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Insights for Change

Implicit Bias, Racial Anxiety, and Stereotype Threat

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Challenging Times



- We are witness to a ever growing number of deaths of unarmed Black men and boys.
- Law enforcement are working hard to protect and gain trust of communities.

The Color of Justice

Powerful Aspirational Visionaries



Kids of color are treated more harshly...

NOT because of their actions.

In national surveys where youth report on their own behavior, we find that kids engage in **very similar behaviors** at **very similar rates.**

Children of color do the same things white kids do, but we treat kids of color more harshly.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011 National Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, sample size 15,425 9th-12th graders from 50 U.S. states. www.cdc.gov

Our Brains in Action

Please state the *color of the text*

Blue

Red

Green

Black

Green

Red

Blue

Black

Black

Blue

Green

Red

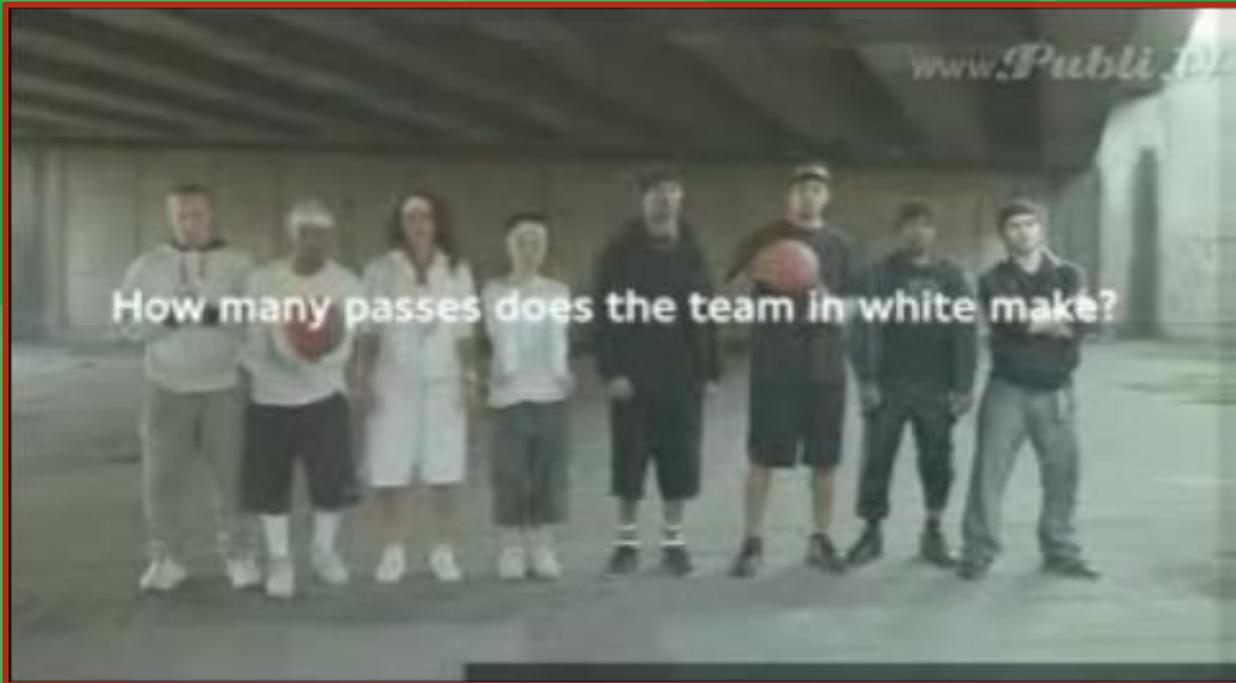
Green

Green

Black

Blue

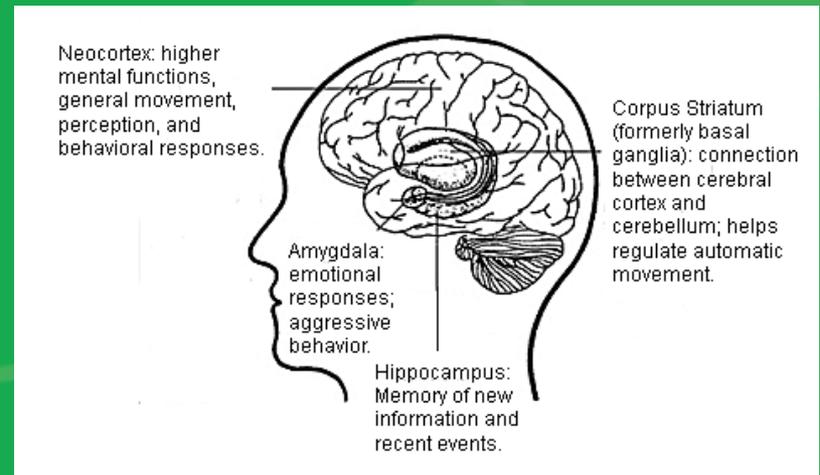
Awareness Test



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrqrkihlw-s>

How is this relevant to race and ethnicity?

- The effect of our society's racial stereotypes on how our brains operate . . .
- We want to be egalitarian, but our brains' automatic functions may make that more difficult than it seems.



The Role of the Unconscious Mind



