

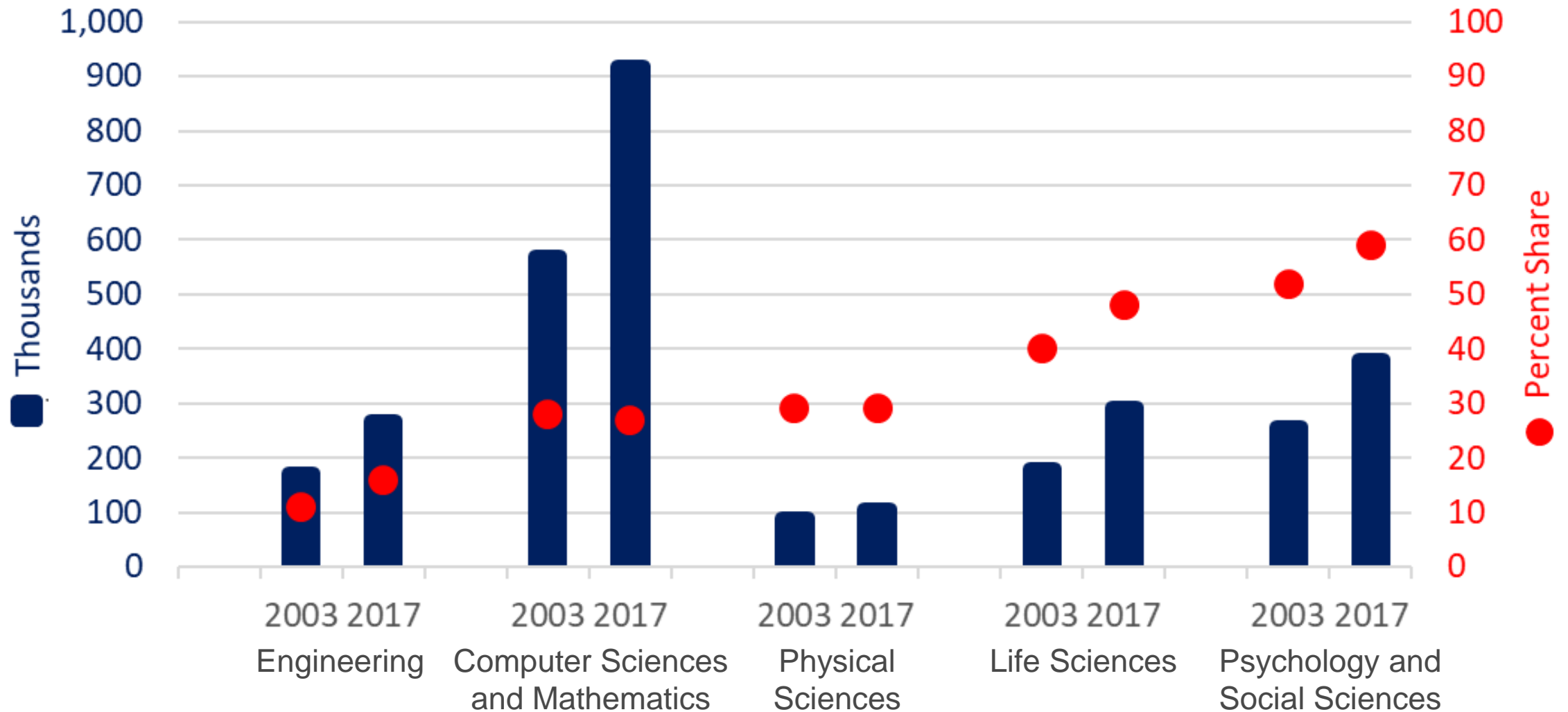
# Breaking Down Barriers to Diversity and Inclusion in STEM

**2 March 2021**

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Force Projection Sector, APL

# Women in Science and Engineering Occupations



Reference: "Science & Engineering Indicators: The State of U.S. Science and Engineering 2020," National Science Board, 2020.

# The Current Reality

- From at a young age, women receive frequent, yet often subtle, external and internal messaging that they do not belong in STEM
- **Gender stereotypes** continue to lead to:
  1. **Biases** toward who can succeed in STEM
  2. The existence of **social phenomena** that hinder women's self-efficacy in STEM
- Negative messaging and social phenomena then affect how women **perceive and respond to institutional obstacles** throughout their STEM education and careers

