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# Unconscious Bias in Education

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**Unconscious bias can affect the very core of the teaching organizations and be an impediment to create a truly diverse and inclusive environment.**



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**Unconscious bias can affect the very core of the teaching organizations and be an impediment to create a truly diverse and inclusive environment.**

**Discuss ways of addressing Unconscious Bias in Education from a personal, institutional and curricular level.**





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A little exercise....



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**Who owns it?**





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1. Are they old or young?
2. What gender might they identify as?
3. Their race?
4. Their civil status?
5. Are they parents?
6. Do they have a disability?
7. Are they religious?





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Actual owner

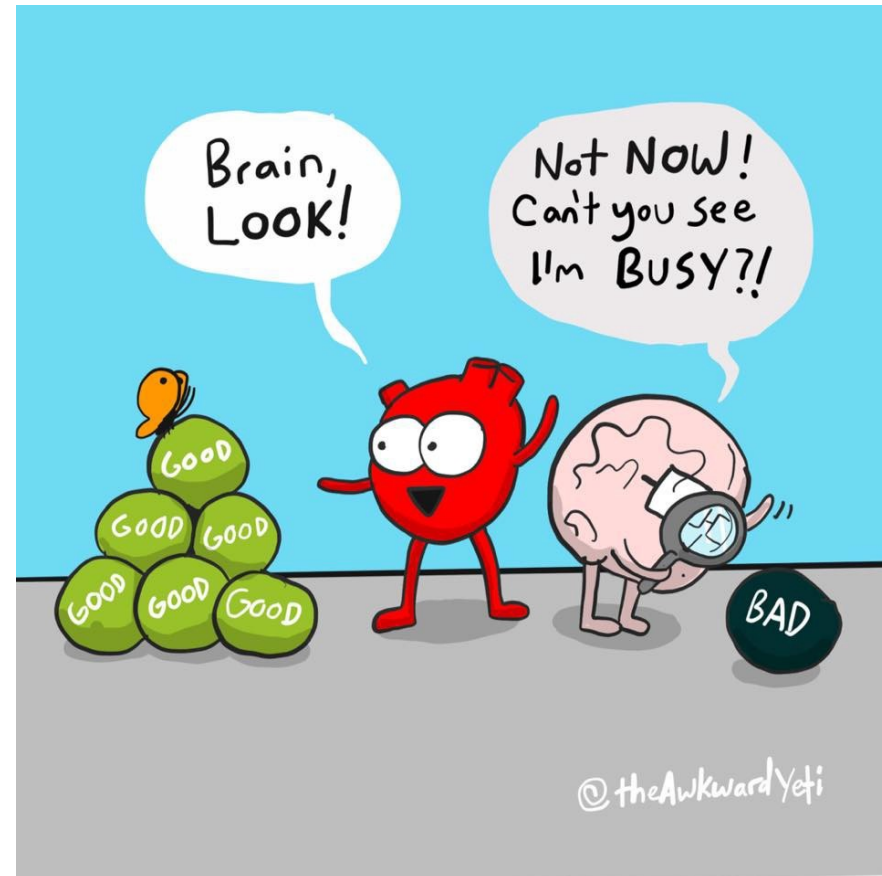


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It's hard to let go...

# Cognitive Dissonance





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# Why discuss unconscious bias in Higher Education?



