DEI and Decisionmaking

Arlington Heights School District #25

September 23, 2021

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Illinois Commission on Diversity and Human Relations (ICDHR)

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The Case for Diversity

- Diversity brings **different perspectives** to the table.

- Diversity leads people to realize that different perspectives exist, which leads to **more thorough information processing**.

- When differences in opinion and perspective are expected, **teams work harder to come to a consensus (i.e., they're more diligent and open-minded)**.

- Working harder leads to **better outcomes**.

Diversity in Schools

- Exposure to people who are different, novel ideas and perspectives, improves cognitive thinking and problem solving

- Diversity can work against the development of stereotypes and prejudices and increase empathy

- Exposure to diverse classmates better prepares students for being successful in a diverse world
  - 96% of major employers say they want employees who are comfortable working with diverse colleagues and clients

Why Define DEI?

We often assume we're on the same page about what these concepts mean without having spent any time discussing

People approach all these concepts from a variety of perspectives

This is time to participate in discussing definitions and understandings that make sense for your community

What is Diversity?

Who are you? Where are you from? How do you think? What's your (different) perspective?
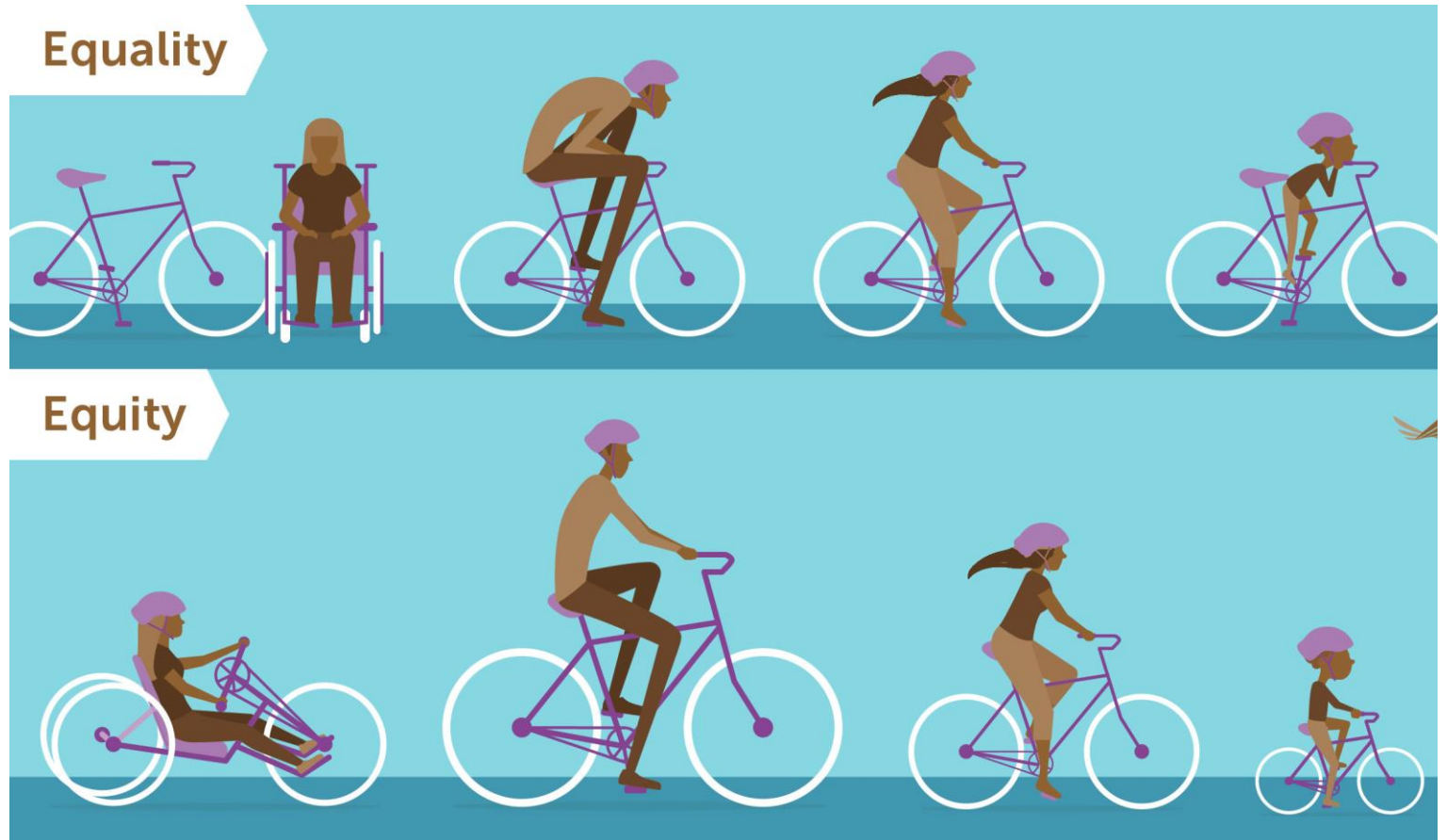
Representation
  Numerical
  Visual/Observable

