Leader in Me®

Overcoming Unconscious Bias in Schools with *Leader in Me*

Schools are becoming increasingly aware of the impact unconscious bias can have on student outcomes, but to act effectively on this new knowledge, for teachers and staff to recognize their own biases and for schools to correct and overcome inequitable practices, they need the right kind of support.

"Unconscious"
= unaware

"Bias"
= preference for (or aversion to)

Unconscious bias refers to attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions without our conscious awareness.

What you should know about unconscious biases:

- They can be about different aspects of identity like race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, weight, level of ability.

- They most often favor either those who match a person's own identity or the identity that is most culturally privileged.

- They can contradict people's consciously held views/beliefs.

- Everyone has them. Our brains are wired to recognize patterns and make generalizations.

> *"We absorb bias in the same way we breathe in smog—involuntarily and usually without any awareness of it."*
> – Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D.

Bias in Education

A growing number of research studies have found that

- teachers have biases that influence how they treat students[1, 2]
- teacher biases can have long-term impacts on students[3, 4]
- underserved students can internalize biases and conform to the negative stereotypes

So, what happens to students when teachers and staff are unaware of their unconscious bias against them?

Unconscious Bias Negatively Impacts Students

Much of the research on unconscious bias in schools has focused on gender and race.

Racial Bias

1. A black student's white teachers were less likely than their black teachers[5] to predict that they would:
   - attain a four-year college degree (**30%**)
   - graduate high school (**40%**)
2. Black students are suspended & expelled at **3 times** the rate of white students[6].

Gender Bias

1. Teachers spend more of their time (**up to ⅔**) talking to male students[7, 8]
2. Teacher bias was found to be the primary reason males students were **19.3% more likely than** their female peers to go on to complete advanced math studies.[9]

Taking a Schoolwide Approach to End Teacher Bias

While schools may recognize their responsibility to reduce or eliminate the negative impacts of teacher bias, many are unsure how to accomplish this.

Four Best Practices for Addressing Unconscious Bias in School

A growing body of educational research has identified the types of school-based interventions that have proven successful in reducing teacher bias and repairing its impacts on students.

Best Practice 1: Professional learning

- Grows awareness of their implicit biases.
- Educates teachers and staff about the effects of those biases.
- Provides strategies for identifying biased behaviors.
- Develops practices used to overcome and repair the impacts of bias on students.

36%
long-term decrease in staff members' implicit race bias following a related professional learning course.[10]

When even one teacher expresses high expectations of a student, it **increases that child's likelihood of completing a four-year college degree by 7%.**[15]

Best Practice 2: Empathic Classrooms

- Seek to understand the cultural backgrounds and personal interests of each student.
- Honor the strengths of each student's lived experiences through lessons, classroom visuals, and celebrations.
- Model high-trust behaviors with students.

Empathetic classroom practices linked to:

60%
decrease in the achievement gap[11]

50%
decrease in student suspensions[12]

Best Practice 3: Empowering Student Achievement

- Set high standards that convey all students great potential and belonging.
- Teach students skills that allow them to lead their own learning.
- Use multiple measures of success, not just test scores.

Disadvantaged students placed in the same high-critical-thinking learning environment surpassed their advantaged peers with a **21% increase in performance.**[13]

3X

more likely for black students to be in the **top 25% of their college class** after an intervention that increased their sense of belonging and ability.[14]
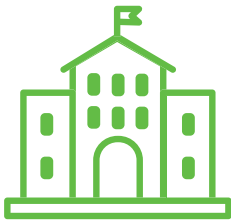
High expectations of students from one teacher increase that child's likelihood of completing a **four-year college degree by 7%.**[15]

Best Practice 4: Building Student Capacity

- Develop a growth-mindset by challenging their own limiting biases.
- Affirm their core values and use them to set goals.
- Build self-efficacy through the application of personal management skills.
- Develop the skills needed for positive peer relationships.

Improved science grades for girls who participated in self-affirming assignments, compared to those who didn't, with **41% of girls getting C's improving by one or more letter grades.**[16]

40%

decrease in achievement gap for black students who wrote affirmations on their personal ability.[17]

Applying the Four Best Practices with *Leader in Me*

Creating the Foundation Necessary to Address Bias

Paradigms

Leader in Me lays a unique foundation for identifying and reducing bias not seen in other whole-school processes. *Leader in Me* starts with professional learning that supports teachers and staff as they do the difficult work of identifying their negative biases, or as *Leader in Me* refers to them, their limiting paradigms about themselves, their school, and their students. And *Leader in Me* then encourages the adoption of positive paradigms.

