MODULE 4
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS
SYNOPSIS

The Cultural Competence Program (CCP) and The Cultural Atlas

The Cultural Competence Program (CCP) is an online training course aimed at building capability around cultural diversity in the workplace. It features engaging multimedia learning modules and a wealth of resources.

The CCP builds capability around cultural diversity. It helps Australian organisations navigate and maximise the benefits of cultural diversity in the workplace. The CCP for individuals is available as an app for tablets and mobile devices. The program builds capability around cultural diversity, and participants will gain practical skills and cultural specific knowledge for use both at work and in everyday life.

Topics covered include:
- Diversity Works – the business case for investing in diversity
- Cultural Differences and Similarities
- Core Inclusion Skills
- Unconscious Bias
- Cross-Cultural Communication (two modules)
- Cultural Adaptation
- Australia by the Numbers

The CCP provides a solid foundation in understanding what culture, diversity, inclusion and cultural competence mean. While it is primarily aimed at building capability around cultural diversity in the workplace, secondary school students will benefit from undertaking the course in terms of increasing their own understanding of cultural diversity in Australia.

The CCP explores topics including cross-cultural communication, addressing stereotypes, unconscious bias, diversity and the benefits of multiculturalism in the workplace. There are over sixty animations and films, including real people telling real stories. Also included are fun, interactive activities, plus options for further reading.

Working alongside the CCP, the Cultural Atlas is a supplementary resource designed to inform and educate in relation to cross-cultural attitudes, practices, norms, behaviours and communications.

The Cultural Atlas is a large-scale online resource providing information about a range of cultures in Australia including:
- Core Concepts – cultural values
- Etiquette, Do’s and Do Not’s
- Greetings and Communication
- Religion
- Demographic Statistics
- Business Culture

CONTENT HYPERLINKS

2  SYNONOPSIS
3  LEARNING OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS FOR SCHOOLS
3  CONCEPTS COVERED IN THIS STUDY GUIDE
3  ACCOMPANYING VIDEOS
4  CURRICULUM LINKS RELATED TO ‘UNCONSCIOUS BIAS’
6  PREPARATORY ACTIVITY
6  LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR THE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS MODULE:
6  Confirmation Bias
7  Focus on ‘unconscious bias’
7  Focus on ‘Project Implicit and the IAT’
8  ‘Challenge your Shortcuts’
9  Focus on ‘recruitment bias’
10  Focus on ‘bias and inclusion’
11  Focus on ‘bias and gender roles’
12  Focus on ‘groupthink’
12  Focus on ‘managing unconscious bias’
14  Focus on ‘stereotypes and generalisations’
14  Focus on ‘prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination’
15  Unconscious Bias Quiz
15  Focus on ‘ways to reduce prejudice’
17  SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT TASKS FOR THE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS MODULE
19  REFERENCES
LEARNING OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS FOR SCHOOLS

The Cultural Competence Program (CCP) and The Cultural Atlas

There are eight modules (and one summary module) within the CCP. The activities in these guides are tailored to work with each specific module. Teachers may work through the modules in sequential order, or choose to work with modules that best suit their curriculum needs.

The Australian National Curriculum has been used as a guide for the basis of these activities. Teachers are advised to select and adapt the activities to suit the student age and stage of their class, and the curriculum foci and outcomes used in specific schools. The activities are also suitable for use in pastoral care and student wellbeing programs.

The CCP and Cultural Atlas can be used in relation to the following subject areas of the Australian National Curriculum:
- Years 7–10 Civics and Citizenship
- Years 7–10 English
- Years 7–10 Health and Physical Education
- Years 7–10 Media Arts
- Year 10 History

In addition, the CCP and Cultural Atlas relate to the following General Capabilities within the Australian National Curriculum:
- Personality and Social Capability
- Ethical Understanding
- Intercultural Understanding

The seven study guides associated with the CCP and Cultural Atlas are:
- DIVERSITY WORKS
- CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES
- CORE INCLUSION SKILLS
- UNCONSCIOUS BIAS
- CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION
- CULTURAL ADAPTATION
- AUSTRALIA BY THE NUMBERS

ACCOMPANYING VIDEOS

The following videos accompany this study guide, and can be accessed at <https://theeducationshop.com.au/cultural-competence-program/>

- **Unconscious Bias** – What are unconscious biases, why do they exist, and how can they affect decision-making. This video also looks at tests to measure a person’s associations (which may be influenced by unconscious bias).
- **Recruitment Bias** – A look at how unconscious bias can influence the different stages of the recruitment process. The results of some statistical studies are used to highlight real-world examples.
- **Bias and Inclusion** – This video explains why unconscious bias is the enemy of diversity and inclusion, with a focus on how it can affect the culture and performance of an organisation or industry.
- **Groupthink** – An explanation of an extreme phenomenon that can reduce the diversity of thought within a group of people.
- **Managing Unconscious Bias** – Six steps that you can take to reduce the impact of unconscious bias. This video also includes an explanation of the different types of ‘micro-messaging’.
- **Stereotypes and Generalisations** – This video defines ‘generalising’ and ‘stereotyping’, and explains the key differences. The impacts of stereotyping are also highlighted.

