



Exploring and Unpacking Bias

Competency

Educators will be able to define and describe implicit and explicit bias and identify how bias influences decisions, actions, and behaviors with students and families. Educators will also identify specific actions they can take to disrupt bias in their classrooms, schools, and districts.

Key Method

Educators will explore their personal biases. They will then create an infographic and a presentation that illustrates various types of bias in education, the impact these biases have on students, and what can be done to disrupt bias in classrooms, schools, and districts.

Method Components

What is DECC?

Diversity, Equity and Cultural Competence (DECC) is an essential component of a thriving learning community.

- **Diversity** is the presence of differences that include race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, age, national origin, religion, disability status, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, physical appearance, and more. Diversity also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values. Being specific about which diversity is lacking in an area is critical. Saying “X” was not a racially diverse space, or “Y” event had little gender diversity helps clarify what we mean when we say, “diversity.”
- **Equity** refers to fairness and justice. It recognizes that advantages and barriers based on culture, race, and identity exist. As a result, everyone does not start from the same place in terms of access to resources and advantages that promote well-being and success. It is a process that begins by acknowledging that unequal starting place and works to correct and



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address the imbalance. Creating equity is an ongoing process that strives to ensure that people who have been marginalized have ongoing opportunities to grow and thrive.

- **Cultural Competence** is the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own.

Part of being culturally competent includes having **cultural humility**, a dispositional trait that allows us to be dynamic. "It takes the stance of being open to the "other" when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, cultural humility lacks the superiority complex evident when an individual interprets their own cultural values as more meaningful and worthwhile than the values of others. Rather than concentrating solely on knowledge of another person's cultural background, cultural humility proposes openness and humility when engaging with individuals from a cultural background different from our own." *Source: Celebrating Cultural Humility in Education*

In this micro-credential you will demonstrate your ability to support students on a variety of topics related to DECC.

What is bias?

Bias

Bias is prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

Implicit Bias (Unconscious Bias)

Implicit bias is the process of associating stereotypes or attitudes toward categories of people without conscious awareness. These involuntary associations make unconscious bias dangerous, especially when directed at students. It is common for an unconscious bias to contradict one's stated values.

Unconscious biases develop in the context of societal messages. For this reason, we all have them. Our brains are wired to "categorize" the large volume of information we receive each day. This categorization (identifying patterns, and creating mental "shortcuts") leads to unconscious bias.

Explicit bias (Conscious Bias)

When one is aware of their attitudes and prejudices toward a person, or group this is explicit bias. Explicit bias is intentional and can be expressed through discrimination, exclusion, hate speech and more. Explicit bias and implicit (unconscious) bias are harmful in schools and our society at large. Both implicit and explicit bias can be expressed in the same behaviors. For example:

- Applying a harsh disciplinary consequence to a student of color, and giving a white student a warning for the same behavior



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- Giving boys more “think time” to answer questions when called on than girls
- Having lower expectations for immigrant and refugee students than students born and raised in your local community
- Interpreting “restlessness” in students of color as a disciplinary problem but as “intelligence” in white students.

While one form of bias is with intent, and the other is without, the impact on students and families is the same. The negative impact of bias on families, students, and their academic, social, and emotional well-being is well-documented.

Impact of Bias and Unconscious Bias on Student Learning and Educational Experiences

Explicit and implicit bias can have the same impact on student learning and academic achievement. Studies show the following:

- In 2016 the Yale Child Study Center found that preschool teachers more closely observe Black students than white students, particularly Black boys, when challenging behaviors are expected. This implicit bias may help explain the high preschool expulsion rates for Black children.
- The University of Texas at Austin found teachers rated white girls lower in math than white boys even when grades and test scores were the same for both genders.
- In 2019 The British Journal of Educational Psychology found that teachers gave students who were overweight lower grades than their healthier counterparts. This study confirmed prior research on anti-fat attitudes and provided new evidence of biased attitudes in school settings.

The impact of bias on students of color can lead to low self-esteem, disengaging from school, increased suspension and disciplinary action, broken teacher/caregiver relationships, and much more. The long-term damage contributes to the “school-to-prison pipeline,” a process in which a school’s disciplinary policies and practices put students into contact with law enforcement and the criminal juvenile justice system.

Wired for Bias

The National Equity Project states that implicit bias is created in two ways:

- **Priming**—a psychological phenomenon in which a word, image, sound, or any other stimulus is used to elicit an associated response.
- **Associations**— these are the shortcuts or mental connections we make to what we see or experience. Our brains make associations and give meaning to what we see or experience based on the way we’ve been primed.

In addressing implicit bias, it is essential to address what is often the source— a history that has dehumanized people of color, minimized the value and abilities of women, and created stereotypes that further marginalize people in stigmatized groups.



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In the U.S., “we have been primed to make harmful associations about different categories of people. This is the result of messaging, policies and practices that have been applied throughout history to include or exclude groups of people.”

As we work to address bias and implicit bias in our schools, we must be aware of the origins of many of our deep-seated beliefs and thoughts.

