

Questions of Belonging: Arise from Socio-Cultural Contexts Risk Becoming Self-Fulfilling But Can Be Interrupted

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Some worries people have in school and at work

Do I belong here?

When I feel lonely, struggle, or feel disrespected, does it mean I don't belong?

Will I be judged?

If I struggle or fail, will people think I, or people in my group, can't succeed?

Do people "like me" belong here?

*Are people here of a different sort than me?
Can I fit in as me?*

Socio-Cultural Contexts Give Rise To Questions

Including perspectives and risks or contingencies rooted in
personal and social identity

School Desegregation, and Resegregation



The History of American Education as a History of Exclusion and Fight for Inclusion



The 1948 desegregation of the University of Arkansas Medical School

The History of American Education as a History of Exclusion and Fight for Inclusion

Every time I walk into a classroom like that [advanced graduate level Math class], I think 'Ok, I know at the end of the quarter I'm going to get an A or B in the class—but making it through the class, showing them what I've got... dealing with what they expect...that I'm not just a girl—that's going to be the hard part.'

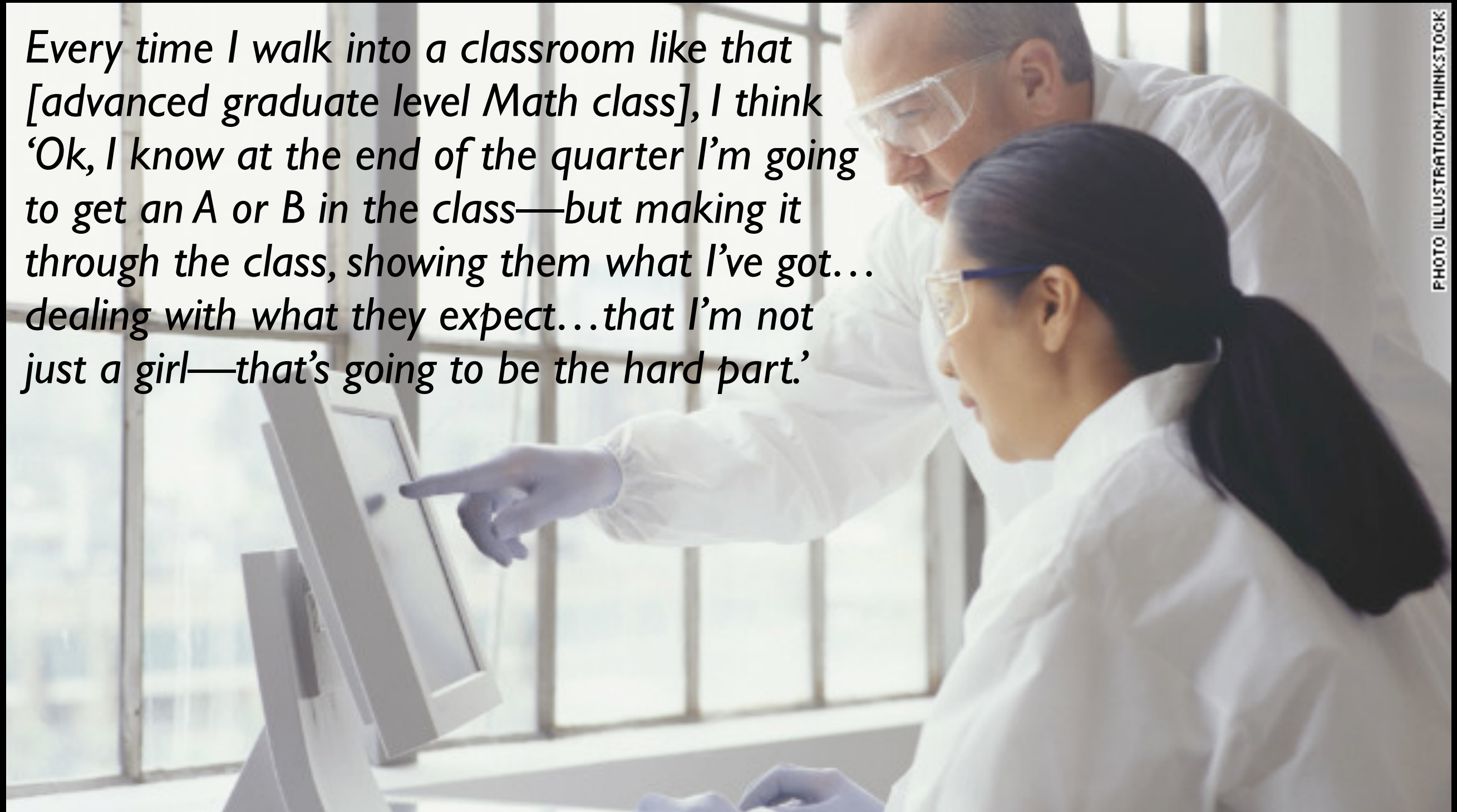


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/THINKSTOCK

-3rd year female graduate student in math at Stanford

Contexts Raise Questions;