CONCEPTS COVERED IN THIS STUDY GUIDE

- Types of bias
- Effect on recruitment and career
- Groupthink
- Stereotypes
- Managing unconscious bias
- Recognise and describe different types of biases.
- Recognise and give examples of workplace practices affected negatively by unconscious bias.
- Explore how decision-making is affected by unconscious biases, in and outside of the workplace.
- Recognise that you have unconscious bias and it affects your decision-making.
- Recognise the distinction between stereotypes and generalisations.
CURRICULUM LINKS RELATED TO ‘UNCONSCIOUS BIAS’

Civics and Citizenship

YEAR 7
Citizenship, diversity and identity
• How Australia is a secular nation and a multi-faith society with a Christian heritage (ACHCK051 – Scootle)
• How values, including freedom, respect, inclusion, civility, responsibility, compassion, equality and a ‘fair go’, can promote cohesion within Australian society (ACHCK052 – Scootle)
• How groups, such as religious and cultural groups, express their particular identities; and how this influences their perceptions of others and vice versa (ACHCK053 – Scootle)

YEAR 9
Citizenship, diversity and identity
• The influence of a range of media, including social media, in shaping identities and attitudes to diversity (ACHCK080 – Scootle)
• How ideas about and experiences of Australian identity are influenced by global connectedness and mobility (ACHCK081 – Scootle)

YEAR 10
Civics and Citizenship Knowledge and Understanding
• The challenges to and ways of sustaining a resilient democracy and cohesive society (ACHCK094 – Scootle)

English

YEAR 7
Language: Language variation and change
• Understand the way language evolves to reflect a changing world, particularly in response to the use of new technology for presenting texts and communicating (ACELA1528 – Scootle)

Language: Language for interaction
• Understand how accents, styles of speech and idioms express and create personal and social identities (ACELA1529 – Scootle)

Literature: Literature and context
• Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1619 – Scootle)

Literature: Responding to literature
• Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (ACELT1620 – Scootle)

Literacy: Interpreting, analysing and evaluating
• Analyse and explain the ways text structures and language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose (ACELY1721 – Scootle)
• Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources (ACELY1723 – Scootle)

Literacy: Creating texts
• Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language, visual, and audio features to convey information and ideas (ACELY1725 – Scootle)

YEAR 8
Language: Language for interaction
• Understand how conventions of speech adopted by communities influence the identities of people in those communities (ACELA1541 – Scootle)

Literature: Literature and context
• Explore the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literary texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups (ACELT1626 – Scootle)

Literature: Responding to literature
• Understand and explain how combinations of words and images in texts are used to represent particular groups in society, and how texts position readers in relation to those groups (ACELT1628 – Scootle)
• Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts (ACELT1807 – Scootle)

Literacy: Interacting with others
• Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content, including multimodal elements, to reflect a diversity of viewpoints (ACELY1731 – Scootle)

Literacy: Creating texts
• Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions, using deliberate language and textual choices, and including digital elements as appropriate (ACELY1736 – Scootle)

YEAR 9
Language: Language for interaction
• Understand that roles and relationships are developed and challenged through language and interpersonal skills (ACELA1551 – Scootle)

Literature: Literature and context
• Interpret and compare how representations of people
and culture in literary texts are drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1633 – Scootle)

**Literacy: Texts in Context**
- Analyse how the construction and interpretation of texts, including media texts, can be influenced by cultural perspectives and other texts (ACELY1739 – Scootle)

**Literacy: Interpreting, analysing and evaluating**
- Interpret, analyse and evaluate how different perspectives of issue, event, situation, individuals or groups are constructed to serve specific purposes in texts (ACELY1742 – Scootle)

**Literacy: Creating texts**
- Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that present a point of view and advance or illustrate arguments, including texts that integrate visual, print and/or audio features (ACELY1746 – Scootle)

**Literacy: Creating texts**
- Create sustained texts, including texts that combine specific digital or media content, for imaginative, informative, or persuasive purposes that reflect upon challenging and complex issues (ACELY1756 – Scootle)