Often counted

Often treated categorically
  Can be intersectional

"Diversity is being invited to the party…" – Verna Myers

What is Equity?

Equality

Equity

What is Inclusion?

- Connecting
- Participating
- Feeling Respected
- Having a Voice

"…Inclusion is being asked to dance."
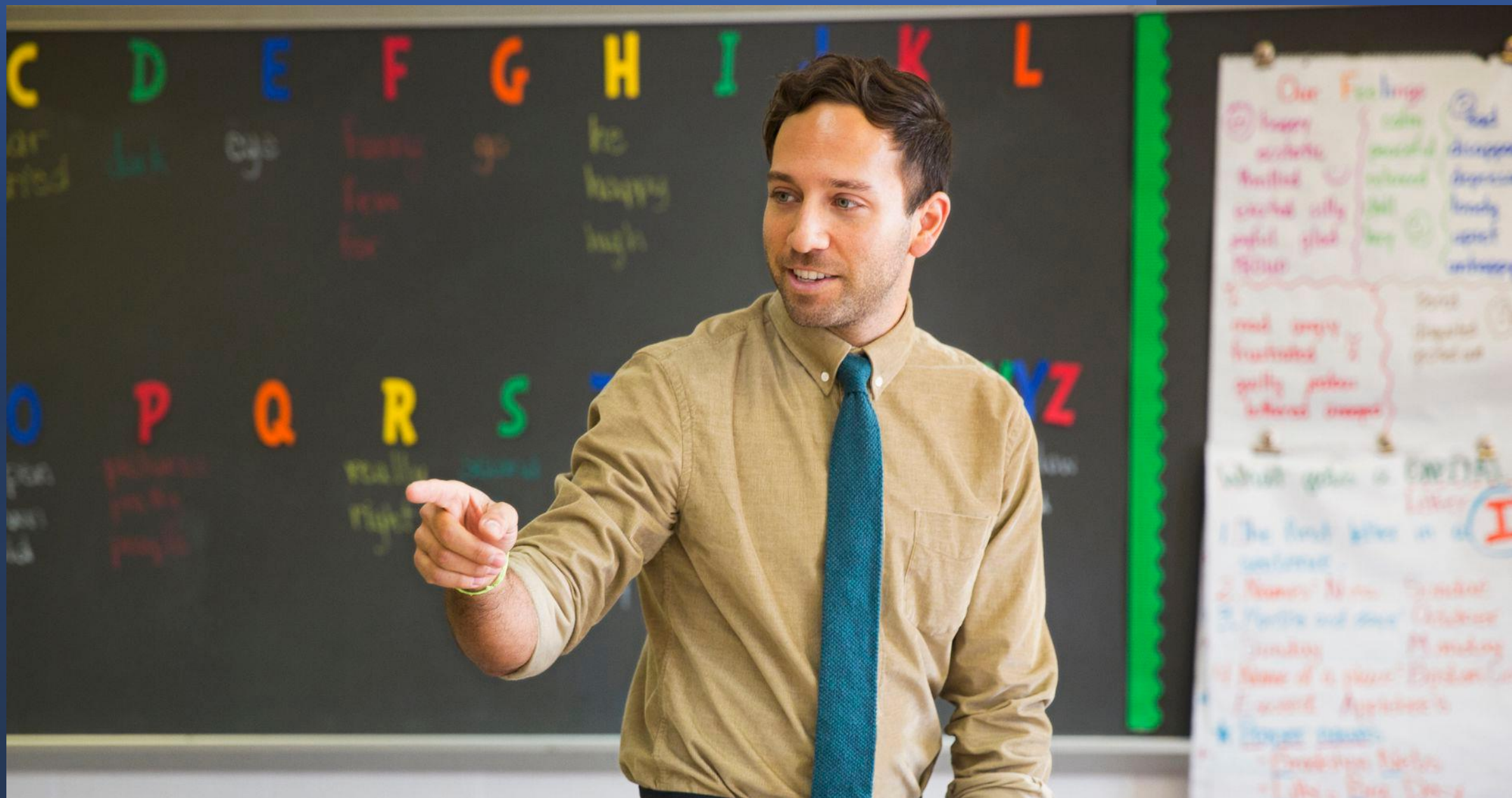
— Verna Myers

