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A S H T A G

Applied Science and Humanities Department

VISION

The Department of Applied Science and Humanities is committed to dynamically integrate the components of Science, Humanities and Engineering to groom students to transform them as globally acknowledged professionals.

MISSION

The department is carrying a mission to create and disseminate the knowledge and techniques in intellectual areas of Engineering and other core areas of Applied Science and Humanities for betterment of Eco system.

To inculcate the importance of Applied Science and develop a natural flair for Engineering and Technology which in turn shall mold students into a competent professional.

To be recognized for practicing the best teaching-learning processes to create highly competent, resourceful, and self-motivated young Engineers for the benefit of the society.

FAILURE
IS NOT THE OPPOSITE OF
SUCCESS,
IT IS PART OF
SUCCESS.

A Thoughtful move by Philippines

The Philippines has taken its tradition of planting a tree on graduation day as a ceremonious gesture a tad bit serious. The island country passed a law under which every student has to mandatorily plant 10 trees in order to get their graduation degree. The rule, if implemented properly, will ensure that over 175 million trees will be planted every year. Page | 2

The bill known as ‘Graduation Legacy for the Environment Act’ has been unanimously passed by the House of Representatives, Philippines. The law will be applicable for college, elementary, and high school students as well.

Under the bill, the law will be implemented jointly by the country’s Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education (DENR) along with Department of the Agriculture Department of Agrarian Reform and National Commission on indigenous people.



The government has decided the areas where these trees will be planted. The selected areas include mangrove forests, ancestral domains, military reservations and urban area under greening plans.

The move came in to being as a preventive measure by the Philippines government as the country’s total forest cover has been reduced to 20 per cent from 70 per cent due to heavy deforestation. The country aims to plant, nourish and grow over 175 million trees a year, under the law.

While this move will certainly go a long way to compensate the depleting forest cover of the country, it an inspiring act for other countries to deal with the problem of forest depletion and global warming – to two major climatic crises the world is going through.

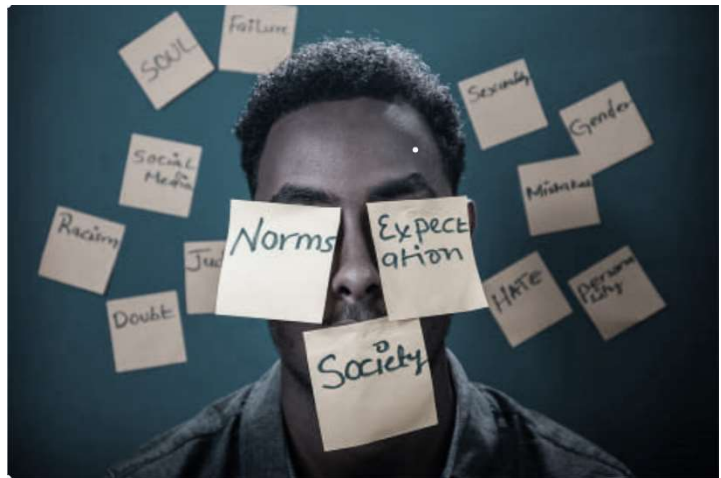
Compiled by: Marina Thomas

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/education/study-abroad/now-plant-10-trees-to-get-pass-certificates-in-philippines-5754403/>

The Science of Political Correctness

In the recent articles, blog posts, and comment threads about possible biological reasons for the continued gender disparity in tenured math and science faculty positions, the discussion seems to be divided between two groups: those who emphasize the social and cultural aspects involved in gender and intelligence, and those who emphasize the scientific evidence of standardized test performance. The science team rails against "political correctness," claiming that by questioning the merits and motives of scientific hypotheses of differences in innate intelligence between different groups of people, that we are letting politics cloud our scientific judgment, preventing the truth--however unappealing it may be in the end--from being found. Page | 3

As Caroline Simard writes, however, "The problem with the biology argument that "boys are just more likely to be born good at math and science" isn't that it's not "politically correct" -- it's that it assumes that we can take away the power of societal influences, which have much more



solid evidence than the biology hypothesis." This evidence comes from hundreds of scientific studies that continually reach the same result: when stereotyped innate differences between groups are emphasized in the context of academic performance testing, the group that is supposed to perform worse always does.

This concept is called stereotype threat and has been discussed here on ScienceBlogs over the years too many times for me to cite individually, but it seems like it's time to mention it again. The first experiment describing the phenomenon was very simple--telling one group of Black students that the test they were taking was designed as a diagnostic of their innate ability was enough to significantly decrease their scores relative to the group that was not told.

This result has been repeated nearly three hundred times with different groups and in different conditions. In one striking example, even white males who were proficient in math were susceptible to stereotype threat when told that their math scores would be compared

against those of Asians, a group stereotyped as being especially good at math. This effect was seen primarily in men who self-reported as caring deeply about their math ability:



The results are similar when gender stereotypes are studied. Not only have studies shown that girls perform worse when they are presented with a stereotype threat at the outset of the experiment, but global trends in the effect of cultural stereotypes about girls' math performance have also been

extensively studied. A fascinating 2009 paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences correlated girls' test scores in math in 34 different countries with results from surveys measuring how much citizens of those countries associated math and science as a stereotypically male activity. The trend is striking--in countries where math is more stereotypically associated with boys, girls perform worse in relation to their male peers. The recent articles citing innate gender differences in math performance claim that we've overcome this implicit cultural stereotype in the US now as the average difference in math scores has closed. What is left of gender disparity at the highest levels of achievement and in tenured faculty positions is the natural, genetically determined difference in the distribution of intelligence. But how does the very existence of a scientific study claiming genetic factors for intelligence affect future performance on academic examinations? A short paper in Science in 2006 explores this question by giving students a test similar to the GRE. The first part of the test was of verbal skills, constructed as reading comprehension of a short essay. The girls who read an essay about a scientific study showing that differences in math ability between boys and girls were based on genetic differences performed significantly worse on the subsequent math section than girls who read an essay about how different experiences had the largest impact on math performance. The authors conclude by saying "Whether there are innate sex differences in math performance remains a contentious question. However, merely considering the role of genes in math performance can have some deleterious consequences. These findings raise discomforting questions regarding the effects that scientific theories can have on those who learn about them and the obligation that scientists have to be mindful of how their work is interpreted."

