Understanding Diversity and Under Achievement: Building Strategies to teach Diverse and Underachieving Learners.

Ernest L. Joe, Jr.
Senior Director
Equity & Diversity Management
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What Exactly is Diversity?

Diversity is acceptance and respect for one another. Everyone is unique but different (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic stages, age, physical abilities, religion.)

Educators with skill, knowledge and attitudes to value diversity among students will be the most successful.
TODAY.....
The U.S. has been compared to a "quilt/tapestry" which includes a variety of textures, colors and shapes.

TODAY.....
According to the Census Bureau, the U.S. is the only nation in the world where virtually every group represented has its origin in another country.

What is Culture?
• Culture is the total of everything an individual learns by growing up in a particular environment (history, values, patterns of behavior, etc.).

• “Everything you do that enables you to identify with people who are like you and that distinguishes you from people who are different from you.” (Nuri, Robins, and Terrell, 2003)

• Culture also provides us with a blueprint of the “hidden rules.” (Payne, 2001)

Race and Ethnic Groups

• Race: generally refers to a group with similar inherited features.

• Ethnic Group: refers to a group that shares language, national origin or religious tradition.

What is Equality and Equity?

What role does Equality and Equity play in student achievement?
Diverse Learners enter our classroom with a diversity of experiences:

• Race
• Ethnicity
• Socioeconomic Status
• Gender
• Learning Modalities
• Cognitive Development
• Social Development
Understanding Diverse Learners

The more you know about the cultures of your diverse learners, the better equipped you will be to teach them. One of the best ways to bridge the cultural gaps of your diverse learners is to find out as much as you can about them.

Cultivating Relationships with Diverse Learners

Create classrooms that *Welcome Students!*
- Greet your students at the door each day!

Model positive *body language*
- Use a pleasant tone of voice.
- Smile! 😊

Students may not care about what you are teaching them until you demonstrate that you care about them!

Stephen G. Peters
Do You Know Enough About Me to Teach Me?
You must always keep at the forefront of your mind that you are:
- first a teacher of students
- and second a teacher of subjects.

Underachieving Learners

What is Underachievement?
Underachievement is....

- A behavior, **NOT** an attitude
- A Perception, **NOT** an absolute
- Content or situation specific, **NOT** pervasive
- Tied in with a need of dignity, **NOT** power

Underachievement is like a....

- **Skin rash:** the symptoms may look the same, but the underlying causes may be very different
- **An onion:** no matter how many layers you peel aside, there seem to be more underneath
- **Labyrinth:** there are many paths to go down for success; but many lead to dead ends.

**Summarize what is underachievement with your partner.**
How to Connect with Students

1. Create an atmosphere that is open and positive.

2. Learn your students background.
3. Give frequent, early positive feedback that supports’ beliefs that they can do well.

4. Ensure opportunities for students’ success by assigning tasks that are neither too easy nor too difficult.

5. Help students feel that they are valued members of your classroom.
Strategies to Improve Academic Performance

Supportive Strategies
1. Eliminate work already mastered.
2. Allow independent exploration of topics of personal interest.
3. Design a non-authoritarian classroom atmosphere
4. Provide multiple methods of "showing what you know."

Intrinsic Strategies
1. Set class rules together
2. Assign specific responsibilities for classroom management and maintenance.
3. Listen reflectively to students' concerns.
4. Allow students to set personal goals and ways to reach them.
Remedial Strategies

1. Provide extra support/resources in areas of weakness.
2. Familiarize students with learning styles research and its application to their own lives.

If kids come to us from strong, healthy functioning families, it makes our job easier.
If they do not come to us from strong, healthy, functioning families, it makes our job more important. -Barbara Colorose