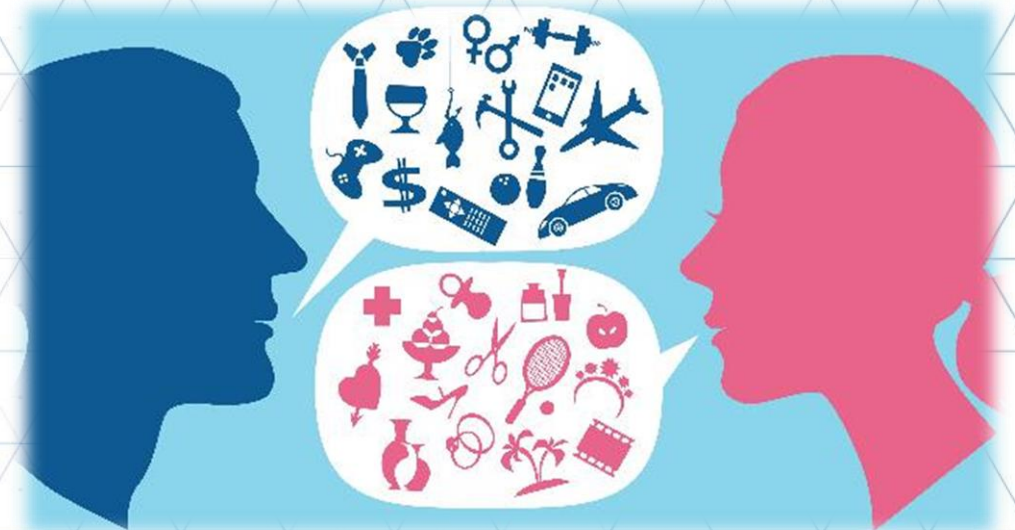
# Gender Stereotypes and Biases

Gender Norms

Stereotype Example: Draw a Scientist

Growth vs. Fixed Mindsets

Explicit and Implicit Bias



# Gender Norms

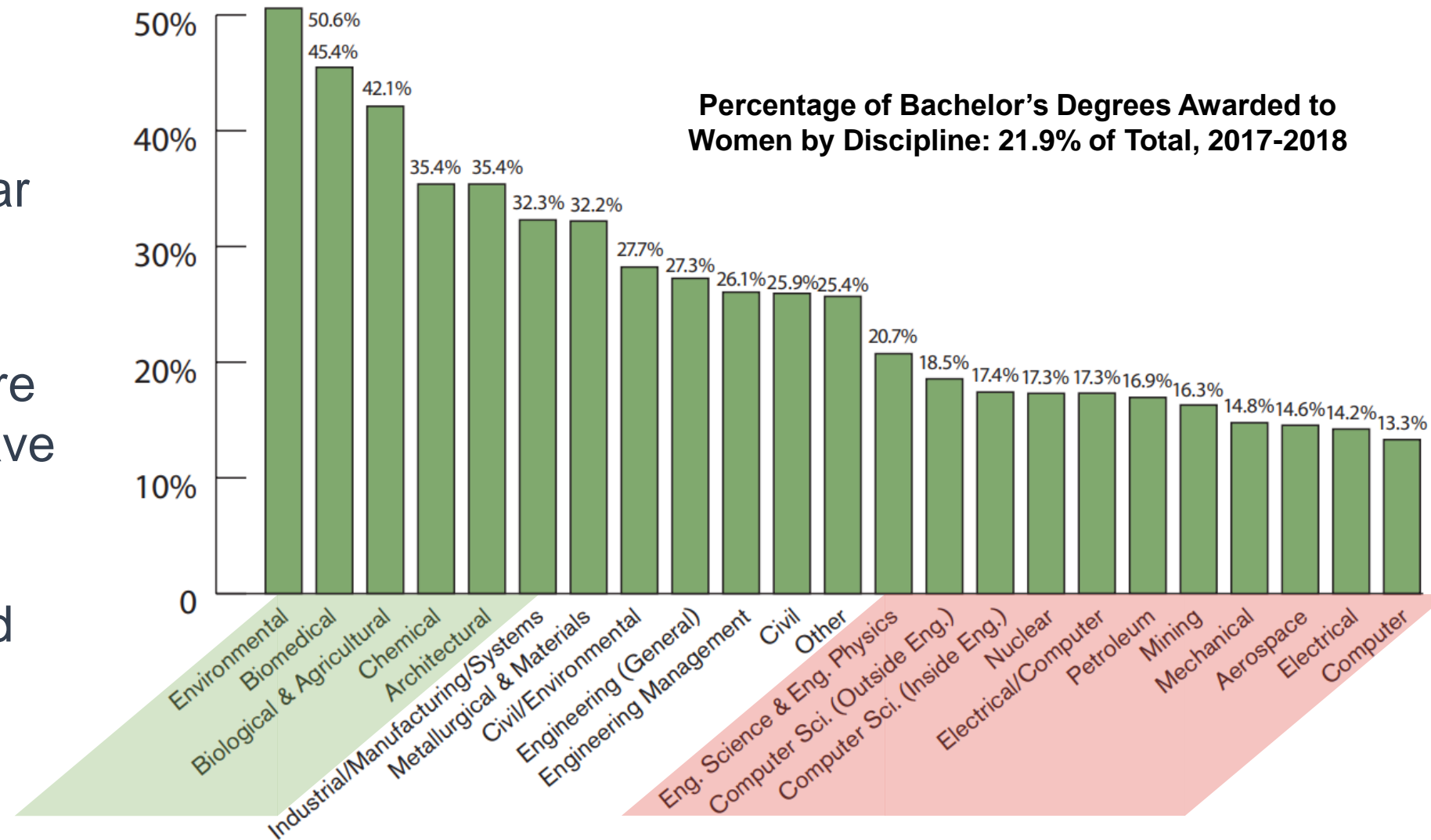
- Gender norms are **social expectations** of acceptable or desirable “feminine” or “masculine” behaviors
- For example, women are expected to be more altruistic than men – more helpful, nurturing, and socially-oriented – rather than competitive or achievement-oriented
- Gender norms influence career choices
  - Teaching, nursing, and social work are examples of female-dominated fields
  - Even within engineering, women favor disciplines with clear **social benefits**
  - Men are more likely to have experience with **computing, electronics, and power tools**

## References:

- B. Cislighi, L. Heise, “Gender norms and social norms: differences, similarities and why they matter in prevention science,” *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 42(2): 407–422. February 2020.
- M. Heilman and J. Chen, “Same Behavior, Different Consequences: Reactions to Men’s and Women’s Altruistic Citizenship Behavior,” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90 (3), pp. 431–441, 2005.
- R. Premack, “43 jobs that are dominated by women,” *Business Insider*, 2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com/teacher-nurse-salary-jobs-for-women-2018-6>.

# Gender Norms Influence Career Choices

- Women favor engineering careers with clear **social benefits**
- Male students are more likely to have experience with **computing, electronics, and power tools**



## References:

- C. Hill, C. Corbett, and A. St. Rose. "Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics," AAUW, 2010.
- J. Roy, "Engineering by the Numbers," ASEE, 2018

# Draw a Scientist

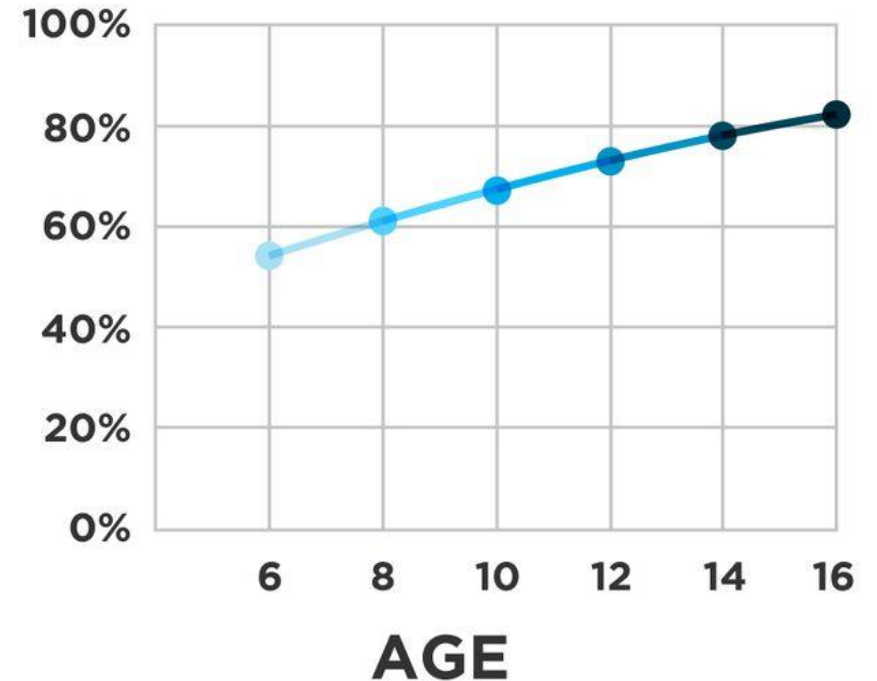
- From 1966-1977, **only 0.6%** of students depicted a female scientist

Percentage of students drawing female scientists

Study Year	1966-1977	1985	2016
Girls	1.2%	33%	58%
Boys	0%	2.4%	13%

- Drawing a female scientist is becoming **more common**, especially for girls; however, students are less likely to draw female scientists as they get older

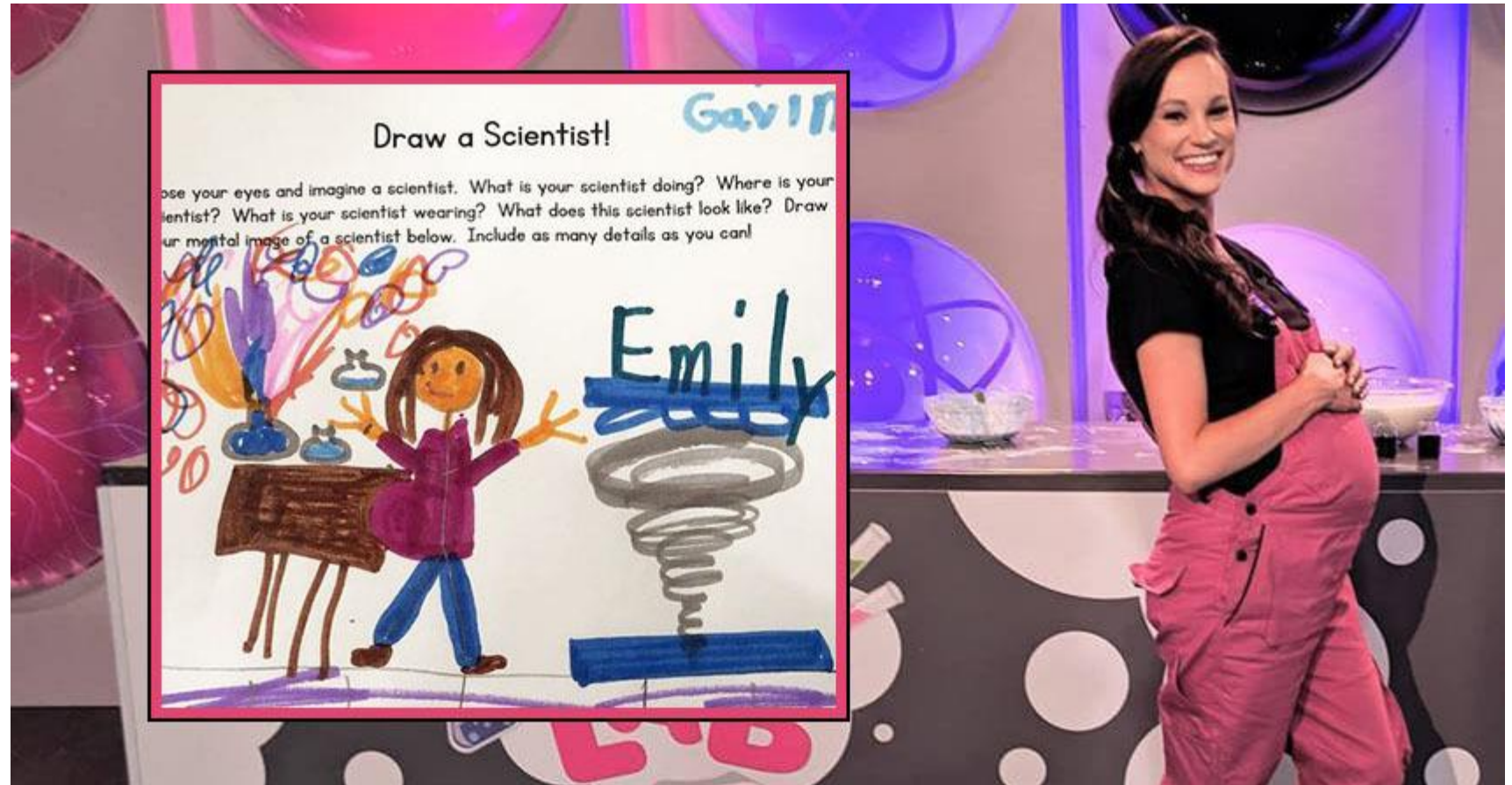
## Percentage of students who draw a male scientist



