An Interactive Literature Review Table on Implicit Bias

"Humans harbor implicit biases. It is how we acknowledge and overcome our biases that will make the difference . . ."

– Connie Kamm (2019)

On the first day of school, an Advanced Placement United States History high school teacher stops only Black students at the door to the classroom to check their schedules, making sure they are in the right class. When questioned, the teacher stated he certainly meant no ill will, but the students felt humiliated nonetheless.

At another school, an elementary teacher begins a parent-teacher conference with the assumption that the mother of a first grade Latina student is not particularly invested in her daughter's education, which explains why the child is struggling with reading. The contrary is actually true. The mother states that she has spent much time and energy sending her daughter first to a Montessori preschool and then supplementing with tutoring and summer programs. She also explains that she has even moved to a smaller home in order to free up financial resources to help support her daughter's education. The teacher states that she is now concerned that the little girl is lagging behind her classmates.

The teachers in each of these instances were perhaps reasonable and fair-minded individuals; however, they may have been operating according to their own implicit biases. "Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner" (Payne, Niemi, & Doris, 2018). Researchers argue that while individuals may be inclusive and kind at a conscious level, their subconscious is still affected by biases typically formed during childhood. While experts do not always agree on the process by which implicit biases are formed, they do agree that such biases are common and influence how people react to others outside their group. Implicit biases fuel unconscious negative perceptions and behaviors that can be life changing, determining where we work, where we live, who our children's friends are, and how we treat others. These outcomes are not necessarily determined by intentionally biased behaviors, but they are influenced by how individuals think about and talk about race, gender, age, socio-economic status, and an array of other areas where bias commonly makes an impact.

The following information in this interactive literature review is about implicit bias, also referred to as unconscious bias and implicit social cognition. Based on the information researched for this review, the following questions are addressed:

- What is implicit bias?
- What is the impact of implicit bias?
- How can we effectively overcome implicit biases in education?
- How do restorative practices help to eradicate implicit biases?

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What is Implicit Bias?		
Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
Implicit bias refers to attitudes and stereotypes that unconsciously affect how we interact with and think about people outside of our usual group of associations. These biases also affect how we interpret events involving the people around us.	- An implicit bias is an unconsciously held set of beliefs and associations about a particular group of people and can result in the attribution of particular qualities to all individuals from that specific group. - Implicit bias subconsciously affects how we interact with those outside of our usual group, even when we consciously denounce prejudice in all its forms. - Implicit biases are usually the result of one's past experiences, learned behaviors, misinformation, lack of knowledge, and erroneous conclusions about different groups of people based on their gender, faith practices, ethnicity, race, age, and more. - The distinctions between implicit and unconscious bias are subtle and, as a result, the two terms are generally interchangeable. Implicit bias is also referred to as implicit cognition (Schialabba, 2017). - Specifically, bias resides in the gap between "what we think and what we *think* we think" (Interlandi, 2015). When such bias goes unchecked, it can be detrimental in the classroom as it directly affects the following mindsets and behaviors: - Teachers' expectations of their students, - How students are disciplined, and - The level of trust between students and teachers.	[Implicit Bias and Unconscious Bias](#) [How to Think About Implicit Bias](#)

What is the Impact of Implicit Bias?

Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
Implicit bias is evident in our schools and has far reaching effects on students' current and future wellbeing.	- In order to understand the impact of implicit bias, it is important to understand the shifting demographics of public education across the country where the life experiences of the students vary dramatically from that of their teachers: - White educators makeup 84% of the current teaching force in public education. - In 2014, the overall number of non-white students surpassed 50% of the student population. - The number of Latino students has increased significantly. - The number of Asian students is steadily increasing. - The numbers of Black and White students are decreasing. - More students are multiracial, English language learners, and living in poverty than ever before (National Education Association, 2018, pp.1-2). - Research shows that non-Black educators have much lower expectations for their Black students than do Black educators (National Education Association, 2018, p.2). - Implicit bias plays a large role in the "school-to-prison" pipeline, which affects students of color – African-American students in particular – more than any other group of students. - Black students are more likely to receive out of school suspension. - Black students are less likely to be screened for gifted programs. - Black students are suspended more frequently and are three times more likely to be expelled from school than their white counterparts (Schialabba, 2017). - The impact of out-of-school, out-of-class suspensions and other commonly practiced discipline approaches, which are often fueled by implicit bias, can be devastating for the students. Note the following facts: "A single suspension in the first year of high school doubles the dropout chance for that child. - Children who are expelled are three times more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system. - Once caught within the juvenile justice system, the psychological and economic consequences can have a lasting and burdensome impact on children while simultaneously decreasing their educational and financial opportunities, and increasing the chances of reincarceration. - Incarcerated youth are nearly 70 percent more likely to be in jail again by age 25 than youth who were not referred to juvenile detention" (Schialabba, 2017). - Implicit bias is evident in schools as noted in the following observations: - A disproportionate number of students of color and linguistically diverse learners are referred to	How Implicit Bias Impacts Our Children in Education Locked Out of the Classroom: How Implicit Bias Contributes to Disparities in School Discipline Confronting Implicit Bias Through Exemplary Educator Preparation

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What is the Impact of Implicit Bias?

Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
	special education.	

- ○ Teachers underestimate the abilities of girls, students of color, and linguistically diverse learners.
- ○ There are disproportionately fewer Black and Latino students in gifted classes when compared to the percentage of White students.
- ○ Tracking policies and practices often put students of color in the remedial track.
- ○ The collective ways of thinking and talking about students of color or linguistically diverse students on a campus diminishes those students' abilities and contributions (Safir, 2016).
- The perception of *non-whiteness* creates barriers to obtaining home loans, decreases chances of an interview, and negatively affects treatment by teachers, professors, and doctors" (Lyubansky,& Shpungin, 2016).

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How Can We Effectively Overcome Implicit Biases in Education?

Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
Educators need to study, discuss, and teach one another about implicit bias in order to overcome practices and beliefs that can limit students for life.	- It is challenging for some teachers to own up to their implicit bias because they fear being perceived as racist or bigoted, but the reality is that when people claim to be color-blind, they are more likely to interact with others in biased ways (Suttie, 2016). - Every adult on a school campus needs to understand the following **truths about bias**: - Bias is not a personal defect, but rather a human condition to be recognized and changed. - Because we live in an inequitable society that is shaped by systemic racism and sexism, most Americans embrace some form of implicit bias. - Focusing on individual acts of bias or weeding out the perpetrators of bias does not solve the problem. - Listening to the stories of others is a powerful disruptor to our own biases (Safir, 2016). **Identifying implicit biases** is the first step to interrupting them and to making better decisions when interacting with students. But simply identifying them is not enough. Implicit biases are malleable and can be unlearned, and specific interventions can help people unlearn them. - Using resources such as **lookdifferent.org or Ted Talks** on implicit bias can help teachers engage more deeply in discussions regarding their own implicit biases. Educators need to ask of themselves the following questions: - Where do I see implicit bias within my school? - What are my fears or concerns about addressing my own bias and that of others on my campus? - How can I be a support to and advocate for students, colleagues, and families who experience bias at my school? - Teachers need to be able to "**recognize, refute, and counter implicit biases** regardless of whether they arise within resources students access, among student attitudes, through interaction with others outside the classroom, or from other educators . . ." (National Education Association, 2018, p. 2). **Teacher education programs** need to prepare teacher candidates by having bias disrupting practices interwoven into their curriculum supported by open discussions about the ways in which bias infuses into our culture, our thinking, and our teaching. Teacher education programs also need to collaborate with mentor teachers and provide professional development courses in identifying and disrupting implicit bias	[Four Ways Teachers Can Reduce Implicit Bias](#) [Caring Teacher Student Relationships](#) [5 Keys to Challenging Implicit Bias](#) [Ted Talk: Verna Myers "How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them."](#) [Common Kinds of Bias from lookdifferent.org](#) (Online test to determine bias)