*Can people like me belong and
succeed here?*

People look to **cues in contexts** to answer
these questions

Understanding Cues

Some Cues Are Passive

“I Count”



“Like many other Blacks, when I find myself in a new public situation, I will count.”

-Arthur Ashe

The “Wall of Fame” in the main conference room at a Major Professional Organization in San Francisco



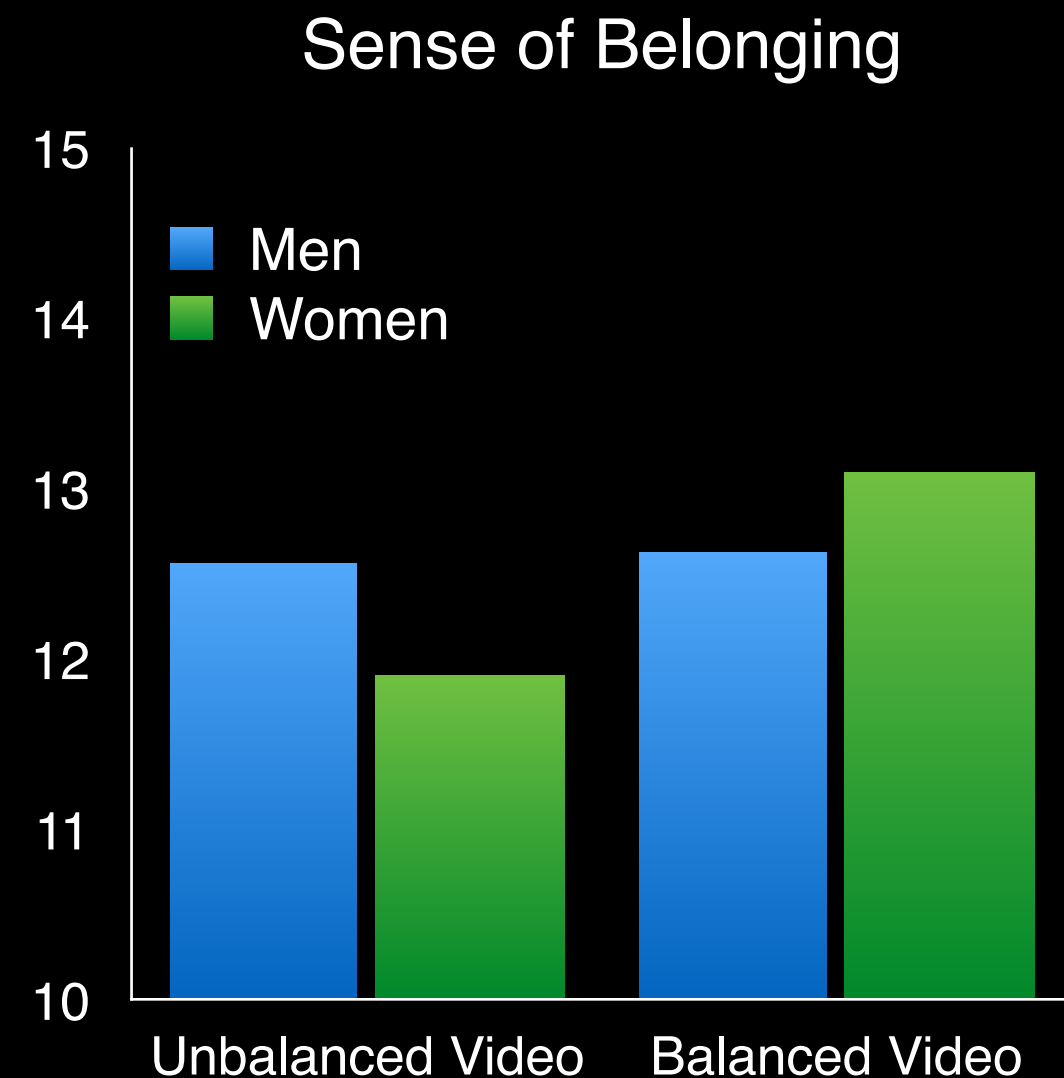
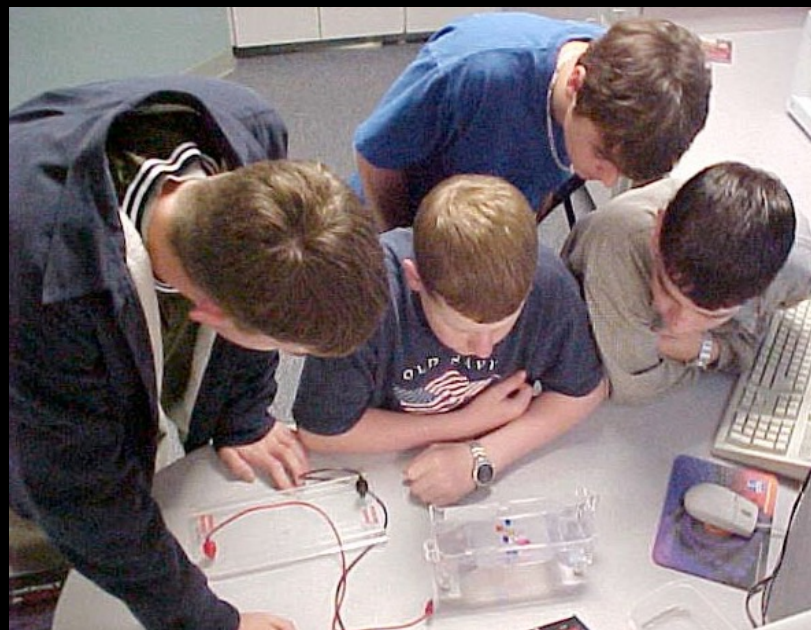
A Physics Conference

