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TODAY'S STUDENTS



Kelly Maschari

TEACHER INTERVIEW

Ms. Kelly Maschari

Ms. Kelly Maschari teaches one of three third-grade classes at Brent Elementary School in Washington, DC, a few blocks from the U.S. Capitol—the house of Congress. Raised in rural Ohio, Ms. Maschari has since expanded her knowledge and experience with cultural diversity after teaching in Hong Kong, Houston, and now the District of Columbia.

With a bachelor's degree in business administration and marketing, she began her teaching career as an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teacher in Hong Kong where she worked with students from the ages of five months to 13 years at a language center. In Houston, she taught at Ortiz Middle School, a charter school with a majority of Hispanic students. Since arriving in Washington, she has taught at both a charter school and traditional public schools.

Q: What have you found are successful strategies in working with students from diverse groups?

A: When students see themselves as a collective team, they become members of a community and active participants in helping each other regardless of their race, economic background, or gender. They learn to ask how they can help each other and their partners. Building a sense of empathy is crucial. Both Brent Elementary School and my previous school use a responsive classroom approach that focuses on social and emotional teaching strategies. We help students develop traits of empathy and caring for each other. The approach works well for most students, but other students need more concrete experiences that aren't part of the responsive classroom.

Involving parents is another critical factor in diverse classrooms. The principal at my school is very successful at engaging parents. I have now set up a consistent routine for communicating with parents and guardians through a newsletter and website that open the door for parents to contact me directly. It is a lot of work, but leads to a great payoff in which parents become more engaged in their children's learning activities. For example,

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

1. Illustrate how the race and ethnicity of all students can be respected and valued in classroom activities so that all students have optimal opportunities to learn at a high level.
2. Evaluate the importance of holding high expectations for all students regardless of the Socioeconomic Status (SES) of their families.
3. Describe at least three instructional programs that are used with English Language Learners (ELLs) and explain some of the advantages and disadvantages of each of them.
4. Identify how you can build on gender differences to provide equitable instruction for both girls and boys.
5. List actions you could take to be supportive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ) students in classrooms and schools.
6. Analyze the impact of the religious beliefs of students and their families on classroom and school practices in your community.

all of the parents of my students were involved in one or more of the nine field trips that the class took last year. Finding an outlet to talk with families about differences that leads to a better understanding of one another's point of view is important.

Q: What do you enjoy most about teaching students from diverse groups?

A: Teaching brings me the greatest joy when I'm a part of a moment when a child feels successful in a particular skill, project, or performance.

Questions to Consider

1. What is similar and different about Ms. Maschari's class and the schools with which you are most familiar?
2. How prepared do you think you are to work in the diverse settings in which Ms. Maschari has taught?
3. What do you want to make sure you learn before you begin to work in a school with students from a number of diverse groups with which you have no or limited experience?

INTRODUCTION

The students you will be teaching may be very similar to you, coming from the same racial and ethnic group and from families with the same **Socioeconomic Status (SES)** as your own family. However, many new teachers find their first jobs in schools with students from groups and **cultures** with which they have little or no firsthand experience. You may have very different experiences than the students in your classroom as a result of your racial or ethnic group membership, native language, SES, and/or religion. Very few schools are segregated by **gender**, so it is likely that not all of your students will be the same **sex** as you, but some of them may have a different **sexual orientation** than you or identify their gender differently than you would expect. You are also likely to have one or more students with a **disability** in the classroom.

Both students and teachers are multicultural. We are all members of different groups in society. Our identities are influenced by our race, ethnicity, gender, SES, native language, religion, sexual orientation, and mental and physical abilities. Being a member of one of these groups impacts how we see ourselves and how we see members of another group. Religion, for instance, may have a great influence on how we think girls and boys should behave. In our society, race and economics define power relationships. Our identities are also determined by others who define us based on their observations of who we are and their experiences or lack of experiences with members of our cultural groups.

One of the keys to being a successful teacher is to care about the students in your classroom. A part of caring is to know the students, their families, and the realities of their everyday lives. This task is much easier in a close-knit community in which most families know one another because they attend the same church, synagogue, temple, or mosque. It is more challenging in large urban and suburban areas in which the histories and experiences of families differ greatly. At the same time, we are more alike than different. Because we are lifelong learners, we should continue to explore our similarities and differences as we learn about each other.

The growing diversity of the student population offers us the opportunity to learn new cultures and expand our cultural competencies. To help all students learn, we should learn as much as possible about groups other than our own before we begin teaching. Learning about the cultures of our students and communities can be one of the joyful outcomes of teaching. This chapter will introduce you to the student diversity you may encounter in your future classrooms.

HOW RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE ARE OUR SCHOOLS?

We are often asked to identify our race or ethnicity on applications and surveys. Our **ethnicity** is generally determined by the country or countries from which our families or ancestors have come. **Race**,

on the other hand, is a sociohistorical concept based on society's perception that differences among people based on the color of their skin exist and that these differences are important. The U.S. Census Bureau places the population into six **pan-ethnic** and racial groups: black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian American, Latino or Hispanic, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and white. We now can choose the category "Two or More Races" to acknowledge our parents or ancestors are from different races. Still, a number of students find it difficult to classify themselves into one of these groups because they do not see themselves as a member of any of them. This section provides a brief introduction to the ethnic and racial diversity of students in schools today. Historical facts of the education experiences of these groups are discussed in Chapter 6, but you are strongly encouraged to engage in further study of these groups.

Race and Ethnicity of the Population

American Indians and Alaska Natives are the **indigenous** or original people who inhabited the United States. Today, 6.7 million U.S. citizens, or 2% of the population, identify as Native American, American Indian, or Alaska Native, with 2.7 million or 40% identifying as biracial or multiracial (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017b). The federal government recognizes 573 tribal governments (Bureau of Indian Affairs, n.d.), with the largest number of members being Cherokee, Navajo, Choctaw, Mexican American Indian, Chippewa, Sioux (i.e., Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota peoples), Apache, and Blackfeet. The five largest Alaska Native tribes are Yup'ik, Iñupiat, Tlingit and Haida, Alaskan Athabaskan, and Aleut. One in five American Indians and Alaska Natives lives on a reservation, on trust lands, or in an Alaska native village. Over two in five American Indians and Alaska Natives live in the western United States, but nearly one in three live in the South (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012). States with the largest percentages of American Indians and Alaska Natives are Alaska, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and South Dakota (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017b).

Native Hawaiians and other South Pacific Islanders are also indigenous to their native lands. Although they live in all U.S. states, more than half of them live in Hawaii and California (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018a). Just over 1.5 million residents identify as Native Hawaiians or South Pacific Islanders, with half of them identifying as biracial or multiracial (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017b). This group includes people who identify as Native Hawaiian, Guamanian, Chamorro, Samoan, Tahitian, Tongan, Tokelauan, Marshallese, Palauan, Chuukese, Fijian, Guinean, Solomon Islander, and other Pacific Islander groups (Hixson, Hepler, & Kim, 2012).

The ancestors of most African Americans, who made up 13.4% of the population in 2017 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017e), involuntarily arrived in this country as slaves beginning in the early 1500s (Guasco, 2017). Over the intervening 500 years, African Americans have developed their own culture out of their African, European, and Native American heritages and their unique experiences in this country. Today, new immigrants from African and Caribbean countries continue to join this pan-ethnic group. Most African American students are greatly influenced by their group membership because of a common history of slavery and discrimination, which continues today. By middle school, most African



First (or Native) Americans live in communities across the United States but continue to celebrate and preserve their heritage in powwows, which are social gatherings that usually include competitive dancing and honor American Indian veterans.

American students have experienced **racism** firsthand or know families or friends who have been negatively affected by racial discrimination.

Asian Americans have immigrated to the United States from numerous countries across the world's largest continent and are currently one of the fastest-growing groups in the country. Chinese Americans are the largest Asian ethnic group in the United States, with 4.9 million residents, followed by Asian Indians (4.1 million), Filipinos (3.9 million), Vietnamese (2.1 million), Korean (1.8 million), and Japanese (1.5 million) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018a). Nearly half of Asian Americans live in three states: California, New York, and Texas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017b). They account for over 40% of Hawaii's population and 5.8% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017e).