Identifying and Working to Address Our Biases

One of the first steps toward addressing our biases is to acknowledge that we have them. Everyone holds bias. For some, however, the power and position they have made their biased actions far more dangerous to students and families. It is a natural function of our brains to develop shortcuts, identify preferences, and create meaning about the messages and stimuli we encounter. When this natural tendency interacts with the messages that are part of our history and are present in today’s society, implicit (and explicit) biases are the predictable result.

As discussed earlier, daily living in the U.S. has primed us to make various conscious and unconscious associations. These are the seeds of bias. While research shows we aren’t able to “turn off” our biases, we can become more aware of them and interrupt them when they may be influencing our behaviors—especially our interactions with students. The following are a few ways you can identify and address your own biases and biases in your school community.

As an educator, it is important to:

- Explore and unpack your own implicit and explicit biases
 - Take the free Project Implicit Association Test to identify your unconscious biases.
- Reflect on your childhood.
 - What memories do you have of what your family taught you about diversity or differences among people?
- Identify the historical and current connections in your community that may influence “priming” and harmful associations about different groups of people.
 - What do you notice in the media, local laws, policies, and practices that reinforce harmful associations about groups of people?
- Acknowledge the prevalence and impact of implicit and explicit bias in your classroom and school.
 - How might implicit and explicit bias affect students and families in your learning community?

As a school community it is important to:

- Identify how explicit and implicit bias could produce flawed assessments of student growth and academic performance.
- Ensure your curriculum and teaching resources are diverse and culturally responsive.



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- Expand professional learning opportunities to identify and dismantle the ways explicit and implicit bias impacts our learning communities.
- Examine and eliminate discipline policies that result in biased and unfair disciplinary actions for groups of students.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Dhaliwal, Tasminda K., et al. "Educator Bias Is Associated with Racial Disparities in Student Achievement and Discipline." Brookings Institution The Brown Center Chalkboard, 20 July 2020, www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2020/07/20/educator-bias-is-associated-with-racial-disparities-in-student-achievement-and-discipline/.

Riddle, Travis, and Stacey Sinclair. "Racial Disparities in School-Based Disciplinary Actions Are Associated with County-Level Rates of Racial Bias." *PNAS*, National Academy of Sciences, 23 Apr. 2019, www.pnas.org/content/116/17/8255.full .

"The Unconscious Cycle of Teacher Bias." *Leader in Me*, Franklin Covey, 2021, www.leaderinme.org/unconscious-bias-in-schools .

Ostra, K, and Vasquez, H. "Don't Talk About Implicit Bias Without Talking About Structural Racism." Medium. 13 June 2019. <https://medium.com/national-equity-project/implicit-bias-structural-racism-6c52cf0f4a92>

Resources

[Implicit Association Test](#)

[POV | Implicit Bias: Peanut Butter, Jelly and Racism](#)

[Willing to Be Disturbed](#)

[Teachers' bias can limit students' future. Opinion News & Top Stories](#)

[Teacher Bias: The Elephant in the Classroom](#)

[5 Keys to Challenging Implicit Bias Edutopia Challenge implicit biases by identifying your own, teaching colleagues](#)

[5 Things Educators Can Do to Address Bias in Their School](#)

[Kirwan Institute: Implicit Bias Training Modules](#)

[Measuring Implicit Bias in Schools | Harvard Graduate School of Education](#)



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[Confronting Inequity/ Unconscious Bias Hurts](#)

[Educator Bias & Racial Disparities](#)

[The Detrimental Impact of Teacher Bias: Lessons Learned from the Standpoint of African American Mothers](#)

[Black preschool students & discipline](#)

[Bias for Extroverts](#)

[Weight bias and grading among middle and high school teachers](#)

["Don't Talk about Implicit Bias Without Talking about Structural Racism"](#)

[Implicit Bias in the Workplace: Definition, Examples & Impact - Video & Lesson Transcript](#)

[How to Work with the Bias in Your Brain](#)

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and be proficient for all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

(200–500 words)

Please use the suggested word count as a guide to answer the following contextual questions. This will help our assessor understand your current context for working on this micro-credential.

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. Describe your current educational role and responsibilities. Briefly describe your school's demographics (ex: student and staff demographics, socioeconomic demographics of school and surrounding communities, urban or rural, etc.)?
2. Why do you want to learn about implicit and explicit biases?

Before answering the questions below, take the Implicit Association Test (IAT) on Race and two additional ones of your choice. The link for this can be found in the Resources section of this micro-credential.

1. How do you feel about the results?
2. What did you learn about yourself?
3. What changes, if any, does it motivate you to make?



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Passing: Response provides reasonable and accurate information. Also, include a learning goal that describes what you hope to gain from earning this micro-credential. The analysis of the IAT is complete and there is evidence of deep reflection about the results.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following three artifacts as evidence of your learning.

**Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

Artifact 1: Educator Infographic

Create an infographic that explains the impact of educator biases. Your infographic should:

- Align to the demographics you identified in the questions above by including the types of biases that most affect your students.
- Include the definition of explicit and implicit bias
- Illustrate both the short-term and long-term impacts of explicit and implicit bias on students' social and emotional well-being and their academic success.

