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# IMPLICIT BIAS

WHAT IS IT AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT UNIVERSITIES?

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# OVERVIEW

- Activities to get us thinking
- Some definitions and examples
- Discussion
- Wrap up: How does this affect us?

“They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.”

— Andy Warhol, The Philosophy of Andy Warhol

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

— Barack Obama

# DO THESE DESCRIBE MALES OR FEMALES?

Tomboy

Doctor

Bossy

Nurse

Strong

Caring

Emotional

Leader

Artistic

Hero

Tough

Athlete

Smart

Science Teacher

Elementary Teacher

Jock

Mechanical

Logical

Sweet

Foolish

## ANOTHER ACTIVITY

Please read this scenario (that I did not write)

“The words of my doctor from earlier that morning were still ringing in my ears when I found myself slamming the brakes of my car to avoid a nasty collision. An incompetent driver was cutting across two lanes at a roundabout just in front of me. Still perspiring somewhat I carried on to drop off my screaming child with the nanny. It was a hectic morning”

# CLOTHING, ETHNICITY, AND GENDER INFLUENCE OUR IDEAS OF IDENTITY, PERSONALITY, AND CHARACTER



## WHAT DOES THIS SAY?

THIS MESSAGE IS TO PROVE HOW OUR MINDS  
CAN DO AMAZING THINGS! IMPRESSIVE THINGS!  
IN THE BEGINNING IT WAS HARD BUT NOW, ON  
THIS LINE YOUR MIND IS READING IT  
AUTOMATICALLY WITHOUT EVEN THINKING ABOUT  
IT, BE PROUD! ONLY CERTAIN PEOPLE CAN READ  
THIS.

# IMPLICIT BIAS

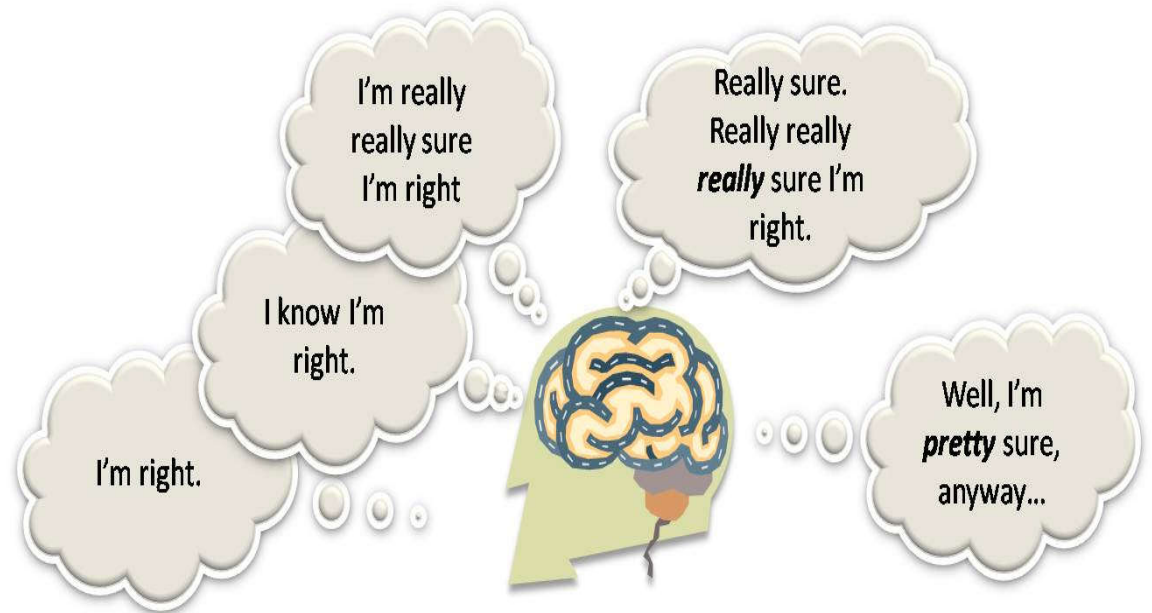
- Unconscious, outside of our control
- Automatic
- “Mindbugs”
  - Erroneous thought that stick in our minds even if we consciously “know better”
  - Lead to perceptual bias
  - Influences how we see, feel, remember, “know”, judge
  - Learned associations