Latinos and Hispanics, who comprised 18.1% of the U.S. population in 2017 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017e), have ethnic roots in many nations. Mexican Americans are the largest of this pan-ethnic group; other families come from or have ancestors from Mexico, Central America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, South America, and Europe. The Spanish were among the early European explorers in the North and South Americas. When the United States annexed the southwestern part of the country in 1848, Mexicans were the majority population of that region. Over half of the Hispanic population lives in California, Florida, and Texas.

European Americans, who are predominantly white, comprise the largest proportion of the U.S. population. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that non-Hispanic whites were 60.7% of the population in 2017 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017e) and are projected to be 55.8% in 2030 and 44.3% by 2060. Another 15.6% of the population are Hispanics who report their race as white (Vespa, Armstrong, & Medina, 2018). European Americans have been the dominant, most powerful racial and ethnic group in the United States for centuries. Before the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, U.S. presidents, governors, Congress, and state legislatures had almost always been composed of white men.

The Impact of Immigration

Immigration was a major topic in the 2016 election of President Donald Trump and continues to divide Congress and the public. A national survey by the Pew Research Center in 2016 found that 6 in 10 respondents thought that immigrants strengthened the country “because of their hard work and talents,” while just over a quarter say immigrants burden the country by taking jobs, housing and health care” (G. López & Bialik, 2017, para. 34). These perspectives will continue to be debated as Congress considers new legislation on immigration. In this section, we will look at current immigration statistics and the impact of immigration on education.

The number of immigrants obtaining permanent resident status during the past decade has been approximately 1 million persons per year (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017). Nearly 7 in 10 immigrants live in the West and South, with almost half of them living in California, Texas, and

New York (López & Bialik, 2017). Large cities attract immigrants with the largest concentrations found in the metropolitan areas of New York City, Los Angeles, and Miami (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017). Nonmetropolitan areas increasingly are also becoming home to immigrants. As a result, rural, urban, and suburban schools across the country include students from different cultures and with many native languages other than English.

The nations from which immigrants come have changed over time, primarily because of immigration laws set by Congress. When the Johnson–Reed Act was abolished in 1965, immigration from the Eastern Hemisphere increased dramatically. The largest number of authorized immigrants in the 1960s came from Mexico (14%), Germany (7%), Canada and Newfoundland (13%), the United Kingdom (7%), Italy (6%), and Cuba



Before 1965, the majority of immigrants to the United States were from Europe. Since Congress passed the immigration bill of 1965, the number of immigrants from Mexico and Asia has increased dramatically, changing the nation's diversity.

(6%). In 2016, the largest number of authorized immigrants came from Mexico (15%), China (7%), India (5%), Cuba (6%), the Dominican Republic (5%), the Philippines (4%), and Vietnam (3%) (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017). Forty-five percent of the foreign-born population was born in Mexico and other Latin American countries, 27% in Asia, and 18% in Europe (Vespa et al., 2018).

Another group of immigrants is **refugees** who have been recognized by the federal government as being persecuted or legitimately bearing persecution in their home country because of race, religion, nationality, or membership in a specific social or political group. The number of refugees differs from year to year, with a high of over 207,000 in 1980 to a low of 26,785 in 2002, to 84,995 in 2016, and a drop to 53,716 in 2017 (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017; Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2018). The largest number of refugees in 2016 came from countries that were at war or engaged in political unrest, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo (19%), Syria (15%), Myanmar (14%), Iraq (12%), and Somalia (11%) (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017).

The most controversial immigration issue in the country is that of unauthorized immigrants, who made up 3.4% of the nation's population in 2015 (López & Bialik, 2017). Seven percent of K–12 students have at least one unauthorized immigrant parent (Passell & Cohn, 2016). Some unauthorized immigrants originally entered the country as travelers or on student or other visas. They extended their stay beyond the authorized date and may be eligible to have their status reclassified as legal at some point if they meet the requirements for employment-based visas, if they are classified as refugees, or if they are sponsored by a family. The number of unauthorized immigrants from Mexico has been on the decline since 2007, with half of the unauthorized immigrants in 2016 being from Mexico and the number from Central America and Asia on the increase. Two in three of the unauthorized immigrants have been in the United States over a decade. Six of ten unauthorized immigrants live in six states—California, Texas, Florida, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois (Krogstad, Passell, & Cohn, 2017)—with the metropolitan areas of New York City, Los Angeles, and Houston being home to the largest concentrations of unauthorized immigrants (Passell & Cohn, 2017).

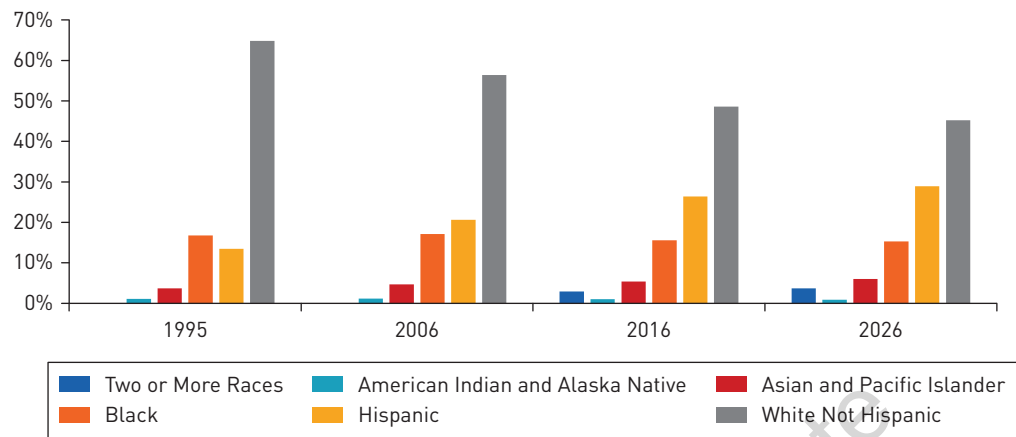
In 1975, the Texas legislature decided to withhold funds from local school districts for children who were not legally admitted into the United States. The act also allowed school districts to deny enrollment to unauthorized children. When the Supreme Court was asked in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) to determine the constitutionality of the Texas statute, it ruled that a state cannot deny unauthorized students a public education. School officials cannot ask parents for their immigration status, their Social Security numbers, or other documentation that might expose their status.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Schools

The U.S. population is currently predominantly white (61.3%), but less so each year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017e). By 2060, 44% of the population will be white, and the Latino population will have nearly doubled, comprising 28% of the population (Vespa et al., 2018). The school population reflects the growing diversity of the country more profoundly than the general population because a large number of immigrants are Latino and Asian, and the average age of those groups is younger than whites, resulting in a larger proportion of births. Students of color were 35% of the school-age population in 1995, but were 52% in 2018 and projected to be 55% by 2026, as shown in Figure 2.1 (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2018). The percentage of African American and American Indian students will remain about the same, while the number of Latino and Asian American students will continue to grow over the next four decades.

The chances that you will teach students from diverse ethnic and racial groups depend on the location of your



FIGURE 2.1 ■ Projected Changing Diversity of the School-Age Population

Source: Snyder, T. D., de Brey, C., & Dillow, S. A. (2018). *Digest of education statistics 2016* (NCES 2017-094). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

school. The largest concentration of students of color is in the western part of the United States, and the Midwest is the least diverse. The highest concentration of African American students is in the South, where they make up 24% of the student population. Latino students make up 42% and Asian American students 9% of the student population in the West. Already, more than 60% of the public school students in Arizona, California, the District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas are students of color. Over half of the student population in Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and New York are students of color, and the number is approaching 50% in 11 other states (Snyder et al., 2018). Students of color also are the majority of the population in many urban schools across the country.