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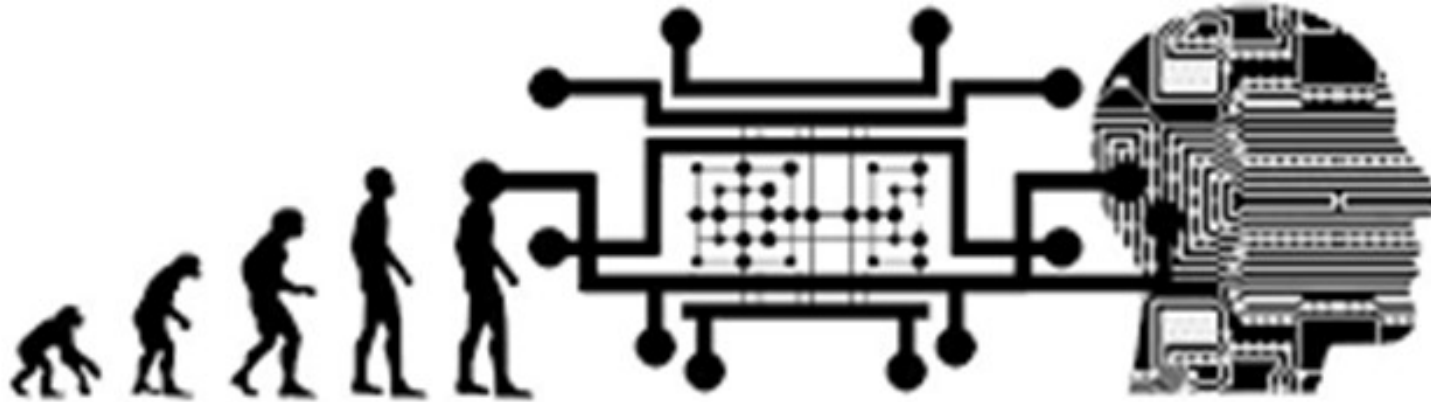




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EVOLUTION





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**We tend to stick to our social in-groups...**



**Those who look and act like us are  
easier to predict  
(Henri Tajfel)**





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# Personal experience



Search ID: toin268

“Yes, I have experience. I’ve been divorced two times.”



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We are constantly bombarded by stereotypes



Flickr



@costumeville.net







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“Unconscious biases are normal and rooted in stereotyping, a cognitive process in which individuals use a social category to acquire, process, and recall information about people” (Blair, 2002)



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**Think of wide held prejudices...**

**Age**      **Gender reassignment**

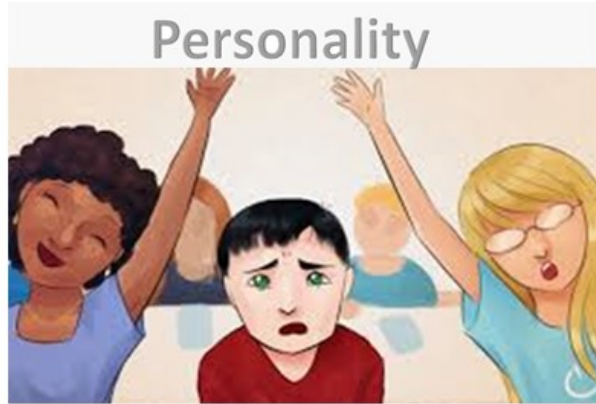
**Civil status**      **Pregnancy/maternity**

**Disability**      **Religion/beliefs**

**Race**      **Sex**      **Sexual orientation**



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Personality

Socioeconomic status

Level of education

Accent



Friendships/Associations

Travel History

Hair colour

Pets

Background

Appearance

Housing / Postcode



Dress sense

Diet





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# Think about assessment...



twinkl.com





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Beauty Bias



Judging people based on how they look.

Affinity Bias



people the same as ourselves.

Horns Effect



Negative assumptions cloud our judgement.

Halo Effect



Perceived as having more positive traits than others.

Attribution Bias



How we perceive the actions of others.

Confirmation Bias



Searching for evidence to back up first impressions.

Conformity Bias



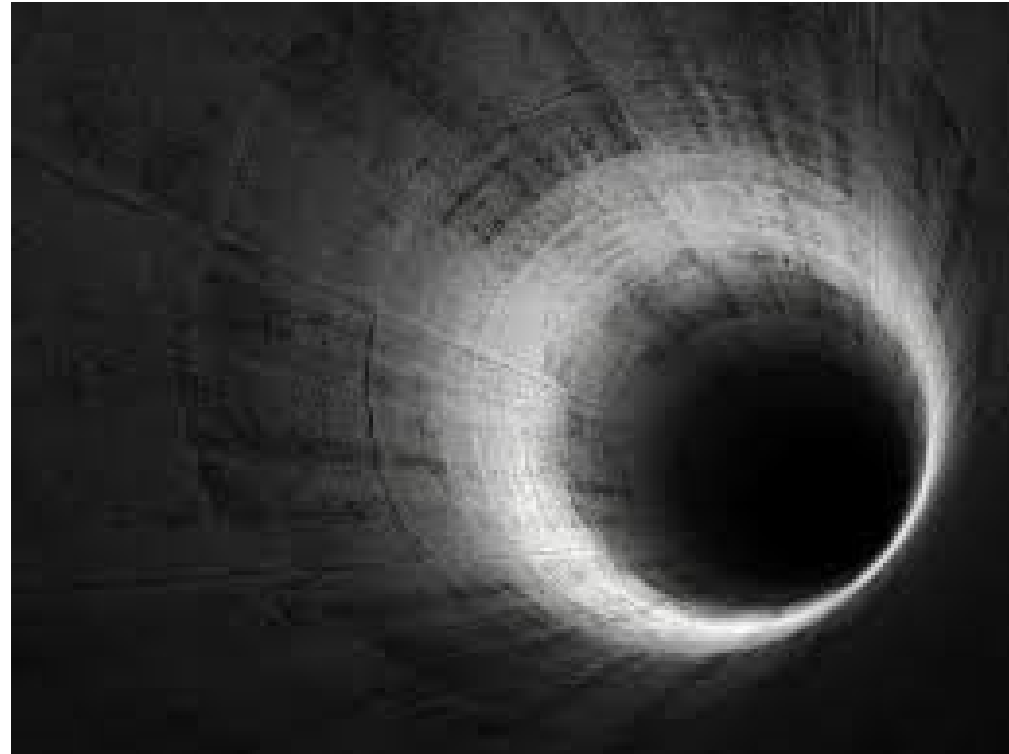
Changing opinions to conform with the group.



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# Pitfalls in teaching and learning...





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**With the move to digital platforms new challenges emerged**







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But if it is unconscious....





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Research  
into  
unconscious  
bias...



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## The Impact of Gender on the Review of the Curricula Vitae of Job Applicants and Tenure Candidates: A National Empirical Study

Rhea E. Steinpreis,<sup>1</sup> Katie A. Anders, and Dawn Ritzke  
*University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

The purpose of this study was to determine some of the factors that influence outside reviewers and search committee members when they are reviewing curricula vitae, particularly with respect to the gender of the name on the vitae. The participants in this study were 238 male and female academic psychologists who listed a university address in the 1997 Directory of the American Psychological Association. They were each sent one of four versions of a curriculum vitae (i.e., female job applicant, male job applicant, female tenure candidate, and male tenure candidate), along with a question-

conscious responding, the results indicate that the participants were clearly able to distinguish between the qualifications of the job applicants versus the tenure candidates, as evidenced by suggesting higher starting salaries, increased likelihood of offering the tenure candidates a job, granting them tenure, and greater respect for their teaching, research, and service records. Both men and women were more likely to vote to hire a male job applicant than a female job applicant with an identical record. Similarly, both sexes reported that the male job applicant had done adequate teaching, research, and service experience compared to the female job applicant with an identical record. In contrast, when men and women examined the highly competitive curriculum vitae of the real-life scientist who had gotten early tenure, they were equally likely to tenure the male and female tenure candidates and there was no difference in their ratings of their teaching, research, and service

<sup>1</sup>To whom correspondence should be addressed at Department of Psychology, 138 Garland Hall, 2441 East Hartford Avenue, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Email: rstein@facstaff.wisc.edu

## Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination

By MARIANNE BERTRAND AND SENDIL MULLAINATHAN\*

We study race in the labor market by sending fictitious resumes to help-wanted ads in Boston and Chicago newspapers. To manipulate perceived race, resumes are randomly assigned African-American- or White-sounding names. White names receive 50 percent more callbacks for interviews. Callbacks are also more respon-