# TYPES OF IMPLICIT BIAS

- Gender
- Race
- Religion/Lack thereof
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Weight/Physical Attributes

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

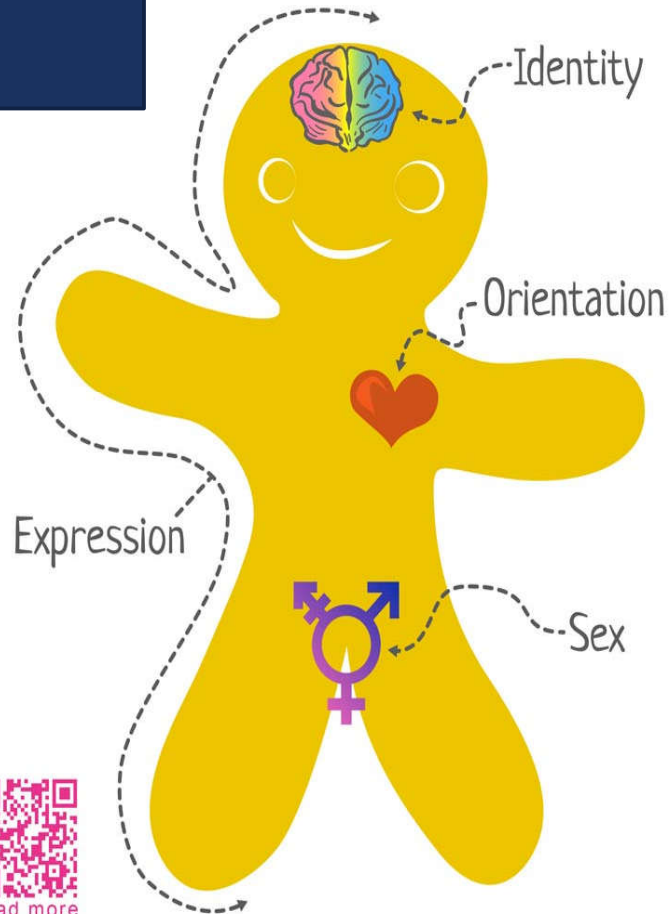




BEFORE WE DISCUSS  
GENDER....

# The Genderbread Person

by [www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com](http://www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com)



Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.



Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.



Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.



Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.

## IMPLICIT BIASES: AFFECTS ON MEN AND WOMEN

- “Women are Wonderful” vs. “Man’s Role”
- “Natural” Women
- The role of a dad: parent or babysitter?
- The value of men vs. the value of women



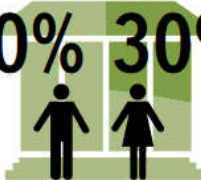
## IMPACT OF GENDER BIAS AT UNIVERSITIES


- In Sciences, men are favored as candidates
- In academia, implicit gender bias contributes to “the fact that women do not reach the most senior and leading positions at universities in the same proportions that men do” (LERU, 2018, 3)
- Double-blind reviews led to significant increase of females as lead authors (Budden, Tregenza, Aarssen, et al. 2008)
- Men earn more than women at every rank and in every institution type except two-year private institutions and held a higher percentage of tenure position at every type of institution even if they did not hold the highest number of faculty positions (Johnson, 2017)
- 26% of full professors are female, 40% of associate professors are female, 48.6% of assistant professors are female, and 56% of instructors/lecturers are female within the Pitt system (Brodish, 2017).


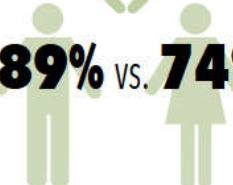



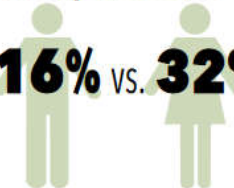
AND IF YOU THOUGHT IT WAS BECAUSE OF MARRIAGE & KIDS....