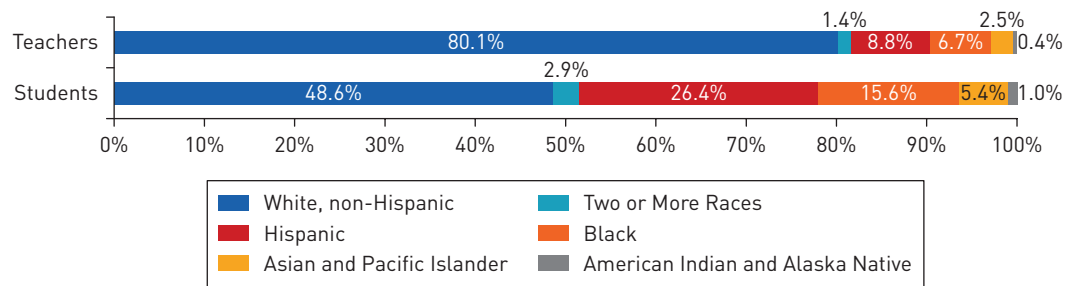
As shown in Figure 2.2, the diversity of teachers in the nation's schools does not match the ethnic and racial diversity of the student population. Four in five public school teachers are white, and three in four are women (Snyder et al., 2018; Taie & Goldring, 2017). Not all teachers understand their students' cultures or have any experience with them. In these cases, teachers and students may misunderstand each other's cultural cues. Teachers may accept the negative **stereotypes** of students from ethnic and racial groups different from their own. Our "interpretations of student behavior can be misinformed and unnecessary conflicts can result" (Milner, 2015, p. 123). Students and parents may come to believe that the teacher does not respect or value their cultures and experiences. They may feel that the only way to be successful in school is to adopt the teacher's culture, which may lead to the denigration of their own culture. Some adolescents of color resist the dominant culture of schools and sometimes label academically successful peers as "acting white."

Teaching Students From Diverse Racial and Ethnic Groups

How should educators respond to the ethnic and racial diversity in their schools? Many teachers say they are **color blind**, meaning that they don't see the race of their students and treat all students the same. The problem with this approach is that the curricula and activities of most schools predominantly reflect the cultures of European Americans and do not effectively integrate the cultures of students of color. Teaching everyone in the same way does not seem to be working, as shown in the great differences in academic achievement among groups as measured by standardized tests. Instead, you should recognize and integrate the cultures, histories, and experiences of multiple racial and ethnic groups into the curriculum and your instruction so that all students see themselves represented and respected in the classroom.

The Opportunity Gap

Disparities in the academic performance and achievement among groups of students are referred to as the **achievement gap**. Although some students from all groups perform at high levels, achievement

FIGURE 2.2 Diversity of Public School Teachers and Students in 2015–2016 School Year

Source for Student Data: Snyder, T. D., de Brey, C., & Dillow, S. A. (2018). *Digest of education statistics 2016* (NCES 2017–094). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

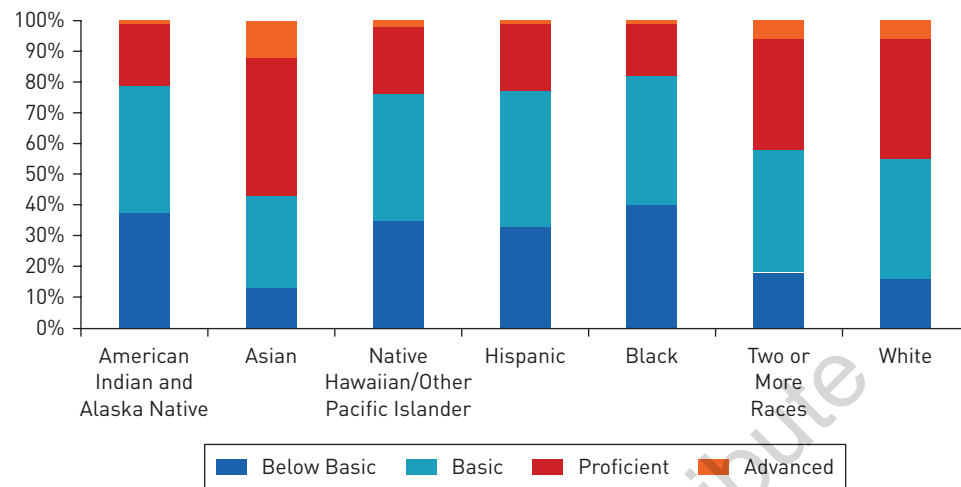
Source for Teacher Data: Taie, S., & Goldring, R. (2017). *Characteristics of public elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States: Results from the 2015–16 National Teacher and Principal Survey First Look* (NCES 2017–072). Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2017072>.

data show that students from white and Asian American families are more likely than other students to score at high levels, graduate from high school and college, and attend professional schools. African American and Hispanic students, and students who live in poverty, do not have the same educational opportunities as students from affluent families. Their Grade Point Averages are lower than those of other students. Their performance on standardized tests is lower, they are less likely to take rigorous courses, they are disproportionately placed in special education, and they are less likely to finish high school in four years.

Another way of looking at academic differences among groups is the availability of opportunities to learn. This **opportunity gap** begins early in the lives of children. Some families are able to provide numerous educational resources and opportunities to travel and participate in education programs during their early years and throughout the school year, especially during summer vacations. Other children have access to few educational resources and suffer from poor health care and nutrition, which can affect their ability to concentrate and focus on school work or even attend school every day. Peer pressure, **tracking** practices, negative stereotyping, test bias, and many other factors also contribute to the achievement opportunities among students. Although poverty is a major factor in the opportunity gap, students of color at all income levels are more likely to experience inadequate or insufficient educational opportunities. Another critical factor in the opportunity gap is that students in poverty and students of color often attend high-poverty schools where more than 75% of the students are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (McFarland et al., 2017), and student achievement on standardized tests is more likely to be lower than in other schools.

One of the major challenges for educators is to increase the achievement opportunities for students from different racial and ethnic groups. Schools are required by a federal law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), to annually test public school students to determine if they are meeting state standards in reading and mathematics and report student performance for subgroups of students (e.g., racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners [ELLs], students from low-income families, and students with disabilities). Students' achievement on standardized tests is the indicator most often used when the achievement gap is being discussed. Although the gap between students of color and white students decreased between 1970 and 1990, it then leveled off, and has not improved significantly since 1990 (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). An example of the differences in academic performance among ethnic and racial groups of students is shown in Figure 2.3. The challenge for an educator is how to eliminate this achievement gap.

The Children's Defense Fund (2015), an advocacy group for children from low-income families and families of color, reports that many children from families in poverty score lower on measures of cognitive development than affluent children beginning as early as nine months. They enter PreK with lower levels of academic readiness. These gaps grow larger as students continue through school. By the 12th grade, 83% of African American students are not reading at the proficient level, and 93% are

FIGURE 2.3 Performance on Eighth-Grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Tests by Racial and Ethnic Group, 2016

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress. (2017). *The nation's report card: NAEP data explorer*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/ndecore/xplore/NDE>.

not doing math at the proficient level. Hispanic and American Indian students perform at somewhat higher levels, but still at 18 or more percentage points less than white students (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2015a).

Elimination of the opportunity gap will require a deliberate effort to provide personalized attention, expert teachers, high-quality curriculum, and more and better learning resources (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Recommendations for reform to improve academic achievement have included reducing class sizes, expanding early-childhood programs, improving the quality of teachers, encouraging more students of color to take high-level courses, and using **culturally responsive teaching** practices in the classroom.

You are likely to be engaged in the work of eliminating the achievement gap, particularly if you teach in a high-poverty school. You may be involved in writing a comprehensive support and improvement plan for your school. You may be working with other teachers and administrators to analyze the test scores for your school and hopefully support each other in helping all students learn at higher levels. In schools where the gap has been eliminated, educators have stopped blaming students and parents for low achievement. Instead, they have taken responsibility for ensuring that students develop the expected outcomes (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). The school districts that have made the most progress in closing the achievement gap in recent years have had educational leaders who prioritize the learning needs of the most vulnerable students (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Having such a positive impact on a group of students should be celebrated. When students aren't learning, the challenge is to figure out what changes we can make to engage them in their learning.

Race in the Classroom

Race has a profound effect on the life experiences of the U.S. population. The fact that African American and Hispanic students continue to achieve at lower levels than their white peers has become so normalized that many educators have become comfortable with their underperformance, expecting no better. Even some students of color become accustomed to failing grades and may avoid academic pursuits or rigorous courses. When failure becomes so normalized by both educators and students, it becomes extremely difficult to change the outcomes (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). The first step is recognizing the problem. Your job as a teacher will be to do all you can to eliminate the ways that racial identity and the stereotype of failure are reinforced and reproduced in your classroom (Steele, 2010).