Words aren't just the stuff of the verbal skills that girls are supposed to be good at (the consolation prize of the innate intelligence crowd), words have meaning and words have the power to hurt and to influence generations of boys and girls into thinking that there are things that they just can't do well. Reducing stereotype threat will make a huge impact on how students perform and how intelligence and ability are measured and perceived, but it is hardly enough. Small differences in math test scores are a convenient statistic to cite to explain away the lack of women in tenured faculty positions in math and science, but even if those go away, the structural barriers and difficulties that women, couples, and families face in the academic job track, the sexism and prejudice in how CVs and applications are read and interpreted, the fact that women still receive 75 cents of salary for every dollar a man makes in the same job, and the macho culture of many science fields still exist and will continue to discourage women into dropping out of science at the postdoctoral level. We need political correctness, we need people talking about these social forces and cultural issues, and we need congressional legislation to "fulfill the potential of women in academic science and engineering." We don't need male scientists and commenters interpreting the evidence of social biases as facts of nature.

Contributed by: Komal Jain

Source: <https://scienceblogs.com/oscillator/2010/06/10/the-science-of-political-corre>

How to Spot Corona virus Fake News?

The proliferation of fake news about the COVID-19 pandemic has been labelled a dangerous “infodemic”. Fake news spreads faster and more easily today through the internet, social media and instant messaging. These messages may contain useless, incorrect or even harmful information and advice, which can hamper the public health response and add to social disorder and division.

Confusingly some fake news also contains a mixture of correct information, which makes it difficult to spot what is true and accurate. Fake news may also be shared by trusted friends and family, including those who are doctors and nurses. They might not have read the full

story before sharing or just glanced over it. Before you decide to share, make sure to read stories properly and follow some checks to determine the accuracy.



If the story appears to claim a much higher level of certainty in its advice and arguments than other stories, this is questionable. People will be seeking certainty in a time of high uncertainty, anxiety and panic. So it is only natural to more readily accept information

that resolves, reassures and provides easy solutions – unfortunately, often in a false way.

Similarly, if a story is more surprising or upsetting than other stories it is worth double-checking, as fake news will try to grab your attention by being more exaggerated than real stories.

What to look out for

- **Source.** Question the source. References have been made to “Taiwanese experts” or “Japanese doctors” or “Stanford University” during the outbreak. Check on official websites if stories are repeated there. If a source is “a friend of a friend”, this is a rumour unless you also know the person directly.
- **Logo:** Check whether any organisation’s logo used in the message looks the same as on the official website.
- **Bad English:** Credible journalists and organisations are less likely to make repeated spelling and grammar mistakes. Also, anything written entirely in capital letters or containing a lot of exclamation marks should raise your suspicions.
- **Pretend social media accounts:** Some fake accounts mimic the real thing. For example, the unofficial Twitter handle @BBCNewsTonight, which was made to look like the legitimate @BBCNews account, shared a fake story about the actor Daniel Radcliffe testing positive for coronavirus. Media platforms try to remove or flag fake accounts and stories as well as verify real ones. Look out for what their policies are to try to do this.

- Over-encouragement to share: Be wary if the message presses you to share – this is how viral messaging works.
- Use fact-checking websites: Websites such as APFactCheck and Full Fact highlight common fake news stories. You can also use a search engine to look up the title of the article to see if it has been identified as fake news by the mainstream media.

Who to trust

The best sources to go to for health information about COVID-19 are your government health websites and the World Health Organization website. Primary sources are generally better than news articles.

Even government messaging and the mainstream media can get things wrong, but they are more trustworthy than unverified sources on social media and viral messaging.

Charlatans have been promoting false preventions and cures for people to spend their money on. The effects can also be more serious than losing some cash. Iran has reported at least 44 people died from alcohol poisoning after drinking bootleg alcohol in a misguided attempt to cure COVID-19.

Unfortunately, the most basic and correct advice given so far does not offer a miracle or special insight. Wash your hands often (use hand sanitisers if you cannot), avoid touching your face, and sneeze or cough into the crook of your elbow or a tissue (and throw it away in a bag-lined bin). Avoid crowds and public places, keep a sensible distance from people, and do not travel unless absolutely necessary. Now many governments are introducing measures including travel bans and quarantines that need to be followed to protect the health of everyone, especially the most vulnerable.

We can all get caught out. Think twice about the messages currently circulating and help guide your family and friends to decide what to trust.

Contributed by: Marina Thomas

Source: <https://scienceblogs.com/sb-admin/2020/03/20/how-spot-coronavirus-fake-news-151444>

Welcome to our new members

The Department of Applied Science and Humanities is happy to get 3 new members in its family. A hearty welcome to Mrs. Florence Christian, Mrs. Sonali Dudihalli and Ms. Jenisa D'silva.



Florence Christian
Mathematics



Sonali Dudihalli
Communication Skills



Jenisa D'Silva
Communication Skills

Edited and compiled by Marina Thomas.

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