# PRESIDENTS

**70%** **30%**  While the number of women presidents has increased since 1986, as of 2016, women only hold 30 percent of presidencies across all institutions of higher education.\*

Currently married   
**90%** vs. **75%** 

Have children   
**89%** vs. **74%** 

Altered career for dependent, spouse/partner, or parent   
**16%** vs. **32%** 

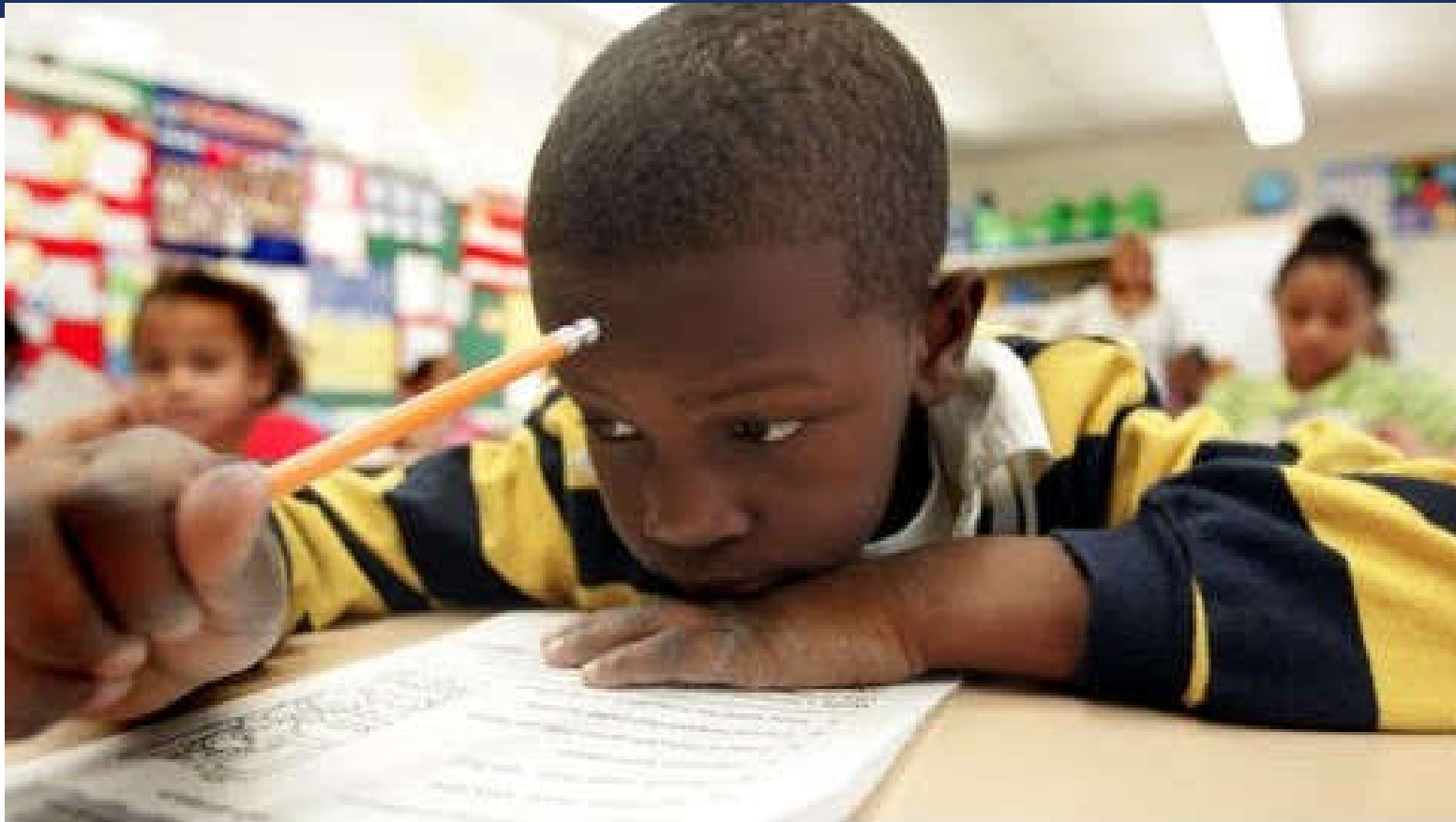
Women presidents are less likely to be married, less likely to have children, and more likely to have altered their career to care for dependent, spouse/partner, or parent.\*\*

