

Committed Collective Action: *The Journey Continues...*

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Last month we went on an adventure into implicit bias. I invited you to take the Implicit Association Test (IAT), taken from Project Implicit. I have taken several of the association tests. I am sharing the results of the association for Male with Science and Female with Liberal Arts.

During the IAT you just completed:

Your responses suggested a slight automatic association for Male with Science and Female with Liberal Arts

The sorting test you just took is called the Implicit Association Test (IAT). You categorized Female and Male words and words related to Science and Liberal Arts.

Disclaimer: The results are not a definitive assessment of your implicit preference. The results may be influenced by variables related to the test (e.g., the category labels or particular items used to represent the categories on the IAT) or the person (e.g., how tired you are). The results are provided for educational purposes only.

How Does the IAT Work?

The IAT measures the strength of associations between concepts (e.g., Female/Male and Science/Liberal Arts). The main idea is that making a response is easier when closely related items share the same response key. We would say that one has an implicit association between Male and 'Science' relative to Female and 'Science' if they are faster to categorize words when Male and 'Science' share a response key relative to when Female and 'Science' share a response key.

Why Should I Care About My IAT Score?

Implicit preferences can predict behavior. Implicit preferences are related to discrimination in hiring and promotion, medical treatment, and decisions related to criminal justice.

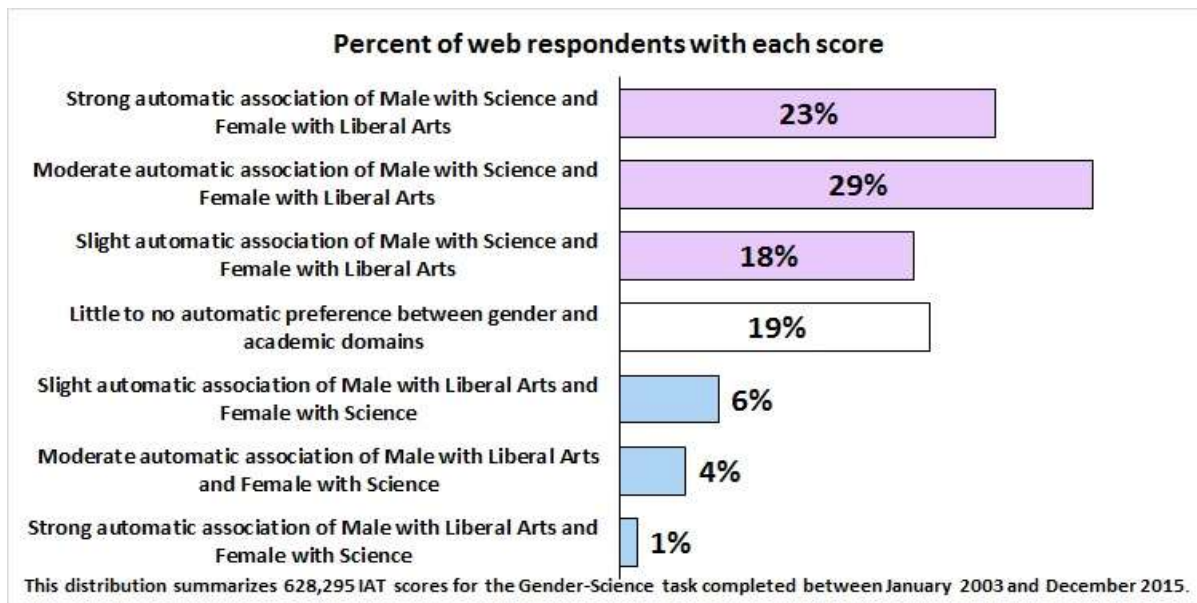
What Can I Do About an Implicit Preference That I Do Not Want?

Right now, there is not enough research to say for sure that implicit biases can be reduced, let alone eliminated. Packaged "diversity trainings" generally do not use evidence-based methods of reducing implicit biases. Therefore, we encourage people to instead focus on strategies that deny implicit biases the chance to operate, such as blind auditions and well-designed "structured" decision processes.



Other People's Results

The summary of other people's results shows that most people implicitly associate male with science - i.e., they are faster sorting when science words and male words go with the same key. Notably, about a third of the people included in this graph report associating the two groups equally with the concepts of science and liberal arts.



<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

As I looked at my results, I was a bit surprised. I wonder now if my bias, however slight it may be, affected my children when they were growing up. Hmmm, something I can think about. It also makes me think about how I affect my grandchildren today. What can I do intentionally to help them see there is equal opportunity... is there equal opportunity? It seems to me it all begins when children are young. Girls are often given dolls. Boys are given trucks and blocks.

This topic was relatively safe to share. When it comes to some of the other topics such as race, it is tough to share if one has bias... It could bring out feelings of defensiveness, skepticism, even embarrassment. It is not easy to admit bias, but it is necessary if we are to understand it and change our behaviors from perpetuating bias.

So what do we do now with the information from the association tests? I am sharing a TED Talk by Verna Myers:

How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYyvbglNZkQ>).

When you finish the video (it is about 17 minutes) what are your reactions? How can Verna Myers suggestions help you with your biases? Is it possible in today's world? What are you willing to do to prevent behaviors that continue to perpetuate bias?

As always, I invite any comment, experience, additions, and suggestions. Feel free to contact me at dnnsfmlyk@aol.com. Donna Kennebeck, HPIO Chair