The subconscious mind uses three processes to make sense of the millions of bits of information that we perceive

1. Sorting into categories
2. Creating associations between things
3. Filling in the gaps when we only receive partial information

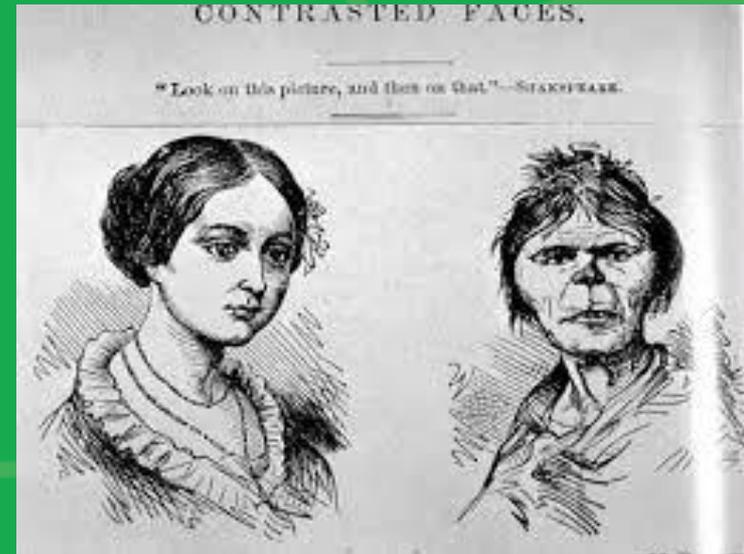
These three processes together add up to **schemas**: the “frames” through which our brains help us understand and navigate the world

Schemas and People

Preference v. Bias

- 1) Schemas That Categorize People , e.g. child, elder, man, woman, White, Black, Catholic. Associations that are generalized about those schemas = **Stereotypes**
- 2) Positive Associations With Stereotypes = **Preferences**
- 3) Negative Associations With Stereotypes = **Prejudices**

Stereotypes



Stereotypes and Myths

- Latinos as a group are often judged as unwanted and unskilled newcomers, earning considerably less than Whites per year (30% less in 2007, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007).
- Fewer than 30% of poor people in the United States are black. The public assumes this number to be 50 – 60%. (Krizay, 2011)
- Blacks are much more likely than whites to be portrayed as criminals (Welch, 2007).

Confirmation Bias

We judge behavior differently depending upon the stereotypes or negative associations.



Defining Implicit Bias

- *Implicit* bias refers to the automatic association of stereotypes or attitudes toward particular groups.
- A person can have deeply held conscious beliefs that all people should be treated fairly regardless of race and still have *implicit* biases.