First Impressions

Consider your impressions of each person I show you.

- Who is this person?
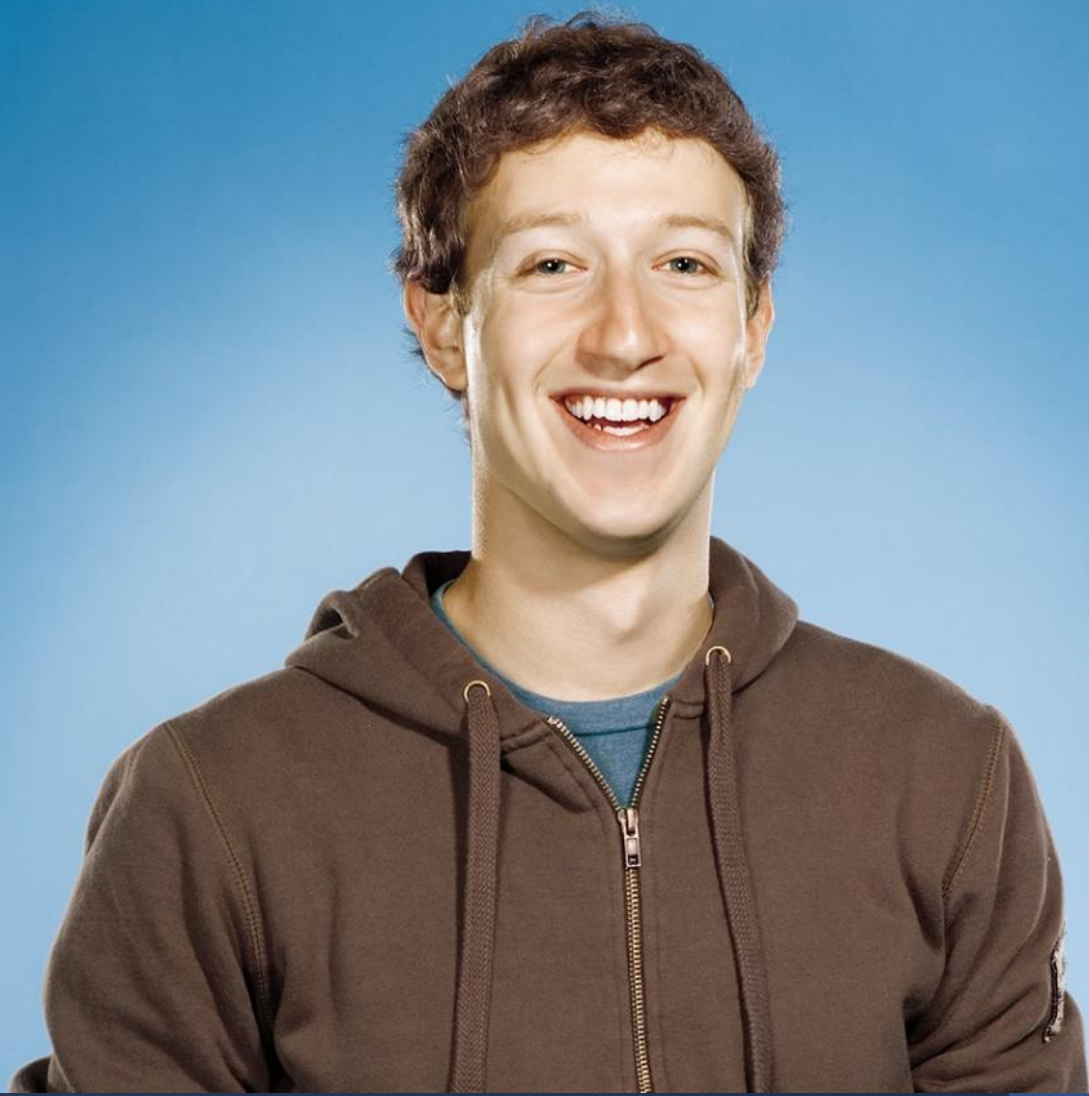- What is this person like?