## IMPLICIT BIASES: RACE

- Influence in Classrooms
- Who do we mentor?
- To Whom do we Respond?
  - Graduate Students
  - On-line courses
- Expectations
  - Shifting standards
- Academic suspensions
- Discriminatory Health care



# STEREOTYPE THREAT



## ETHNICITY/INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS & FACULTY

- Implicit bias against students with non-standard accent (Na, 2016)
- Accented English can be seen as “exotic” (e.g., “Ooh, I love your accent) and/or
- Feeling from international minority ethnic faculty that “individuals from non-dominant backgrounds should conform to White norms and leave institutionalized racist acts unquestioned” (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018, 108)
- Devaluing of Research:
  - Can be viewed as “lesser” or “more personal”, less “serious” and “rigorous” (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018)





## INTERSECTIONALITY



- Intersectionality is how being more than one of these groups affects a person.
- Example in academia: “At the turn of the 21st century, there were 176,485 tenured full professors at the nation’s public and private research universities—72 percent White men, 17 percent White women, 8 percent men of color (Black, Hispanic, and Native American combined), and 2 percent women of color—combined” (Evans, 2007, 131).



## SPECIFIC OUTCOMES OF BIASES ACROSS THE BOARD

- Hiring Practices (Faculty, Grad Students, Etc.)
  - Experiment of equal resumes
- Letters of Recommendation
  - Undergraduate letters of recommendation (male/female; white/minority) -- discrepancy and tentative statements
  - Letters overall tend to be shorter, lack specificity, include fewer superlative adjectives



# BECHDEL TEST

Alison Bechdel (1985)

Created for movies; now used for books

- (1) it has to have at least two women in it
- (2) who talk to each other
- (3) about something besides a man.



## IMPLICIT BIAS ACROSS THE BOARD: OUR WATER



- “Faculty share the values and prejudices of the broader society and those of their own group—one which in the US is predominately white, male and from well-educated middle class families” (MacLachlan, 2017, 1).
- Think we’re objective, but we come with our own values, expectations, values, and experiences
- It’s our “water”. It is what academia “is” or “is not” to us.



## ADVICE TO MITIGATING IMPLICIT BIAS\*

*Bias is influential when...*

- Information is ambiguous, complex, and/or incomplete
- Decision-making criteria are unclear

*To mitigate the effects of bias we could...*

- Develop and prioritize evaluation criteria in advance
- Judge all candidates in comparison to criteria
- Know which factors are related to performance

\*From From Kate A. Ratliff, Ph.D. Executive Director, Project Implicit. Assistant Professor, University of Florida

## DISCUSS DIVERSITY: IT'S IMPORTANT (ALBEIT UNCOMFORTABLE)

“Studies on the psychology of racial dialogues indicate social and academic norms that dictate against race talk between White Americans and persons of color: (a) the politeness protocol, (b) the academic protocol, and (c) the color-blind protocol. These protocols discourage race talk and allow society to enter into a conspiracy of silence regarding the detrimental impact oppression plays on persons of color. Facilitating difficult dialogues on race requires educators to recognize what makes such discussions difficult. For people of color, engaging in race talk exposes them to microaggressions that invalidate and assail their racial/ethnic identities. For Whites, honest discussions are impeded by fears of appearing racist, of realizing their racism, of acknowledging White privilege, and of taking responsibility to combat racism.” (Sue, 2013)

“Unexamined biases in institutional culture can prevent diverse students from thriving and persisting in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Given the daily personal interactions that faculty have with students, we suggest that individual educators have the opportunity, and responsibility, to improve the retention and persistence of diverse students. However, in our experience, faculty professional development programs often limit discussions of diversity to "comfortable" topics (such as learning styles) and miss opportunities to explore deeper issues related to faculty privilege, implicit bias, and cues for stereotype threat that we all bring to the classroom” (Killpack & Melon, 2016).

## ADDITIONAL ACTIONS WE CAN TAKE

- Be mindful: Reflect on your emotions
- Be kind and practice empathy
- Being diverse does not equal being inclusive
  - We “hire for diversity and manage for similarity” (Turnball, 2019)
- Maintain an openness to learning



## PLAN OF ACTION

- What will you do?
- Who will it effect?
- How will it change what we do here at the university?
- How will it improve the lives of our faculty, staff, and students?





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