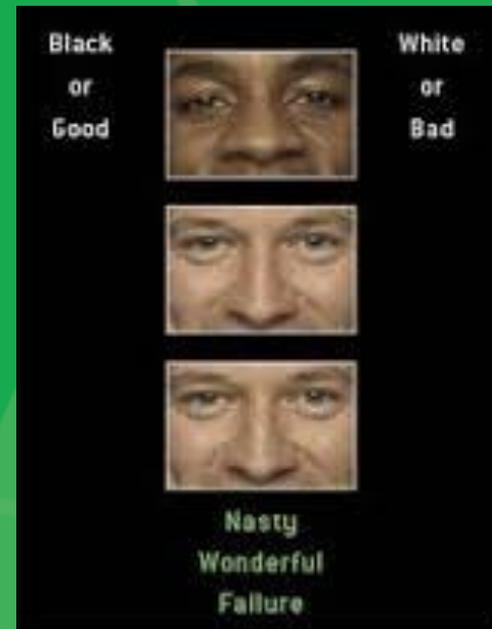
How do we measure bias?

Implicit Association Test

ProjectImplicit.com

Measures time differences between “schema consistent pairings” and “schema inconsistent pairings”

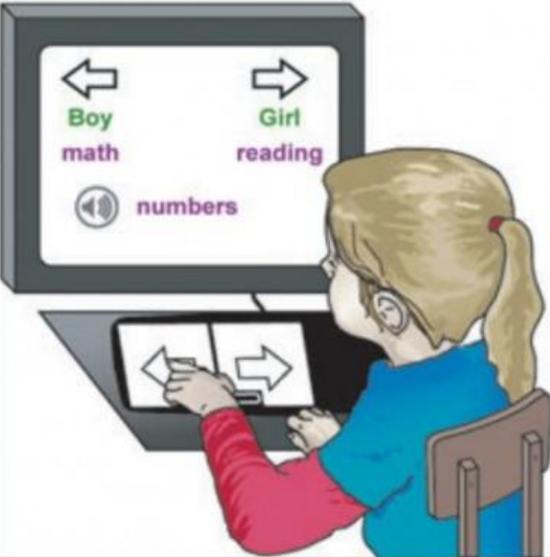
Most people perform second task more slowly.



What does the IAT tell us?

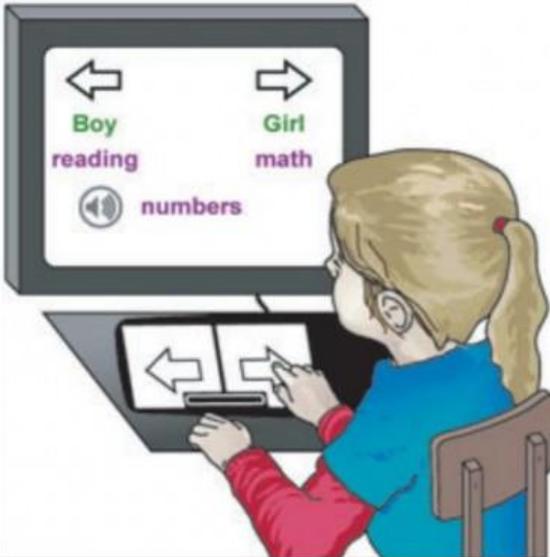
- It is *not* a DNA test – social scientists do not recommend it as a mechanism to “diagnose” an individual.
- As a tool to be used for research purposes, with millions of users over time, it is of great value in telling us about societal trends.