The inequitable educational outcomes for students of color are a function of the social context—in this case, their unequal access to key educational resources such as quality teachers and quality curricula (Darling-Hammond, 2013). We need to “embrace students’ race and culture as central to their identity and as assets to build on” (Mitchell, Hinueber, & Edwards, 2017, p. 26). Students of color do not always trust teachers from racially privileged groups because those teachers are more likely not to understand the impact of race on their lives (Howard, 2014). Racism’s impacts on interactions in the classroom, the curricula, and school policies have often been ignored or not validated by educators.

Schools that have been successful at achieving academic results for African American students don’t avoid addressing race directly (Mitchell et al., 2017). Specifically, they focus on increasing the academic achievement of students of color. They teach about race, culture, class, and power and their impact on making communities vulnerable. They “foster strong relationships between educators and black students” (p. 24). Finally, classroom environments promote excellence and support students in taking responsibility for their own learning.

Well-known psychologist, author, and president emerita of Spelman College Beverly Daniel Tatum (2017) says that we need “meaningful, productive dialogue [about race] to raise consciousness and lead to effective action and social change” (p. 331). Race and racism are topics not easily discussed in most classrooms. Students of color almost always have experienced racism and discrimination, whereas few white students have direct experiences with racism and sometimes don’t believe it exists. Students of color generally are more comfortable talking about race and racism. White students may be more reluctant to join those discussions because they fear they will say the wrong thing or they have limited knowledge about the topics (Tatum, 2017). Discussion can evoke emotions of anger, guilt, shame, and despair. Most students think of the United States as a just and democratic society. Therefore, it may be difficult for them to confront the contradictions that support racism. Nevertheless, we need to confront our own racism and students’ racism to begin to overcome the racial gaps that exist in society.

HOW DOES FAMILY INCOME AFFECT A STUDENT'S SCHOOL EXPERIENCES?

Schools generally reflect the income and wealth of the families of their students. More-affluent families have more economic, social, and political resources and, as a result, better schools. Even within a school, students are sometimes classified and sorted by their economic conditions, giving the advantage to students from higher-income families. As the nation has moved away from efforts to desegregate schools, students are increasingly segregated by economic levels with a disproportionate number of Hispanic and African American students enrolled in high-poverty schools. In Ms. Maschari’s third-grade classroom, these economic differences can become quite clear in the students’ morning meeting when, for example, an affluent student reports that he and his father went to the Wimbledon tennis tournament in London over the weekend.

Economic Diversity of Students

The lack of family resources affects the quality of housing and the environment in which students live, the food they eat, the way they dress, and the educational resources to which they have access. These economic conditions can also have a great impact on the quality of education they receive. Their schools may not have up-to-date laboratories and technology. Their teachers may not have majored



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Eliminating racism in schools and society requires the involvement and action of citizens from diverse racial and ethnic groups.

in the subjects they are assigned to teach, and they may have a higher absentee rate than students in schools that serve more-affluent communities. With the opportunity gap with which these students enter schools, they need the best teachers and a great deal of support from school officials and the community to ensure they learn at the same levels as their more-affluent peers. However, they are more likely to attend schools with unlicensed teachers, teachers who are not prepared to teach the subjects they are assigned, and fewer resources for enrichment activities that support critical thinking and expand their experiences with the latest technology and arts to nurture their creativity.

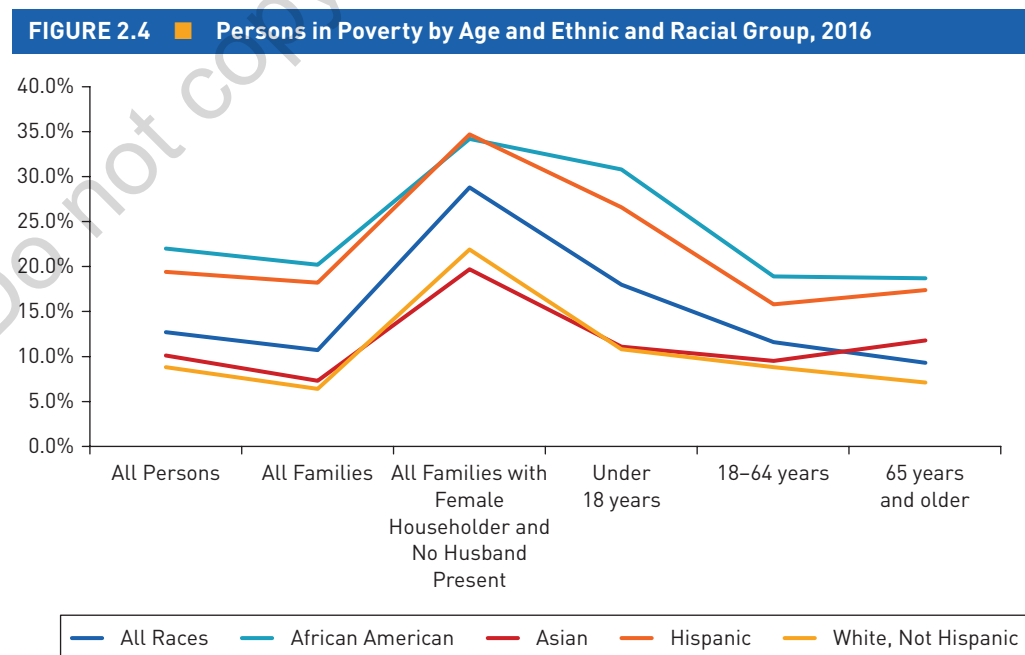
Students in Low-Income Families

Family members with low incomes may be temporarily unemployed or working at low wages because of a family illness or because they have lost a job as a result of economic conditions. A very small portion of the population is persistently poor as measured by living in poverty for eight or more years. However, there are many working poor who hold part-time jobs or full-time jobs that pay the minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour or \$15,080 annually, but who can't pull themselves out of poverty with such a low income. Work in minimum-wage jobs can be sporadic, and unemployment is unpredictably affected by the economy. Fringe benefits usually are not available, leaving many of these workers without health insurance or vacation time.

Poverty differs by age, race, and ethnicity, as shown in Figure 2.4. Although the number of whites in poverty is greater than any other group, the percentage of all whites in poverty is less than other groups, with a larger percentage of Native Americans being in poverty than any other group, followed by African Americans and Hispanics. Generally, the poverty rate for Asian Americans is near that of whites, although some Asian ethnic groups have high poverty levels.

Because families of color generally earn less than white families, their children are more likely to be impoverished. Thus, the rate of poverty is greater for children of color, with 35% of American Indian, 34% of African American, and 28% of Latino children living in poverty, as compared with 12% of white and Asian children (Koball & Jiang, 2018).

One in four public schools is a high-poverty school in which more than three in four of the students live in families that are in poverty. African American and Latino students are six times more likely than



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2016b). Historical poverty tables: People and families—1959–2016. *Current Population Survey: Annual social and economic supplement*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-people.html>.

white and Asian American students to attend high-poverty schools. As you might guess, a majority of students in city schools attend high-poverty schools, while a majority of suburban students attend low-poverty schools (McFarland et al., 2017).

Schools classify students as low income by the criteria that make them eligible to participate in the Free or Reduced-Price Lunch program. To be eligible for a Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, family income must fall below 130% of the federal poverty level, or \$32,630 for a family of four in the 2018–2019 school year (Federal Register, 2018). For a subsidized lunch, family income must fall between 130% and 185% of the federal poverty level, or between \$32,631 and \$46,435 for a family of four. Half of all public school students in the United States were eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch in 2015 (Snyder et al., 2018).

When students from low-income families are the majority of the students in a school, they are more likely to have low test scores, unsafe and unattractive schools, and less-than-stimulating schoolwork that has little meaning for their lives. From the beginning of their school career, they are too often not expected to go to college. They are not proportionately picked to lead groups, assigned to AP classes and gifted and talented programs, or encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities other than specific sports. You could conclude that these students are being prepared for jobs that more-affluent people are unwilling to take.

