

# UD COE Inclusive Teaching Workshop Series:

## Implicit Bias

### The Takeaways

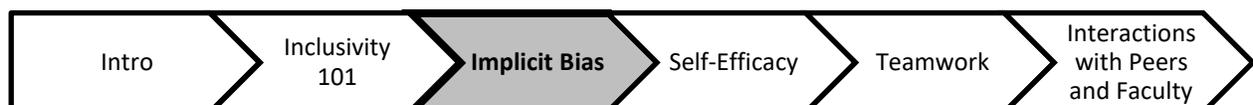
- Everyone has unconscious or implicit biases to help them navigate the world, and sometimes these biases can unintentionally and negatively impact students.
- Faculty can use strategies to reduce the impact of implicit bias in the classroom and in evaluation of student work.

### Fast Facts

- Implicit (or unconscious) bias are the “attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, reactions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.” Unlike explicit biases, they are activated involuntarily, without our awareness or control. [1]
- Implicit bias does not necessarily align with our stated, explicit beliefs.
- Implicit bias in itself is not a bad thing – it is a set of shortcuts to make decisions quickly. According to best estimates, our brains receive 11,000,000 pieces of information per second, but can only consciously process 40 pieces of information per second. [2]
- Implicit bias can impact who we select to work in our labs [3], how quickly we respond to email or discussion boards (or whether we do at all) [4], and ultimately, how likely our students are to succeed. [1]
- Having clear learning outcomes and rubrics aligned with these outcomes, as well as avoiding subjective items in grading, can help to prevent our implicit bias from inadvertently impacting our grading.

### Teaching Tips

- When asking questions in class, find a way to truly call on people randomly, to avoid always calling on the same individuals, genders, or even areas of the classroom. Examples: notecards with student names, computer app (or MATLAB script!) with random number generator.
- Reduce anonymity: Provide ways for you to get to know your students (e.g., have them fill out notecards with their name and fun facts) and for your students to get to know each other (structured teamwork, think-pair-share: 1-2 min to talk to one another about a question you pose before calling on anyone).
- Reduce opportunities for implicit bias to be invoked in evaluation:
  - Use rubrics to evaluate student work [5,6].
  - Consider using Canvas’ SpeedGrader tool to grade anonymously [7].
  - Have students write their names on the backs of pages rather than the front.



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- Design your class to communicate how everyone can be successful:
  - Frame syllabus policies in positive ways (expectations and why they are important) rather than negative ways (penalties for absences, late work...). Some observations in implicit bias have shown certain minority groups respond more negatively than others to punitive or punitive-sounding measures. [1]
  - Communicate expectations clearly, such as through rubrics for assignments [5, 6], providing them ahead of time when possible (i.e., projects, but not exams). Avoid subjective or overly vague items when evaluating students, to avoid inconsistency in evaluation.
  - In courses with teamwork,
    - Avoid allowing students to form their own groups for major projects, since their own implicit bias often leads them to create homogenous teams. [1]
    - Provide opportunities for peer evaluation – and take time to explain how to use it objectively. [For example, 8] CATME also includes a “Practice Mode” for students to use the tool for fictional, hypothetical case studies before applying the tool to actual team members. [9]
    - Require teams to create a list of norms or a “team contract.” [10]

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- [6] Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning, “Rubrics” [Online]. Available: <https://ctal.udel.edu/resources-2/rubrics/> [Accessed Jan 22, 2018].
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The Harvard IAT: (Implicit Association Test) <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>  
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ADVANCE resources: <https://sites.udel.edu/advance/>

