



Stereotype Threat & Bias Literacy



Experiences

What is Stereotype Threat?

- o A situational predicament in which people are, or feel themselves to be, at risk of confirming negative stereotypes about their *social group*.
 - o Gender, race & ethnicity, religion, age
 - o Nationality, regionality, political affiliation, marital status, parental status
 - o Hair color/cut, clothing, etc—anything that signals a social group
- o And the resulting anxiety and sense that you will be judged in terms of negative stereotypes instead of personal merit.

What are we talking about?

- o Stereotype Threat is a form of implicit bias
 - o We all have biases that affect our decisions, thinking processes, and actions
 - o It is part of being human
 - o Being human also means we can become self-aware
 - o It means we can become bias literate
- o Bias literacy is a path of awareness and mitigation starting with the self and moving outward to colleagues, friends, and others.

Bias Literacy

1.
Unconscious
Incompetence

2. Conscious
Incompetence

3. Conscious
Competence

4.
Unconscious
Competence

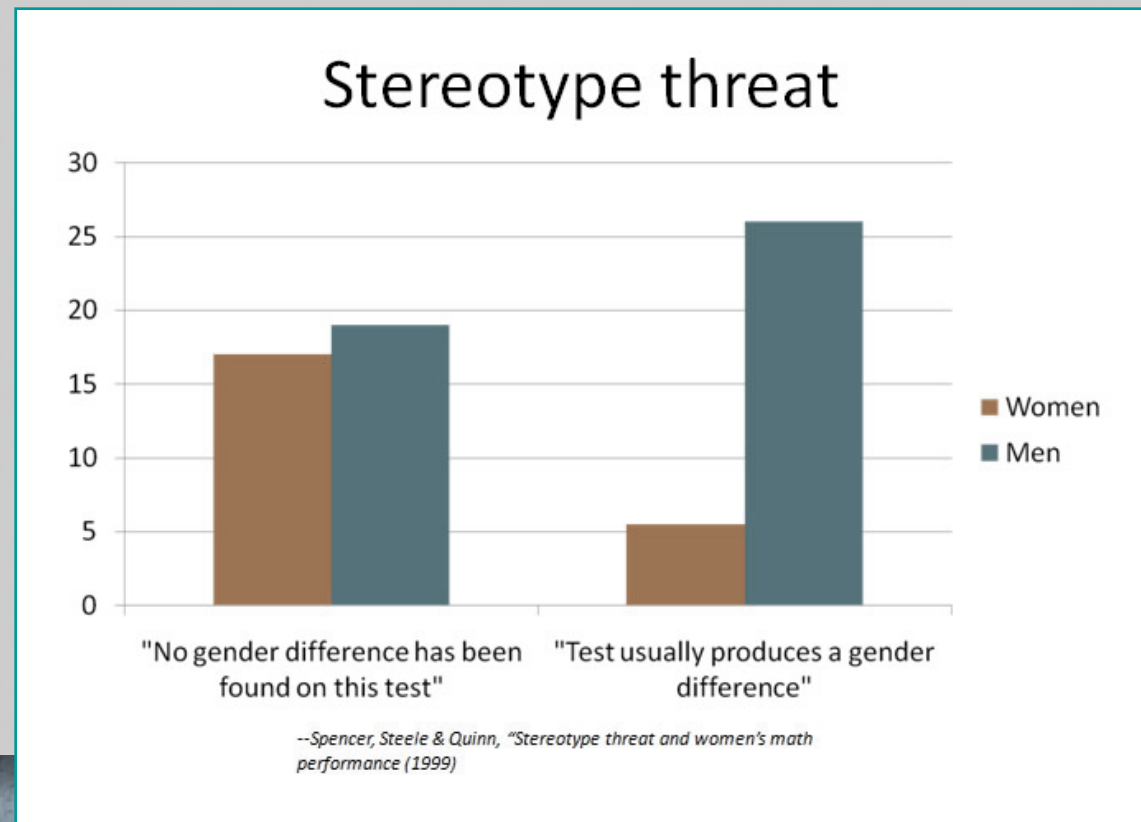
5. Reflective
Competence

Why does it matter?

- o Stereotype threat:
 - o Reduces the confidence & performance of people who belong to negatively stereotyped groups by causing anxiety when those stereotypes are triggered
 - o Reduces recruitment & retention of minorities and women
 - o A factor in achievement gaps & then reinforces stereotypes
 - o Affects educational policies through lack of information, misconceptions, & choices/decisions based on stereotypes
- o Holds back talented students who don't think they belong or don't think they can perform

What does it look like in the lab?

- o “Heightened awareness about your identity as a man or woman or member of a certain group could influence your performance on a standardized math test.” Dr. Matthew McGlone



What does it look like in the media?

“Let me tell you about my trouble with girls. Three things happen when they are in the lab: you fall in love with them, they fall in love with you, and when you criticize them they cry.”

--Tim Hunt, Nobel Prize winner and former scientist at the University College London, June 2015

#distractinglysexy

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Filter mask protects me from hazardous chemicals and muffles my woman cries. Double win! [#DistractinglySexy](#)



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Thank goodness for the cold weather gear, otherwise my male teammates might have fallen in love [#distractinglysexy](#)



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What does it look like in the media?



#ILookLikeAnEngineer



“This [tech] industry’s culture fosters an unconscious lack of sensitivity towards those who do not fit a certain mold. I’m sure that every other woman and non-male-identifying person in this field has a long list of mild to extreme personal offenses that they’ve *just had to tolerate*. I’m not trying to get anyone in trouble, fired or ruin anyone’s life. I just want to make it clear that *we are all humans*, and there are certain patterns of behavior that no one should have to tolerate while in a professional environment.” –*Isis Wenger*

What does Stereotype Threat look like in our computer science classrooms?

- o Gender imbalance in the classroom
- o Stereotyped space
 - o 'Geeky' classrooms
 - o "male" space



Cheryan et al., 2011, *Computers & Education*

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What does it look like in our computer science classrooms?

Signals

- Assigning tasks/work based on stereotyped roles
- Interrupting, talking over, ignoring or “mansplaining” women or people of color
- Attributing women and people of color’s achievements to luck, affirmative action, attractiveness
- Calling on males and whites more often

Results

- Students don’t speak up in groups or classes
- Reluctant to take leadership roles
- Discount their performance

Simple Solutions

- o Increase your bias literacy
 - o Start with you and your classroom environment
- o Use a growth mindset
 - o Growth mindsets only work if you address the implicit bias and structures of bias in which your students perform



A Different Experience