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	in the classroom (National Education Association, 2018, p. 4).
	● To address teachers' implicit biases consider the following suggestions:
	    ○ Teachers need a safe, non-judgmental environment in which they are able to examine their own personal implicit biases.
	    ○ Teachers need to be able to evaluate the extent to which their own implicit biases affect their ability to provide a fair and equitable classroom for all students.
	    ○ Teachers need to learn to identify the implicit biases that exist within resources, institutions, and individuals that their students might encounter.
	● **When teachers ignore the differences in their students, they reinforce their own biases**. In fact, research shows that the more "objective" one claims to be, the more likely that biases influence that person's thinking and decision-making. It is vitally important that we develop a bit of humility in our efforts to recognize and eradicate our own implicit bias (Tropp & Godsil, 2015).
	● Noticing the differences among people in a group and having associations that correspond to those differences is an important part of socialization. It is in making erroneous and potentially damaging judgments according to those associations where the problem lies (Schialabba, 2017).
	● **Helping teachers have more empathy for their students and engaging in more empathic communication combats bias.** In fact, when teachers spend more time learning about their students' everyday lives, they not only show that they care about their students, but they engage in more empathic communication and avoid less bias. In contrast, maintaining an objective, I-treat-all-my-students-the-same mentality is counterproductive and promotes biased behaviors (Suttie, 2016).
	● **Practicing mindfulness and kindness** have also reduced biased thinking and behaviors in individuals. Teachers would do well to engage in practices that reduce their stress as stress reduction minimizes biased behaviors.
	● **Developing sincere cross-group relationships** in their personal lives and with their colleagues helps teachers decrease stress and prejudiced thinking toward other groups.
	● Teachers who **invest in cross-group relationships** tend to encourage their students to do the same.
	● **Holding ourselves accountable** is an important part of disrupting our implicit bias. Namely, keeping	

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	track of and interpreting specific discipline and academic data on campuses heightens educators' awareness and yields change. ● Using gender and race as parameters for the data, schools should 　○ Track discipline referrals, 　○ Measure the rigor of classroom questions, 　○ Evaluate the quality of student work, 　○ Examine the numbers of students failing, and 　○ Review which students are in honors classes, remedial classes, and special education courses. ● Schools need to **collaborate with the community** to establish culturally sensitive practices and a rich curriculum that encourage students to engage in community-minded projects with the express purpose to identify and change implicit bias. ● **Creating a trusting school climate** where the school community is a safe and caring place directly affects the achievement levels of *all* students. A trusting school climate is a place where 　○ All students, teachers, and parents feel free to share and explore new ideas without ridicule or discouragement, and 　○ A students and educators are able to take risks and fail without the fear of backlash.	The Future of Education: Mindful Classrooms Seven Ways Mindfulness Can Help Teachers Interactive Literature Review on Mindfulness from Kamm Solutions Unconscious Bias in Teaching from MIT Kamm Solutions Interactive Literature Review Table on Creating a Culture of Trust

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	How Can We Effectively Overcome Implicit Biases in Education? *Learning From Educators Who Close the Achievement Gap*	
Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources

Educators should be given the opportunity to learn from and emulate the teachers who close the achievement gap in their classrooms.	● All over the country there are teachers who seem to be able to close the achievement gap with their students by eliminating bias. We need to learn from them. Consider the following questions regarding the practices of these teachers:
	  ○ How do they build trust in their classrooms?
	  ○ How do they come to know their students as complex individuals?
	  ○ What learning routines and instructional practices characterize their classrooms?
	  ○ How do they maintain the dignity of and humanize their students?
	● Research shows that teachers who have a more **empathetic mindset** are less likely to threaten students, assign detention or suspension, or involve administrators. These same teachers are more likely to solicit input from students and make changes to how they interact with them (Quereshi & Okonofua, 2017, p. 17).
	● Often teachers who successfully eliminate bias create classrooms founded upon the principles of **social justice and equity**. These teachers often engage in the following practices:
	  ○ They employ curriculum that focuses on the needs and experiences of the children within them and helps students see the relevance of what they are learning in the context of the larger world.
	  ○ They embrace learning experiences that encourage students to "talk back" to the world and consider such questions as
	    ■ "Who makes decisions and who is left out?
	    ■ Who benefits and who suffers?
	    ■ Why is a given practice fair or unfair? What are its origins?
	    ■ What alternatives can we imagine?
	    ■ What is required to make change?" (Au, Bigelow, & Karp, 2007).
	  ○ They explore literature that includes the experiences and voices of all who are part of our society, especially those who are "marginalized and dominated" (Au, Bigelow, & Karp, 2007, p. x).
	  ○ They engage in learning tasks and assignments that are participatory and experiential where students are challenged to be mentally and even physically active.
	  ○ They arrange the room and establish routines that help the students feel cared about by the teacher and by one another. In these classrooms, students feel safe to discuss freely their ideas without ridicule or dismissal.
	  ○ They expect academic rigor in which students are appropriately challenged to master the
		Kamm Solutions' Interactive Literature Review Table on Closing the Achievement Gap
		
		Kamm Solutions Interactive Literature Review Table on Social and Emotional Learning
		
		Kamm Solutions' Collaborative Curriculum Design
		
		The Relationship Between Trust and Bias
		
		Social Justice Standards

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Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
	concepts being taught. ○ They demand that the curriculum and all within the classroom be culturally sensitive (Au, Bigelow, & Karp, 2007, p. xi).	

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How Can We Effectively Overcome Implicit Biases in Education?
Eliminating Bias Through Effective Practices

Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
Specific strategies that are guided by an increase in cultural proficiency have not only improved student-teacher relationships, but have also helped eliminate bias in educators' thinking and actions.	● The **Wise Feedback Practice** focuses on teachers providing critical academic feedback to students in empowering ways. Too often, students feel that academic feedback is evidence of teacher bias, especially if the student has had negative interactions with the teacher previously. The "Wise Feedback" approach asks teachers to provide thoughtful feedback to students that incorporate both **high achievement standards and the expectation and encouragement that students can meet them**. ○ In a study, handwritten notes from the teacher that communicated high standards and the encouragement that students can meet those standards yielded significant responses from students. Only 17% of students who received a simple explanatory note bothered to revise their essay. In contrast, 72% of the students who received the encouraging hand-written note chose to revise their essays (Quereshi & Okonofua, 2017, p.17). ○ Such an effort increased the trust students of color had in their teacher and provided clarity regarding the purpose and intention of teacher feedback. ● The **Social Belonging Practice** focuses specifically on the important social, emotional, and educational growth that occurs in middle school students. It zeros in on the incoming 6th grader and works to improve the relationships between students and their teachers and focuses on the individual's positive desires and improved behavior. Consider the following information: ○ One simple, yet effective implementation of this intervention was by having 7th grade students write notes to 6th grade students that reassured them about the coming year. The messages said that "... teachers would 'have their back', that 'teachers are on your side,' and that, with time, the new students would come to feel at home in the new school" (Quereshi & Okonofua, 2017, p.18). Over the course of a seven-year period, this simple intervention had a powerful effect: ■ Black students, who had reported the greatest anxieties about the new school and new teachers, felt more comfortable and focused in their classes. ■ The overall student-teacher relationship improved which reduced the number of discipline incidents in 6th grade and extended through the end of high school. ■ Incidents of disciplinary actions for black boys fell 64% over that seven-year period. (Locked Out of the Classroom, p.18). ● The **Empathic Discipline Practice** also focuses on improving the student-teacher relationship. This is a	[Locked Out of the Classroom: How Implicit Bias Contributes to Disparities in School Discipline](#) [Three Ways to Improve Teacher-Student Relationships and Reduce Discipline Disparities](#) [Overcoming Implicit Bias and Racial Anxiety](#)