**Health and Physical Education**

**YEARS 9 AND 10**

**Personal, Social and Community Health**
- Evaluate factors that shape identities and critically analyse how individuals impact the identities of others (ACPPS089 – Scootle)
- Investigate how empathy and ethical decision making contribute to respectful relationships (ACPPS093 – Scootle)
- Plan, implement and critique strategies to enhance health, safety and wellbeing of their communities (ACPPS096 – Scootle)
- Plan and evaluate new and creative interventions that promote their own and others’ connection to community and natural and built environments (ACPPS097 – Scootle)
- Critique behaviours and contextual factors that influence health and wellbeing of diverse communities (ACPPS098 – Scootle)

**Media Arts**

**YEARS 7 AND 8**
- Experiment with the organisation of ideas to structure stories through media conventions and genres to create points of view in images, sounds and text (ACAMAM066 – Scootle)
- Develop media representations to show familiar or shared social and cultural values and beliefs, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACAMAM067 – Scootle)
- Develop and refine media production skills to shape the technical and symbolic elements of images, sounds and text for a specific purpose and meaning (ACAMAM068 – Scootle)
- Plan, structure and design media artworks that engage audiences (ACAMAM069 – Scootle)
- Present media artworks for different community and institutional contexts with consideration of ethical and regulatory issues (ACAMAM070 – Scootle)

**YEARS 9 AND 10**
- Produce and distribute media artworks for a range of community and institutional contexts and consider social, ethical and regulatory issues (ACAMAM077 – Scootle)
PREPARATORY ACTIVITY

Teachers are advised to conduct the following preparatory activity before engaging with the CCP and the Cultural Atlas.

Talking about cultural diversity, bias, discrimination, the importance of inclusivity and related ideas requires maturity and understanding of others. While the CCP and activities contained in this study guide clearly aim to increase students’ awareness of the importance of inclusion in a culturally diverse society, certain discussions may cause existing biases and stereotypes to surface. With this in mind, it is extremely important to spend time creating a safe and inclusive classroom environment. Suggested activity to help establish this:

**ACTIVITY**

**Establishing Class Ground Rules**

The aim is to establish a classroom environment that encourages openness, positive behaviour and expected standards of interaction with other class members. Teachers are to lead a discussion that invites students to develop a series of Class Ground Rules. Ideas to include:

1. **Respect Others:** You may hear ideas and opinions that may differ from your own. Try and take in new information without judgement and keep an open mind. Be mindful of your words and body language and ensure these reflect a respectful attitude. Learn by listening to others.
2. **Own Your Own Values:** Speak personally (e.g. ‘I feel …’ or ‘In my experience …’). Avoid overtly negative, accusatory or generalised statements when interacting with others in your class. If you disagree with a class member, remember to challenge their opinion not the person.
3. **Be Open and Honest:** All students have the right to ask questions without fear of judgement. It is important that everyone be given the opportunity to learn as much as possible. If you are not confident in asking a question in front of the class, make sure you approach your teacher personally.
4. **Respect and Confidentiality:** Everything said in the classroom stays in the classroom. When sharing personal anecdotes, avoid using real names and carefully consider what personal information you chose to share with the class.
5. **Share ‘Air Time’:** Every student is encouraged to express their ideas and opinions. Allow others to share and don’t monopolise discussion. You are not obligated to speak; it is fine to say ‘pass’.

Once the class has established their Ground Rules together, teachers should formalise these and display/make copies available to all students. These can be referred to during your engagement with the CCP and the Cultural Atlas.

**LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR THE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS MODULE:**

**ACTIVITY**

**Confirmation Bias**

Confirmation bias is one of many biases we have. As a class, undertake the following ‘Confirmation Bias’ activity.

Teachers should familiarise themselves with this activity prior to running it with the class.

1. Present a sequence of 3 numbers to students and inform them that the numbers in the sequence all obey a particular rule which you would like students to guess.
2. Present the following number sequence: 2, 4, 8.
3. Working individually (in silence), students are to guess the rule and then write down 2 new sequences that they think illustrates this rule.
4. Ask the class for volunteers to share their answers. After a short discussion, teachers are to reveal the solution: each number must be larger than the one before it. Therefore, 5, 10, 20 satisfies the rule, as does 1, 2, 3 and so on. Most people start off with the incorrect assumption that they’re being asked to solve a tricky problem, and so they come up with a theory such as “Each number is double the previous number” and then start to test if they are right (i.e. confirmation bias).