Both boys and girls are more likely to draw a male scientist as they get older.

source: Miller, Nolla, Eagly, & Uttal, 2018

# Gender Stereotypes: Draw a Scientist



Reference: *Emily's Wonder Lab*, Netflix, <https://www.netflix.com/title/81128389>  
Image: <https://www.scarymommy.com/emilys-wonder-lab-fan-draw-a-scientist/>



# Combat Gender Stereotypes

- **Everyone should:**

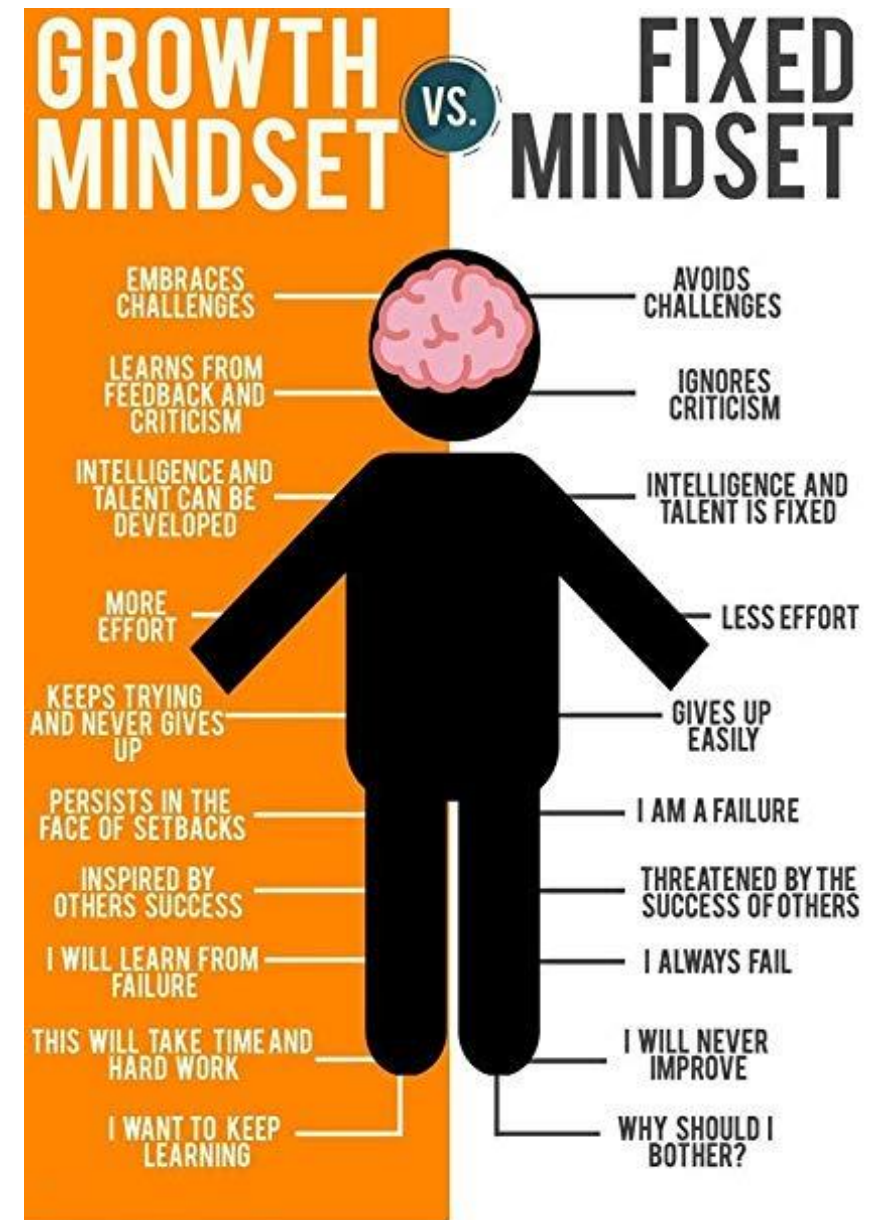
- Treat kids equally and encourage interest in STEM fields
  - Encourage all kids to play with toys involving **construction and manipulation** skills
- Remove gender stereotypes from advertising and feature diverse examples of successful STEM professionals
- Highlight **real-life applications** and **social benefits** of all STEM fields in outreach

- **Universities should:**

- Offer introductory courses in coding, electronics, woodshop, and spatial visualization

# Growth vs. Fixed Mindsets

- Young **girls** are praised for **intelligence**, causing fixed mindsets
  - Skills and intelligence are innate and finite
- Young **boys** are praised for **effort**, promoting growth mindsets
  - New skills can be developed through effort and learning
- Those with growth mindsets more likely to:
  - Embrace challenges and **risk taking**
  - See effort as a path to mastery
  - **Learn from failure** and criticism



## References:

- C. Dweck, "What Having a 'Growth Mindset' Actually Means," Harvard Business Review, 2016,
- H.G. Halvorson, "The Trouble With Bright Girls," Psychology Today, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-science-success/201101/the-trouble-bright-girls>
- C. Hill, C. Corbett, and A. St. Rose. "Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics," AAUW, 2010.

Image: <https://www.amazon.com/Faverlkujj-Growth-Mindset-Artwork-Decorations/dp/B07J3C3ZB7>

# Cultivate Growth Mindsets

- **Parents and teachers should:**
  - Reiterate that skills can be **acquired**
  - **Praise** all students for **effort, learning, and progress**
    - Encourage seeking help, soliciting feedback, and testing new approaches
- **Everyone should:**
  - **Highlight the struggle** – setbacks are valuable learning experiences

I may not be able to do this now, but with time and effort I'll be able to!



## References:

- C. Dweck, "What Having a 'Growth Mindset' Actually Means," Harvard Business Review, 2016,
- C. Hill, C. Corbett, and A. St. Rose. "Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics," AAUW, 2010.

Image: <https://www.mindsetworks.com/science/>

# Explicit Bias

- Biases influence how we evaluate, perceive, and behave toward others
- Explicit biases are “consciously held, self-reported attitudes”

*“Efforts to ‘balance’ gender and race **diminish the overall quality of an organization** by reducing the collective merit of the personnel”*

*“I frequently hear concern... that recently hired women or minorities [are] only filling the **‘diversity slot’**”*

*“This new manager told me directly that I would not ‘want’ a promotion because... **I am a mom so I wouldn’t want to travel**”*