Some Cues Are Passive

- **Numeric underrepresentation** (e.g., Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007)

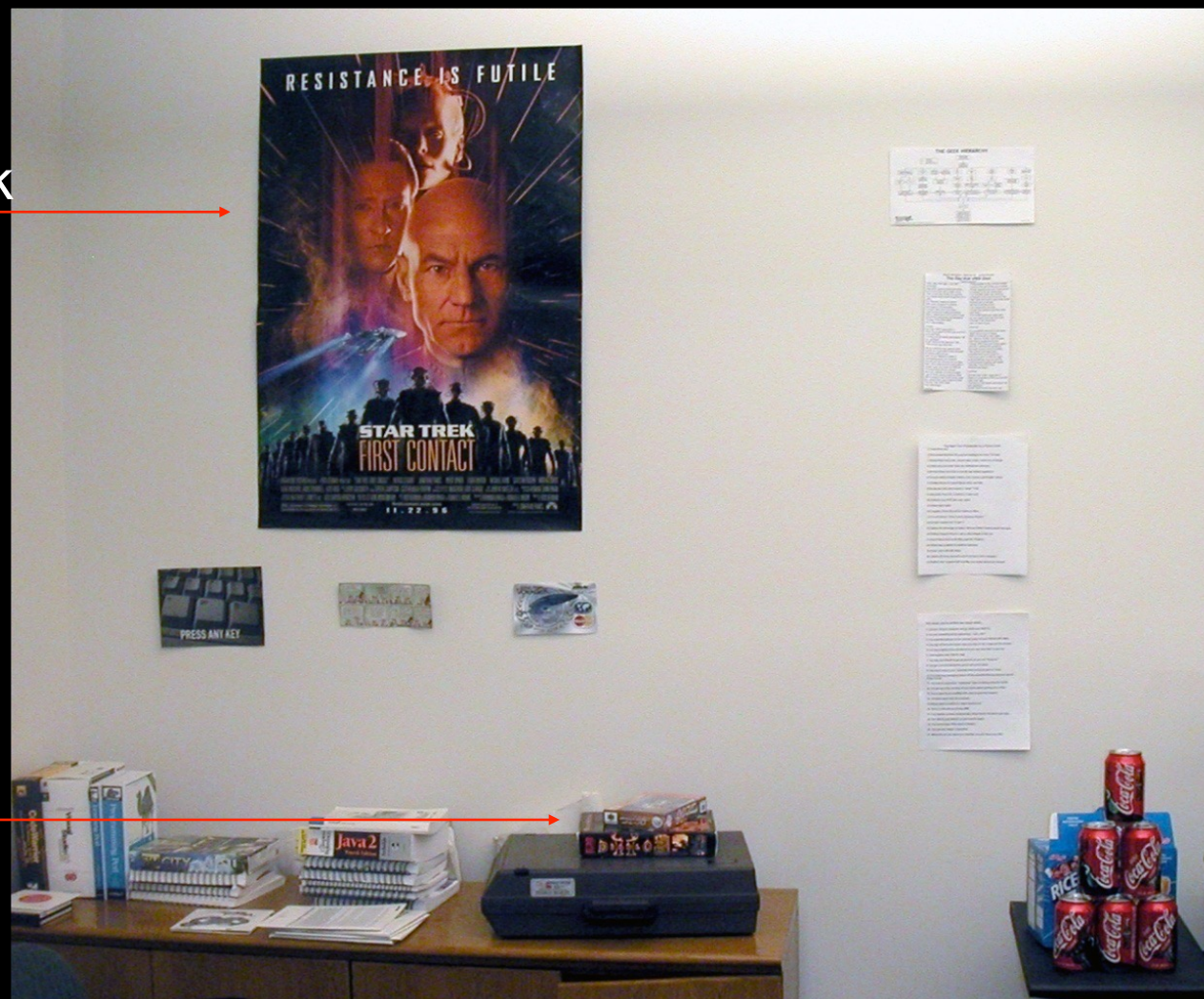


Mary Murphy
Indiana



Some Cues Are Passive

- Numeric underrepresentation (e.g., Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007)
- Stereotypic objects (e.g., Cheryan et al., 2009)



Star Trek
poster

Sci Fi
books

Coke
cans



Sapna Cheryan
Washington

Stories from Black Women in Tech



I feel I can't contribute to my fullest potential because my supervisor/people on my team are threatened/intimidated by me

I feel like I'm left out or not part of the team because of cultural references/contexts that specifically don't include me or reflect my experience

This feels like I want to be. Where I am home but...I don't have any real power in this system. I have a really great boss, but more often than none, it's about me coaching my boss. I am in a position where people respect and value me but if I go outside that team... I don't think I will get that.

My input/ideas are not considered because they do not reflect mainstream [white] and are deemed not "relatable"