Artifact 2: Design a Professional Learning Experience

Create a professional learning experience for your colleagues. This is how:

Create a 10–15 slide presentation for your colleagues that compares, contrasts, and examines the effects that explicit and implicit biases have on students. The presentation should include at least one slide per topic below:

- Definition of implicit and explicit bias
- Various types of biases that exist outside of race (e.g., body weight, gender identity, etc.)
- Identify the seedlings of bias—what may have “primed” our brains to make harmful associations about various groups of people (e.g., media, laws, policies and practices)? How is this perpetuated?
- How biases affect our perception of students and their communities
- How biases impact our instructional practices and our expectations of students
- How bias affects classroom disciplinary action and suspension rates
- Strategies you can use to eradicate biases that negatively impact students

Also include:

- Two engaging activities for colleagues that offer them an opportunity to explore:
 - The difference between implicit and explicit bias
 - How implicit bias can contribute to classroom inequities



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- A response/reflection activity in which educators provide feedback and respond to the experience. Example of questions:
 - What surprised you while learning about different types of biases?
 - What changes can you make in your interactions with students and families to compensate for your personal biases?
 - How has this experience impacted your thinking?
 - How will your practice change as a result of this professional learning?
 - What did you like the most about this professional learning? Why?
 - What would you change about this professional learning? Why?
- Facilitation Notes for each slide (not necessary on the title slide)
- Any handouts you will be distributing. (optional)

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Infographic	<p>Infographic includes all required elements below:</p> <p>Types of biases that most affect your students as identified in the context questions</p> <p>Definition of bias</p> <p>Illustrates both the short-term and long-term impacts of bias on students' social and emotional well-being as well as on their academic success.</p> <p>And</p>	<p>Infographic is missing some of the required elements:</p> <p>Types of biases that most affect your students as identified in the context questions</p> <p>Definition of bias</p> <p>Illustrates both the short-term and long-term impacts of bias on students' social and emotional well-being as well as on their academic success.</p>	<p>Infographic is missing more than two of the required elements below:</p> <p>Types of biases that most affect your students as identified in the context questions</p> <p>Definition of bias</p> <p>Illustrates both the short-term and long-term impacts of bias on students' social and emotional well-being as well as on their academic success.</p>



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	Infographic that is well designed, informative, and well organized		
Artifact 2: Presentation	<p>Presentation includes the following requirements:</p> <p>10–15 slides</p> <p>At least one slide per topic below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Definition of implicit and explicit bias -Various types of biases that exist outside of race (e.g., body weight, gender identity, etc.) -How biases affect our perception of students and their communities -How biases impact our instructional practices and our expectations of students -How bias affects classroom disciplinary action and suspension rates -Strategies you can use to eradicate biases 	<p>Presentation includes some of the following requirements:</p> <p>10–15 slides</p> <p>At least one slide per topic below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Definition of implicit and explicit bias -Various types of biases that exist outside of race (e.g., body weight, gender identity, etc.) -How biases affect our perception of students and their communities -How biases impact our instructional practices and our expectations of students -How bias affects classroom disciplinary action and suspension rates -Strategies you can use to eradicate biases that 	<p>Presentation is missing most of the following requirements:</p> <p>10–15 slides</p> <p>At least one slide per topic below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Definition of implicit and explicit bias -Various types of biases that exist outside of race (e.g., body weight, gender identity, etc.) -How biases affect our perception of students and their communities -How biases impact our instructional practices and our expectations of students -How bias affects classroom disciplinary action and suspension rates -Strategies you can use to eradicate biases that



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	<p>that negatively impact students</p> <p>Also includes:</p> <p>Two engaging activities for colleagues that offer them an opportunity to explore:</p> <p>-The difference between implicit and explicit bias</p> <p>-How implicit bias can contribute to classroom inequities</p> <p>A response/ reflection activity that allows educators to provide feedback and respond to the experience.</p> <p>Facilitation Notes for each slide (not necessary on the title slide)</p>	<p>negatively impact students</p> <p>Also includes:</p> <p>Two engaging activities for colleagues that offer them an opportunity to explore:</p> <p>-The difference between implicit and explicit bias</p> <p>-How implicit bias can contribute to classroom inequities</p> <p>A response/ reflection activity that allows educators to provide feedback and respond to the experience.</p> <p>Facilitation Notes for each slide (not necessary on the title slide)</p>	<p>negatively impact students</p> <p>Also includes:</p> <p>Two engaging activities for colleagues that offer them an opportunity to explore:</p> <p>-The difference between implicit and explicit bias</p> <p>-How implicit bias can contribute to classroom inequities</p> <p>A response/ reflection activity that allows educators to provide feedback and respond to the experience.</p> <p>Facilitation Notes for each slide (not necessary on the title slide)</p>
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Part 3 Reflection

(200–500 words)

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection, review the following resource: [How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. How can your implicit biases impact your instructional practice and student success?



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2. Describe several ways in which you can mitigate the effects of your implicit bias in the classroom.

Passing: Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on both educator practice and student success. Specific examples are cited directly from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.



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