A **Stereotype Congruent (easy/fast)**



Item List:
story
Emily
graph
David
numbers
Hannah

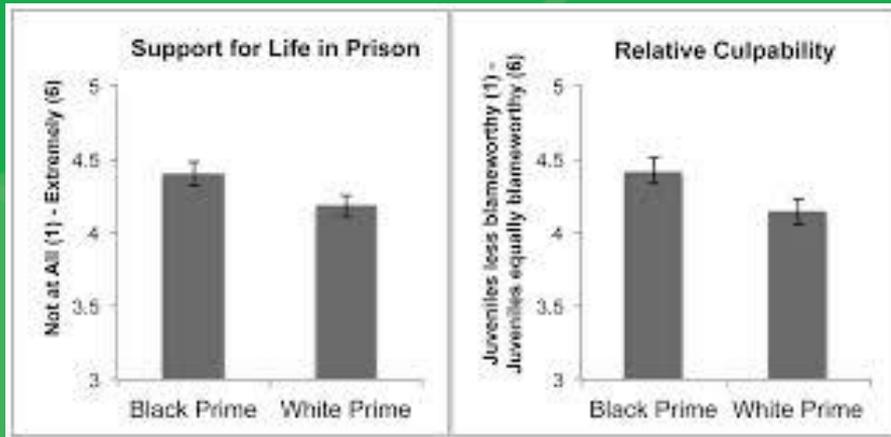
B **Stereotype Incongruent (difficult/slow)**



Item List:
books
Sarah
addition
Michael
numbers
Jessica

Link to Behavior

- Does it predict behavior?
- In general, IAT scores predict behavior more accurately than explicit attitudes.
- White judges with greater implicit bias against blacks were harsher on defendants when primed.



Implicit bias predicts “real world” behaviors

Recommended budget cuts (Rudman & Ashmore, 2007)

Recommended treatment for cardiac patients
(Green et al., 2007)

Voting and policy attitudes (Knowles et al., 2010)

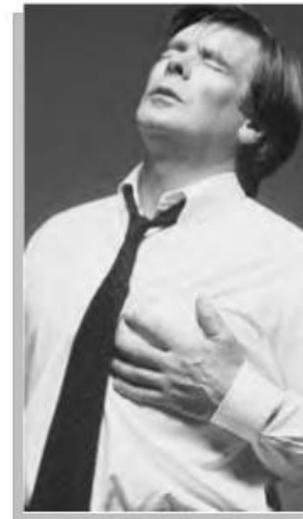
Hiring decisions (Rooth, 2010)

Nonverbal behavior (Dovidio et al., 2002)

Race and heart disease treatment

Acute CHD Presentations

- Unstable Angina
- “Wee heart attack!”
 - (subendocardial or partial thickness MI)
 - non-ST elevation MI
- “Big heart attack!”
 - (transmural or full thickness MI)
 - ST elevation MI



The Race Effect (2014 Nextions study)

Tom Meyer (White)

- “generally good writer but needs to work on”
- “has potential”
- “good analytic skills”
- 2.9/7 spelling grammar errors were found
- 4.1/6 technical writing errors found

Tom Meyer (Black)

- “needs lots of work”
- “can’t believe he went to NYU”
- “average at best”
- 5.8/7 spelling grammar errors found
- 4.9/6 technical writing errors found

Another form

- Unable to see the full range of emotions in other racial or ethnic groups.
- Can see rage but not sorrow.
- Effect is to limit empathy and willingness to help.



Displaying Implicit Bias

- Implicit bias affects more than our cognitive decision-making.



Research has shown that body language is far more affected by implicit bias than verbal statements – but that most people cue in and respond more to nonverbal than to verbal cues.

Particularly from people in power.
(Dovidio, 2002)

In-Group Preference

Along with or instead of negative associations toward an out-group, most people tend to hold favorable attitudes toward in-groups.

“In-group” preference explains how people can legitimately feel “non-racist” or free from gender stereotypes.

Can underpin “racial threat” – the fear of one’s group losing dominance.

Malleability of Merit

- “malleability of merit” – people frequently alter their criterion depending upon whether fits in-group member.
 - Police chief finalist
 - Construction manager
 - Book smart v. street wise
 - Education v. experience



Race-Effect Unawareness

- Secure in own status as “non-racist”
- Unaware of triggers for perceptions of bias by those in other racial groups



Examples of implicit bias

- When conductors were placed behind a screen, the percentage of female new hires for orchestral jobs increased 25% – 46%.