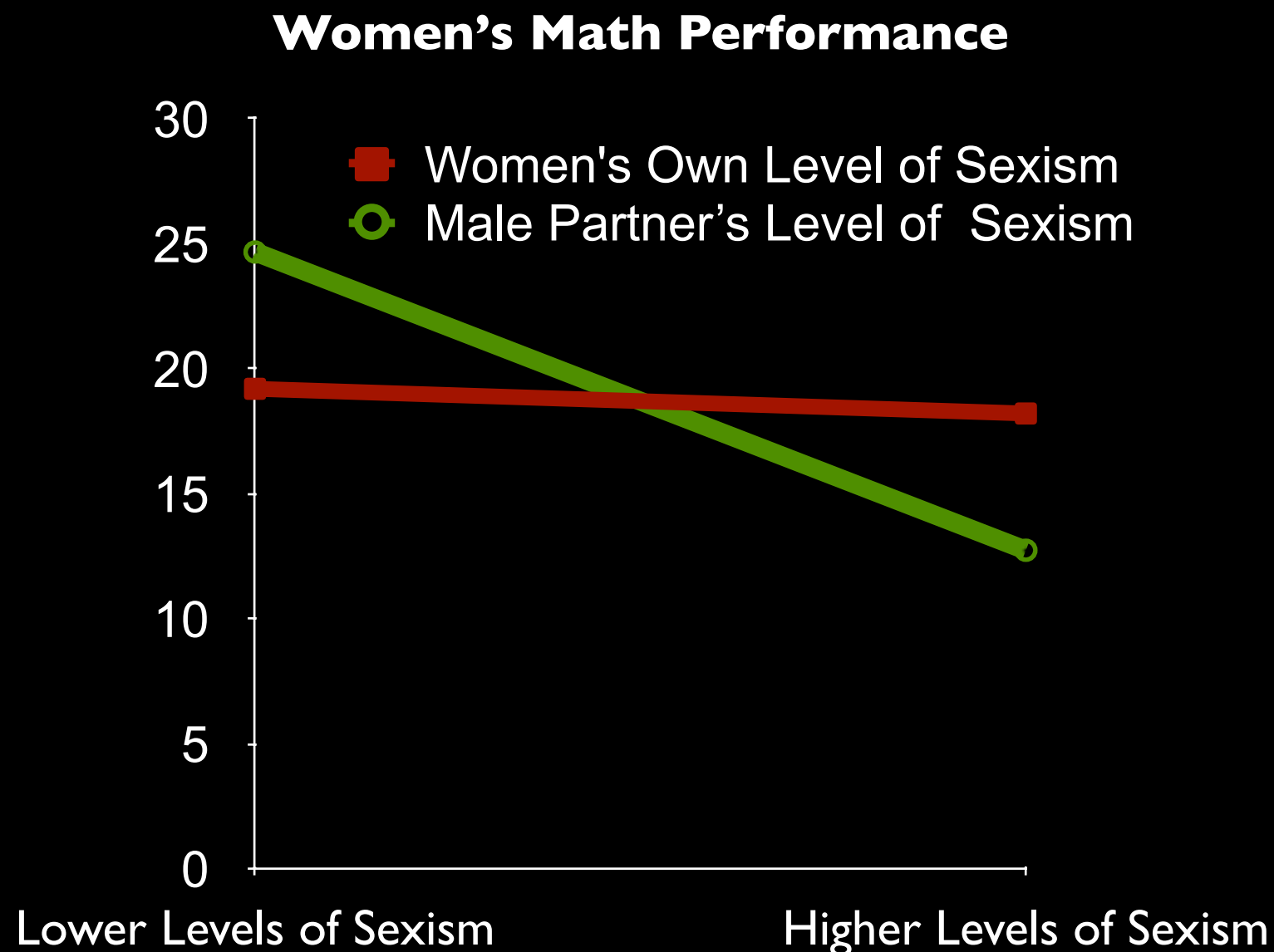
I am more qualified (because I've had to be better, faster, and more confident, more resourceful, than my peer or even my supervisor but have been subtly or blatantly been treated like I am less than.

Other Cues Are Active

