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by J N

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Reflection on Bias

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Reflection on Bias

We have mostly viewed bias as conscious, but I think it is important we understand the nature of unconscious bias to interact better with other people. People are concerned about conscious bias, which always seems so obvious. Still, if unconscious bias has a role in dividing people, it is crucial to recognize its existence and develop means to address it.

A school teacher is likely to shape their beliefs towards students unconsciously due to hidden bias. Hidden bias can explain why math teachers are likely to engage boys more during the class than girls and why they might be alienated from specific students without knowing. For instance, a teacher can choose more boys than girls in math to help students understand, as the boys will often help others solve and understand the concepts easier. The habit becomes normal to the teacher and does not see the problem with such division until they are informed by another person (Ross, 2008). However, such unconscious bias is driven by a widely held belief about Girls and STEM subjects or boys and languages. Notably, a teacher can unconsciously offer more help and treat a specific student well simply because they remind them of their determination in school.

When teachers categorize students unconsciously, the sidelined group is likely to feel demotivated. Girls are mostly viewed as incapable of performing well in STEM subjects and the boys in languages and such bias is likely to demotivate students. For instance, when the teacher declares that the STEM subjects are difficult to understand, the girls are likely to lose motivation towards the subjects because girls are not drawn to things that are said to be hard (Simidian, 2016). Hidden bias in the school case will affect the extrinsic motivation because all learners have the inner capabilities of performing in all subjects. Thus, the students need support from

teachers and people to recognize that they are all capable of performing, but when such motivation is lack, they lose extrinsic motivation.

I would say that many adults do not perceive themselves as biased because of the necessary purpose of bias. Adults are often preoccupied with many decisions to make for survival. Thus they tend to filter things and people that may pose a danger or barrier towards their goals (Ross, 2008). For that reason, in filtering things and people, adults see it as a necessary means for survival but not driven by bias.

Both readings emphasize the issue that it is not about who is biased or who is not, but the main focus should be on dealing with such bias because everyone is biased. As a result, I am guilty of thinking that biased people are only those who hold a negative view of someone, but I am better informed on how to consider unconscious bias that affects everyone.

Studying both articles has helped me understand that I have highly held one friend over others over the conscious belief that they are kind and they bring some joy to a family member I hold dearly, but in a real sense, unconscious bias is in play. The friend I hold so dearly is rich, and this aspect is hidden in my unconscious to understand it is the real reason for bias. Hence, I intend to always take time before deciding on the friend to verify that I am not a result of unconscious bias but a conscious belief.

References

Ross, H. (2008). Proven strategies for addressing unconscious bias in the workplace. *CDO Insights*, 2(5), 1-18.

Simidian, G. (2016). *Building Equity in Learning: Debunking Gender Stereotypes in the Classroom* [Ebook] (pp. 1-8). New York State School Boards Association
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