

Cultural Competence and Education Equity

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What?

I don't wake up every day thinking about how I will live my best minority life. I don't feel like I'm different. Paradoxically being part of a minority group is something I have in common with the majority of people in our school corporation but, it is also true that some groups are under more scrutiny than others. All of these smaller groups are what we cover when we talk about Cultural Competency.

What is the challenge? Assuring that every student, parent and staff are receiving the tools they need to achieve their potential, that is what we cover when we talk about Equity, for us at Southwest Dubois County Schools, Education Equity is providing equal access to learning environments, education success and belonging for each and every student.



How?

The first step to build a path towards Cultural Competency and Equity is doing some introspection. We need to explore our implicit thoughts and feelings. We have an implicit bias when we have a preference or aversion to someone or to a group of people, when we associate stereotypes without our conscious knowledge and this affects our thoughts, emotions and behaviors towards them. Stereotypes often cause us to make assumptions (both negative and positive) about people based upon superficial characteristics (Schneider, 2004). So it's no surprise race is a prime area for implicit bias.

SWDCS Cultural Competence and Education Equity

Will you take a test to identify your implicit biases?

We have only a small window into how our own minds work. What are your automatic reactions when you think about culture, race, skin, depression, alcohol, eating, or persons with mental illness?

At Project Implicit, you can measure your thoughts about social attitudes and health difficult to consciously control. The tests require less than 15 minutes and you will receive feedback about your performance and learn more about your automatic thoughts. You can take the test here:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

"Different children have different needs and addressing those different needs is the best way to deal with them equitably. The same is true in the classroom. If teachers pretend not to see students racial and ethnic differences, they are limited in their ability to meet their educational needs"

Gloria Ladson-Billings