What does living in a low-income family mean for children and teenagers? For one, they are in poorer health than students in higher-income families. They have a greater incidence of vision and hearing problems, especially those caused by ear infections. They lack dental care, leading to toothaches. They have greater exposure to lead in water pipes, which affects their cognitive functioning and behavior. They are more likely to have asthma, especially when living in densely populated neighborhoods. They are less likely to have regular medical care and may lack health insurance. They suffer from food insecurity, and their nutrition is often poor. The lack of affordable housing results in their families moving from one school district to another. All of these factors affect school attendance and their ability to concentrate and attend carefully to their work when they are in school (Rothstein, 2013).

As a result, students in low-income families are also less likely than those in higher-income families to graduate from high school and pursue postsecondary education. Only 67% of the students from low-income families are enrolled in a two-year or four-year college immediately after high school, as compared to 83% of the students from high-income families (Snyder et al., 2018).

Students Who Are Homeless

Nearly 3.5 million children and young adults in the United States were homeless at some time during the previous year. One in ten young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 was homeless or **couch surfing** over a 12-month period. The rate of homelessness was less for adolescents ages 13–17, but was still 1 in 30 adolescents (Morton, Dworsky, & Samuels, 2017). The National Alliance to End Homelessness (2018) reports that in 2016, “half a million people in families stayed at a homeless shelter or transitional housing program—292,166 were children, and 144,991 were under the age of six” (para. 2). Homeless people are not always unemployed: Some work at such low wages they are unable to afford housing. Other homeless people have lost their jobs or have become estranged from their families. Homeless women may have left home to escape violent relationships. Homeless teenagers may have left home to avoid abuse and severe family dysfunctions.

Public schools must provide educational rights to homeless children and youth. The **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act** requires school districts to provide transportation for homeless students to stay in their schools of origin if their parents request it. Enrollment cannot be denied because homeless students do not have their school records, immunization records, proof of residency, or other documents. The school district's liaison for homeless students is expected to advocate for them, helping them access available services in the school system and community. The U.S. Department of Education reports that over a million homeless children and youth are enrolled in school (Paulson, 2014).

Middle-Class Families

Many Americans identify as middle class. It is a category that often includes everyone who works steadily and is not a member of the upper class. It ranges from service workers to well-paid professionals.



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Many students identify themselves as middle class, which generally means that one or both of their parents are working and their family is buying a home or has stable living arrangements.

This group includes white-collar workers who work in offices as secretaries, administrative assistants, and managers. It also includes many blue-collar workers who are involved in manual labor. Middle-class workers generally have greater job security and better fringe benefits than low-income workers. However, many families live from paycheck to paycheck, not earning enough to accumulate wealth. Both parents often work to make ends meet.

The number of African Americans and Latinos who are in the middle class has increased over the past five decades, but whites and Asian Americans continue to have disproportionately high representation in this group. The upper middle class usually has high educational expectations for its children, expecting them to attend college or receive training after they finish high school. Families are more directly engaged with schools than most less affluent families.

Families with higher incomes can choose to send their children to private schools or contribute to school funds to pay for art, music, and additional teachers. They not only have computers at home but also ensure that their children have access to the latest technology. When their children are not learning at the level expected, they hire tutors. Their children participate in enrichment activities such as academic summer camps when they are not in school. Income provides the advantages to ensure that the children of higher-income families are able to achieve at high academic levels and attend college.

Providing Equity in Schools

Most students who live in poverty have learned how to live in a world that is not imaginable to most middle-class students and teachers. However, their knowledge and skills do not always fit into the middle-class orientation of schools. Students should see ordinary working people as valued members of society. They should see low-income families as contributing members of the school community, rather than as second-class citizens who are not expected to be involved in their children's education.

TEACHERS' LOUNGE

STUDENTS DON'T CARE WHAT YOU KNOW UNTIL THEY KNOW THAT YOU CARE



Peter Eley

It has been my experience while teaching middle and high school that students from diverse groups do not care what you have to say until they know that you care. Teaching is getting students to do what you want them to do while having them think it is their idea, because everybody loves their own ideas. This takes me into my experience with two of my middle school students in Henderson, North Carolina. Teaching math to students when it is not their favorite subject can be a bit of a task. I had one student in particular who was having problems, and I tutored him after school. We began to develop a

student-mentor relationship that was of significant importance because the student lacked any male guidance. His family welcomed my relationship with the student. As a result, I was granted permission to take the student and his brother for an afternoon out on the town. We went to the movies and had dinner in a nice restaurant and spent time enjoying each other's company at my expense. At the time, this did not seem to be a big deal to me; however, it was a huge deal to the students. The students became ambassadors for me at the school and model students. The students realized that I really cared about them and that I wanted the best for them. The new challenge was that every student wanted to go to dinner and a movie with me now. You never know what you may be to a student and what need you fill. When you let them know you care, they will allow you to lead them where they need to go.

Peter M. Eley, PhD
Fayetteville State University
Fayetteville, North Carolina

One of the first steps to ensuring you serve students from low-income families is to reflect on your perceptions of these students and their families. Do you think they will attend college? Do you think their families value education? Do you think they are likely to use drugs or participate in other harmful behaviors? Do you believe they are lazy and want to take advantage of government benefits? Negative stereotypes can affect your ability to work effectively with students who live in low-income families and help them achieve at high levels.

Teachers are critical in ensuring that students from low-income families are provided all of the opportunities possible in the classroom. They are assisted in this process by schools that have created a culture for what Budge and Parrett (2018) call “disrupting poverty.” These schools are “places where people (adults and students) authentically [feel] they belong, [have] a purpose, [are] empowered and supported, and [know] they [are] safe” (p. 12). Budge and Parrett have found that the teachers in high-performing, high-poverty schools care about students and intentionally foster relationships with students. They also have empathy for students, understand the challenges they face, and believe they can meet high standards with appropriate support. Teachers provide opportunities to help students achieve at levels equal to their more advantaged peers. Teachers take responsibility for student learning. When students are not learning, teachers reteach lessons using different instructional strategies to make the content meaningful to students. Finally, teachers continue to confront their own biases and have the courage to try to overcome the barriers to learning that some students face.

Teacher Expectations

Sociologists have documented the classification and segregation of students based on their race and economic status beginning in their first days of school. Most teachers can quickly identify the **cultural capital** that students bring to school. At the same time, many teachers develop expectations for their students' behavior and academic achievement. Often unknowingly, they then develop instruction and interactions with their students that ensure they will behave as the teachers expect—a phenomenon called the **self-fulfilling prophecy**.

If a teacher's goal is to spend extra time with students who are struggling with academics with the intent of ensuring that they develop the academic skills necessary to move to a higher level, a grouping strategy might be successful. The problem is that too often students identified as having lower academic ability at the beginning of the year end the school year with little improvement in their skills, just as the teacher had projected early in the year. Unfortunately, their lack of academic growth during that year usually follows them throughout their school career.

When teachers make such judgments about students based primarily on their social class status, they are preventing them from having an equal opportunity for academic achievement (Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018). In these cases, a teacher's expectations for student achievement lead to the confirmation of the self-fulfilling prophecy. The practice is not congruent with the democratic belief that all students deserve equal education opportunities. One of the joys of teaching is to overcome the odds against students whose families are low income by guiding them to academic performance at the same level as their more-affluent peers. You should expect all of your students to meet rigorous academic requirements regardless of the income of their families. If you require less of low-income students, they may think that you don't think they are as capable as the other students.

Tracking

Tracking is an educational strategy that separates students for instruction, primarily based on their academic abilities. Students may be placed in a specific education track based on their native language or disability. Students may choose or be assigned to a college, vocational, or general track that determines the courses they take. However, these assignments are sometimes based on teachers' or counselors' judgments of a student's future potential. Some students are placed in gifted programs and others in programs that are clearly designed for low-ability students.

SES matters in tracking practices. Test scores, which may be used to track students, are more closely correlated to the education level, or social class, of students' parents than to their academic potential. The same pattern applies to placement of students in high-ability classes. Students in high-ability

courses and programs are academically challenged with enrichment activities that improve their intellectual and critical-thinking skills. Courses for students classified as low ability are often characterized as uninviting and boring. They include oral recitation and structured written work that are related to low-status knowledge. In addition, many teachers in these classrooms spend more time on administration and discipline than actually teaching the subject matter, keeping students at the lowest level of academic achievement. These students are most likely to be taught by the least qualified and least experienced teachers in a school. Students from low-income families are also disproportionately assigned to low-ability groups. They also are more likely to be classified as mentally challenged than are their classmates from more-affluent families.