## Hiring “Emily or Greg” vs “Lakisha or Jamal”

Even  
signifi-  
cantly

are twice as likely to be unemployed and earn nearly 25 percent less when they are employed (Council of Economic Advisers, 1998). This inequality has sparked a debate as to whether employers treat members of different races differentially. When faced with observably similar African-American and White applicants, do they favor the White one? Some argue yes, citing either employer prejudice or employer perception that race signals lower productivity. Others argue that differential treatment by race is a relic of the past, eliminated by some combination of employer enlightenment, affirmative action programs and the profit-maximization motive. In fact, many in this latter camp even feel that stringent enforcement of

researchers possess far less data than employers do. White and African-American workers that appear similar to researchers may look very different to employers. So any racial difference in labor market outcomes could just as easily be attributed to differences that are observable to employers but unobservable to researchers.

To circumvent this difficulty, we conduct a field experiment that builds on the correspondence testing methodology that has been primarily used in the past to study minority outcomes in the United Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> We send resumes in response to help-wanted ads in Chicago and Boston newspapers and measure callback for interview for each sent resume. We

ican-  
like it  
Since

## Females as communal

- Nurturing
- Sympathetic
- Helpful

## Males as leaders

- Decisive
- Strong
- Risk takers

## Recommendation Letters

Components/ Language in letter	Males (N=222)	Females (N=89)
Standout adjectives <sup>1</sup>	2.0/letter	1.5/letter
Grindstone adjectives <sup>2</sup>	23%	34%
Doubt Raisers <sup>3</sup>	12%	24%
Reference to personal life	1%	6%
Multiple mentions of research	62%	35%
Accomplishments/ Achievements	13%	3%
Reference to publications	13%	3%
“Successful”	7%	3%

<sup>1</sup> excellent, superb, outstanding, unique

<sup>2</sup> hardworking, conscientious, dependable, thorough, dedicated, careful, meticulous

<sup>3</sup> e.g., negative language, hedges, unexplained comments, faint praise, and irrelevancies

## Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?<sup>1</sup>

Shelley J. Correll, Stephen Benard, and In Paik  
*Cornell University*

Survey research finds that mothers suffer a substantial wage penalty, although the causal mechanism producing it remains elusive. The authors employed a laboratory experiment to evaluate the hypothesis that status-based discrimination plays an important role and an audit study of actual employers to assess its real-world implications. In both studies, participants evaluated application materials for a pair of same-gender equally qualified job candidates who differed

## The Parent Trap

against fathers.

Mothers experience disadvantages in the workplace in addition to those commonly associated with gender. For example, two recent studies find that employed mothers in the United States suffer a per-child wage penalty of approximately 5%, on average, after controlling for the usual human capital and occupational factors that affect wages (Budig and England 2001; Anderson, Binder, and Krause 2003). In a summary of economic research, Crittenden (2001) concludes that, for those under the age of 35, the pay gap between mothers and nonmothers is larger than the pay gap between men and women. As Glass (2004) notes, employed mothers are

## Women and Men in Accounting Textbooks: Exploring the Hidden Curriculum

Wendy M. Tietz

*Issues in Accounting Education* (2007) 22 (3): 459–480.

Hirshman, B.R., Alattar, A.A., Dhawan, S. *et al.* Association between medical academic genealogy and publication outcome: impact of unconscious bias on scientific objectivity. *Acta Neurochir* **161**, 205–211 (2019).

## Hidden Curriculum: An Analytical Definition

Mohammad Reza Andarvazh<sup>1</sup>, PhD; Leila Afshar<sup>2</sup>, MD, PhD; Shahram Yazdani<sup>3\*</sup>, MD

Journal of Medical Education

Fall 2017, Vol. 16, No. 4

Haider AH, Sexton J, Sriram N, et al. Association of Unconscious Race and Social Class Bias With Vignette-Based Clinical Assessments by Medical Students. *JAMA*. 2011; 306(9):942–951.