Leader In Me Core Paradigms

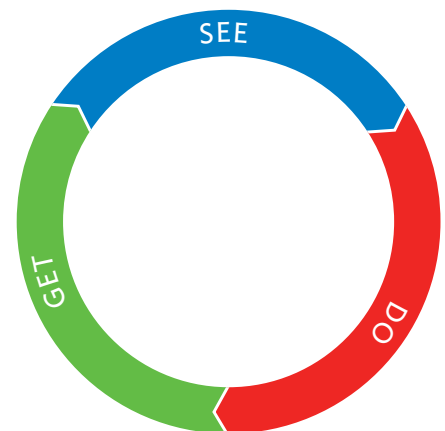| Paradigm of Leadership		Paradigm of Potential		Paradigm of Change		Paradigm of Motivation		Paradigm of Education	
NOT THIS	BUT THIS	NOT THIS	BUT THIS	NOT THIS	BUT THIS	NOT THIS	BUT THIS	NOT THIS	BUT THIS
Leadership is for the few.	**Everyone can be a leader.**	A few people are gifted.	**Everyone has genius.**	To improve schools, the system needs to change first.	**Change starts with me.**	Educators control and direct student learning.	**Educators empower students to lead their own learning.**	Focus solely on academic achievement.	**Develop the whole person.**

See-Do-Get

As teachers and staff **SEE** themselves, their school, and all their students through these new paradigms, it naturally impacts what they **DO**, and then, the results they **GET**. The new behaviors and schoolwide systems that develop as schools implement the Leader in Me further serves to reinforce the core paradigms.

How we **SEE** the world, our paradigms.

Shapes our behavior, what we **DO**.

The results we **GET** flow from our behavior.

The See-Do-Get Models on the following pages illustrate how the *Leader in Me* approach supports the four best practices previously detailed.

SEE

DO

GET

"If you want to create incremental change, focus on behavior. But if you want a real breakthrough, change the paradigm."
- Stephen Covey

Applying Best Practice 1: Professional learning

◯ SEE:

Paradigm of Leadership		Paradigm of Potential		Paradigm of Change		Paradigm of Motivation		Paradigm of Education	
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◯ DO:

1. Develop the personal and professional capacity of teachers and staff, during which they:
   - Identify limiting paradigms.
   - Learn how to take action to address them.
2. Set up ongoing collaborative practices.

◯ GET:

- A staff that recognizes the worth and potential in themselves and their students.
- A culture of high trust.
- A greater awareness of implicit bias and the ability to take targeted action.

Research evidence:

"Attending professional development with faculty and staff members provided **A SENSE OF UNITY AND COLLABORATION** among all school personnel."

DR. S. ROSS (2012) JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

87%
teachers acquired new skills and knowledge to **EMPOWER STUDENTS.**

ROI INSTITUTE (2014)

p<.01) Significant correlation between teachers' beliefs about school vision of leadership and 7 Habits indicating that "[Teachers] not only **BELIEVE THAT THEIR STUDENTS ARE LEADERS**, but they envision them living the 7 Habits, as leaders would do."

DR. K. CUMMINS (2015) UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

MY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS ADEQUATELY TRAINING ME TO FOSTER STUDENT LEADERSHIP.

Non-LiM (n=55): 3.2
LiM (n=70): 4.0

● Non-LiM (n=55) ● LiM (n=70)
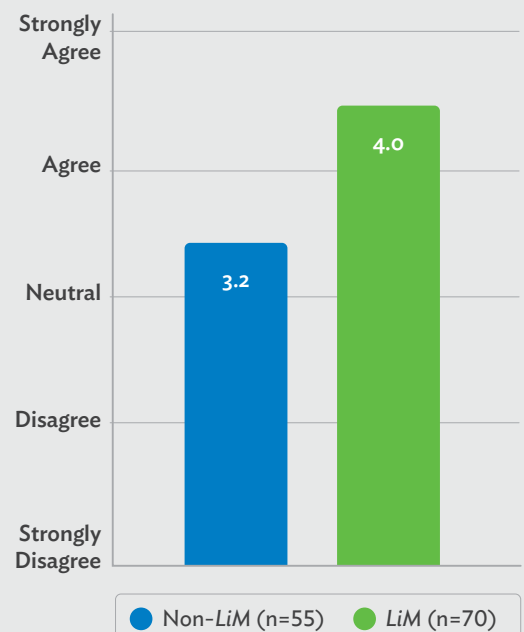
DETHLEFS, ET AL. (2017) UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

Applying Best Practice 2: Empathetic Classrooms

◯ SEE:

Paradigm of Leadership		Paradigm of Potential		Paradigm of Change		Paradigm of Motivation		Paradigm of Education	
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◯ DO:

- Model and directly teach effective personal and interpersonal behaviors.
- Empower students to make decisions and act on important class matters.
- Build engagement through student leadership roles, student-led learning practices, and classroom traditions.