- Sexist and negative interactions (e.g., Logel et al., 2009; Hall et al., 2018)



Christine Logel
University of Waterloo



Other Cues Are Active

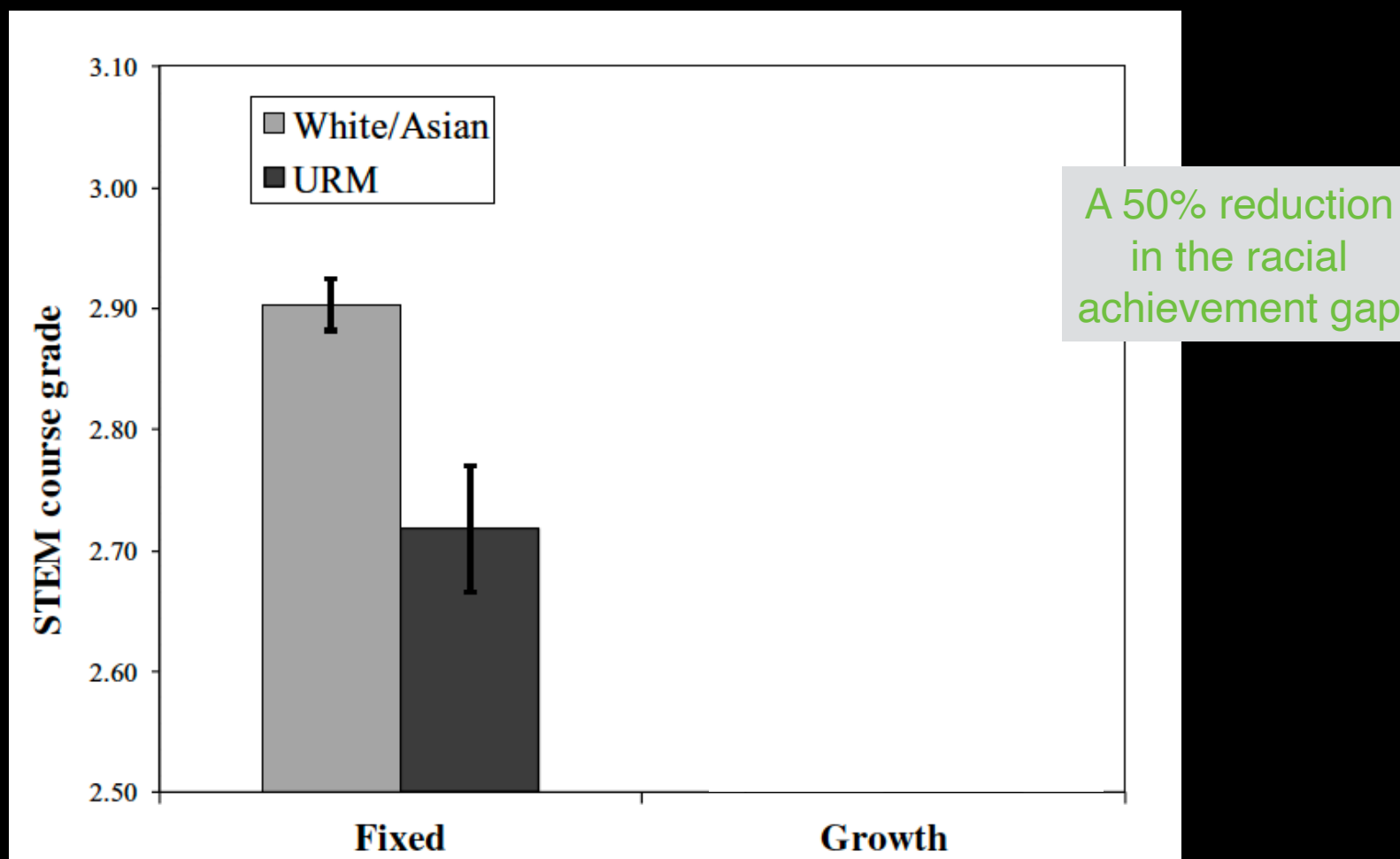
- Sexist and negative interactions (e.g., Logel et al., 2009; Hall et al., 2018)



