A Fearless Campus

Fearless Classroom Asynchronous Workshop

Overcoming Implicit Bias

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Implicit Bias

- "Gut feelings" or "snap judgments" in response to people based on their social identities

- Test your own biases at Project Implicit (implicit.harvard.edu)

- You can check out my **website** or **new book** for lengthier intros into the nature of and evidence for implicit bias

- How do implicit biases affect folks in in the classroom?
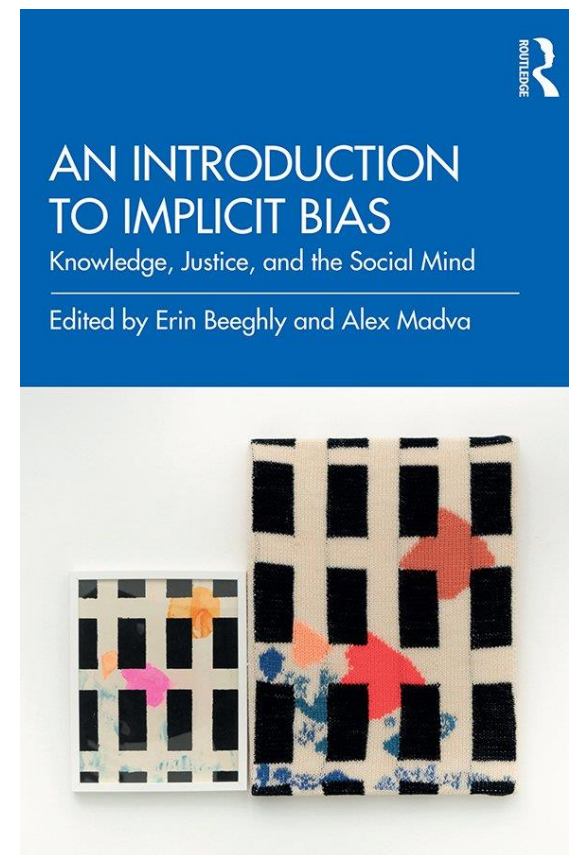
Replying to emails (Milkman, Akinola, & Chugh 2012)

Student Race and Gender	Emails Ignored		Meetings Denied	
	%	% Increase Relative to Caucasian Males	%	% Increase Relative to Caucasian Males
Caucasian Male	26.5%	N/A	52.4%	N/A
Caucasian Female	29.8%	12.5%	52.9%	1.1%
Black Male	32.5%	22.6%	61.3%	17.0%
Black Female	34.4%	29.8%	60.0%	14.6%
Hispanic Male	36.9%	39.2%	58.2%	11.1%
Hispanic Female	27.1%	2.3%	55.7%	6.3%
Indian Male	41.8%	57.7%	68.2%	30.2%
Indian Female	37.7%	42.3%	67.9%	29.7%
Chinese Male	36.7%	38.3%	66.8%	27.6%
Chinese Female	46.9%	77.0%	62.9%	20.2%

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Implicit Bias in the Classroom

- **Dutch teachers: explicitly unprejudiced, but implicitly biased, toward Arab-Muslim students**

- **Implicit biases predicted…**
  - expectations of student success, and
  - ethnic achievement gaps in their classes
    (van den Bergh et al. 2010)
  - similar results in two large studies in Italy
    (Alesina, Carlana et al.)

- **Texas teachers: toward black & Latinx students…**
  - gap b/t teacher and student's perception of motivation
  - lower grades in math and English
    (Harvey et al. 2015)

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Implicit Bias in the Classroom

- **White undergrads gave lessons to either black or white students**
(Jacoby-Senghor et al. 2016)

- **Implicit race biases led these "instructors" to…**

  - be visibly anxious

  - give poorer lessons

  - (even non-black learners who watched videos of these lessons <u>learned less</u>)

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Social actions and "micro-behaviors"

Explicit (egalitarian) beliefs → controllable behaviors, e.g., how friendly our words are
(McConnell & Leibold 2001; Dovidio et al. 2002)

Implicit biases predict tacit and subtle behaviors:

➢how much eye contact we make

➢how rapidly we blink

➢how far away we sit

➢whether we lean forward or back

➢how much we laugh at a joke

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Students' Biases about Each Other
(Grunspan et al. 2016)