Breaking the Prejudice Habit



- Identify actions linked to stereotypes
- Make accessible counter-stereotypic images
- Individuation
- Empathic perspective-taking
- Inter-racial engagement (Devine et al. 2012)

Bias Over-Ride

- What are the areas of risk for biased behaviors?
- Subjective Criteria
- Poor decision-making contexts
- Presumed objectivity
- Count – identify tensions points
- Improve conditions for decision-making
- Internal Motivation

Intervention

- Focus on outward responses to behavior
- Develop knowledge base to anticipate triggers
- Seek alliances and relationships to deepen understanding

Relational Dynamics



Racial Anxiety – worry or concern that people have about or during inter-racial interactions.

Stereotype Threat – concern about confirming negative stereotype about group.

Racial Anxiety

- Experienced by people of color as anxiety that they will be the subject of discrimination and hostile or distant treatment.
- Experienced by whites as anxiety that they will be assumed to be racist and will be met with distrust or hostility.

How we expect others to see us

When we anticipate that we will be judged or rejected because of our race, ethnicity, gender, or other identity characteristic, we are experiencing “racial anxiety.”



Effects on the brain?

- Heart rate goes up, cortisol (stress level) increases, and cognitive capacities go down.



Behavioral Effects



- People experiencing racial anxiety often engage in less eye contact, have shorter interactions, and generally seem awkward.

Racial Anxiety Intervention

- Identify potential triggers.
- Develop language ahead of time.



Interventions

Promote the recognition that increased inter-racial contact leads to less anxiety.

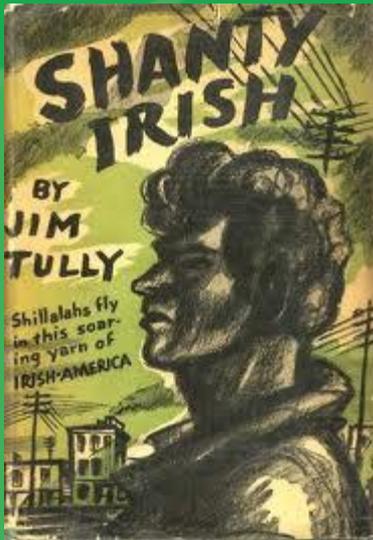
Noticing race is not racist – it is seeing part of a person's identity.

Facilitate cross-racial ally groups to help people recognize that obstacles and challenges may not be linked to race, ethnicity, or gender difference (Walton & Cohen, 2011).

Identity Relevance

Implicit

Explicit



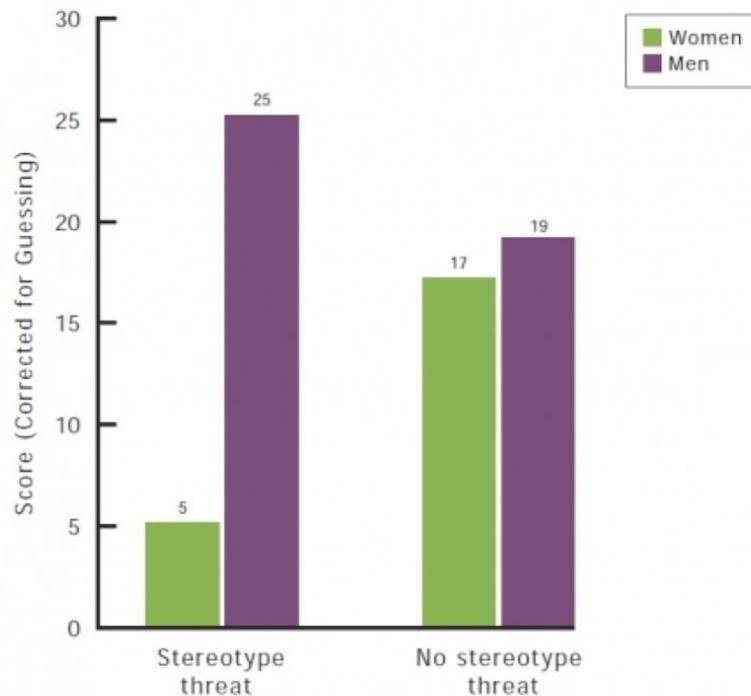
Stereotype Threat

Apprehension arising from the awareness of a negative stereotype or personal reputation in a situation where the stereotype or identity is relevant, and thus confirmable



