Implicit Bias
Training

Monique H. Jackson, NBCT
Deputy Superintendent, Student and School Support

Maisha Gillins, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Office of Equity and Accelerated Student Achievement

Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Objectives

- Understand what implicit bias means and how it may influence our decisions

- Understand that being implicitly biased does not necessarily mean we act in explicitly biased ways

- Explore how our “lived experience” influences implicit bias

- Learn some techniques that can mitigate implicit bias
Connect the Dots Activity

• This activity is meant to challenge your thinking

• Use a pencil to connect all of the dots with four straight lines. Do not lift your pencil off the paper. Do not retrace any line. Lines may cross if necessary.

• You will have 3 minutes to complete the activity.

• When you are done, turn your paper over.
Connect the Dots - Debrief

- Why is it that most of us did not think of going outside the boundaries to solve the problem?

- How does this activity connect with how we interact with others, especially those that are different from us?

- How does this activity connect with implicit bias?
The Table Activity

What do you notice about the 2 tables?

This activity shows how the eye receives, the brain registers, and the mind interprets visual information. The mind does a great deal of its work automatically, unconsciously, and unintentionally.

Now go back and look at the tables. You may still see the tables as not being the same, this knowledge has no corrective effect in diminishing the illusion.
This book focuses on a different type of blind spot, one that contains a large set of biases and keeps them hidden.

This hidden-bias blindspot share a feature with the activity you just experienced – we can be unaware of hidden biases which guides our behaviors without our being aware of their role.
What is Implicit Bias?

Hidden biases are bits of knowledge about social groups. These bits of knowledge are stored in our brain because we encounter them so frequently in our cultural environments. Once lodged in our minds, hidden biases can influence our behavior toward members of particular social groups, but we remain oblivious to their influence.
Why does awareness of Implicit Bias matter?

Implicit bias matters because everyone possesses these unconscious associations, and implicit bias affects our decisions, behaviors, and interactions with others. Although implicit biases can be positive or negative, both can have harmful effects when they influence our decision-making.

Understanding implicit bias is also important because of its connection to structural inequity. A significant body of research has established that implicit bias can have broad negative impacts.
Consequences of Implicit Bias

With a partner, review the cards and discuss how implicit bias impacts:

- Housing
- Employment
- Education
- Criminal Justice

Please share your thoughts.
Implicit Association Test

The implicit association test enables us to reveal to ourselves the contents of hidden-bias blindspots.

A tool for measuring implicit bias by measuring the amount of time it takes an individual to make an association between two concepts displayed as either words or images.

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html
Let’s Try it!

Use a single short stroke for your marks.
Do all the words in order. Don’t skip any.
Do not stop or backtrack to correct answers.
You will be recording your time in seconds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insects or Pleasant Words</th>
<th>Flowers or Unpleasant Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wasp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scoring the Implicit Association Test

Add your time in seconds and number of errors

Subtract the sum of s + e for Sheet B from the sum of s + e for Sheet A

Results:
- Difference of 18+ (strong automatic preference)
- Difference between 12 and 17 (moderate automatic preference)
- Difference between 6 and 11 (slight automatic preference)
- Less than 6 (no preference)
Making sense of the results

• Your brain has stored years of past experiences that you cannot set aside.

• What impact could the Implicit Association Test have on individuals?

• What is the value in taking the Implicit Association Test?
Cultural “Bubble” Activity

- Place your name in the middle circle
- Record 4 dimensions that have influenced who you are

Discuss:
- Share all four dimensions, but only discuss the one dimension that you identify most strongly with? Why is that?
- How does our Cultural “Bubble” impact implicit bias?
Mitigating Implicit Bias

We can overrule our mental habits and gut reactions. It’s not inevitable these biases have to control our behavior.

Having biases doesn’t make you a bad person—it only makes you human. Fortunately, our implicit biases are not permanent; they can be changed.

- Dr. Jennifer Raymond in Pederson (2015)
Mitigating Implicit Bias

*Self-examination.* Making the familiar strange by examining your own cultural identity. Culture is like the air we breathe, permeating all we do. The hardest culture to examine is often our own, because it shapes our actions in ways that seem invisible and normal. We must understand how are own cultural values shape our interactions with others.
Mitigating Implicit Bias

*Widen your lens*. Letting in more alternative explanations for other’s behaviors and social interactions that look different from our own.

We all operate from a set of cultural frames of reference. The challenge is that if we routinely interpret other people’s actions solely through our personal cultural frames, we run the risk of misinterpreting their actions or implicit bias.
Mitigating Implicit Bias

Counterstereotype Examples. Another proven way to counteract the power of unconscious bias is to replace negative associations with positive ones. Biases are built by repeated exposure to a particular message. Deliberately consuming counter narratives can help break down that automatic reflex.
Mitigating Implicit Bias

*Hold ourselves accountable.* Numbers keep us honest. Educators want to be effective with all students. Within this context, looking at student data (academic and discipline) provides an opportunity to shed light on two critical questions: Are we more effective with some groups of students than others? If so, what change in our practice will make us more effective with all students?
Mitigating Implicit Bias

Anticipate bias and create systems to reduce it. Examples: use of equity sticks, group grading, peer walkthroughs with the focus of equity of student voice, “blind auditions”, etc.

Making decisions collaboratively—about discipline, school policies, and family outreach strategies—provides the opportunity for others to point out our blind spots. When we work in isolation, it's hard to see what we don't see.
“Training teachers to understand bias will not eliminate it, but it could create an institutional environment in which it is clear that understanding bias and its effects is critically important. The long-term return on investment is inestimable.” – SORAYA CHEMALY
Reflection

How will I align my actions with my beliefs?

How has this session impacted my future interactions with my respective school system?
THANK YOU