- **Which bio students are most knowledgeable?**

- **Undergraduate men ranked other men as most knowledgeable...**

- **... even over women who were doing better (.75 GPA points better!)**

- **(Women showed no gender bias)**

- **Bias increased as the term went on. Why?**

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Gender Inequalities in the Classroom

- **Instructors…**
  - Call on male students more often
  - Use male students' names more often when attributing ideas in discussion
  - Ask male students more <u>abstract</u> questions
    and ask others more <u>factual</u> questions
  - Elaborate more often on male students' points

- **Undergraduate men speak more frequently**
  - and blurt out answers without raising their hand
- **Women are interrupted more, speak less, speak softer**
  - and hedge more ("I may be wrong but…")

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Tools for Reducing Bias

**More than our implicit biases,
our <u>goals</u> shape our behavior**

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Tool #1: The Life-Changing Magic of <u>If-Then</u> Plans

Concrete plans that specify the when, where, and how…

"I'd like to cut back on smoking" vs.

"If I feel a craving for cigarettes, then I will chew gum!"

"My New Year's resolution is to work out more" vs.

"When I leave work on Tuesdays, then I will go to the gym!"

Identify the problem contexts and formulate concrete plans for how to act in those contexts

- easy to form, easy to remember, easy to execute

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Tool #1: The Life-Changing Magic of <u>If-Then</u> Plans

More likely to interrupt women than men?

→ **"If she's talking, then I won't." (Louise Antony)**

Student participation?

→ **"If someone who hasn't spoken yet raises their hand, then I'll call on them!"**

→ **"If a student says something anomalous, then assume that I don't understand (not that student doesn't make sense)!"**

Context context context

- **"If a person underperforms, then I will consider situational causes!"**
  - car trouble, family or work problems, course load, etc.
- **"When I plan activities and assignments, then I will make sure they are <u>accessible</u>!"**

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Your Homework: Brainstorm...

- **What are some contexts where you might be affected by, or encounter, bias?**

- **What are some plans for response you can put in place?**

- **Plan structure:**
  - If [description of context],
  - Then [I will act in a certain way]!

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Replying to emails…

**"If a student emails me,
then I will reply!"**

**"instead of just responding with… gut instinct,
there should be a policy in place for how to handle [emails]…**

<u>respond uniformly across the board to everyone</u>"
(Katherine Milkman)

Tool #2: Approach Mindset

- **Adopt an "approach-oriented" mindset to classroom interactions**
  - Prevention-focused: "avoid appearing prejudiced in any way during the interaction"

  - Promotion-focused: "approach the interaction as an opportunity to have an enjoyable intercultural dialogue"

→**Make intergroup contact "rewarding rather than depleting"**
(Trawalter & Richeson 2006)

→**When I meet a new person,
then I'll tell myself it's an opportunity to learn!**

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Tool #3: Find Common Ground

(Mallet et al. 2008, West et al. 2014)

- **Find similarities with outgroup members, even about trivial things: apples vs. oranges and carpet vs. hardwood**
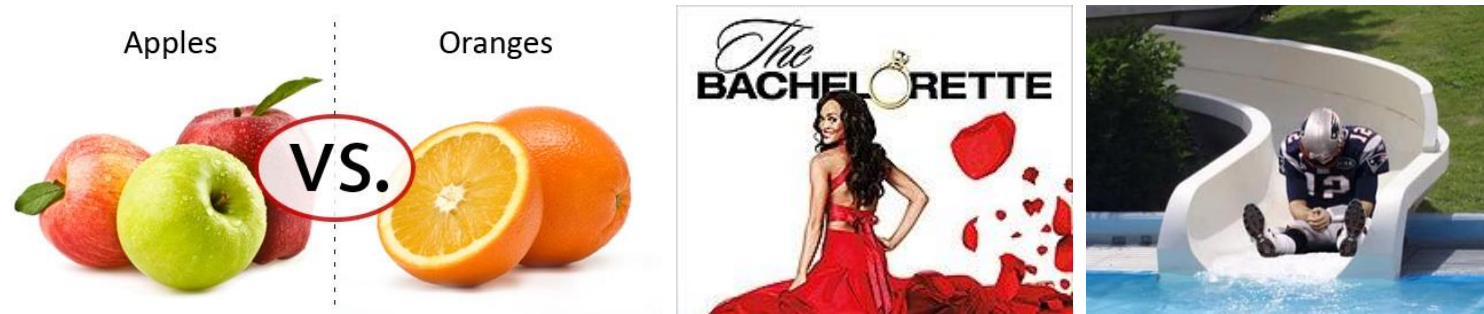
- **Both rooting for the same Bachelor?**