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Thompson BM, Haidet P, Casanova R, et al. Medical students' perceptions of their teachers' and their own cultural competency: implications for education. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2010; 25:(suppl2)

## Unconscious Bias

Addressing the Hidden Impact on Surgical Education

Leah M. Backhus, MD, MPH ✉ • Natalie S. Lui, MD, MAS • David T. Cooke, MD • Errol L. Bush, MD

Zachary Enumah, MD • Robert Higgins, MD, MSHA

REVIEW ARTICLE | VOLUME 29, ISSUE 3, P259-267, AUGUST 01, 2019

## How to Make or Break Implicit Bias Instruction: Implications for Curriculum Development

[Cristina M. Gonzalez](#), [Ramya J. Garba](#), [Alyssa Liguori](#), [Paul R. Marantz](#), [M. Diane McKee](#), [Monica L. Lytson](#)

## Possible unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion and the need to promote equality

Geoffrey Beattie ✉ & Patrick Johnson ✉

Volume 16, 2012 - Issue 1: Higher education: advancing equality in challenging times

## Can Education Change Society? Curriculum, Feminist pedagogy and Adult Education

Bríd Connolly. v. 3 n. 5 (2020): RIEJA - Revista Internacional de Educação de Jovens e Adultos



medical education

Helping medical learners recognise and manage unconscious bias toward certain patient groups Cayla R Teal, Anne C Gill, Alexander R Green, Sonia Crandall

Gonzalez, C.M., Deno, M.L., Kintzer, E. *et al.* A Qualitative Study of New York Medical Student Views on Implicit Bias Instruction: Implications for Curriculum Development. *J GEN INTERN MED* **34**, 692–698 (2019).

Medical Teacher

## Twelve tips for teaching implicit bias recognition and management

Cristina M. Gonzalez, Monica L. Lytson & Javeed Sukhera



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# Barriers

- **We can't change what we're unaware of!**
- **The emotionally charged nature of the subject**
- **Resistant educators**
- **Resistant learners**
- **Unsupportive or unaware institutional climates**





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# Next steps







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# As an individual

- Acknowledge your own bias
- Take the Implicit Association test (with a pinch of salt)
- Understand the evidence and existing frameworks
- As an educator design relevant curricula
- Engage learners
- Garner institutional support
- Exercise judgement in practice



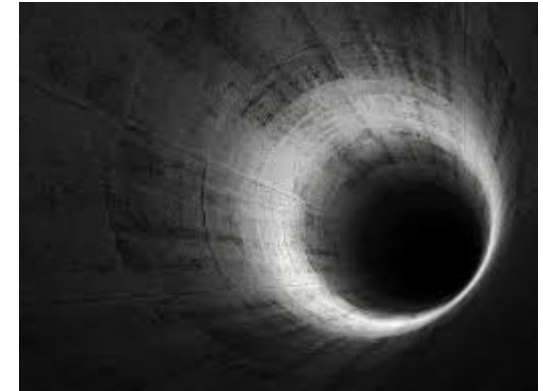


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# Me, myself and I... and them

- Think about access to learning
- Think about educational interactions
- Think about expectations
- Think about 'confirmation bias'
- Think about the impact of the information you pass on and how the cycle may repeat itself!





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# As an institution...

- Acknowledge and tackle biases (be visible in doing so)
- Create communities of practice
- Provide **training** and work on solutions
- Encourage skill development (research)
- Validate and reward good practice
- Provide funding and evaluation
- Be accountable decision makers
- Sustainable change over time...





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# Summary

- ❖ Raise Unconscious Bias awareness
- ❖ Recognise the need for sustained change in the teaching and learning discourse
- ❖ Need to address curriculum absence
- ❖ Need to review policies and challenge policy makers
- ❖ Inspired?



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Teaching can be incredible powerful as it can empower but it can also damage.

Use your power wisely!  
(unknown)

Thank You!



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# Some References

Cristina M. Gonzalez, Monica L. Lypson & Javeed Sukhera (2021) Twelve tips for teaching implicit bias recognition and management, *Medical Teacher*, DOI: [10.1080/0142159X.2021.1879378](https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2021.1879378)

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