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Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
	practice through which middle-school teachers interact with a series of online exercises focused on empathic discipline. ○ Specifically, the teachers read articles about student discipline that highlighted the anxieties students feel that contribute to misbehavior. The articles contained direct quotes from students about their fears, such as "Will the new teacher treat me fairly? Will she call on the White students more?" ○ The teachers then read articles that focused on creating growth-oriented relationships with students. In their own words, students shared examples of their interactions with their teachers when they had gotten in trouble. The teachers actually listened to their side of the story and repeated back the details so the students knew they were heard. Students felt better about school and trusted these teachers. ○ The last set of articles the teachers read were from other teachers' perspectives and shared that these teachers perceived discipline issues to be an opportunity to build a stronger relationship with their students. ○ The final stage of the intervention asked teachers to write essays about how they might build positive relationships with their students (Quereshi & Okonofua, 2017, p.19). ● The **Empathic Discipline Practice yielded significant change**: ○ Teachers gleaned insight into the experiences of racially stigmatized students. ○ Teachers were encouraged to build relationships with students when discipline incidents occurred. ○ The students were humanized in the teachers' eyes and they embraced a growth mindset regarding their students. ○ Suspension rates dramatically decreased and students felt more a part of their school community and respectful and appreciative of their teachers. ● Similar to the previous intervention, specific practices to "**break the prejudice habit**" have been highly effective. These strategies include the following: ○ Exposing individuals to counter stereotypes of different ethnic groups in film or literature, ○ Providing exercises in consciously contrasting negative stereotypes with counter examples, ○ Seeking "individuate" members of different racial groups by learning specific and individualize information about them, and ○ Assuming the perspective of a person in the out-group and making more of an effort to connect	

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	in meaningful ways (Tropp & Godsil, 2015).
	● It is important to note that coupled with much of the research regarding implicit bias is a focus on the role of **resource officers** in this discussion.
	● While the intention of having **resource officers on campus** is to help students feel safer and to support administration when serious discipline issues occur, the effect has not always been a positive practice.
	   ○ Police Academies focus little time training officers to deal effectively with youth and, as a result, police officers in schools tend to use policing strategies appropriate for adults rather than those that are developmentally specific to youth. They lack "the understanding that children and adolescents' perceptions and behaviors are influenced by biological and psychological factors related to their developmental stage" (McNeal, 2016, p. 292).
	   ○ When these officers are not adequately trained, they focus solely on the punishment and removal of misbehaving students and repeat offenders are labeled as "troublemakers". Removal via suspension or even expulsion can have devastating life-long effects on students.
	● Training in **identifying and eradicating implicit bias** is recommended for officers as well as for educators.
		[Managing Our Blind Spot: The Role of Bias in the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#)
		
		[Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Tools for Change](#)
		
		[Symposium Issue: "The School to Prison Pipeline" – American University Washington College of Law](#)

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How do Restorative Practices Help to Eradicate Implicit Biases?

Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources

Restorative practices offer a more compassionate and equitable approach to discipline and also help to eradicate implicit biases.	• **Improving the classroom management and instruction skills** of teachers is the first and foremost intervention that helps to reduce discipline incidents in a classroom. Too often, teachers blame the students for misbehavior, yet these same students are not misbehaving in other classrooms.
	  ○ Research shows that many discipline problems result from teachers' inability to manage classrooms and engage students effectively (Nance p. 345). Too often the teachers' struggle to manage the classroom in a fair and equitable way also stems from the implicit bias he or she harbors.
	  ○ Teachers need interventions that help them create an optimum learning environment for their students.
	  ○ Students learn best when
	    ■ They are engaged in an active, collaborative learning environment;
	    ■ They see the connections between meaningful content and their own lives;
	    ■ The lesson delivery and activities meet their needs and address their learning styles;
	    ■ They feel safe and supported; and
	    ■ They are not worried about getting in trouble.
	  ○ Establishing such learning environments requires strong leadership from administrators who clearly articulate their vision and expectations for improved instructional and discipline strategies and strongly support their teaching staff in their efforts to make such improvements.
	• **Social and emotional learning** that is meaningful and infused within the curriculum at a school has also proven to be an effective intervention that improves the school's discipline practices and eliminates bias. Effective social and emotional programs
	  ○ Help students identify and cope with their various emotions;
	  ○ Encourage students to develop healthy relationships;
	  ○ Instruct students in fostering respect toward people of different races, religions, ages, gender, etc.;
	  ○ Teach students how to make good decisions; and
	  ○ Arm students with the tools to effectively deal with challenging interpersonal situations (Nance p. 350).
	• A most critical component to social and emotional learning is a focus on **"racial literacy" or "race-relations intelligence"** (Nance p.351). It is important for all educators to develop authentic interracial relationships and to model anti-racist thinking and behavior in their interactions with their students and colleagues. This goal can be achieved by engaging in the following actions:
		How Restorative Justice Can Work to Keep Students of Color in School
		
		Restorative Justice Resources for Schools
		
		The Promise of Restorative Practices to Transform Teacher-Student Relationships and Achieve Equity in School Discipline
		
		Kamm Solutions Interactive Literature Review Table on Social and Emotional Learning
		
		Will School-Discipline Reform Actually Change Anything?

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How do Restorative Practices Help to Eradicate Implicit Biases?		
Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
	○ Use culturally relevant material in the classroom; ○ Teach students of different races how to interact with each other positively; and ○ Help students understand that everyone in the classroom should be treated fairly and respectfully and with dignity (Nance p.352). **Restorative justice** is the hallmark of schools that have improved their discipline practices and eradicated implicit bias. Indeed, "restorative justice has been shown to reduce racial disparities in discipline directly" (Song, 2018). The improvements of effectively implemented restorative justice practices are dramatic with huge declines in discipline issues and the complete eradication of suspensions (Nance p. 356). - Restorative justice embraces the philosophy that the **relationships between the students and the school community are at the center of the students' learning experiences.** The practices that characterize restorative justice are essentially tools for conflict resolution that involve victims, offenders, and other members of the school community. - The **goals** of restorative justice include the following: ○ Repair harms, ○ Engage victims, ○ Establish accountability, ○ Strengthen the school community, and ○ Prevent future harm. - Additionally, restorative justice aims to ○ Change behavior, ○ Enhance school safety, and ○ Improve graduation rates. - Rather than excluding the student from the school community for misbehaving, which may cause resentment, disrupt that student's educational progress, and lead the student to drop out of school, "one of the primary goals of restorative justice is to **integrate the offender back into the school community as a productive member**" (Nance p. 354). - One of the major components of restorative justice is the **restorative circle** where offenders and victims are able to listen to each other's perspectives, feelings, and apologies. This is a powerful tool that helps students see things from another person's perspective and better understand the others in the circle. Likewise, this circle helps teachers understand where their students are coming from, what experiences those students have had that influence the way they behave, and how the teachers can support these	

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How do Restorative Practices Help to Eradicate Implicit Biases?		
Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
	students.	

- Such personal and vulnerable interactions as those that are practiced in the restorative circle are the very experiences that combat implicit bias for the following reasons:
  - They humanize the offenders, the victims, the teachers, and they help people listen to and understand each other.
  - They also help heal the damage as those in the circle collaborate to determine what needs to be done to help everyone involved make better decisions and interact with each other more peaceably. Collaborative decision-making is the key to reducing biases (Song, 2018).

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