◯ GET— STUDENTS WHO:

- Feel safe, supported and engaged.
- Contribute their voice to important decisions.
- Take on leadership roles.

Research evidence:

Teachers and students reported that after implementing *Leader in Me,* the "classroom became a **SAFE ENVIRONMENT WHERE ALL STUDENTS FELT COMFORTABLE PURSUING GOALS.**"

BALDWIN, ET AL. (2012) THE COLLEGE OF SAINT ROSE

87%

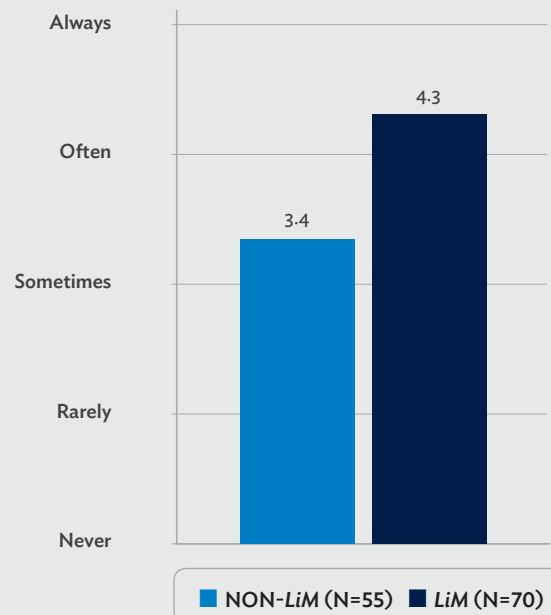teachers acquired new skills and knowledge to **EMPOWER STUDENTS.**

ROI INSTITUTE (2014)

46%

greater likelihood a Lighthouse *LiM* student feels they get to help make decisions at their school.

DETHLEFS, ET AL. (2017) UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

At my school, students have opportunities to be leaders in their own special ways.

Bar chart (scale: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always):
- NON-*LiM* (N=55): 3.4
- *LiM* (N=70): 4.3

Legend: ■ NON-*LiM* (N=55) ■ *LiM* (N=70)

DETHLEFS, ET AL. (2017) UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

Applying Best Practice 3: Empowering Student Achievement

◯ SEE:

Paradigm of Leadership		Paradigm of Potential		Paradigm of Change		Paradigm of Motivation		Paradigm of Education	
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◯ DO:

- Empower students with the mindsets and skills needed to lead their academic achievement.
- Teach students to identify, set, and track goals around their learning needs.
- Set expectation that all students who work hard and persevere will achieve academically.

◯ GET— STUDENTS WHO:

- Self-regulate their learning.
- Set goals, prioritize, and manage their time .
- Self-advocate.

Research evidence:

94.23%

faculty agreement "All students at this school regularly set academic goals in at least one area."

DR. K. CUMMINS (2015) UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

Study results indicated the most notable behavioral change from *Leader in Me* was the **increased responsibility students took for their own learning**.

DR. S. CARACELO (2012) WALDEN UNIVERSITY

Students in *Leader in Me* Lighthouse schools were **20% more likely than non-LiM student to agree** "When I have a lot of homework and other activities, I create a plan to get things done."

DETHLEFS, ET AL. (2017) UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

Applying Best Practice 4: Building Student Capacity

◯ SEE:

Paradigm of Leadership		Paradigm of Potential		Paradigm of Change		Paradigm of Motivation		Paradigm of Education	
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◯ DO—TEACH STUDENTS:

- Personal responsibility.
- How to build and maintain positive relationships with their peers.
- That everyone can grow and improve if they work hard .

◯ GET—STUDENTS WHO:

- Want to be an empowering leader.
- Overcome personal challenges.
- Have fulfilling relationships.

Research evidence:

91%

faculty agreement "All students at this school are leaders."

DR. K. CUMMINS (2015) UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

Leader in Me teachers and students reported **"a strong belief that all persons could be leaders in different ways"**

BALDWIN, ET AL. (2012) THE COLLEGE OF SAINT ROSE

Teachers indicated that *"'I am in charge of me.' Seems to be at the heart of what has increased student motivation."*

DR. C. TIDD (2016) WALDEN UNIVERSITY

"LiM helps to build a positive school climate" with "increases in prosocial behavior, communication and social problem-solving skills, and self-regulation and executive functions"

DR. CORCORAN, REILY, & DR. ROSS (2014) JOHN HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

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