Teachers should clearly explain the simplicity of the rule and the way that confirmation bias impacts a person’s problem solving and decision-making processes. Following the activity, the class should discuss the following questions:

- How does that activity reveal the ways confirmation bias impact our problem solving and decision-making processes? Were there vastly different answers within the class when solving the problem?
- Share any direct experience you have had with confirmation bias in your own life.
- Why do you think confirmation bias exists and how can it be problematic in relation to cultural competence?
Focus on ‘unconscious bias’

As a class, view the ‘Unconscious Bias’ clip and answer the following questions:

1. The clip begins with the following quote: ‘The eye sees what the mind is prepared to comprehend.’ Discuss what you think this quote means, with specific reference to the concept of unconscious bias.
2. How many different types of cognitive bias are listed on Wikipedia? Does this number surprise you?
3. How do cognitive biases help us to filter and make sense of the vast range of information we encounter and process each day? How do you think this is essential to our survival?
4. What are ‘heuristics’ and how do they help us form judgements and make decisions in a timely manner? How can they also lead to bad decision-making?
5. How can unconscious bias relate to making assumptions about people from other cultures, and lead to bad decision-making and unintended impacts?

6. We hear about the Implicit Association Test (IAT). As a class, visit the site listed below and look at the range of original IATs. If possible, students are encouraged to individually take one of these tests. Please note: tests take approximately twenty to thirty minutes and students should ensure they carefully read the explanation of their results. Teachers should be selective when assigning IATs to students, ensuring they are age- and context-appropriate for each student. Students are encouraged to share and discuss their results and overall experience of undertaking the test as a class.

Site to visit for IATs: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/im-plicit/takeatest.html>

Focus on ‘Project Implicit and the IAT’

The ‘Unconscious Bias’ clip refers to the work by Greenwald, Banaji and Nosek in relation to unconscious bias and their development of the Implicit Association Test (IAT). The IAT measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report. The IAT is part of Project Implicit, which focuses on implicit social cognition (i.e. unconscious thoughts and feelings). Project Implicit aims to educate the public about hidden biases and provide people with an understanding of the difference between a) knowing your attitudes, being unwilling and thus hiding them from someone and b) not realising your attitudes and unknowingly hiding them from yourself.

Working in pairs, students are to undertake research into both Project Implicit and the IAT. Research may be presented in any of the following formats: Google Slides, PowerPoint, Prezi, or similar. Areas to research:

- What are the aims of Project Implicit? Where and when did it originate and how does it function?
- Explain how the IATs work and what concepts they cover in their testing. Include a sample run-through of selected questions by way of illustration.
- What societal and cultural factors do you think contribute to hidden biases?
- Why do you think it’s helpful for people to understand, acknowledge and reflect upon their own unconscious biases? What can be some of the negative impacts of unconscious biases?
- How do you think Project Implicit and the IATs help build cultural competence?
‘Challenge your Shortcuts’

Our brain uses shortcuts all the time. This activity shows how we struggle to associate conflicting messages that challenge those shortcuts.

Instructions

This activity asks you to match colours with the names of colours. It is a simple and quick test of some of our very basic associations: colours. Teachers are to project the exercises to the class, selecting a student volunteer to undertake the test. Participants are urged to answer as quickly as they can. (Please note that in order to successfully complete this activity, participants need to be able to visually identify the following colours: red, blue, green, yellow, brown.)

Exercise 1
Match the colours of the words with the names of the colours.
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green
- Red
- Brown

Exercise 2
Match the colours of the words with the names of the colours.
- Sunshine
- Grass
- Blood
- Sky
- Dirt

Exercise 3
Match the colours of the words with the names of the colours.
- Blood
- Dirt
- Grass
- Sunshine
- Sky

Exercise 4
Match the colours of the words with the names of the colours.
- Yellow
- Red
- Blue
- Brown
- Green

The activity shows us how tricky it is to match contradicting information, such as when the word “sky” is red, or the word “red” is blue. It seems that automatic associations are hard to contradict.

Following completion of the activity, discuss the process and the results. Reflect on the following:
- Did you think the activity was simple?
- Was there a point where the task became more difficult? Why was this the case?
- Unfortunately, we are often unaware how these associations impact our behaviour and attitudes towards other people. Our shortcuts do not always help us and in many cases we are not even aware of it. Try think about situations at school or in your daily life where your shortcuts may prevent you from fairly judging individuals. Do you often let stereotypes and assumptions take over?
- How can you slow down your thinking process to avoid letting your shortcuts rule your decisions?
Focus on ‘recruitment bias’

As a class, view the ‘Recruitment Bias’ clip and answer the following questions:

1. What are the different examples the clip refers to in relation to the human tendency to favour one group to the detriment of another (e.g. relating to factors such as gender, height, etc.)? Can you think of a time where you have formed a decision about someone based on a similar example of unconscious bias? Share and discuss as a class.

