

Examining Social and Emotional Learning through an Equity & Identity Lens

Building a Culture of Equity Through Social-Emotional Learning Dena Simmons

Links: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76xt2_-q62I [Aug 21, 2021 (6 mins)] APB

[YouTube: "Dr. Dena Simmons is the founder of LiberatED, a liberatory approach to social and emotional learning, racial justice, and healing. She is also the inaugural scholar-in-residence at the Institute for Racial Justice at Loyola University of Chicago.]

Dena Simmons remembers the harm she experienced in school as a young Black child and asks, "How can we practice and implement SEL to ensure that it does not cause harm?" Because American history has been anchored in inequities, how can we rethink our systems? Simmons challenges the listener to ask, "what is our 'why'" with regard to SEL (social and emotional learning). Simmons asserts that the SEL "why" should not depend on "which" children; for Black and Brown children, SEL has been used as remediation; for white children it is framed in terms of college preparedness. "If our why is different, how are we complicit?" She points out that good intentions are not necessarily related to good outcomes, and that anything can be used as a weapon—even SEL. She challenges us: "How can we leverage SEL to create the social change we need?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UM3Lfk751cg> [August 28, 2020 (3 mins)] Edutopia

6 Ways to be an Anti-Racist Educator "Good Instruction is Student Centered"

1. Start with yourself
2. Learn with your crew
3. Hold each other accountable
4. Affirm your students
5. Think about the larger context
6. Ask students what they need

Link: [The importance of affirming student identity - YouTube](#) (Feb, 2020 [10 mins])

Jeewan Chanicka, Superintendent of Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression, works on Turtle Island in Canada and serves 250,000 students. His talk addresses students' identities- asking who is overrepresented or underrepresented, and in what ways. (Similar to the U.S., 12% of his student body is Black but 42% will have experienced a suspension by graduation.) He challenges the status quo noting that, for example, homework reinforces disparities between children versus reducing them. Chanicka has been a teacher, principal, superintendent and parent of (racialized) Black sons without really thinking about the role of identity in education. However, "none of us check our identity at the door." Identities that have been marginalized in the past are still harmed in our current education system due to baked-in discrimination patterns. Those children most affected include: Indigenous, Black and Brown, those with disabilities or living in poverty, LGBTQ+. He asks, how might we be complicit in perpetuating harm to these students? And demands that we begin with the process of checking in with our own identities and beliefs. His team has made changes that include listening and building relationships, rethinking spaces based on who is represented and who is not, and anchoring work in adult learning first.

Additional Resources:

[Social-Emotional-and-Academic-Development-Through-an-Equity-Lens-August-6-2020.pdf \(edtrust.org\)](#)

[Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework | New York State Education Department \(nysed.gov\)](#)

https://www.childrensinstitute.net/sites/default/files/documents/sustaining-framework_resource_v2.pdf

[Social Emotional Learning and Equity — National Equity Project](#)

[Them and Me-- The Care and Treatment of Black Boys in America Kevin M. Simon, M.D.](#)