, remain unconscious. In turn, this can lead to making comments or asking questions that harmful impact.

Microaggressions are the everyday

- *verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults,*
- *intentional or unintentional things we say or do,*
- *Communications that are hostile, derogatory, or negative*
- *Targets of persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.*

*In many cases, these **hidden messages may invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings,** suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment.” (Derald Wing Sue: Microaggressions: More than Just Race).*



Ally

Ally is a verb and denotes the actions we take alongside people who experience marginalization.

Commitment and allyship is reflected in the following:

- Educate oneself about oppression.
- Follow the lead of those who have experienced marginalization.
- Learn from and listen to people who are targets of oppression.
- Examine one's own prejudices.
- Work through feelings of guilt, shame, and understand what needs to be healed.
- Learn and practice the skills of challenging oppression.
- Act collaboratively to dismantle oppression.



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