2. How can unconscious bias, as per the examples discussed in this clip, have significant impact on recruitment practice and cultural competence?

3. What are the defining features of people we tend to favour? And how does this work in reverse in terms of those we exclude?

4. The clip talks about the potentially disastrous and far-reaching consequences of unconscious bias on the entire recruitment process. Using ideas gained from this module and your own research, write a scenario that shows an example of this. Include the following stages of recruitment and ensure you explain the impact of unconscious bias at each stage:
   - JOB ADVERTISEMENT
   - SHORTLISTING PROCESS
   - INTERVIEW PROCESS

5. Explain the research and findings of Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan in relation to cultural/race recruitment bias.

6. Explain the research and findings of Corinne Moss-Racusin in relation to gender recruitment bias.

It is clear from this clip that unconscious bias can adversely impact the recruitment process. Working in pairs, design your own experiment that could test for the presence and impact of unconscious bias on the recruitment process. You can base your idea on the research referred to in this clip or focus on other areas of unconscious bias. Use the following steps of psychological research when formulating your experiment:

- Identify the research topic (specify the type of unconscious bias you will be investigating in this experiment).
- Formulate your hypothesis (your educated guess about what the findings will be).
- Select your research method and specify the type of organisation(s) you would be focusing on, the number of people in your study, and the steps involved in carrying out your research.

Given groups are unable to carry out their actual experiment, groups should share and discuss their experimental design, and speculate as to whether the study would support your hypothesis in relation to the expected impact of unconscious bias on the recruitment process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Employment</th>
<th>Potential Impact of Unconscious Bias</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assigning Tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing people with training opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to people’s ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACTIVITY**

Focus on ‘bias and inclusion’

As a class, view the ‘Bias and Inclusion’ clip and answer the following questions:

1. We learn that unconscious bias can have a highly detrimental impact on inclusion. Even if the challenge of recruitment bias has been overcome, unconscious bias can continue to have an impact in all areas of employment. As a class, brainstorm the ways the potential impact unconscious bias could have on the following areas of employment shown on the right:

2. The clip discusses the experience of Liz Dolan, former director of Quiksilver, who resigned from the board in June 2015 due to, what she describes as, a very clear case of unconscious bias. Read the following account from Liz Dolan of her experience, [http://fortune.com/2015/06/15/liz-dolan-quiksilver-board/](http://fortune.com/2015/06/15/liz-dolan-quiksilver-board/) and write a reflection that covers the following areas:
   - How long had Liz worked at Quiksilver?
   - What was her experience in the lead-up to her decision to resign?
   - How does she feel that unconscious bias (and specifically gender bias) played a role in her treatment?

3. The clip describes the ‘insidious impacts’ of unconscious bias in relation to the reduction in diversity of thought. Explain how this occurs with reference to homogenous versus heterogeneous groups. Why do you think a lack of diversity within an organisation can lead to negative outcomes in relation to creativity and innovation?
Following completion of the test, discuss the process and the results as a class. Reflect on the following:

- What were participants’ results on the Gender-Career IAT? Were any participants surprised by their results?
- How can biased shortcuts impact the treatment of males and females in the workplace? Do you think this extends to school? Have you had direct experience with this?
- Think about the gender make-up of your school in relation to teaching staff. Do you think that gender bias exists in your school in any way?
- Everything an individual is exposed to and experiences on a daily basis contributes to forming unconscious biases. It is crucial that we don’t let our ‘gut feeling’ take over when important decisions are made, especially in the workplace or school environment. Can you think of other shortcuts and associations you have of people that impact your behaviour towards them?
- Read the following article about gender bias: <http://theconversation.com/most-people-think-man-when-they-think-scientist-how-can-we-kill-the-stereotype-42393/>
- Why do you think young children are forming gender-based science stereotypes?
- Can you think of other gender-based stereotypes that exist in relation to professions?
- What are some of the potential impacts of these stereotypes?
- What are the ways that the article proposes we can help reduce such thinking?
- Read the following article about Tokyo Medical University’s alleged manipulation of entrance exam results to limit the number of female students and ensure more men became doctors: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/08/tokyo-medical-school-admits-changing-results-to-exclude-women/>
- Describe how the university was engaging in this fraudulent practice and the possible reasons behind this.
- Managing Director of the university Tetsuo Yukioka acknowledged that some people believed women were not allowed to become surgeons. How do you think this might relate to engrained gender roles in Japanese society? Provide evidence from the article to support your answer.
- The article quotes Japan’s Equality Minister Seiko Noda, who states: ‘It is extremely regrettable if medical schools share a view that having female doctors work at hospitals is troublesome.’ How do you think such views could be best addressed in terms of achieving a shift in gender bias? Discuss as a class.
ACTIVITY

Focus on ‘managing unconscious bias’

Knowing that biased behaviour exists is different from doing something about it. For example, you might ‘know’ that smoking is bad for you, however, that does not mean you will ‘do’ anything about it. Often the environment in which the behaviour takes place has to change to help influence your behaviour. The same can be said about preventing biased behaviour. Organisations need to create an environment which supports processes that do not lead to biased decision-making. Cultural diversity and inclusion has to be hardwired into the ethos of the organisation.