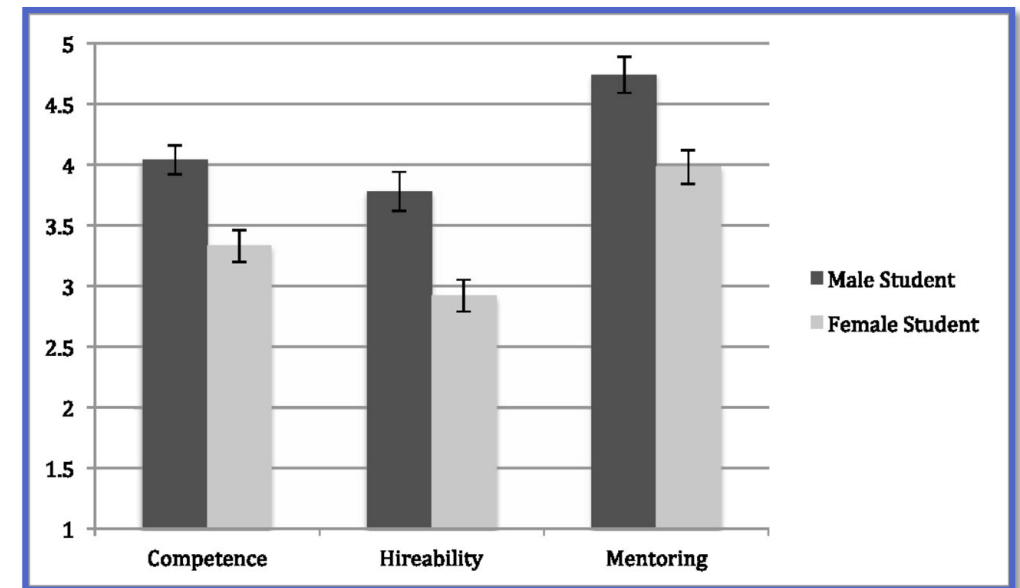
*“Let me tell you about my trouble with girls. Three things happen when they are in the lab: **You fall in love with them, they fall in love with you, and when you criticize them they cry.**” – Nobel Laureate Tim Hunt (2015)*

## Reference:

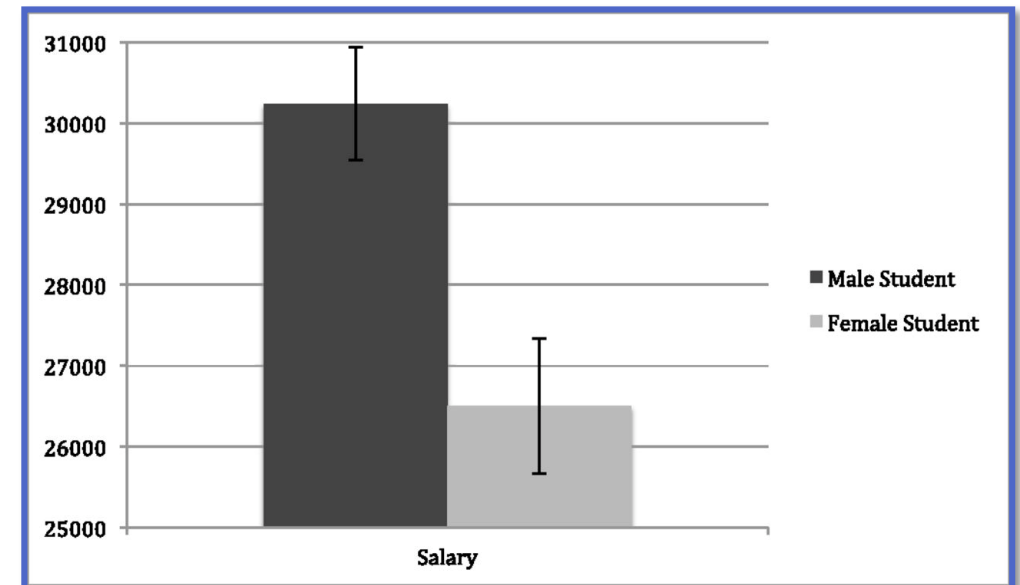
- J. Handelsman and N. Sakraney, “Implicit Bias,” White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, [https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/bias\\_9-14-15\\_final.pdf](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/bias_9-14-15_final.pdf)
- J. C. Williams, S. Li, R. Rincon, and P. Finn. “Climate Control: Gender and Racial Bias in Engineering?” Center for Worklife Law & Society of Women Engineers, 2016.

# Implicit Bias

- Implicit biases are unconscious, unintentional assumptions
- Science faculty received **identical** application packages for either a male or a female applicant
- Both male and female faculty assessed the **male** applicant to be:
  - **More competent**
  - More hireable
  - A more desirable mentee
  - Deserving of a **higher salary**



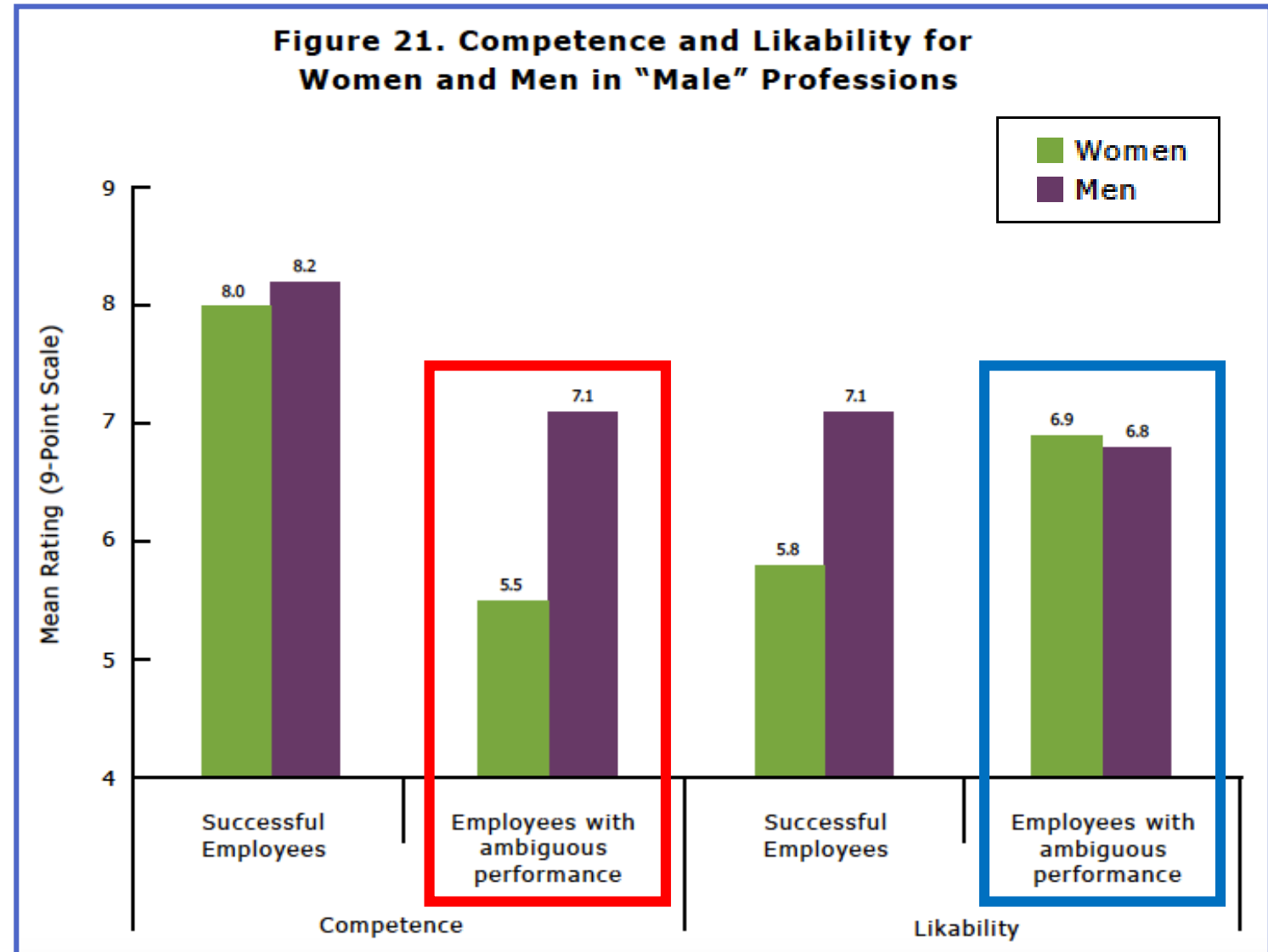
Means for ratings of student competence, hireability, and faculty interest in mentoring



