

Bias and Stereotypes Worksheet*

In pairs or smaller groups, discuss the following questions as they relate to the findings below:

1. What bias or stereotype threat does the result highlight?
2. Do you feel you have this bias or have you seen this bias enacted upon?
3. How can this bias impact a mentoring relationship?

Study 1. If African American or female students are asked to identify their race or gender, respectively, at the start of an exam, they will do statistically worse on that exam.[†]

Study 2. Blind, randomized trial: When asked to rate the quality of verbal skills indicated by a short text, evaluators rated the skills as lower if they were told an African American wrote the text than if a they were told a white person wrote it, and gave lower ratings when told a man wrote it than when told a woman wrote it.[‡]

Study 3. Blind, randomized trial: Evaluators rated the same job performance lower if told it was performed by a woman. This difference was substantially greater when evaluator was busy or distracted.[§]

Study 4. Real life study: CVs of real women were assigned a male or female name, randomly, and sent to 238 academic psychologists to review either 1) at the time of job application or 2) at the time of review for an early tenure decision. Respondents were more likely to hire the applicant if a male name was found on the CV at the time of job application. Gender of applicant had no effect on respondents' likelihood of granting tenure when their CV was reviewed as part of an early tenure decision. However, there were four times more "cautionary comments" in the margins of the tenure packages with female names such as "We would have to see her job talk."^{**}

Study 5. Real life study: Parents' estimates of math ability are higher for sons than for daughters, despite no gender differences in grades or test scores.^{††}

Study 6. Real life study: Letters of recommendation for successful applicants for medical school faculty positions were analyzed based on gender of applicant. Letters for male applicants were longer and referred to research ability more often. Recommendations for females were shorter and referred to skill as a student/teacher more than a researcher. Females were more likely to be described using "grindstone" adjectives implying success due to hard work and persistence rather than skill.^{‡‡}

* Adapted from a workshop presented by Christine Pfund, Jo Handelsman and Jim Stith at the National Academies Summer Institute on Undergraduate Education in Biology (<http://www.academiessummerinstitute.org>).

† Steele, Claude M., & Aronson, J. (1995). "Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans." *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 69, 797-811.

‡ Biernat, M., & Manis, M. (1994). Shifting Standards and Stereotype-Based Judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66, 5-20.

§ Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (2000). Aversive racism and selection decisions: 1989 and 1999. *Psychological Science*, 11, 319-323 and Martell, R. F. (1991). Sex bias at work: The affects of attentional and memory demands on performance ratings for men and women. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 21, 1936-1960.

** Steinpreis, R. E., Anders, K. A., & Ritzke, D. (1999). The impact of gender on the review of the curricula vitae of job applicants and tenure candidates: A national empirical study. *Sex Roles*, 41, 509-527

†† Yee, D. K. & Eccles, J. S. (1988). Parent perceptions and attributions for children's math achievement. *Sex Roles*, 19, 371-333.

‡‡ Trix, F. & Psendka, C. (2003). Exploring the color of glass: Letters of recommendation for female and male medical faculty. *Discourse & Society*, 14(2), 191-220.