As a class, view the clip ‘Managing Unconscious Bias’, which presents practical strategies to minimise the impact of unconscious bias. Answer the following questions:

1. The clip presents six steps you can take to reduce the impact of unconscious bias. These are presented in the table on the next page; take notes as you watch the clip and record any salient points and ideas that you have around each of these six steps.
It is clear that we all have our own unconscious biases. There are several efforts you can make to improve your ability to stay objective. The first thing is to look at yourself and see in what situations your bias is displayed, explicitly or implicitly. Take a look at the list below and silently/individually answer each one as truthfully as you can. These answers will remain confidential:

- Who do you prefer to spend time with at school?
- Who do you speak to most often about non-school-related matters when you are at school?
- Who have you never talked to or engaged in a conversation with and why?
- Who is part of your usual class groups you work with on any given school day?
- Who is not part of your usual class group and why do you not prefer spending time with them?
- Who do you often help out or leave a good word for?

Look at your responses. Do you think that any of your answers reveal your own unconscious biases? Or are other factors at play? What can you do to challenge yourself and go ‘outside your comfort zone’? Could you challenge any of your work habits to reduce the impact of your own unconscious bias?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Steps to Reduce Unconscious Bias</strong></th>
<th><strong>Definition and Key Concepts /Ideas related to this step</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Recognise unconscious bias.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Become mindful of making assump-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Deal with facts, not assumptions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Replace subjective decision-mak-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Measure results.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ACTIVITY**

**Focus on ‘stereotypes and generalisations’**

The final clip in this module looks at ways we can understand cultures through generalisations without stereotyping individuals.

As a class, view the ‘Stereotypes & Generalisations’ clip and answer the following questions:

1. The clip begins with the following quote from author Charlie Caruso: *The human compulsion to group people and objects together was ingrained in our being since we evolved. We need to group things – group the dangerous and unknown from the ‘safe to eat’ or the ‘it won’t eat you’ categories. Without the ability to categorise these threats, our ancestors wouldn’t have survived.*
   - Do you agree with this statement? Does it help you understand the human need for grouping people together? Do you think there are other factors at play when we group people together?

2. Consider the following quote from Soren Kierkegaard: ‘Once you label me you negate me.’ Discuss what this means as a class.

3. What are the key differences between generalisations and stereotypes?

4. What are the key differences in terms of the potential impact of generalisations versus stereotypes?

**ACTIVITY**

**Focus on ‘prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination’**

Prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination are all different manifestations of bias. They can co-exist or be expressed independently of each other. Read more about these categories in the following article: <http://nobaproject.com/modules/prejudice-discrimination-and-stereotyping/>

Teachers are to allocate one of the concepts listed in the table on the right to a pair of students. Students are to research their concept and create a brief tutorial which explains:

- Key elements of this bias
- What factors can contribute to this bias
- Examples from real-life workplace/school situations where this bias has had a negative impact
- Ways that workplaces/schools can actively reduce the occurrence of this bias

**Attribution Bias**

When we recall information although it was never there, we just assumed it was.

**Aversive Racism**

Unexamined racial bias that the person does not intend and would reject, but that avoids interracial contact.

**Blatant Biases**

Conscious beliefs, feelings, and behaviour that people are perfectly willing to admit, are mostly hostile, and openly favour their own group.

**Discrimination**

Behaviour that advantages or disadvantages people merely based on their group membership.

**Prejudice**

An evaluation or emotion towards people merely based on their group membership.

**Similarity Bias**

When we prefer to be around people that are similar to ourselves. It prevents us from evaluating people based on their merits (e.g. end up hiring people that are similar to yourself).

**Social Identity Theory**

The tendency for people to categorise each other into groups, favouring their own group.

**Stereotype Threat**

When the stereotyped group starts to believe in their ‘own’ stereotypes. (E.g. when girls start to believe that they are bad in Maths because of the stereotype ‘girls are bad at Maths’).

**Subtle Biases**

Automatic, ambiguous and ambivalent, but real in their consequences.

**The Anchoring Effect**

The first impression of a person gets anchored in our mind. As a result, it makes it hard to change our mind about the person, even if contradicting information is revealed.

**The Halo Effect**

The overall impression of the person influences our perception of what we think about the person. (E.g. thinking ‘he reminds me about myself when I was that age, so he will be doing a great job’). You apply a ‘halo’ on the person.
ACTIVITY

Focus on ‘ways to reduce prejudice’

Research has shown that there are four key ways groups of people can come together and help reduce the incidence of stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice. Working in small groups, students are to conduct research into the following methods for reducing these factors. Presentations can be presented as a hard copy poster, or digitally (e.g. Google Slides, PowerPoint, Prezi or a podcast).

1. SUSTAINED CONTACT
2. MUTUAL INTERDEPENDENCE
3. SUPERORDINATE GOALS
4. EQUALITY OF STATUS

Presentations should include an example of these four factors in action based in a school or workplace scenario.

ACTIVITY

Unconscious Bias Quiz

Students (either working individually or in pairs) are to answer the following quiz questions to ensure they’ve understood the main terminology and concepts that have been covered in this module:

**QUESTION 1**

Confirmation bias is when you…

a) Prefer to search for, hear and believe information that fits your pre-existing beliefs
b) Search for contradictory information to disprove your theory
c) All of the above
d) None of the above

Correct answer: a) Prefer to search for, hear and believe information that fits your pre-existing beliefs. It’s not always about the dislike of hearing alternate beliefs to your own. Sometimes you unconsciously avoid asking questions that may challenge your existing ideas.

**QUESTION 2**

Confirmation bias in a company is expressed in what way?

a) People tend to think about positive situations rather than negative ones
b) People tend to think about why something might go right rather than wrong
c) People tend to think about questions to which the answer is yes rather than no
d) All of the above
e) None of the above

Correct answer: d) All of the above. Confirmation bias can be detrimental. Always look at a situation from various angles and avoid the comfortable ‘yes’.
**QUESTION 3**

Stereotypes ignore individual differences and are judgemental.

a  True  
b  False

**Correct answer:** a) True. Stereotyping is the application of an attribute on all members of a group. It is a form of cognitive bias.

**QUESTION 4**

Stereotypes based on race, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation often lead to

a  Discrimination and oppression  
b  Confirmation bias  
c  Groupthink  
d  All of the above  
e  None of the above

**Correct answer:** a) Discrimination and oppression. Stereotypes often alter behaviour and lead to biases and discrimination. Discrimination is a form of behaviour bias.

**QUESTION 5**

Micro-inequities are subtle, disrespectful actions that reflect our...

a  Groupthink  
b  Biases  
c  Objective decision making  
d  None of the above

**Correct answer:** b) Biases

**QUESTION 6**

Micro-affirmations are...

a  Subtle, disrespectful actions  
b  Reflective of our biases  
c  Small, everyday gestures of respect that make the recipient feel included and valued  
d  None of the above

**Correct answer:** c) Small, everyday gestures of respect that make the recipient feel included and valued. Micro-affirmations are the antidote for micro-inequities. Micro-affirmations are just small acts of politeness and common courtesy, consciously practiced. Micro-affirmations are easy to do and can be as simple as saying “Hi”.

**QUESTION 7**

Groupthink occurs when a group of people...

a  Sit down to solve a corporate issue  
b  Don’t question each other and instead agree upon everything resulting in bad decision outcomes  
c  Try to find the most innovative solutions to problems  
d  None of the above

**Correct answer:** b) Don’t question each other and instead agree upon everything resulting in bad decision outcomes. Groupthink is believed to be the biggest risk to growth to Australian businesses.

**QUESTION 8**

Unconscious biases in the workplace impact...

a  Recruitment practices and promotion  
b  Giving people training opportunities  
c  Assigning tasks, mentoring and performance reviews  
d  All of the above

**Correct answer:** d) All of the above. Unconscious bias operates on all levels of an organisation.
SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT TASKS FOR THE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS MODULE

Reflection on Unconscious Bias:

1. Students are to create their own ‘Wordle’ by visiting the following site: <http://www.wordle.net>. A ‘Wordle’ is a word cloud that is generated by text you provide, with prominence given to words that most frequently appear. You can tweak your clouds with different fonts, layouts and colour schemes. You might use a different word cloud generator program in class which is fine too. We have used Wordle as an example. Working in small groups, students are to brainstorm and discuss the key terms/concepts/ideas they have explored in the Unconscious Bias module and study guide, entering them all into the ‘Wordle’ generator. Completed ‘Wordles’ can be printed out and displayed around the classroom.