Means for salary conferral

# Implicit Bias and Gender Norms

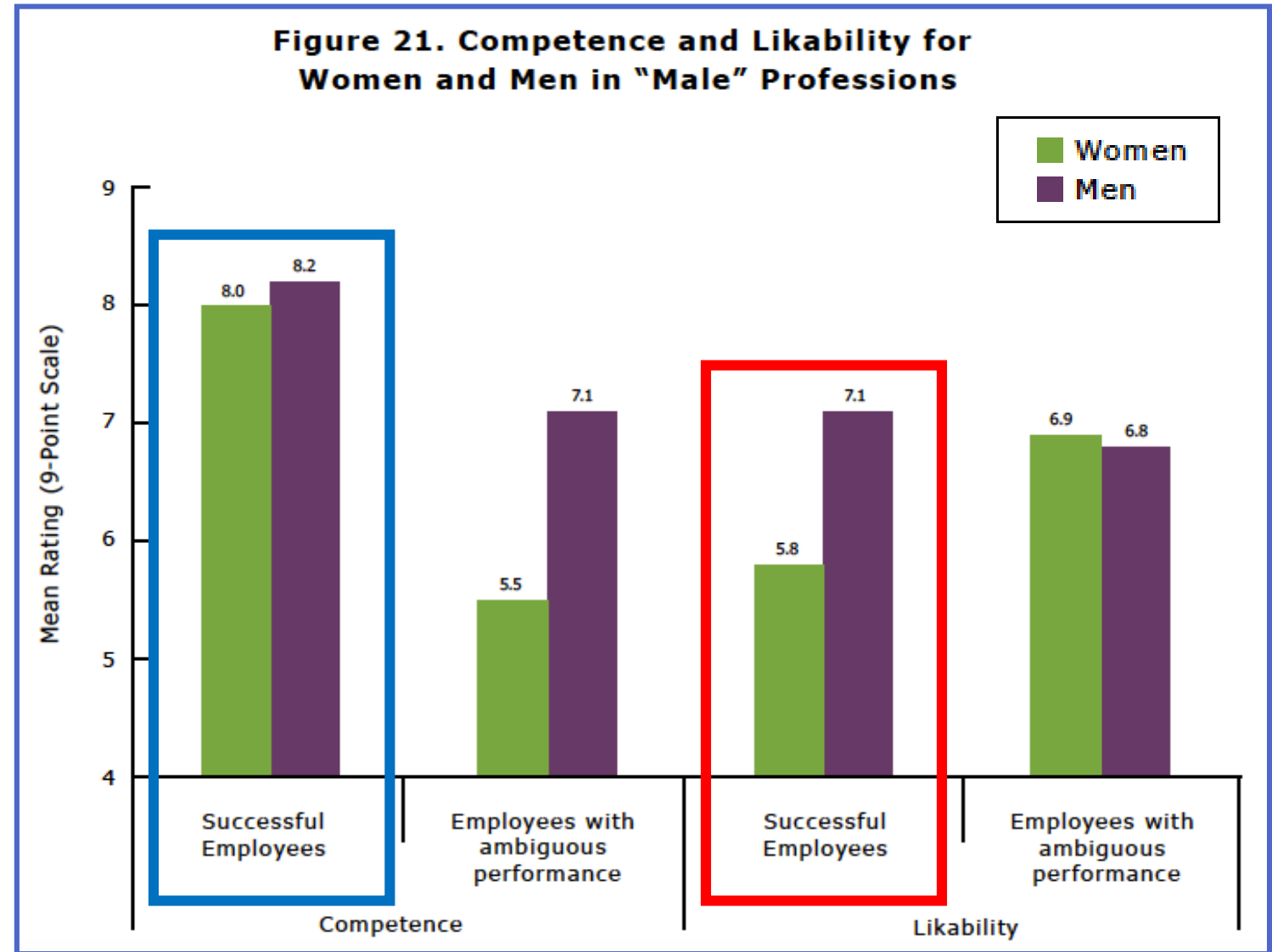
Women with ambiguous performance were rated as *equally likeable*, but *less competent*



Reference: C. Hill, C. Corbett, and A. St. Rose. "Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics," AAUW, 2010.

# Implicit Bias and Gender Norms

Successful women were rated as *equally competent*, but *less likeable*



Reference: C. Hill, C. Corbett, and A. St. Rose. "Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics," AAUW, 2010.

# Counter Implicit Biases and Be an Ally

- **Everyone should:**

- **Raise awareness** about biases working against women in STEM
  - Take an implicit bias test (e.g., from Harvard's Project Implicit)
  - Host and participate in **implicit bias training**
- Become a trained ally through **bystander intervention training**

- **Universities and employers should:**

- Create **clear and objective** interview and performance evaluation criteria
  - Conduct panel interviews with diverse panelists
  - Remove names and indications of gender when reviewing resumes
  - In letters of recommendation, highlight **ability and success** using specific examples



# Social Phenomena

Stereotype Threat

Imposter Syndrome

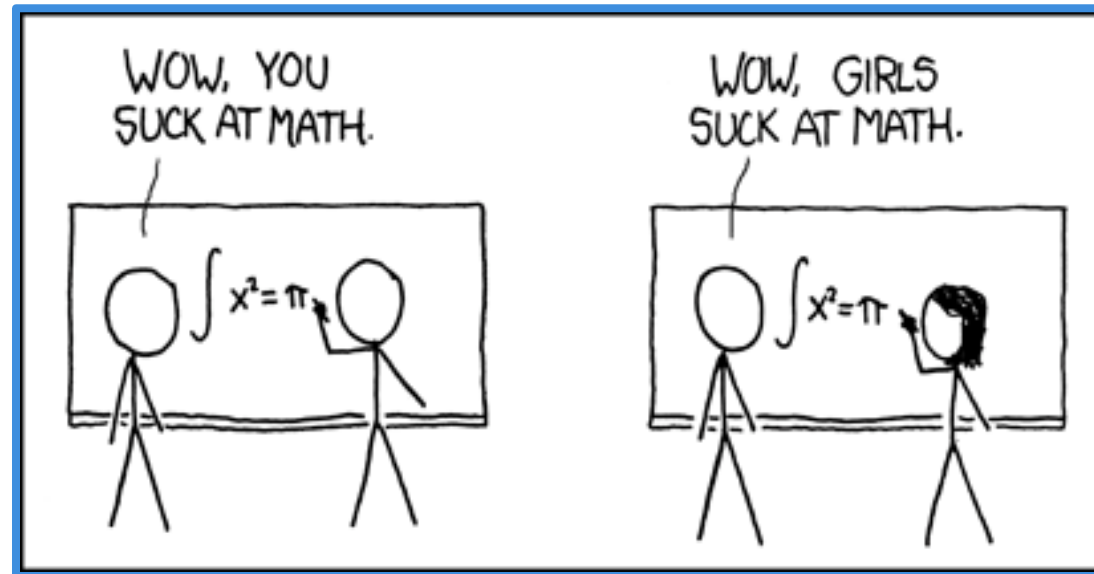
Tiara Syndrome



Image: <http://languages.oberlin.edu/blogs/ctie/2016/02/28/the-stereotype-threat/>

# Stereotype Threat

- Refers to being at **risk of confirming**, as a self-characteristic, a **negative stereotype** about one's social group
- **Women in STEM** are at risk of conforming to the **stereotype** that women are worse at math and science