What is Bias?

Simple Definition: a feeling in favor of or against a thing, person, or group, especially relative to another

- Power in naming: Biases are usually considered unfair (regardless of + or -)

- Compared to prejudice (negative bias), a bias isn't inherently good or bad in nature, but they often lead to less than ideal outcomes if not outright disparities

- Biases can also result from shortcuts our brains take to process information efficiently and/or to help us feel good about ourselves

7. Confirmation bias.

We tend to listen only to information that confirms our **preconceptions** — one of the many reasons it's so hard to have an intelligent conversation about climate change.

4. Blind-spot bias.

Failing to recognize your own cognitive biases is a bias in itself. People notice cognitive and motivational biases much more in others than in themselves.
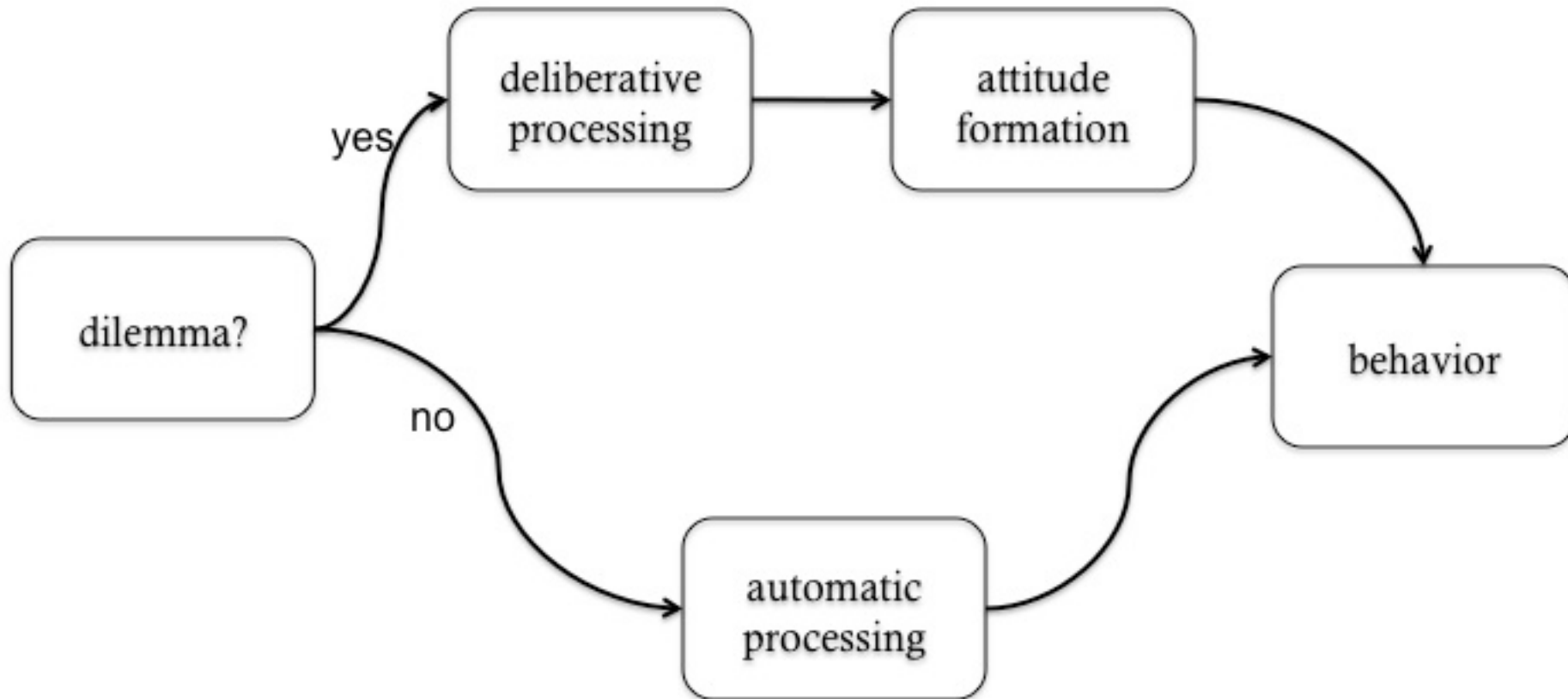
18. Stereotyping.