Will Hall
Brock University

Other Cues Are Active

- Sexist and negative interactions (e.g., Logel et al., 2009; Hall et al., 2018)
- A fixed-mindset culture (e.g., Canning et al., 2019)



Elizabeth Canning
Washington State

**Everyday Experiments Are
Typically Ambiguous**

**Mindsets Shape *How*
People Make Sense of
Ambiguous Events**

Belonging Uncertainty

*Can people like me belong
and succeed here?*

Social-Belonging: From Fixed Quality to Process

Yes/No

- Do I belong or not?
- Does this event mean I don't belong?

Process

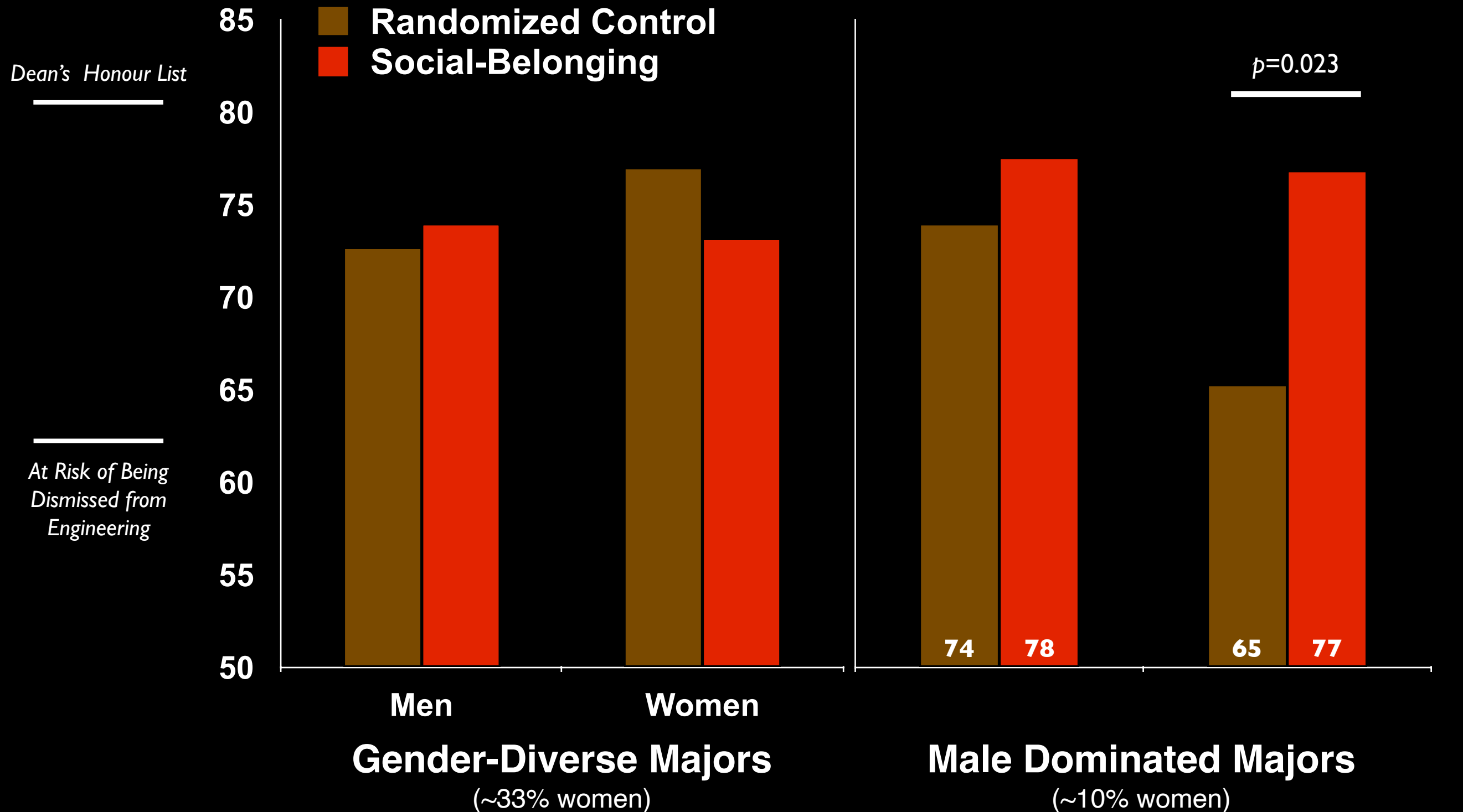
- It takes time and effort
- How will I develop my belonging?

The Social Belonging Intervention

Stories + “Saying-Is-Believing”

First-Year GPA in Engineering

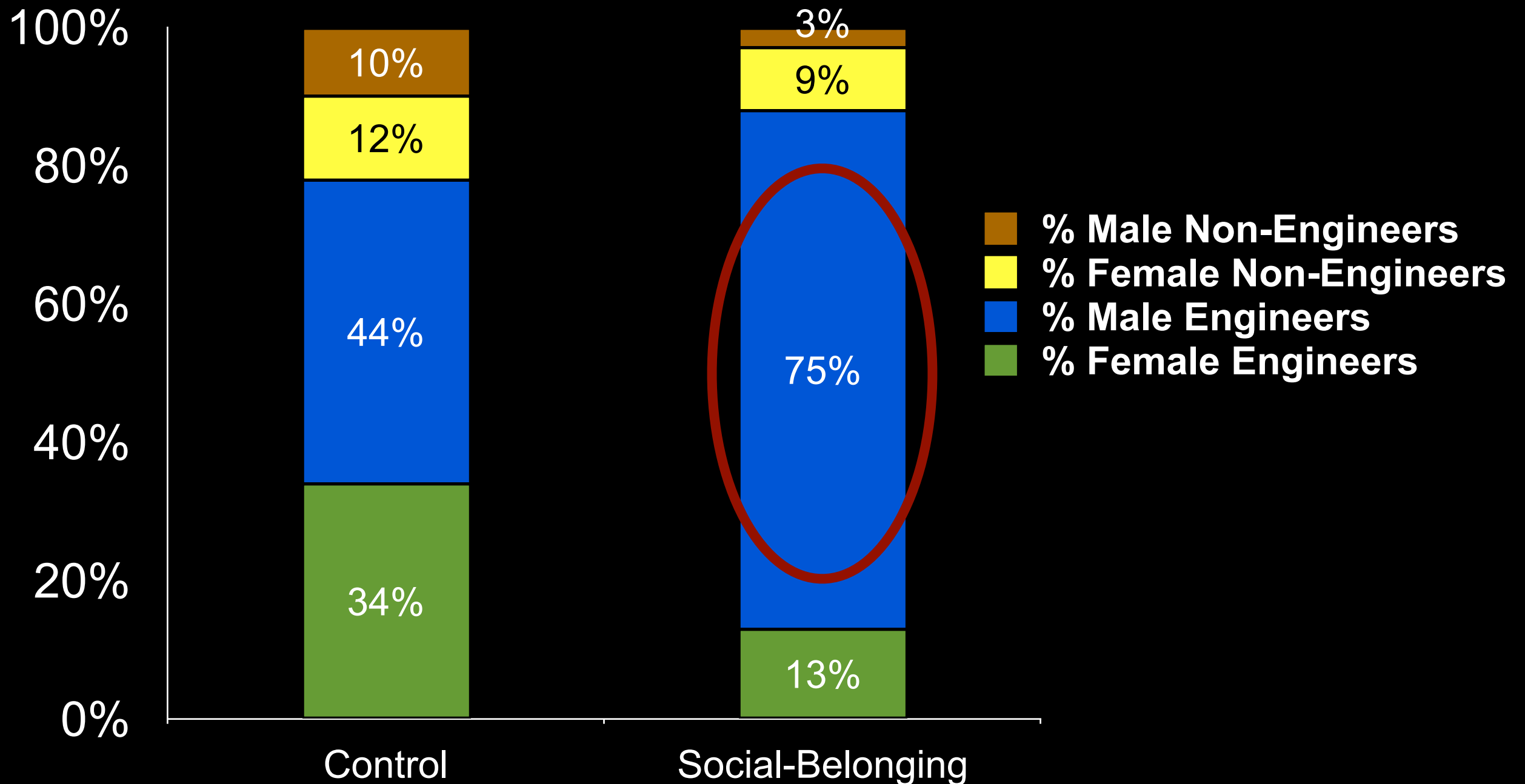
(Controlling for within-major mean)



Women's Friendship Groups

(controlling for preintervention)

In Male-Dominated Majors



Second-Choice Remedy

Prejudiced Places: How Contexts Shape Inequality and How Policy Can Change Them

Mary C. Murphy¹, Kathryn M. Kroeper¹, and Elise M. Ozier¹

Abstract

Psychological theories often locate the problem of prejudice within people. However, prejudice sits at the intersection of people and places. Prejudiced contexts are places with predictable, systematic inequalities in experience across people's social group memberships—advantaging people from some social groups, while disadvantaging others. The prejudice-in-places model illuminates sources of inequality that would otherwise be overlooked and identifies new avenues for intervention. By understanding how norms, values, policies, practices, and procedures shape places, leaders and policymakers can intentionally debias environments so that members of all social groups have equal educational and organizational settings.

Keywords

social-contextual model of prejudice, bias, discrimination, structural prejudice

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15 Hacks for Building Diversity in Tech

BY GREG WALTON AND MARY MURPHY¹

ISSUE BRIEF | SEPTEMBER 2015

Policymakers and many tech leaders want to ensure that the American tech industry reflects the diversity of our society. How can we capture the talents and contributions of people from diverse backgrounds who aren't now well represented in tech?

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGISTS HAVE SHOWN that seemingly small changes can sometimes have large effects on diversity, with effects that endure for years. How is this possible? It's not magic!² Learn more—and attract people from diverse backgrounds to your company and help them thrive.

This brief describes **15 changes companies can make** to be more diverse and inclusive. These changes fall into four key areas:

- How to help everyone feel welcome
- How to hire the best talent
- How to promote mindsets that increase resilience on the job
- How to use everyday practices to help diverse teams function well

If you'd like more detail on any of these ideas, this folder³ contains papers from the leading researchers who have pioneered work in these areas.

MAKING EVERYONE FEEL WELCOME

An important goal of any company is to make everyone feel welcome—and especially people from backgrounds that are different from the majority of the people in the company or the industry. The key is to communicate to people from underrepresented groups that they are valued members of the team.

1. Write job ads that include, not exclude

Job ads signal who belongs in a company from the very outset. Research by **Danielle Gaucher at the University of Winnipeg** shows that ads for male-dominated areas tend to use more words associated with male stereotypes (e.g., leader, dominant). That wording makes people think men dominate those settings and, in turn, undermines women's motivation to pursue those opportunities.⁴

2. Celebrate diversity—in everyone

Sure it'd be great to be color-blind—but no one really is. And if a company isn't very diverse, telling people of color that you "just don't see color" can come

MINDSET
SCHOLARS
NETWORK

Hosted at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, the Mindset Scholars Network is a group of leading social scientists dedicated to improving student outcomes and expanding educational opportunity by advancing our scientific understanding of students' mindsets about learning and school.