

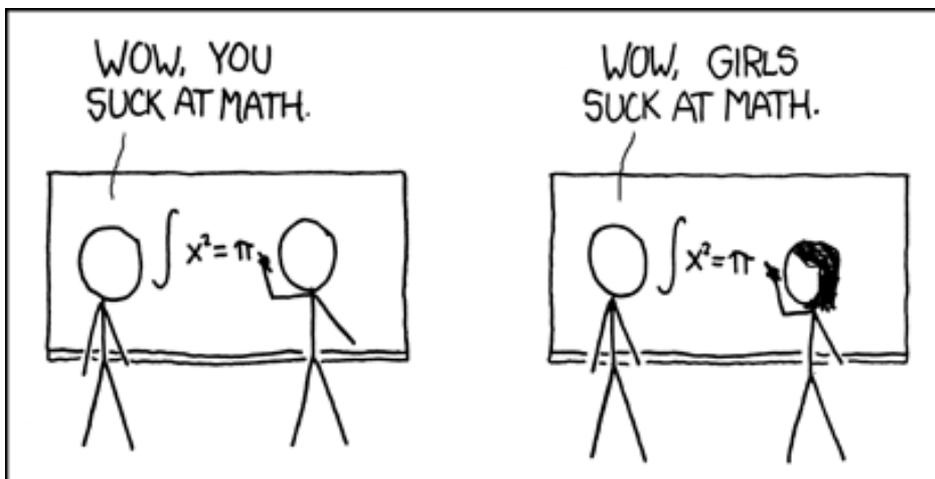
Stereotype Threat

**LBL MSD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Committee**

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What is Stereotype Threat?

“Stereotype threat is being at risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's group.”

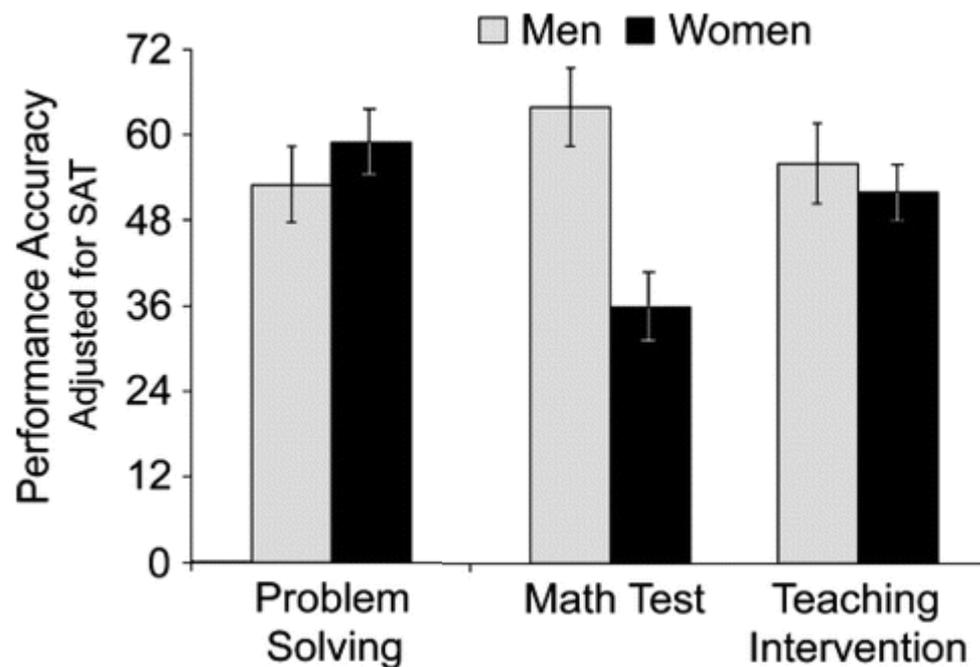


- First described by Steele and Aronson in 1995 about Black students
- Stereotype Threat is a feeling of anxiety and also poor performance
- A minority student from a negatively stereotypes group believes their performance is a reflection of the group and face the possibility of confirming the stereotype

Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(5), 797-811.

Study: Women and Math Tests

- Students in an introductory statistics course volunteered for extra credit
 - All are given the same GRE math quiz, but are given different instructions.
1. Told it is a “Problem Solving” exercise to study the cognitive process
 2. Told is it a standardized “Math Test” to study gender differences in mathematics performance
 3. Get same instruction as test group, plus a “Teaching Intervention” about what stereotype threat is



Johns, M., Schmader, T., & Martens, A. (2005). Knowing Is Half the Battle: Teaching Stereotype Threat as a Means of Improving Women’s Math Performance. *Psychological Science*, 16(3), 175–179.

Reducing the Effect

Knowledge is Key!

1. **Be aware that Stereotype Threat exists**
 - **Teacher interventions**
 - **Self-Affirmations**
2. **Create a non-competitive environment**
 - **Positive faculty-student interactions**
 - **Same-gender testing**
 - **Diverse faculty role models**
3. **Intelligence is a malleable trait**
 - **Students with the “growth mindset” have improved academic performance**

“It's important to keep in mind that if you are feeling anxious while taking this test, this anxiety could be the result of these negative stereotypes that are widely known in society and have nothing to do with your actual ability to do well on the test.”



Vogt, C., D. Hocevar and L. Hagedorn, “A Social Cognitive Construct Validation: Determining Women’s and Men’s Success in Engineering Programs,” *Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 78, 2007, No. 2, pp. 337-364.

Schunk, D.H., *Learning Theories: An Educational Perspective* (3rd Ed.), Columbus, OH Merrill/Prentice Hall, 2000.

Osborne, J., “Testing Stereotype Threat: Does Anxiety Explain Race and Sex Differences in Achievement?” *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, Vol. 26, 2001, pp. 291-210.