**Strategies to Prevent Bias in Teaching**

The following list summarizes some strategies that individual instructors can use to reduce the impact of implicit biases towards their students, as well as biases that students may hold against us as instructors.

1. Develop a better understanding of your own implicit biases.
   1. Take the [Implicit Association Tests](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html).
   2. Sit down at the end of the day and reflect on what happened. Ask yourself if there were any situations that occurred where you think you may have shown bias.
   3. If you do identify a situation where you may have displayed some bias, *first ask yourself why that bias exists* and then identify what you could do going forward to prevent that from happening.
2. Encourage other faculty on your campus to learn about implicit biases and how they can impact their own teaching.
   1. Request to leadership that this type of training is provided.
   2. Start a community group around this conversation (recommended reads below).
   3. Become a trained facilitator and lead your own trainings!
3. Take note of who you are calling on in class or which groups you work with most often. Make sure you are working with all students in class.
   1. One type of bias, termed in-group bias, can lead us to associate positive traits with students who look like us. This can affect both whom and how we interact with students in the classroom.
4. Practice empathy. Studies show that empathy is a valid intervention1,2. This study3 found that if you actively consider the perspective of a person, you can reduce stereotype biases.
5. Get feedback!
   1. Set up a classroom observation with a colleague. There are a variety of classroom observational tools that can help guide classroom observations by peers. Some examples:
      1. [Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM4](https://trestlenetwork.ku.edu/copus-observation-resources/)
      2. [Reformed Teaching Observation Protocol5](https://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/certop/reformed_teaching.html)
      3. [Teaching Dimensions Observation Protocol6](http://tdop.wceruw.org/Home/Index)
   2. Gather student feedback throughout the semester. How you design student feedback surveys is important though! Check out this study7 that identified a mitigation technique for bias in student surveys by implementing anti-biased language.
6. Have you checked your syllabus?
   1. Like student surveys, making sure the language in your syllabus is inclusive and un-biased is important. Check out these syllabus review tools developed at [James Madison University](https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/inclusion_by_design_survey_your_syllabus_2.pdf)8 and [The University of Kansas](https://cte.ku.edu/creating-inclusive-syllabus)8.
7. Don’t allow tone policing to occur in your classroom10. Tone policing occurs when someone attempts to detract from someone’s message by attacking the way something was said as opposed to the actual statement.
8. Re-evaluate how you grade and implement best practices to avoid implicit bias.
   1. One source of bias in grading is that the assignment expectations don’t match what the students are learning in class. [Backwards design](https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/understanding-by-design/)11 is a strategy to ensure your assessments align with your course/topic objectives.
   2. Check out this [best practices document](https://kansas-my.sharepoint.com/personal/bensonbe_home_ku_edu/Documents/Blair's%20Documents/Workshops%20I%20Have%20Led/BP_Evaluating_Student_work.docx) on evaluating student work12.
   3. A rubric is a great way to reduce/eliminate implicit bias when grading. The University of Kansas Center for Teaching Excellence has developed this [guide to creating a rubric](https://kansas-my.sharepoint.com/personal/bensonbe_home_ku_edu/Documents/Blair's%20Documents/Workshops%20I%20Have%20Led/Creaing_A_Rubric_handout_REV07.18.pdf)13.
9. When designing your course, remember that everyone has different capabilities. Your course should be accessible and help prepare all individuals to be able to complete challenging assignments. The [International Association for Geoscience Diversity](https://theiagd.org/)14 has many valuable resources to help create accessible course materials.

References

1Okonofua et al., 2016, Brief intervention to encourage empathic discipline cuts suspension rates in half among adolescents: PNAS, v. 113, pp. 5221-5226.

2Gehlbach et al, 2016, Creating Birds of Similar Feathers: Leveraging Similarity to Improve Teacher–Student Relationships and Academic Achievement: Journal of Educational Psychology, v. 108, pp. 342-352.

3Social Cognition, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2012, pp. 94–108 94 A. Todd, Adam Galinsky, and G. Bodenhausen. "Perspective-taking undermines stereotype maintenance processes."

4COPUS: <https://trestlenetwork.ku.edu/copus-observation-resources/>

5RTOP: <https://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/certop/reformed_teaching.html>

6TDOP <http://tdop.wceruw.org/Home/Index>:

7Peterson DAM, Biederman LA, Andersen D, Ditonto TM, Roe K (2019) Mitigating gender bias in student evaluations of teaching. PLoS ONE 14(5): e0216241. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216241>

8<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/inclusion_by_design_survey_your_syllabus_2.pdf>

9<https://cte.ku.edu/creating-inclusive-syllabus>

10Edith Campbell, 2018, Educators must mind tone policing: School Library Journal <https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=educators-mist-mind-tone-policing>

11Wiggins, Grant, and McTighe, Jay. (1998). Backward Design. In Understanding by Design (pp. 13-34). ASCD

12This information was adapted from: 1. University of Michigan, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching website: <http://crlt.umich.edu/olws/6/grading>. 2. University of Minnesota, Center for Writing website: <http://writing.umn.edu/tww/responding/norming.html>. 3. Vanderbilt University, Center for Teaching website: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/grading-student-work/>.

13Stevens, D.D. and Levi, A. (2005). *Introduction to Rubrics: An Assessment Tool to Save Grading Time,*

*Convey Effective Feedback and Promote Student Learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

14The International Association for Geoscience Diversity: <https://theiagd.org/>

**RECOMMENDED READS:**

Blindspot: Hidden Bias of Good People by Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald

Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman

Whistling Vivaldi: And Other Clues to How Stereotypes Affect Us by Claude Steele