Tracking has led to the **resegregation** of students based on race, class, and language into separate programs within the school (Tyson, 2013). White middle-class students are disproportionately represented in gifted and talented programs, while African Americans, Latinos, students from low-income families, and ELLs are the majority of the students in low-ability classrooms and special education programs. Schools could be accused of discriminatory practice in placing these students in low-ability courses and programs because they are limiting students' educational opportunities and potential for later occupational and economic success.

THINKING DIFFERENTLY

MIX IT UP!



ERIC SEALS/KRT/News.com

How can you encourage students to interact with students from cultures, religions, and socioeconomic levels that are different from their own? This goal is a longtime project, but you can start the process in your own classroom as you promote and support intergroup activities. As you assign students to groups, you can ensure that students are interacting with both boys and girls, with students from different racial, religious, and socioeconomic groups, and with students who have different native languages.

Over a decade ago, the Southern Poverty Law Center and its Teaching Tolerance project initiated an activity at the school level to improve intergroup relations. Mix It Up at Lunch Day was designed to encourage students "to identify, question, and cross social boundaries." This activity has two goals for students: (1) meet someone new and (2) engage in positive conversations. It does take planning to make the activity work, but the Teaching Tolerance team recommends the following six steps to make it happen:

1. Create a Planning Team that includes enthusiastic students and adults in the school community, including parents and custodians.
2. Determine a Lunchtime Activity that will ensure that students meet someone new and have a positive conversation.
3. Make It Festive by having a theme, decorating the tables, and having fun activities.
4. Publicize the Event using email, calendars, newsletters, morning announcements, posters, fliers, and social media so that everyone in the community knows the details.
5. Capture the Day in photographs and with interviews that can be shared. Alert the local TV station or newspaper.
6. Evaluate, Debrief, and Follow-up by collecting data from students through a show of hands in an elementary classroom or an electronic survey in middle and secondary classes after the event. Review these data in a post-event planning meeting to share what worked and what you would do differently next year. Plan two follow-up activities to sustain good intergroup relations.

For more information on Mix It Up at Lunch Day and other resources related to issues addressed in this chapter, Google Teaching Tolerance at Southern Poverty Law Center.

WHAT IF STUDENTS' NATIVE LANGUAGES ARE NOT ENGLISH?

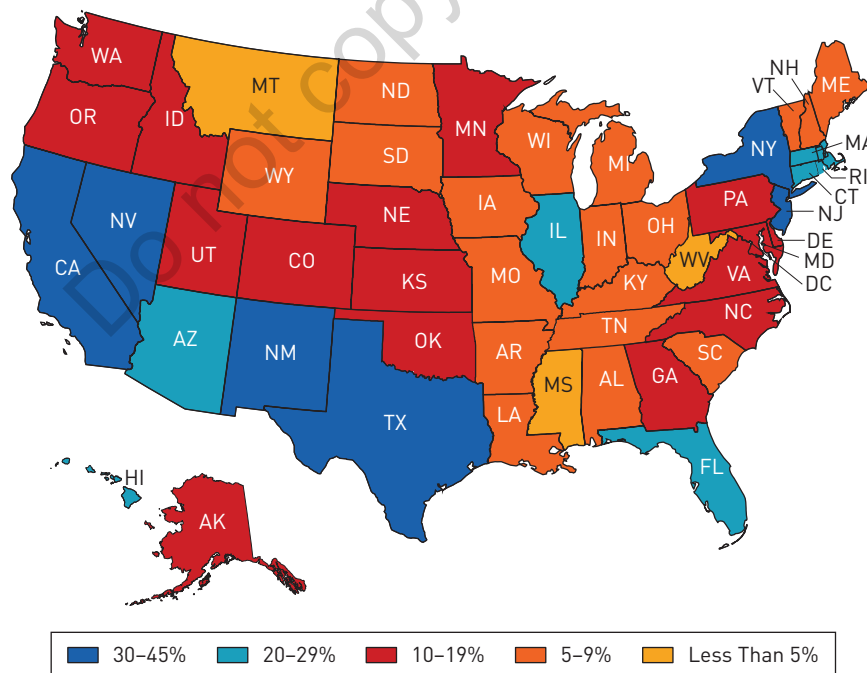
Language diversity is valued in most countries of the world. The populations of many European, Middle Eastern, African, and Asian countries are bilingual or multilingual. In today's global world, in which many companies operate internationally, employees who know more than one language and culture can be an asset to the company, especially in its interactions with other nations in the areas of commerce, defense, education, science, and technology. Bilingualism is also an asset for jobs such as hotel clerks, airline attendants, social workers, nurses, teachers, and police officers, who may be interacting with individuals who speak little or no English.

Language Diversity of Students

More than 63 million residents of the United States speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016a). Many are recent immigrants whose children are learning English in school. Nearly four in five U.S. residents speak only English. Of the one in five people who speak a language other than English at home, more than half of them report that they speak English "very well" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016a).

Three in four of the ELLs receiving ELL services in public schools speak Spanish (Snyder et al., 2018). Over the past decade, the percentage of Hispanic students who speak Spanish at home has been declining, due in large part to the decline in immigration and the growth in the number of U.S.-born Hispanics. Ninety-seven percent of new immigrant families speak Spanish to their children, but that drops to 71% in second-generation families with one immigrant parent, and to less than half of third-generation families (M. Lopez, Krogstad, & Flores, 2018). Other languages spoken most often at home by ELLs are Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, French, Korean, German, and Arabic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016c). Between 30% and 45% of the population in California, Texas, New Mexico, New York, New Jersey, and Nevada speak a language other than English at home, as shown in Figure 2.5. Other than Florida, most southern states have a limited number of non-English speakers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016a).

FIGURE 2.5 ■ Percentage of Population Speaking a Language Other Than English at Home, 2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2016a). Language spoken at home. 2012–2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_5YR_S1601&prodType=table.

Teaching English Language Learners (ELLs)

Immigrants come to the United States with different levels of education. Almost as many of the foreign-born population hold bachelor's degrees as the native population. At the same time, 3 in 10 foreign-born adults do not have a high school diploma—three times as many as the native-born population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016d). Immigrants come from different socioeconomic levels, some entering the country with limited economic resources and some entering with enough resources to invest or begin a business. Their education credentials and economic status in their home countries may give them the social and cultural capital that makes it easier for them to fit into the dominant society (Kubota & Lin, 2009).

UNDERSTANDING AND USING DATA

ELL PERFORMANCE ON A STANDARDIZED TEST

Earlier in the chapter, you learned that students from some racial and ethnic groups are more likely to score at high levels than students from other groups on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests that are given to a

sample of K–12 students every three years. Let's now analyze the most recent NAEP data on performance on mathematics tests by ELL status and family income.

Grade	English Language Learner					Not English Language Learner				
	%	below Basic	at Basic	at Proficient	at Advanced	%	below Basic	at Basic	at Proficient	at Advanced
4th	11	47	39	13	2	89	17	39	34	9
8th	6	71	23	5	1	94	27	36	26	11
12th	4	79	15	5	#	96	37	38	22	3

Rounds to zero

Grade	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch					Not Eligible for FRPL				
	%	below Basic	at Basic	at Proficient	at Advanced	%	below Basic	at Basic	at Proficient	at Advanced
4th	51	31	44	22	3	43	9	34	43	14
8th	46	45	37	15	3	47	18	35	32	16
12th	40	54	35	10	1	52	28	40	28	4

% does not add up to 100 because information was not available for all students

- Overall, how are students performing at the three grade levels (e.g., are they improving as they progress through school)?
- What is the gap between the performance of ELLs and non-ELLs? What is it between students eligible for FRPL and those who are not eligible?
- What is the relationship of proficiency levels for ELLs and students eligible for FRPL? Based on the information in this chapter, why are ELLs performing at such a low level on this mathematics test?
- If these were the proficiency levels for students at your school, what do the data suggest for you as a teacher at the level that you plan to teach even if you are not planning to teach math?

