**Strategies to Address Bias when 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. Admit that you do have biases, intentional or not. If you won’t acknowledge you have them, you won’t recognize when they impact others.
   3. 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.
   4. 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.
   2. This [article from Edutopia](https://www.edutopia.org/blog/practices-promote-equity-in-classroom-shane-safir)1 has some general suggestions to kick-start some ideas.
4. Practice empathy.
   1. Studies show that empathy is a valid intervention2,3.
   2. This study4 found that if you actively consider the perspective of a person, you can reduce stereotype biases.
   3. Practice empathy towards yourself! We don’t know everything, as much as we may strive to.
5. Don’t allow tone policing to occur in your classroom5. 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.
   1. Check out [ADVANCEGeo](https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/index.html)6 to learn some bystander intervention techniques that can help you intervene if you see this happening.
6. Use scaffolding to make your course as accessible as possible.
   1. 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.
   2. The [International Association for Geoscience Diversity](https://theiagd.org/)7 has many valuable resources to help create accessible course materials.
   3. This article references multiple resources to use to learn more about Universal Design8
7. 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 STEM9](https://trestlenetwork.ku.edu/copus-observation-resources/)
      2. [Reformed Teaching Observation Protocol10](https://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/certop/reformed_teaching.html)
      3. [Teaching Dimensions Observation Protocol11](http://tdop.wceruw.org/Home/Index)
      4. [EQUIP](https://www.equip.ninja/) (aimed at identifying bias in the classroom)
   2. Gather student feedback throughout the semester. How you design student feedback surveys is important though! Check out this study12 that identified a mitigation technique for bias in student surveys by implementing anti-biased language.
8. Check the language in your syllabus. Like student surveys, making sure the language in your syllabus is inclusive and un-biased is important.
   1. 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)13 and [The University of Kansas](https://cte.ku.edu/creating-inclusive-syllabus)14.
9. 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. [Backward design](https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/understanding-by-design/)15 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 work16.
   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)17.
10. Time is a valuable tool!
    1. Delay decision making to reduce fast thinking moments. This resource18 discusses factors that introduce implicit biases into our decision making.

References

1Article from Edutopia - <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/practices-promote-equity-in-classroom-shane-safir>

2Okonofua et al., 2016, Brief intervention to encourage empathic discipline cuts suspension rates in half among adolescents: PNAS, v. 113, pp. 5221-5226.

3Gehlbach 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.

4Social Cognition, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2012, pp. 94–108 94 A. Todd, Adam Galinsky, and G. Bodenhausen. "Perspective-taking undermines stereotype maintenance processes."

5Edith Campbell, 2018, Educators must mind tone policing: School Library Journal <https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=educators-mist-mind-tone-policing>

6ADVANCEGeo Partnership: <https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/index.html>

7The International Association for Geoscience Diversity: <https://theiagd.org/>

8Burgstahler, S., 2009, Universal Design of Instruction (UDI): Definition, Principles, Guidelines, and Examples: ERIC.ed.gov

9COPUS: <https://trestlenetwork.ku.edu/copus-observation-resources/>

10RTOP: <https://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/certop/reformed_teaching.html>

11TDOP <http://tdop.wceruw.org/Home/Index>:

12Peterson 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>

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

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

15Wiggins, Grant, and McTighe, Jay. (1998). Backward Design. In Understanding by Design (pp. 13-34). ASCD

16This 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/>.

17Stevens, 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.

18Staats, C., 2015, Understanding Implicit Bias: What Educators Should Know: American Educator. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1086492.pdf

**RECOMMENDED READS:**

1. Blindspot: Hidden Bias of Good People by Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald
2. Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman
3. Whistling Vivaldi: And Other Clues to How Stereotypes Affect Us by Claude Steele
4. Bandwidth Recovery: Helping Students Reclaim Cognitive Resources Lost to Poverty, Racism, and Social Marginalization by Cia Vershelden
5. Me and White Supremacy by Layla Saad
6. How to be an Anti-racist by Ibram X. Kendi
7. Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria by Beverly Daniel Tatum
8. So you want to talk about race by Ijeoma Oluo
9. I’m Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness by Austin Channing Brown