

What is Unconscious Bias; considerations and top tips.

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Outline of session

What is Unconscious Bias; considerations and top tips.

1. Overview – What is Unconscious Bias
2. Examples of Unconscious Bias
3. Mitigate - what can you do
4. Case studies



Reality =

79.5 % male

93.7% white (among UK nationals

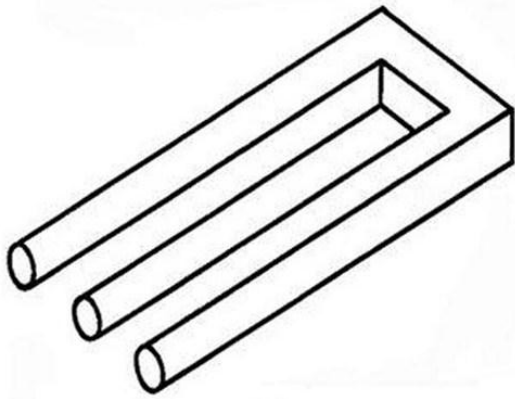
– 86.0% white among non-UK nationals)

97.6% non-disabled

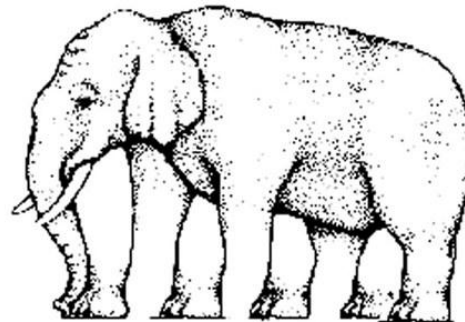
95.8% over 40

Equality in higher education: statistical report 2013

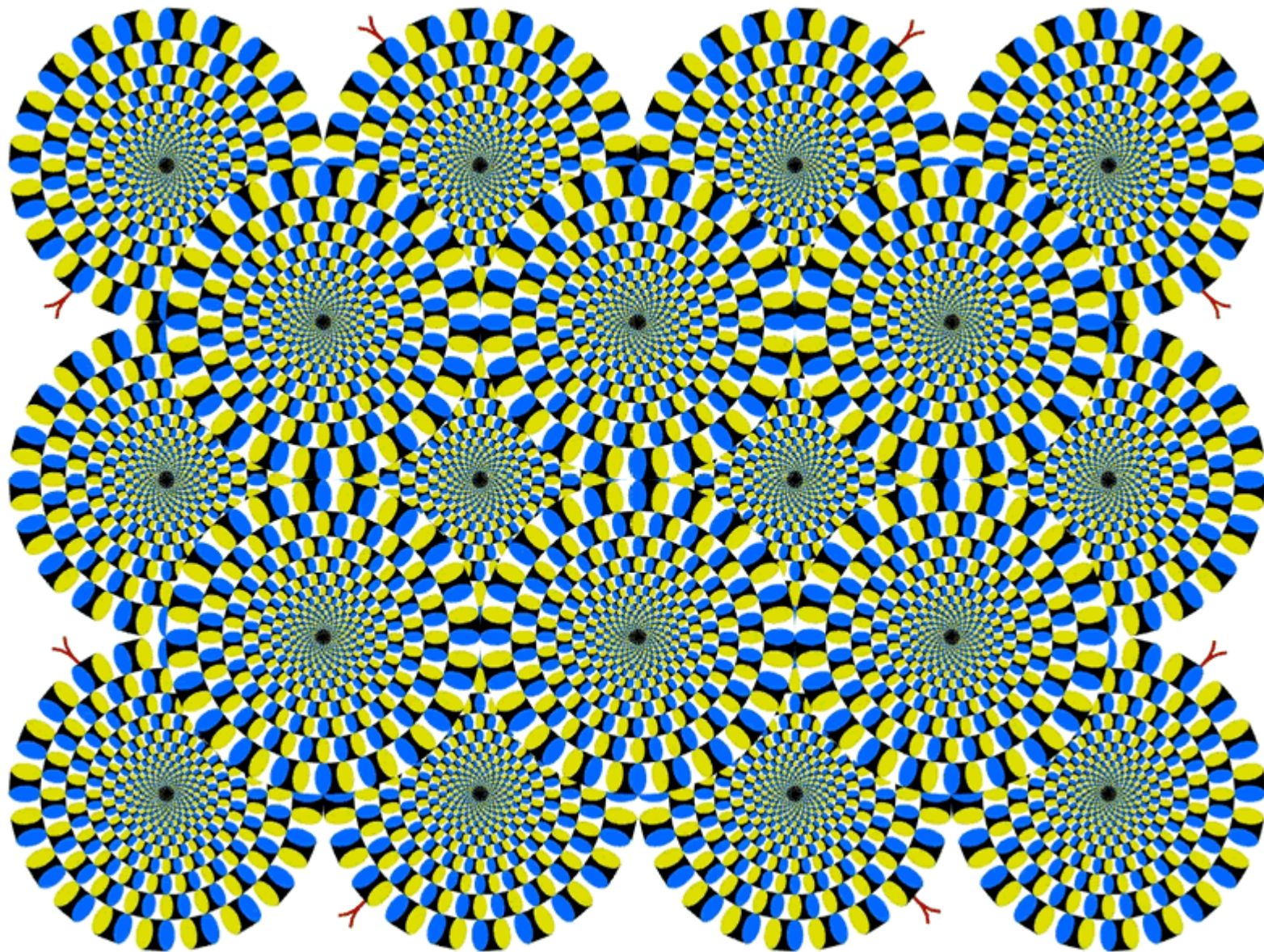
Equality Challenge Unit



IMPOSSIBLE TRIDENT! HOW PRO?



HOW MANY LEGS DOES THIS ELEPHANT HAVE?



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What is Unconscious Bias?

Unconscious bias refers to a bias that we are *unaware of*, and which happens outside of our control. It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our **background, cultural environment and personal experiences**

(ECU: 2013 *Unconscious bias in higher education*)

Examples

- Student admissions
 - Offer & acceptance rates
 - Images / publicity – inclusive & representative
 - Female staff on open days / Roles in dept
 - Names / address / foreign or local qualifications *

- Students assessments
 - Difference in attainment between genders in different modules, course work, year-end assessments & final degree class
 - Anonymous marking/ second marking
 - Group work – diversity
 - Look at feedback given to different groups of students

Examples

- Recruitment of staff *
 - Difference in ratios between applications, shortlisting, interviewing & appointments
 - Adverts visible to under-represented groups
 - Criteria for person spec – essential criteria
 - Use standard application not CV's
 - Anonymous shortlisting
 - Interview panel – verbal commitment to equality, consider similarities, objective rather than subjective, reps, single gender on panel

- Promotion of staff
 - Gender differences in proportion of male & female staff self nominating / being nominated for promotion & rates of success
 - Difference by gender of time spent at each grade for academic staff
 - Clear objectives
 - Also merit pay

Examples

- Staff appraisals
 - Monitor the appraisal process among staff
 - Gender difference in the outcomes of appraisals