The children in immigrant families also have different educational experiences. Some have never been in school and know no English. Metropolitan areas with large numbers of immigrant students may have established special schools or newcomer programs for those students to learn English and be introduced to the U.S. culture. Other children have strong educational backgrounds and are fluent in English. Some families work hard to retain the native language from one generation to another, using their native language at home or sending their children to classes to learn their native language and culture. They are helped in this process when they live in communities that value bilingualism.

Your major challenge in working with ELLs will be to ensure they are learning the content that you are teaching. An advantage to being able to use the native languages of students in the classroom is that students can use resources in their native languages, and you can check their understanding in their native language if you, a teaching assistant, or a volunteer speak that language. The primary reason that ELLs do not perform as well as some of their peers on standardized tests is that they do not possess the English proficiency to understand the content that is being taught in the classroom. Although students can become orally proficient in three to five years, it generally takes four to seven years to develop the academic English used for many assessments (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000). In addition to the opportunity gap of limited academic English proficiency, many of these students are members of families with low incomes and attend high-poverty schools that further limit their access to the enriched educational resources that would provide the necessary support to develop their knowledge and skills to the same level as their more-affluent native-English-speaking peers (Gándara, 2013).

Bilingual Education

Programs for ELLs vary across school districts, with differences often based on the desires of the immigrant families or politics of the area. Bilingual education, which uses students' native languages and English in instruction, is the most controversial because it values the native language and supports its use in school. Bilingual programs require teachers or teachers' aides who speak the native language to ensure students are understanding concepts and developing academic skills while they learn English. The goal of two-way immersion, two-way bilingual, or dual-language programs is students' development of strong skills and proficiency in both the home language and English (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2017).

Other programs that focus on students developing literacy in two languages include transitional or early-exit bilingual education programs. Instruction in these programs is in the home language while English is introduced to help ensure that students are learning academic content. Although these students are gradually moved into English-only classrooms, they continue to receive support for their native language development (NCELA, 2017).

The Office of English Language Acquisition at the U.S. Department of Education also offers grants for the study of indigenous languages. The program supports the preservation and revitalization of the native languages of American Indians, Native Hawaiians, and Native Pacific Islanders while encouraging a focus on developing English proficiency to meet state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Immersion classrooms use both the home language and English for instruction with the goal of students becoming bilingual. Students in developmental or maintenance bilingual programs share the same native language. In two-way immersion and two-way bilingual programs, English-speaking students are learning a second language while ELLs are learning English. Some school districts offer other immersion programs in elementary schools for English speakers to learn and use a second language such as Chinese, French, or Spanish.



Many classrooms across the country include students who are foreign born or who have one or more foreign-born parents.

Stock/FatCamera

English as a Second Language (ESL)

English as a Second Language (ESL) is the most common program used in schools. Students' native languages are not used for instruction in ESL; instruction is provided only in English. Sheltered English instruction or content-based ESL programs usually include students from multiple linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the same class. Visual aids and the home language are used to help students learn English. Students in Structured English Immersion (SEI) programs are usually all ELLs who are learning English. Other programs for developing English fluency include the pullout ESL or English Language Development (ELD) programs. Students are pulled out of the classroom for English instruction that focuses on grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills. In the push-in ESL program, ELLs are in a regular English-only classroom where an ESL teacher or teacher's aide translates if needed and uses ESL strategies to help students learn the content (NCELA, 2017). Newcomer programs for immigrant students who know limited English use ESL to help students learn English, the content, and the common culture (Short & Boyson, 2012).

As the population of the United States becomes more diverse, with larger numbers of people speaking languages other than English, teachers will need to know how to teach ESL. Most universities offer one or more courses on ESL or SEI that could expand your skills and make you more attractive to school districts with growing ELL populations. Speaking a second language that is common in the area in which you plan to teach can also provide you with an advantage when seeking a teaching position.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF GENDER AND EDUCATION?

Men and women often segregate themselves at social gatherings and participate in gender-specific leisure activities. Boys and girls generally choose different games to play. Sometimes students are segregated by sex in schools or school activities, especially sports. We often hold stereotypical perceptions of ourselves and the other sex. We disproportionately enter different occupations and have access to different financial opportunities. These differences are reflected in what is studied in school, how students interact with each other, and how teachers interact with students. In this section, we will explore how education is affected by gender and how teachers can ensure they provide an equitable education for their female and male students.

Differences Between Females and Males

Sex is the term used to identify ourselves as male or female based on biological differences, while *gender* refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, and psychological traits typically associated with our sex or our gender identity. Gender today is no longer viewed as simply the male or female binary. It is more of a spectrum based on our sex at birth, which could be both male and female; our personal gender identity; and our gender expression.

Physical differences between males and females can usually be determined by appearance alone. Before age 8, boys and girls have similar hormonal levels and similar physical development. During puberty, hormonal levels of estrogen and testosterone change; these hormones control the physical development of the two sexes. However, physical differences between the sexes, such as upper body strength, can be altered with good nutrition, physical activity, practice, and different behavioral expectations (Eliot, 2012).

Intelligence tests show no differences in the general intelligence between males and females, but studies



David Grossman/Alamy Stock Photo

Most observers of children, including parents and teachers, see differences in the behavior of boys and girls in classrooms, on the playground, and at home.

have found some gender differences in mathematical, verbal, and spatial skills. Psychologist Michael Gurian, physician Leonard Sax, and other popular writers have been reporting for many years that differences between boys and girls are due to innate biological differences. They argue that females favor the left hemisphere of the brain associated with intuitiveness and creativeness, while males tend to favor the right, having greater right-hemisphere specialization that supports logical and analytical reasoning and skills. However, neuroscientists have not found these left-brain/right-brain differences, and they don't connect the subtle differences that do exist to the differences between males and females (Eliot, 2012; Fine, 2011; Jordan-Young, 2011; Kosslyn & Miller, 2013). Nevertheless, proponents of brain-based differences based on sex have had an influence in schools. They have argued that teachers who know these hemispheric differences have a better understanding of why boys and girls behave the way they do in classrooms (Eliot, 2012; Fine, 2011). They report that teachers design lessons and organize their classrooms based on the way that girls learn, which they argue leaves boys academically behind their female peers.

Other researchers attribute most male and female differences to the environment and **socialization** patterns learned from their parents, relatives, teachers, and peers (Eliot, 2012; Fine, 2011). Schools historically reinforce society's view of gender. Girls are expected to display feminine traits and boys masculine traits. In school, girls are expected to be quieter and better behaved than boys. Girls are more likely than boys to be encouraged to break out of their stereotypical modes. Many parents today tell their daughters that they can be whatever they want. They play on sports teams, are the leaders in many school activities, and attend college at higher rates than boys. Women and girls may struggle to develop a balance between their femininity and their participation in a masculine world.

Young men are generally encouraged to be independent, assertive, leaders, self-reliant, and emotionally stable. They are pushed toward these characteristics, in part, to prevent them from being labeled *gay* or a *sissy*, which could lead to harassment by others. As a result, they sometimes go overboard in proving their masculinity (Kimmel, 2009). The problem is that not all males fit the masculine stereotype: Some are empathic and caring, which are commonly recognized as feminine characteristics. Some critics of feminism declare that boys have been harmed by all of the attention on the education of girls and women, which they think has led to the lower participation of young men in college. It is true that some young men are not adjusting well, as shown in the statistics on their high rates of suicide, binge drinking, and steroid use; they are also more likely to be victims of homicide and car crashes. Psychologists do not always agree on the reasons why a number of boys and young men seem to be at risk today. Some argue that boys are programmed for a culturally determined masculine identity with little room for divergence.

Ms. Maschari indicated that she has observed over her career that girls and boys begin to segregate in the second grade: "By the third grade, they are definitely segregating themselves by sex in the classroom, in the lunchroom, and at recess. I mix them up for group work. When we line up for different activities, I line them up by birthdays and other factors, but never by sex or gender."

Delivering an Equitable Education for Girls and Boys

Teachers are expected to treat all students equally and to encourage academic excellence in all of their students. Whether a student exhibits masculine or feminine characteristics or both, a teacher has the responsibility to exhibit unconditional positive regard for him or her, to recognize the student's special talents and needs, and to provide a learning environment that fosters acceptance and understanding.

