



CLARE HALL CAMBRIDGE

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Presentation: Implicit bias has its roots in the social world we live.

What if people make choices that discriminate against one group in favour of another without even realising they are doing it? And even more strikingly... against their own conscious belief that they are being unbiased. The work that I present is the work that the Equality and Diversity (E&D) Section of the University have embarked on to support staff in mitigating implicit bias. The work refers to the hidden attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions. These biases, which encompass both favourable and unfavourable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. They cause us to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, and appearance.

The E&D Section commissioned an online UB training module which now forms part of a University Virtual Learning Environment site which will also hold a bank of other IB resources, including written resources on how to mitigate IB in various roles and settings within the University amongst other nationally recommended resources. Focussing on implicit bias witnessed in the world of academia, we noticed how women are perceived positively stereotyped as supportive, nice and gentle until they step into the male domain or until they challenge stereotypical expectations. This coupled with research evidence that treating men and women equally in recruitment and job evaluations is more of an ideal than a reality, we have an issue of conflict and we are committed to working out why this is it still happening? One potential answer is that the implicit biases we have can affect our judgment, even though we may be unaware of them. Uncovering these unconscious, or implicit, biases can be the first step to eliminating them.

Bio

Dr Miriam Lynn is an Equality & Diversity Consultant, University of Cambridge