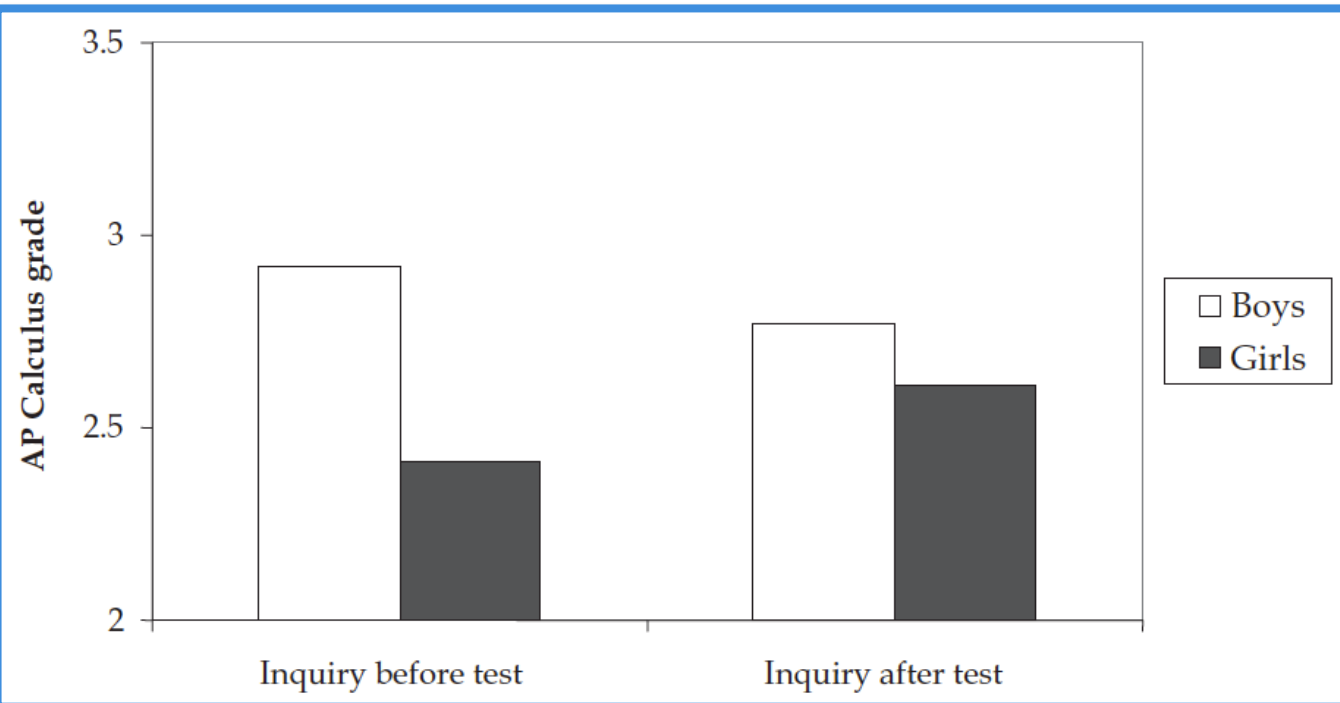


Reference: C.M. Steele and J. Aronson, (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69 (5), 797–811.

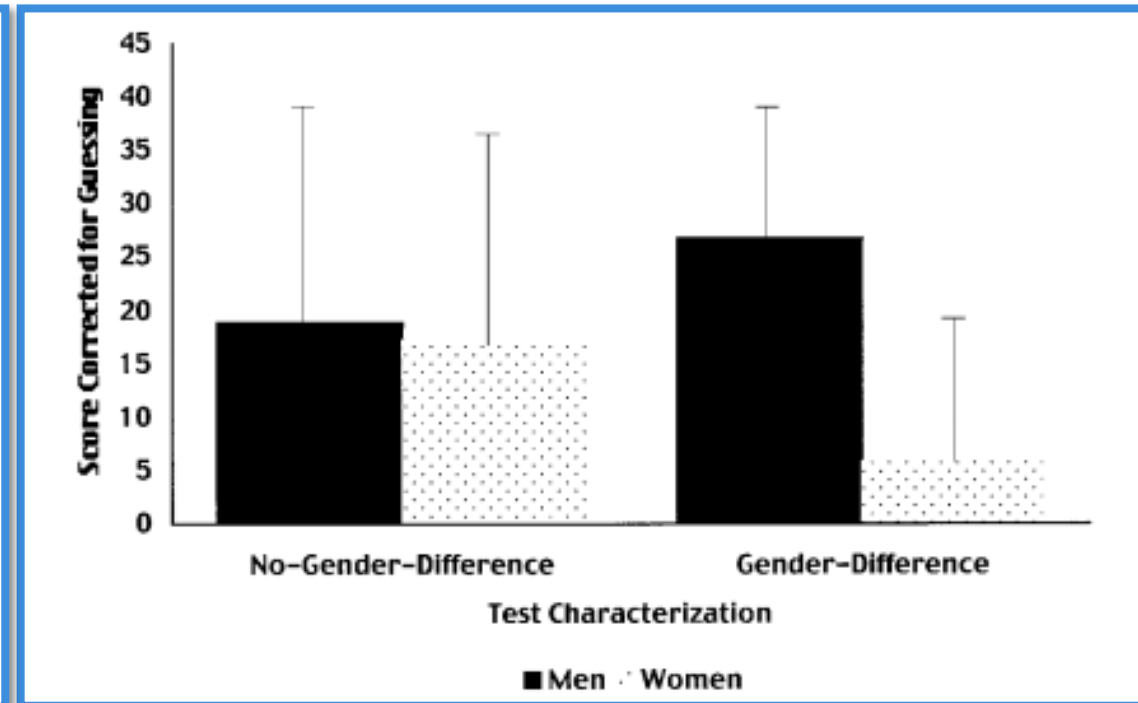
Image: <https://xkcd.com/385/>

# Stereotype Threat

- Stereotype threat causes anxiety and **hinders performance**
- Men do better and **women do worse** when reminded of their gender



AP Calculus grade by gender and timing of gender inquiry



Performance on math test by gender and if subjects were told test previously yielded a gender-difference

References:

- K. Danaher and C.S. Crandall, "Stereotype Threat in Applied Settings Re-Examined," Journal of Applied Social Psychology
- S.J. Spencer, *et al.*, "Stereotype Threat and Women's Math Performance," Journal of Experimental Social Psychology.

# Combat Stereotype Threat

- **Everyone should:**
  - **Challenge** stereotypes, promote a culture of respect, and stress equal capabilities of women and men in STEM
    - **Share statistics** on the independence of gender and performance
  - Counter negative stereotypes by highlighting and connecting students with **female role models** in STEM
- **Teachers and parents should:**
  - **Inform** students about stereotype threat
  - Have students fill out gender information **after** completing standardized tests

# Imposter Syndrome

- All-encompassing **fear** that you will be exposed as a **fraud**
  - i.e., discover you don't have what it takes
- Often occurs among **high achievers** of all genders who are unable to internalize their success
  - Women in STEM are often high performers
  - Up to 70% of people have likely suffered from imposter syndrome at some point
- Tendency to attribute accomplishments to **external** factors (e.g., luck or a helping hand) as opposed to **internal** factors (e.g., grit, talent, or effort)

## References:

- M. Warrell, "Afraid of Being 'Found Out?' Overcome Imposter Syndrome," Forbes, 2014, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/margiewarrell/2014/04/03/impostor-syndrome/>
- K. Weir, "Feel Like a Fraud?" American Psychological Association, 2013, <http://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2013/11/fraud.aspx>.

# Overcome Imposter Syndrome

- Everyone should:
  - **Share** the symptoms of imposter syndrome
    - It is especially important for students to learn to recognize the signs of imposter syndrome prior to college
  - **Highlight** stories of successful women who have experienced imposter syndrome
    - E.g., Sonia Sotomayor, Tina Fey, Emma Watson, Padma Lakshmi
  - **Discuss** strategies for **owning one's success**
    - **Recognize** one's strengths and accomplishments
  - **Praise** good performance with specific details



# Tiara Syndrome

- Expectation that if you work hard and perform well, your value will be automatically recognized and rewarded
- Women are **less likely** to:
  - Sit at the main table and speak up in meetings
  - Apply for jobs without meeting all of the qualifications
  - Negotiate salaries and raises
  - Self-promote or apply for promotions
- In 2018, LinkedIn found that women **applied to 20% fewer jobs** than men, despite viewing a similar average number of job postings
  - Women were also 26% less likely to ask for a referral
  - In another 2018 study, 68% of male and 45% of female job seekers negotiated for their salary



## References:

- [Including Image] C. Cuffley, "How to Avoid 'The Tiara Syndrome' and Accelerate Your Career as a Woman," Thinking Choices, <https://www.thinkingchoices.com/avoid-tiara-syndrome-accelerate-career-woman/>
- "Gender Insights Report: How women find jobs differently," LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2019.
- "Survey: 55 Percent Of Workers Negotiated Pay With Last Job Offer," Robert Half, <http://rh-us.mediaroom.com/2019-02-13-Survey-55-Percent-Of-Workers-Negotiated-Pay-With-Last-Job-Offer>

# Removing the Tiara

- **Students should:**

- Sit at the main table and **speak up** in meetings
- **Self-promote** and **negotiate** salaries and raises
  - Leverage peers and websites like Glassdoor to gauge your market value
- **Apply** for desired jobs, promotions, and leadership positions
  - Interviewing is a great learning opportunity, even if you don't meet all the qualifications

- **Everyone should:**

- Help others to understand their worth and develop negotiation skills
- Act as a mentor and **sponsor** for others—encourage them to lean in too