 - Appraisal recognises the variety of work – Research, Teaching, Outreach, Admin responsibilities
- Workload allocation
 - Gender difference in time allocated to various work areas - Research, Teaching, Outreach, Admin responsibilities
 - Volunteering or carry out work that is more positive to career progression or work that is not highly valued
 - Process staff are allocated teaching responsibilities
 - Ensure admin work is not disproportionately allocated to certain groups of staff

Examples

- Other
 - Research Project – advisory group / steering group
 - Teaching – cases studies
 - Marketing / Website / Publicity
 - Meetings – timings & scheduling
 - Guest speakers / lectures – diversity

Mitigate

Mitigate the impact / increased awareness of strategies to manage our brain shortcuts

- Micro v macro situations
- In-group v out-group
- Confirmation bias

Practical examples

- Reduce levels of bias – males & females on panel, cultural diversity on interview / selection panel, have criteria & use them
- Policies & procedures eg Physics example
- Diversity of guest speakers & lectures
- Timings / scheduling of meetings. Also who attends
- If an organisation's performance management systems were stereotype-free; if they reflected attributes, characteristics, and behaviours of all talent – women and men– then the workplace would truly be inclusive.

What you can do

- Be awareness/ conscious
- Considerations
- Small changes
- Pragmatic
- Challenging stereotypes and counter stereotypical information
- Using context to explain a situation
- Changing perception and relationship with out-group members
- Being an active bystander
- Improving processes, policies & procedures

**What can you do / change / adapt /
recommend**

Summary

- We all have unconscious biases and we are all affected by bias
 - We can take action to manage the impact on our behaviour and decision making
 - It's up to individuals to decide what action to take
1. Introduction to Unconscious Bias
 2. Examples of Unconscious Bias
 3. Mitigating Unconscious Bias

Resources

ECU link <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/>

Unconscious bias in HE Literature review

<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/unconscious-bias-in-higher-education/>

Harvard Implicit Association tests measure UB

www.tolerance.org/activity/test-yourself-hidden-bias