Open Your Class With This Tomorrow

In the book *Situations Matter* author Sam Sommers has created an alternative version of the **Implicit Associations Test (IAT)** test that allows instructors to demonstrate implicit prejudice and unconscious processing as a class demonstration. This activity provides an excellent illustration of how easily our brains categorize, and the idea of implicit prejudice. Additionally, by doing the exercise as an entire class the anxiety that this test sometimes creates for students can be reduced.

Introduction: This categorization exercise is a low tech version of the *Harvard Implicit Association Test,* or IAT. If you prefer, students can take several versions of the IAT free online at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html. The website for the IAT includes tests for several types of implicit prejudice including gender, age, disability, religion, and other racial groups. Remind students that the results of the IAT or this in class demonstration are most likely not consistent with how they view themselves and as a result may cause cognitive dissonance. It is important to stress that although the environment we live in influences us, we are also capable of consciously choosing thoughts and behaviors in a way that is not biased.

Directions: Use the PowerPoint presentation and read the directions. Additional background information not referenced in the PPT is included here.
- Place your hands palm down on your thighs
- Right palm on right thigh; left palm on left thigh
- Silently read the left column then the right from top to bottom and classify the terms as directed by slapping either your left or right thigh
- Raise your hand when you are finished
- Move through the as fast as possible while trying to remain accurate– if you make a mistake correct it before moving on to the next term
- There is one practice round and then the demonstration consisting of three different additional rounds

Practice Round
Allow students to practice briefly so they understand how the procedure works. Remind them to raise their hand when they are finished.
- Read the left column then the right from top to bottom
- For male names, slap your left hand on your left leg
- For female names, slap your right hand on your right leg
- Males = LEFT, Females = RIGHT
- Move through the list as fast as possible while remaining accurate– if you make a mistake correct it before moving on to the next name
- There are 10 names
- Have students raise their hand when they finish
- Record the time when most of the students have finished for an approximate group average time.

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Version 1 Word List
- For male names, slap your left hand on your left leg
- For female names, slap your right hand on your right leg
- Males = LEFT, Females = RIGHT
- There are 28 names
- Have students raise their hand when they finish
- Move through the list as fast as possible while remaining accurate– if you make a mistake correct it before moving on to the next name
- Record the time when most of the students have finished for an approximate group average time.

Results: Record the amount of time that passed when most students had raised their hand. In general, most individuals categorize these names in a similar manner, but there can be some variance. For example, some names can be associated with both genders.

Version 2 Word List
- Students place their hands palm down on their thighs
    - Right palm on right thigh; left palm on left thigh
- In version two students will be doing 2 categorization tasks at the same time.
- Students should try to move as quickly through the list as possible. If they make a mistake, they should correct their response before moving on to the next term.
- There are 28 words
- For words associated with family – right hand slap
- For words associated with career – left hand slap
- For female names – right hand slap
- For male names – left hand slap
- Have students raise their hand when they finish
- Record the amount of time that passed when most students had raised their hand.

Results: Record the amount of time that passed when most students had raised their hand. The average time should have increased because managing two categorization tasks creates a greater cognitive load.

<u>**Version 3**</u>
- Students place their hands palm down on their thighs
  - Right palm on right thigh; left palm on left thigh
- In version 3 students will again be doing 2 categorization tasks at the same time.
- Career words – right hand slap
- Family words – left hand slap
- For male names – left hand slap
- For female names – right hand slap
- Students should try to move as quickly through the list as possible. If they make a mistake, they should correct their response before moving on to the next term.
- There are 28 words
- Record the amount of time that passed when most students had raised their hand.

Results: Record the amount of time that passed when most students had raised their hand. Share the average times for each version with students and complete the discussion questions provided. It is to be expected that the vast majority of participants will have a harder time pairing career words with female names and family words with males. Students will most likely be skeptical and maybe even angry about the test design. They will most likely suggest that they simply got used to categorizing in one way (female on the right and male on the left) so the lower scores were simply the result of motor confusion and not implicit bias. If you would like, try the same lists again but do the third list before the second list. Also, start at the bottom of each list and work upwards so that you are using a different word order. You can also do the order differently in separate class periods to contrast results. In numerous replications of this test the results are the same regardless of the order that the lists are presented.

Discussion: This demonstration is designed to give students a feel for how psychologists might measure implicit attitudes regarding traditional gender roles and careers. In the book *Situations Matter* the author presents a similar test designed to measure implicit prejudice for race. The race version of the test version one involved having participants separate pleasant (rainbow, vacation, flowers) from unpleasant (rotten, pain, defeat) words. In version two participants were asked to first pair pleasant words with stereotypical white first names and unpleasant words with stereotypical black names. In version three participants were asked to pair pleasant words with stereotypical black names and unpleasant words with stereotypical white names. In numerous trials most individuals found that they took longer, and made more mistakes on version three than on version two. The average time for this list was frequently twice as long as it was for list two. The results suggested that most individuals have a more difficult time pairing pleasant words with black names than white names. Or in other words it is easier for most individuals to link unpleasant

words with black names than to do the same with white names. The vast majority of participants had a harder time pairing pleasant words with black names.   In the online version where photographs of individuals are used rather than stereotypical names the results do not change much. In general, regardless of the order in numerous trials 75% of white Americans take two times longer to pair unpleasant with white names. When this test is given to African American participants 50% of participants also take two times longer to pair unpleasant with white.

Discussion Questions
1. How does this demonstration work? How does it attempt to measure implicit prejudice?
2. Was there a control condition?
3. Does the fact that some names can be either male or female pose a problem?
4. What are some criticisms of this test?
5. Is this an accurate test for implicit prejudice?
6. How do implicit biases guide behavior?
7. Why are stereotypes so pervasive?
8. How can stereotypes be related to the concept of confirmation bias?
9. How does culture influence the creation of implicit biases?
10. How are does the fundamental attribution error contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes?