

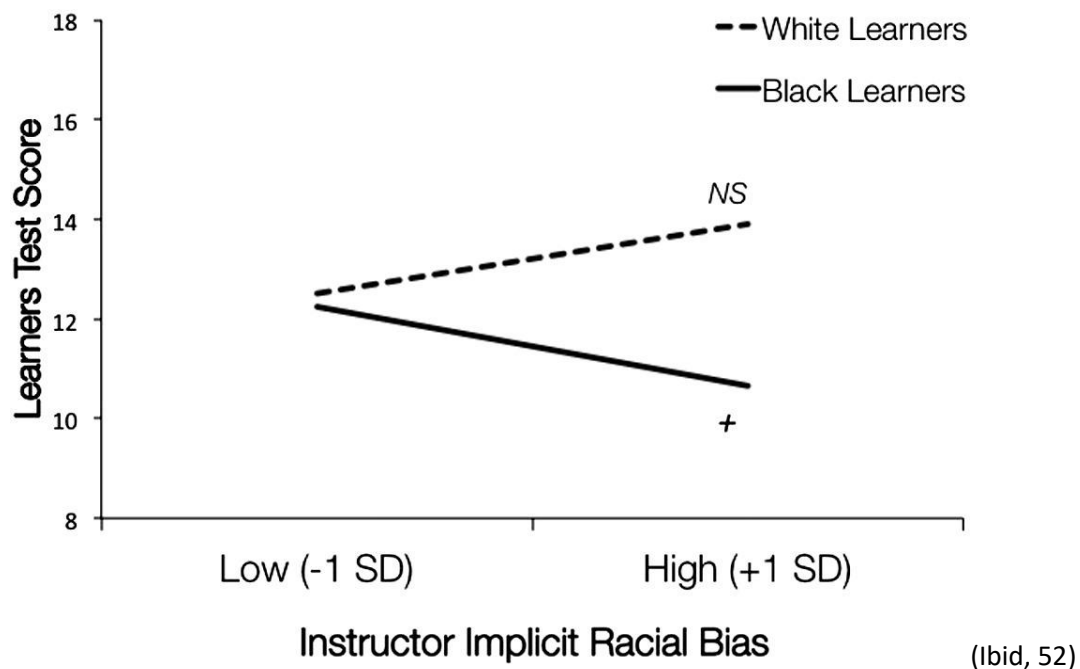
Diversity and Bias in Education

In the field of education, diversity is quite an important issue, that is growing among parents, administrators and policymakers. The questions addressed in this paper will be broad-asking how common is bias in schooling, and more in depth- how do biases and diversity effect student performance in school? Using works by a prominent psychologist, studies charting the performance of minority students in the classroom, and a discussion about diversity committees in universities, we can look at these questions further and develop some good answers to them.

First, we will look at the concept of implicit theories of intelligence. This theory is related to bias in education and it basically says this: Intelligence can't be measured just one way- different ethnic and cultural groups have different strong suits that cannot all be captured by how well they perform on standardized tests, etc. Robert Sternberg, a professor at Cornell and a leading psychologist who's known for his theories on intelligence conducted two case studies that centered on a rural Kenyan community and an indigenous group of Alaskan peoples, known as the Yup'ik people.¹ In his findings he shows that while each of these groups of people may not fare well when it comes to standardized academics, they excel in other areas- such as knowing which plants are edible (out of thousands of combinations) and were far more industrious than a normal student in a western culture. This concept of thinking about people and how intelligent they are based on where they come from is interesting and insightful, to show that intelligence is not one concrete thing, and there's more nuance to it.

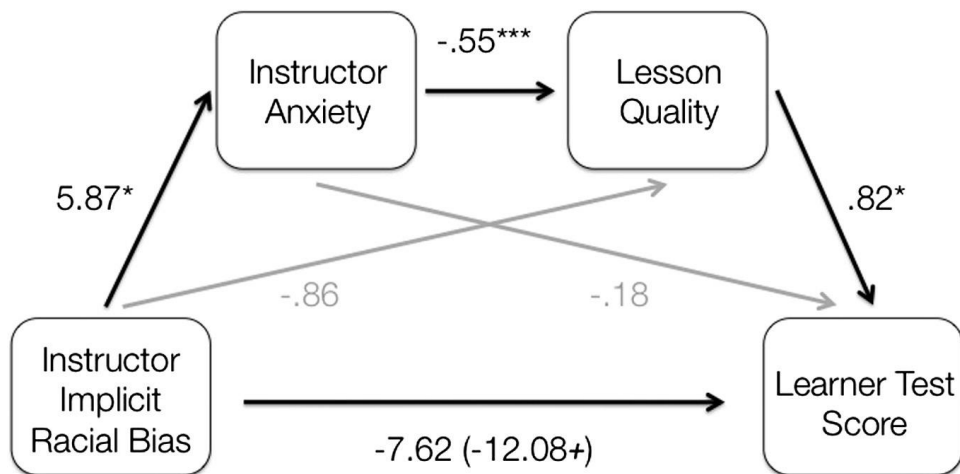
¹ Sternberg, Robert J. "Diversity." In *What Universities Can Be: A New Model for Preparing Students for Active Concerned Citizenship and Ethical Leadership*, 72-88. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2016. Accessed August 6, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt20d890h.8.

A study conducted using students from Princeton University to show the effects of biases (both implicit and explicit) of teachers and their performance in making a lesson plan, their delivery in lectures, and black students' exam scores shows us quite a bit.² The higher the implicit bias the instructor has, they had more anxiety in teaching (shown in such areas as stiffness and shaky delivery in delivering the information in class) and this in turn had a negative effect on the test scores of black participants. Shown below is a graph showing the differences of performance between black and white students: as you can see, the difference is not insignificant.



Also, a figure showing the cycle of bias leading to lower test scores of black students:

² Jacoby-Senghor, Drew S., Stacey Sinclair, and J. Nicole Shelton. 2016. "A Lesson in Bias: The Relationship between Implicit Racial Bias and Performance in Pedagogical Contexts." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 63: 50-55.



Indirect Effect CI: [-10.03, -.01]

(Ibid, 53)

In a book written by James Thomas, he devotes a chapter to the problem of diversity in schools and why talking about it isn't enough.³ The concept of diversity in college campuses (and even private companies) is unorganized in their attempts to tackle this problem, and as a result, nothing really gets accomplished because there is no organizational structure that has concrete guidelines telling and showing members what they should do to make their environments more welcoming to fostering a diverse climate, instead just a few people who have good intentions show their passions for having inclusion in school, but no real direction to get there.

As we can see, there is a problem in the education system (just as in outside life) of racial and ethnic bias. From the start, seeing how a teacher or professor will act towards you based on the color of your skin, or what their assumptions of how intelligent you may be based on your ethnic and cultural background is widespread. In noticing this, hopefully

³ Thomas, James M. "Diversity Regimes and Racial Inequality: A Case Study of Diversity University." *Social Currents* 5, no. 2 (April 2018): 140–56. doi:10.1177/2329496517725335.

administrators will take note of this phenomenon and have some more training to address this, and as a result hopefully improve the performance of minority students in school.

When it comes to having more inclusion and diversity in an educational setting, there needs to be a more structured framework as to how to make this happen. The way it is largely handled now where it is random people voicing their concerns with the lack of diversity just isn't enough. We have to be aware of this and act accordingly.

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Bibliography

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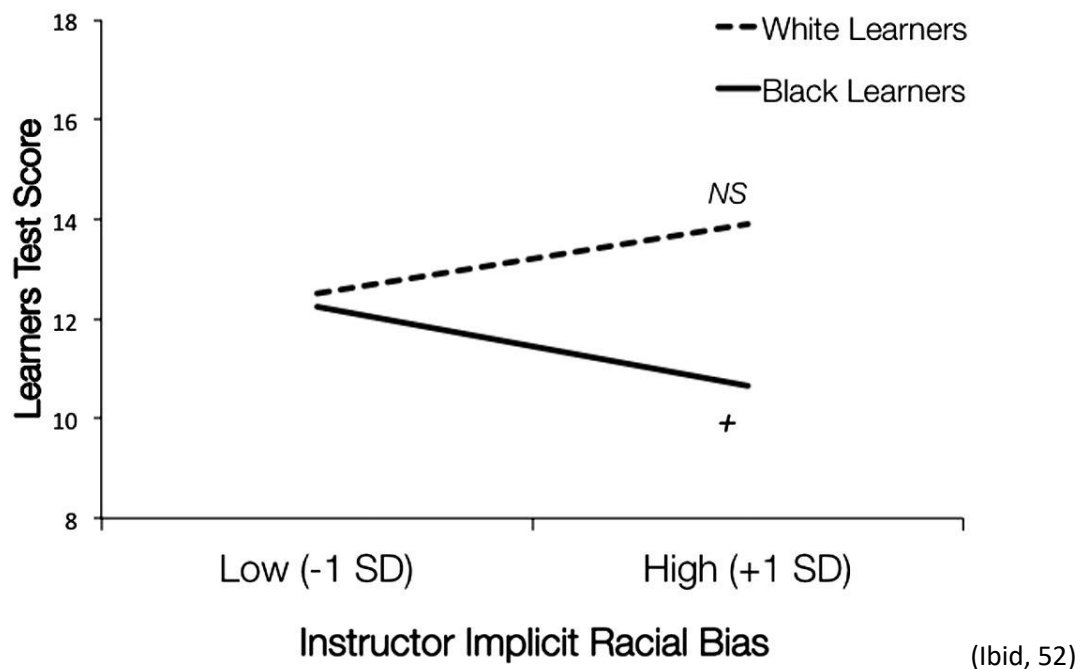
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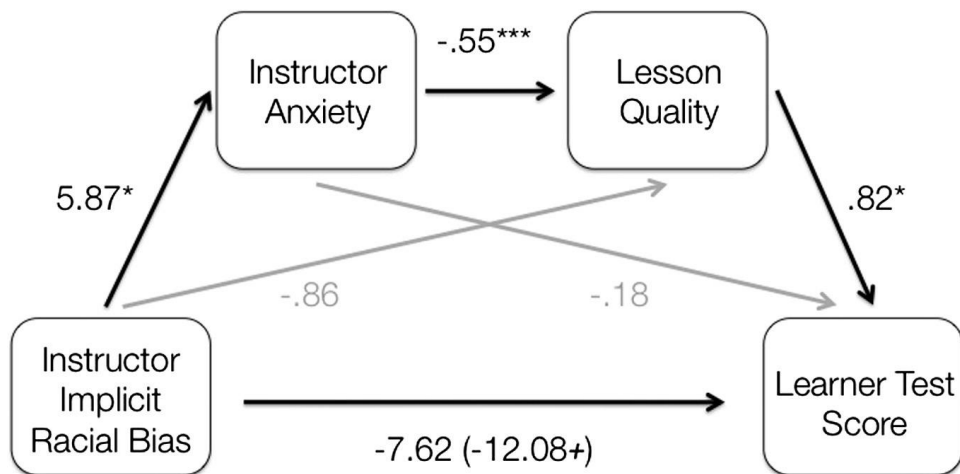
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