

Glossary Terms
Promoting Excellence for All: Module 1

Achievement Gap: Nationally, race has been a predictor of success in schools for decades. Called “the achievement gap”, “the opportunity gap”, “the equity gap”; all phrases speak to the long-standing educational inequities in our system. Both national data and Wisconsin state data show that in nearly every measurable area - academic achievement, discipline, gifted and talented placement, and graduation rates - students of color have statistically significant lower rates of success as compared to their white peers.

Bias: A conscious or unconscious preference that limits a person’s capacity for impartial judgment. A biased way of thinking can result in unfair or discriminatory acts of policies.

Color Blindness: The racial ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity. It focuses on commonalities between people, such as their shared humanity.

Critical Consciousness: An active state of seeking to identify the beliefs and language that obscure systemic inequities.

Culture: Describes how we live on a daily basis in terms of our language, ancestry, religion, food, dress, musical tastes, traditions, values, political and social affiliations, recreation, and so on (Singleton, 2006).*

Culturally Responsive Practices: Account for and adapt to the broad diversity of race, language and culture in Wisconsin schools and prepare all students for a multicultural world.

Deficit Thinking: Thinking that a student who fails in school does so principally because of the deficits or deficiencies in the student and the student’s family and community.

Demographic: Relating to human populations and the information collected about them, such as their size, growth, ages and education.

Disability Status: Indicates that a student has been reported by the school district as needing special education and/or related services.

Economically Disadvantaged: Counted as being “economically disadvantaged” based on membership in a household that meets the income eligibility guidelines for free or

reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or an approved alternative mechanism.

English Language Learners/Limited English Proficient: Any student whose first language, or whose parents' or guardians' first language is not English and whose level of English proficiency requires specially designed instruction, either in English or in the first language or both, in order for the student to fully benefit from classroom instruction and to be successful in attaining the state's high academic standards expected of all students at their grade level.

Equity: Educational equity means that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income.

Ethnicity: A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

Funds of Knowledge: The skills and learning that have been historically and culturally developed to enable an individual or household to function within a given culture. Integrating funds of knowledge into classroom activities creates a richer and more highly scaffolded learning experience for students.

Identity: A commitment that embodies beliefs and values concerning the aims and the process of education against the background of basic convictions about what is right and good for the individual and the society.

Identity Markers: The characteristics, aspects, histories, background, and knowledge that make us each unique and which shape us both personally and professionally.

Identity Salience: The degree to which different identities are more or less important depending upon the context in which one finds oneself.

Implicit Bias: A negative association that people hold that is expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. It is also known as unconscious or hidden bias.

Implicit Racial Bias: Stereotypes about race that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Inclusion: Authentically brings traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

Internalized Oppression: When people from targeted groups internalize myths and misinformation. It can cause them to feel (often unconsciously) that in some way they are inherently not as worthy, capable, intelligent, beautiful, good, etc. as people outside their group. They turn the experience of oppression or discrimination inward. They begin to feel that the stereotypes and misinformation that society communicates are true and they act as if they were true.

Microaggressions: Microaggressions have been defined as brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, derogatory, or negative insults.

Non-white Students: Denotes or relates to a person whose origin is not predominantly European.

Peer Group: Typically the people who are approximately the same age as you and come from a similar social group.

Prejudice: An adverse judgement or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge or examination of the facts.

Race: A social construct based on visible physical features, as well as historical and political characteristics. In the United States, the general public tends to recognize five primary racial groups Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, White, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaskan Native.

Racial Anxiety: The heightened levels of measured stress hormones and physical symptoms of anxiety that automatically kick in when we consciously or *unconsciously* view as a threat our interactions with people of other races.

Racial Identity: The ways in which individuals think and feel about the issue of race and their own racial group membership.

Racial Justice: A proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

Racial Microaggressions: Small and subtle comments, actions, or inactions that reinforce racial stereotypes.

Segregation: A system that keeps different groups separate from each other through physical dividers, social pressures, or laws.

Social Constructions: The perception of an individual, group, or idea that is “constructed” through cultural and social practice, but appears to be “natural” or “the way things are”.

Stakeholders: Typically refers to anyone who is invested in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff members, students, parents, families, community members, local business leaders, and elected officials such as school board members, city councilors, and state representatives.

Stereotype Threat: How students of color experience stress and distress based on their fear that they will confirm negative stereotypes of academic inferiority – and how that stress and distress affects performance, learning, and motivation.

Unconscious Bias: A negative association that people hold that is expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. It is also known as implicit or hidden bias.