Expecting a group or person to have certain qualities without having real information about the person. It allows us to quickly identify strangers as friends or enemies, but people tend to **overuse and abuse** it.

Cognitive Biases

What is Implicit Bias?

Two cognitive systems: one fast, one slow (Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*)

I wose with my
BROTHER DASHAWN and
His FRIND ARIN
BUT iT wose
a GRAET DAY TO BE
a BOY AT HOME ooo

I wose with my
BROTHER CONNOR and
His FRIND SCOT
BUT iT wose
a GRAET DAY TO BE
a BOY AT HOME ooo

The essay with the brother Connor was more likely to be rated as at grade level or above work, particularly by White and female teachers.

For more on this study: *https://hechingerreport.org/white-and-female-teachers-show-racial-bias-in-evaluating-second-grade-writing/*

Bias in the Classroom

- A classic study from the 1950s showed that if teachers expect a student to perform well, the students see gains compared to students who were not expected to perform well
  - Self-fulfilling prophecy of teacher expectations
    - When teachers expect good or poor outcomes from a student, whether based on race, gender, social class, personality, etc., they (unintentionally, mostly) interact with students differently and in ways that make good or poor performance more likely

- A 2017 study found that HS math teachers perceive their classes as too difficult for Black and Latino students; HS English teachers perceive their classes as too difficult for non-White students (Cherng, 2017)
  - These beliefs underestimate student potential (or overestimate difficulty of class) and this can negatively affect student performance (e.g., lowering GPA by 0.20 points)

Bias in the Classroom

- Boys more likely to be looked at and called on in the classroom

- Classroom teachers gave girls' math tests lower grades than external graders (who didn't know anything about the students); and most of the teachers in this study were female
  - Girls who receive lower grades and less support in math/science as early as elementary school are less likely to pursue STEM later

- A 2013 US Department of Education study found that a teacher's feelings about a student (+ or -) affected how they assessed student work
  - A student who performs well on one task, is graded higher on a subsequent task (and vice versa)

How Biases Affect Decisionmaking

Biases, assumptions, and expectations affect perceptions of and interactions with

Colleagues	Community Members	Administrators, Staff, and Teachers	Students

Biases, assumptions, and expectations can affect any decisionmaking process

What types of decisions do you make as school board members where your biases, assumptions, and expectations may influence your process or outcomes?

What Can Be Done?

- Awareness of potential for bias
  - Getting past the bias blind spot
  - Pay attention, look for patterns, collect data
  - Engage when you find yourself surprised, uncomfortable

- Increased accountability and transparency
  - Better managed, possibly reductions in, discretion
    - More discretion often means more opportunity for biases to influence outcomes
  - Processes that consider and control for potential biases
    - Checks on decision-making
    - Opportunities for multiple people, perspectives to review
    - Reporting procedures that require reasons to be articulated
    - Ask questions, articulate the answers!

- Incorporation of diverse perspectives and people