# Institutional Obstacles

Overview

Culture

Transparency and Clarity

Abrasiveness Trap

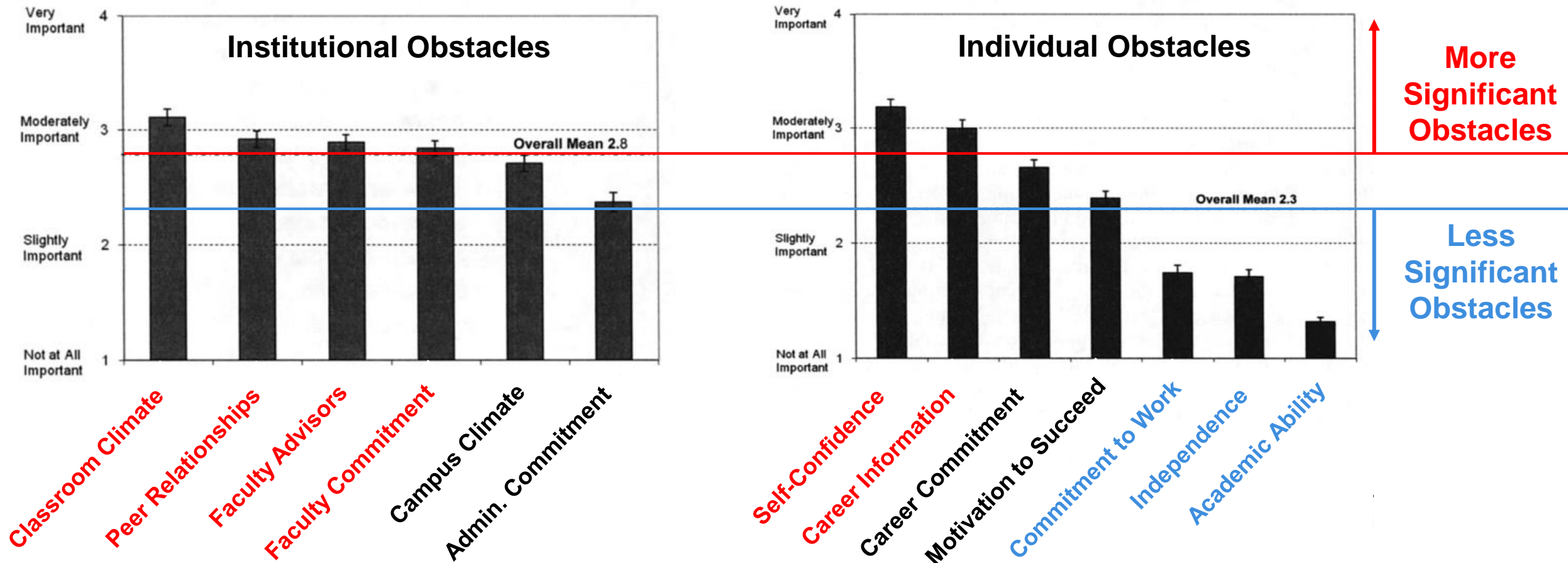
Glue Work



Image: <https://portlandenglish.edu/blog/overcoming-obstacles/overcome-climb-wall-obstacle-difficult-work-goal-people-person-esl-english/>

# Importance Ranking of University Obstacles

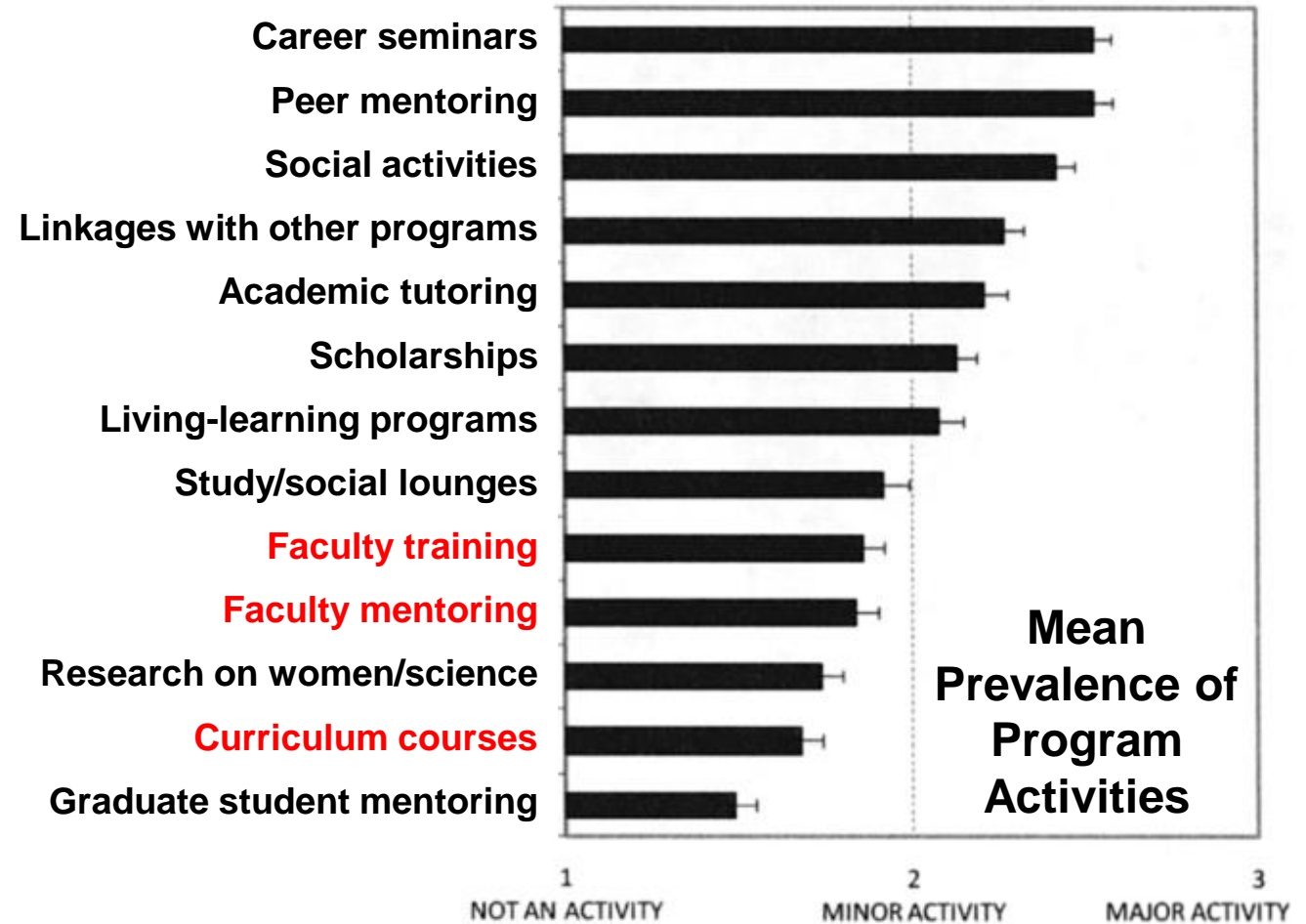
- According to college women in STEM programs, **institutional obstacles** are more likely to discourage female students than individual obstacles



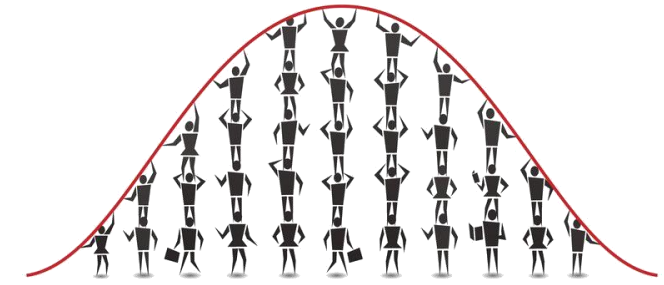
Reference: M. Fox, et al., "Programs for Undergraduate Women in Science and Engineering: Issues, Problems, and Solutions." *Gender & Society*, 25 (5), pp. 589-615, 2011.