2. Using their completed Wordles, students are to write a reflection on what they have gained from exploring the Unconscious Bias module of the CCP. The following prompts should guide reflections:
   • Which words are most prominent in your ‘Wordle’? Why do you think this is?
   • Which types of unconscious bias do you find most interesting and why?
   • What do you think are the biggest effects on unconscious bias on decision-making?
   • What are the most obvious effects of unconscious bias on workplace and school practices and why?
   • What are the key differences between stereotypes and generalisations? How can both of these affect workplace and school practices?

Confirmation Bias in Action – Horoscope Activity:

In this module, we explored the impact of confirmation bias. The brain’s job is to make sense of the world, and it does so by finding connections between things. Unfortunately, this fantastic process can often lead us to seek proof for only what we’ve already decided is true, and thus we open ourselves to unlimited errors of thought.

This task involves students designing their own test of confirmation bias via false horoscope descriptors. Horoscopes provide an interpretation of a person’s overarching characteristics based on their birthdate. They are written in generalities and are, by their very nature, designed to be universal in their application. Students are to undertake the following:

1. Research the date ranges for all twelve signs of the zodiac. Write the name and date range of each sign of the zodiac on 12 separate pieces of paper. Then write the same horoscope on all the 12 pieces of paper, as given below:

   Horoscope:
   You have a great need for other people to like and admire you, yet you have a tendency to be critical of yourself. At times, you have serious doubts as to whether you have made the right decision or done the right thing. You prefer a certain amount of change and variety and become dissatisfied when you are hemmed in by restrictions. You work well with others; however, you are an independent thinker and highly capable of completing tasks on your own. While you are extroverted at times, you do have a need for time alone, and can often take a while to ‘warm up’ at social events.

2. Once you have twelve copies ready to go, decide on your ‘experimental subject’ for this task. This may be a student in another class, or someone outside of school. Inform the person that you are conducting an experiment on the accuracy of horoscope descriptors.
3. Ask your subject for their horoscope. Locate their horoscope descriptor sheet in your pile, ensuring that they don’t see all the descriptors are actually the same.
4. Read their descriptor to them and ask them to rate how accurate this was in relation to their personality traits (0 = not at all accurate, 5 = highly accurate).
5. Reveal to them the nature of your ‘experiment’ and explain the concept of confirmation bias (e.g. ‘the tendency to search for, interpret, favour, and recall information in a way that confirms one’s pre-existing beliefs.’). Were your participants surprised by their response?
6. Report back to class with your findings. Did most participants rate their horoscope descriptor as highly accurate? Write an overall reflection on this activity, explaining the steps involved and the results. What are other examples of confirmation bias in our everyday life? How can the impact of this form of unconscious bias range from benign to more severe? Consider in relation to the concept of cultural competence.
‘The Pitch’ – Reducing Gender Bias in your School or Community

Working in small groups, students are to storyboard and create their own advertisement (filmed clip, poster, digital) that aims to raise the awareness/reduce the impact of gender bias in either their school or community.

Students are to present their advertisement to the class, and provide a detailed analysis of the choices they made when creating their finished product. Some questions for students to consider:

• Who is your overall target audience? This will influence the content of your advertisement.
• Do you want to incorporate statistics/evidence? Do you want your advertisement to be hard-hitting? Humorous? A combination?
• Do you want your advertisement to be suitable for social media? If yes, what hashtag (#) will you incorporate in your message?

Presentation on ‘Groupthink’

Working in pairs, students are to research and prepare a presentation on the phenomenon of ‘groupthink’. Students can present their findings in the form of a poster, digital display (e.g. Google Slides, PowerPoint or Prezi) or as a podcast. Presentations should cover the following:

• Definition of the phenomenon of ‘groupthink’ and related terms (i.e. in-group, out-group)
• Group conditions that most often lead to ‘groupthink’
• Consequences of ‘groupthink’ (with direct reference to unconscious bias)
• Ways to prevent ‘groupthink’

Film Analysis of Ways to Reduce Stereotypes, Discrimination and Prejudice

The following activity involves students viewing the 2001 film *Remember the Titans* and analysing the film in relation to the following concepts:

• Factors that contribute to the development of stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice
• Factors that can help reduce stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice

Students are to view the film and record notes on the table provided as they view. It is suggested that teachers pause the film at key moments to allow for recording of ideas/quotes. The film can be obtained here.

After viewing the film, students are to write an analysis that responds to the following prompt: ‘How did the film *Remember the Titans* explore the ways that stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice are formed and factors that can help reduce their presence and impact?’
REFERENCES