- **Both hoping that Tom Brady's career finally goes south?**

- **Both fans of *Tiger King? Black Mirror? Stranger Things? The Last Dance?***

- **<u>Would you rather</u> always be: 10min late or 20min early?**

Tool #4: Success, Setbacks, & Motivation

- **When we test out new strategies to promote a Fearless Classroom,**
- **we tend to lose motivation to keep pushing (effectively thinking, "ok, my work here is done")**
  - This is true even if the new strategy has no effect!
  - Collect data—formally and informally—to see if these tools work for you!

- **Treat effective interventions as evidence that we <u>can</u> make progress if we keep trying, not that <u>we</u> have met all our goals**

- **"When we make progress, then we will remind ourselves how far we have to go!"**

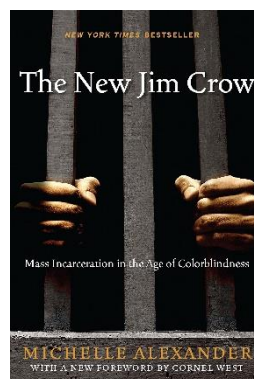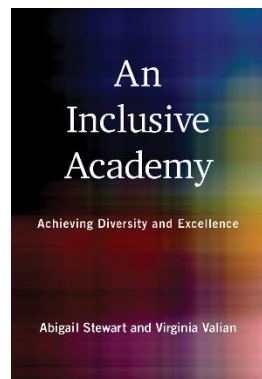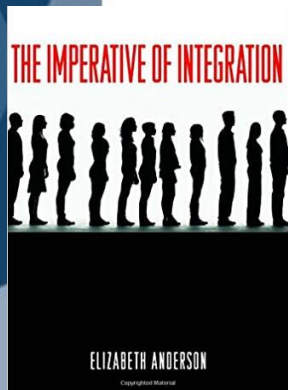- **"When there are setbacks, then we will keep fighting!"**

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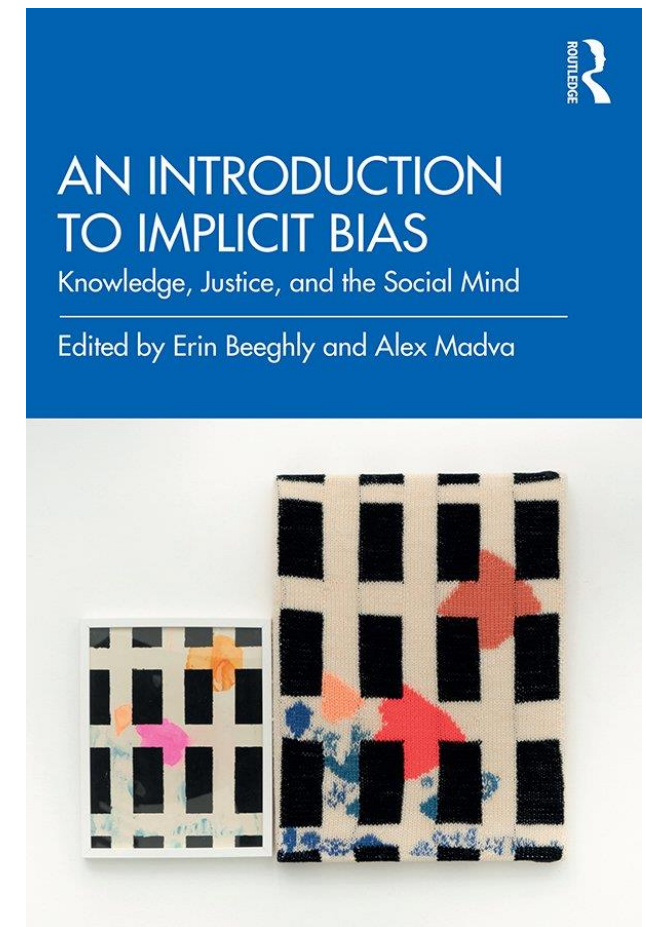
Thanks!

Check out my new book!

Email me with any follow-up questions, comments

ammadva@cpp.edu

More info and links at my website:

alexmadva.com

See also: Project Implicit, Active Bystander Strategies