Evidence of Stereotype Threat

Figure 15. Performance on a Challenging Math Test, by Stereotype Threat Condition and Gender

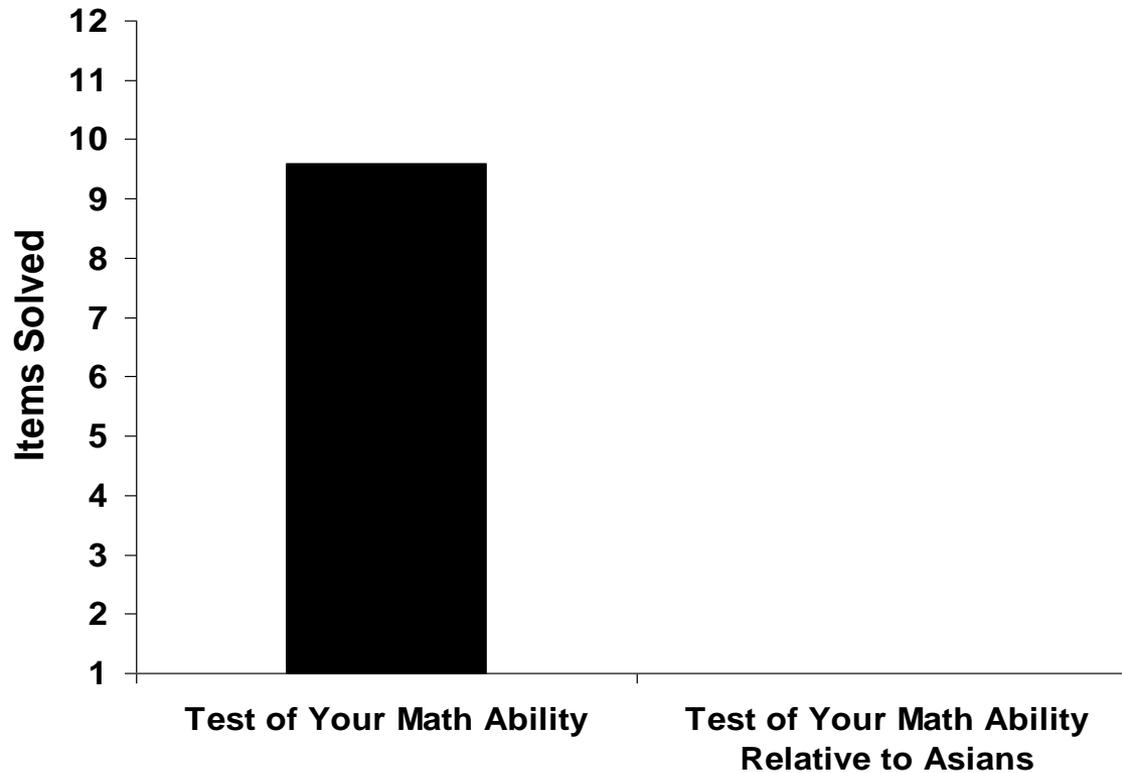


Stereotype threat: if participants are told that women are worse than men at mathematics, the women's scores worsen, men's improve...

Source: Spencer et al., 1999, "Stereotype threat and women's math performance," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 35(1), p. 13.