# Typical Activities to Address University Obstacles

- The most successful programs for collegiate women in STEM addressed institutional obstacles
- However, the majority of reported activities addressed individual obstacles
- Few activities tackled **classroom climate** and **faculty issues**



# “Weed-Out” Culture



- “Weed-out” courses
  - By design, discourage interested students from pursuing degrees in STEM fields
- Low raw or average exam scores
  - Discourage students who feel low scores reflect a **poor understanding** of course material
  - **Reinforce negative stereotypes** experienced by women in STEM
- Grading on a curve
  - Commonly described as **frustrating**, **discouraging**, and **demoralizing**
  - Shifts focus of exams from mastering material to outperforming other students, **reinforcing imposter syndrome**
  - Leads to performance uncertainty

## References:

- C. Hill, C. Corbett, and A. St. Rose. “Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics,” AAUW, 2010.
- J. Wolfe and B.A. Powell, “Engineering Beats You Up’: Problems with Relying on the Bell Curve,” 121<sup>st</sup> ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition

Image: <https://www.thoughtco.com/grading-on-a-curve-3212063>

# Alienating Culture

- Because STEM fields are considered “masculine,” boys are much likely to develop an **early and passionate interest** in STEM careers
  - Women are more likely to have a **moderate interest that builds gradually**
- In college, this passionate male model of “doing” engineering or computer science “**shapes** assumptions of **who will succeed** and **who belongs**”
  - This culture causes women to feel like **misfits**, lowering their confidence and interest
- Underrepresented students face additional feelings of **isolation**, reducing their ability to overcome the social phenomena that lower self-efficacy

## References:

- C. Hill, C. Corbett, and A. St. Rose. “Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics,” AAUW, 2010.
- J. Margolis and A. Fisher, “Unlocking the clubhouse: Women in computing,” Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002.

# Create a Welcoming Culture

- **Universities should:**

- **Reevaluate** traditional grading methodology for STEM programs
- Send an **inclusive message** about who makes a good STEM student
  - Encourage and value **diverse interests, skills, and experiences**
- Actively perform **outreach** and **recruitment** of diverse students
- Improve the pipeline of support
  - Create and support **communities** for women in STEM
  - Increase the number of **female mentors and role models** in academia and industry
  - Facilitate **student-faculty interaction**

- **Everyone should:**

- Be your **authentic selves** and create an inclusive environment for others to do the same

References:

- C. Hill, C. Corbett, and A. St. Rose. "Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics," AAUW, 2010.
- L. Goodman and L., Damour, "Engaging Girls in STEM: Role Models," Center for Research on Girls at Laurel School, 2011.

# Sexual Harassment

- Organizational climate is the greatest predictor of the occurrence of sexual harassment
- 50% of female engineering faculty and staff experience sexual harassment
- Depending on discipline, **20-50% of all engineering students** experience harassment from faculty or staff

**The cumulative effect of sexual harassment is significant damage to the research integrity and a costly loss of talent in academic sciences, engineering, and medicine**

# Perception Challenges: Transparency and Clarity

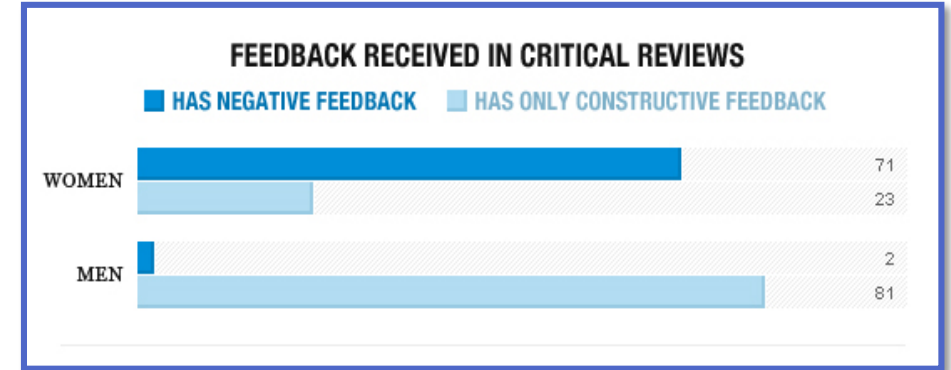
- Opaque grading policies
  - e.g., grading on a curve, delayed return of grades, or arbitrarily assigned team project grades
- Vague or infrequent performance reviews and interview feedback
  - Causes **uncertainty in performance expectations** and standards
  - Difficult to improve performance without **constructive and actionable feedback**
  - Can lead to a **perception of bias** and **discourage** applying for future positions
- Unclear selection criteria for awards, grants, and hiring
  - Without clear selection criteria, **unconscious biases** can influence decisions
  - Enables claims that women are selected over **“more qualified”** men in the name of diversity

Uncertainty can cause women to fall back on stereotypes as “cognitive crutches” to assess their performance – Sociologist Shelley Correll



# Perception Challenges: The Abrasiveness Trap

- High achieving men and women are **described differently** in performance reviews
- “Words like **bossy**, **abrasive**, **strident**, and **aggressive** are used to describe women’s behaviors when they **lead**.”
  - And **71** of **94 (75.5%)** critical reviews of **women**
  - Appeared in **2** of **83 (2.4%)** critical reviews of **men**
- In order to be considered leaders – **and likeable** - women must “**do something masculine, but in a feminine vein**”



“Men are given constructive suggestions. Women are given constructive suggestions – and told to pipe down.”

## References:

- K. Snyder, *The Abrasiveness Trap: High Achieving Men and Women are Described Differently in Reviews*, 2014, <http://fortune.com/2014/08/26/performance-review-gender-bias/>
- S. Nurhussein, *Gendered Code Words: Recent Study Examines the “Abrasiveness Trap,”* Sept. 2014, <https://www.shatteringtheceiling.com/gendered-code-words-recent-study-examines-the-abrasiveness-trap/>

# Perception Challenges: Glue Work

- Glue work – the less glamorous (and **often less-promotable**) work required for team success:
  - Interviewing and onboarding
  - Performing diversity and inclusion work
  - Organizing meetings and social events
  - Identifying gaps on projects before they create issues
  - Being the unofficial lead and developing team strategies



- In one study:
  - Women volunteered to do non-promotable tasks **48% more often** than men
  - Managers asked women to do non-promotable tasks **44% more often** than they asked men

Can lead to perceptions of women being “not technical enough”

## References:

- L. Babcock, M. P. Recalde and L. Vesterlund, “Why Women Volunteer for Tasks That Don’t Lead to Promotions,” Harvard Business Review, 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/07/why-women-volunteer-for-tasks-that-dont-lead-to-promotions>
- [Including Image] T. Reilly, “Technical Leadership and Glue Work,” No Idea Blog, 2019, <https://noidea.dog/glue>

# Improving Perception Challenges

- **Students should:**

- Work with faculty and supervisors to understand performance expectations
- Regularly **seek feedback**

- **Universities and employers should:**

- Develop and communicate **clear selection criteria** for awards, hiring, raises, and promotions
  - Provide **detailed and constructive feedback** to candidates
- Establish clear **performance expectations** and provide **regular (actionable) feedback**
- Communicate when work being performed **isn't promotable**
  - Split necessary, non-promotable work evenly
  - Publically recognize valuable glue work – highlight impact and technical elements

References:

- C. Hill, C. Corbett, and A. St. Rose. "Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics," AAUW, 2010.
- T. Reilly, "Technical Leadership and Glue Work," No Idea Blog, 2019, <https://noidea.dog/glue>

# Key Takeaways

- To reduce the gender gap in STEM, we must:
  - 1) Work to **eliminate societal differences** in the treatment of boys and girls
  - 2) Recognize that these differences influence how:
    - Women **perceive** their own abilities and performance in STEM
    - Men and women perceive the performance of their female peers
    - Women **respond** to institutional obstacles
  - 3) Actively seek to improve the educational and workplace environments to attract and retain women in STEM
- Be an **active ally** by **discussing the obstacles** faced by women in STEM and **advocating for solutions**



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APPLIED PHYSICS LABORATORY

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- L. Babcock, M. P. Recalde and L. Vesterlund, "Why Women Volunteer for Tasks That Don't Lead to Promotions," HBR, 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/07/why-women-volunteer-for-tasks-that-dont-lead-to-promotions>
- V.L. Brescoll, "Who Takes the Floor and Why: Gender, Power, and Volubility in Organizations." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 29 February 2012.
- B. Cislighi, L. Heise, "Gender norms and social norms: differences, similarities and why they matter in prevention science," *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 42(2): 407–422. February 2020.
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- M. Heilman and J. Chen, "Same Behavior, Different Consequences: Reactions to Men's and Women's Altruistic Citizenship Behavior," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90 (3), pp. 431–441, 2005.
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