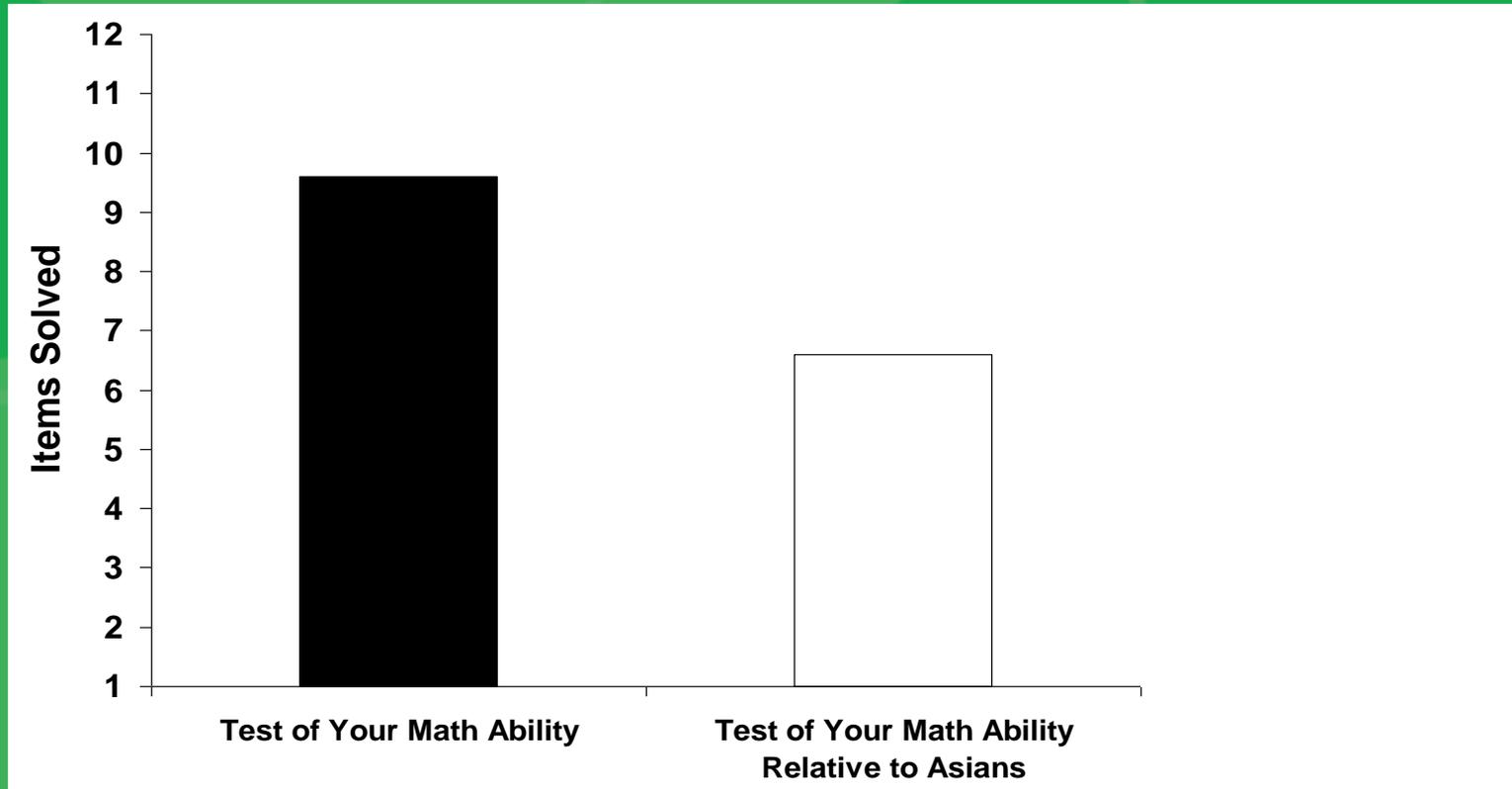
When White Men Can't Do Math

Aronson, et al., (1999). *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.



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Bias in Mentoring: Positive feedback bias

Teachers often give students of color less critical feedback (Harber et al., 2010)

Except when the teachers feel “supported” in their schools.

Then – they give Black children same level of feedback as white children. But they still give Latino children less critical feedback.

Application

Have you ever felt like people make assumptions about you that are not true?

How do you handle that experience?

How may implicit bias, racial anxiety, or stereotype threat interfere with equity goals in your department?
Brainstorm!

Applying Successful Interventions

- Learn about implicit bias, racial anxiety, and stereotype threat and tailor interventions to particular context.
- Genuine Belief in Values
- Affirm confidence in cross-racial relationships