Federal legislation governing elementary and secondary education includes Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which makes it illegal to treat students differently or separately on the basis of gender. It requires that all programs, activities, and opportunities offered by a school district be available equally to both males and females. You should be concerned about the academic performance of both boys and girls. You should be asking why so few girls are majoring in computer science and engineering in college, and you should be developing strategies for increasing their participation in those fields. The fact that boys are not performing as well on reading tests suggests that new strategies for involving them in reading and language arts are needed to ensure they are reading at grade level or above. You should wonder why boys are not graduating from high school and not enrolling or finishing college at the same

CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS

MYTH: TEACHERS INTERACT WITH ALL STUDENTS IN THE SAME WAY REGARDLESS OF RACE AND GENDER.

The Research

Drawing on 20 years of fieldwork in 11 elementary classrooms in the Midwest and South, a researcher traced the origins of school experiences for students of different races and genders. She also explored the implications of how teachers and students interacted based on their race, gender, and status.

White girls had the most positive interactions with teachers. They received frequent praise from teachers for their good behavior and academic work. In addition, teachers chatted with them about personal issues. For the most part, white girls understood the classroom routine and rules, followed the rules, and focused on the teachers.

Black males, on the other hand, had limited interactions with teachers, and those interactions were almost always negative and initiated by the teacher, not by the boys and young men. Teachers tended to monitor or criticize their behavior or

academic work. Black boys were much more likely to interact with their peers than with their teachers. White boys and black girls had a more balanced ratio of interactions with teachers and peers. Their relationships with teachers were cordial, but not as close as those of white girls.

The researcher concluded that schools do more to enhance than to diminish gender and race differences among African American girls, white girls, African American boys, and white boys. Although teachers do not appear to consciously intend to support white girls more than other students, such practices help ensure inequality in a classroom.

Source: Adapted from Grant, L. (2004). Everyday schooling and the elaboration of race-gender stratification. In J. H. Ballantine & J. Z. Spade (Eds.), *Schools and society: A sociological approach to education* (2nd ed., pp. 296–307). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.

rates as girls. Increasing the graduation rates of young men would be another challenge in which you could become involved when you begin teaching. Engaging in activities that keep young men in school and open academic fields such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (called STEM) to more girls and students of color is another way to bring joy to your teaching.

HOW IS SEXUAL ORIENTATION ADDRESSED IN SCHOOLS?

Discussions about sexual orientation are no longer hidden in society. In fact, nearly two in three Americans now support same-sex marriages (Masci, Brown, & Kiley, 2017). The support for equal rights of gays and lesbians has grown as cities, states, and school districts have expanded their policies on equality to include sexual orientation. Even with these changes, some school districts continue to struggle with how to handle diverse sexual orientations in the curricula and in student clubs.

However, **heterosexism** continues to exist when people believe that opposite-sex sexuality is the only acceptable sexual orientation, and all others are abnormal and morally wrong. This behavior can lead to discriminatory practices and harassment against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning (**LGBTQ**) individuals who continue to face discrimination in housing, employment, and social institutions in some communities. Heterosexism can result in violence against anyone who is identified by his or her assailer as LGBTQ, which is still tolerated in some areas of the country and in some schools. Society's prejudices and discriminatory practices result in many gays and lesbians hiding their sexual orientation and establishing their own social clubs, networks, and communication systems to support one another.

Sexual Identity

What is sexual orientation? The American Psychological Association (2018) defines it as an “enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes,” and further indicates that different sexual orientations are normal forms of human bonding. The sexual orientation of the majority of the population is heterosexual or straight, which has become the norm against which

everyone else is measured. In a famous study of the sexual behavior of thousands of white adults in the 1940s and 1950s, Alfred Kinsey reported that 10% of the males and 2% to 6% of the females were more or less exclusively homosexual (Kinsey Institute, 2017). Based on a 2016 Gallup Poll, it is estimated that nearly 10 million Americans, or 4.6% of the U.S. population, identify as LGBTQ, with young people born between 1980 and 1998 twice as likely as people at other ages to indicate they are LGBTQ (Reynolds, 2017).

The term *gay* is sometimes used more generically to refer not only to gay men, but also to lesbians and bisexuals. Transgender persons identify their gender as different from the sex they were assigned at birth. The *Q* in LGBTQ refers to *queer*—a term used to negatively label gays and lesbians in the past, but that is now used as a political term that rejects **assimilation** into a heterosexual world. The *Q* can also mean *questioning*, to include individuals who are not sure of their sexual orientation. Terms related to sexual orientation are always evolving. In addition to the ones in LGBTQ, others used in 2018 included *transsexual*, *two-spirit*, *intersex*, *asexual*, *ally*, *pansexual*, *agender*, *gender*, *bigender*, *gender variant*, and *pangender* (OK2BME, 2018). As you work with students and adults, remember that it is important that they identify their own gender identity and sexual orientation and are not labeled by others. As a teacher or a friend, you should respect their self-identities.

Many LGBTQ adults report feeling different from their siblings or peers from early in life. By the time they reach puberty, most students begin to feel an attraction to the same, opposite, or both sexes. Most students struggle with their identity during middle and high school. However, LGBTQ students usually have a more difficult time, especially with their sexual identity. They may question their sexual feelings but not be sure if they are LGBTQ. If they show signs of being LGBTQ, even if they are not, they may be subjecting themselves to harassment or bullying by their classmates. During this period, they may feel isolated and might not know to whom they can turn for information and support, especially when their family will not accept their sexual orientation. LGBTQ students comprise a disproportionate percentage of homeless students on the nation's streets, in part, because they are not accepted by their families.

Supporting LGBTQ Students

“That’s so gay” is a common phrase in the hallways of schools. *Gay* is used as a derogatory term against heterosexual students as well as a reference to students perceived to be LGBTQ. This name-calling begins in elementary schools and increases as students move through school, but it appears to be most prevalent in middle schools. In her experiences in four different schools, Ms. Maschari found that students begin to call others “gay” with a negative connotation around the fourth grade. The teachers at her school use these opportunities to confront these unacceptable behaviors at morning meetings with students. Ms. Maschari has also found that her current school is very accepting of LGBTQ parents, who are warmly welcomed and who actively participate in school activities.

Teachers and other educators can play a very important role in eliminating such harassment and bullying in schools as well as educating students to respect all students. Over half of LGBTQ students fear for their safety in schools, with over four in five of them being verbally harassed at school (Kosciw, Greytak, Giga, Villenas, & Danischewski, 2016). If gays and lesbians openly acknowledge their sexual orientation or appear to be LGBTQ, they are likely to be harassed and face reprisals from peers and, sometimes, from school officials. A school and school personnel do not always provide the same kind of support to LGBTQ students as they do to other students.

LGBTQ students feel more comfortable and safer in schools when faculty and staff are supportive, LGBTQ



LGBTQ students report that schools feel much safer when they know there are safe zones and they can trust specific educators. Safe zones stickers and posters in the school signal a supportive school climate.

Education & Exploration 3/Alamy Stock Photo



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The families of students practice many different religions. Educators should be sure they do not discriminate against students whose families practice a religion different from their own.

people are portrayed in the curricula, gay–straight alliances or similar clubs exist, and a comprehensive policy on harassment is enforced (Kosciw et al., 2016). You may know little about LGBTQ history and experiences. You may have had few or no contacts with LGBTQ people who are out, or open about their sexual orientation. Without a better understanding of sexual orientation, you may find it difficult to work effectively with LGBTQ students or the children of gay and lesbian parents. However, you always have the responsibility to provide a safe environment for students, which includes intervening when students are harassing their peers because of their sexual orientation, gender identification, or sex.

HOW DOES RELIGION IMPACT THE CLASSROOM?

Religion has a great influence on the values and lifestyles of families and plays an important role in the socialization

of children and young people. Religious doctrines and practices guide how and when one worships, but they also guide beliefs about many aspects of daily life, including the roles of men and women, birth control, child rearing, friendships, and political attitudes. Some religions in the United States also promote patriotism, often displaying the American flag in their places of worship. A religious doctrine can also dictate a family's expectations for teachers and schools. When the religious perspectives and school expectations differ, numerous challenges arise for educators.

Religious Diversity

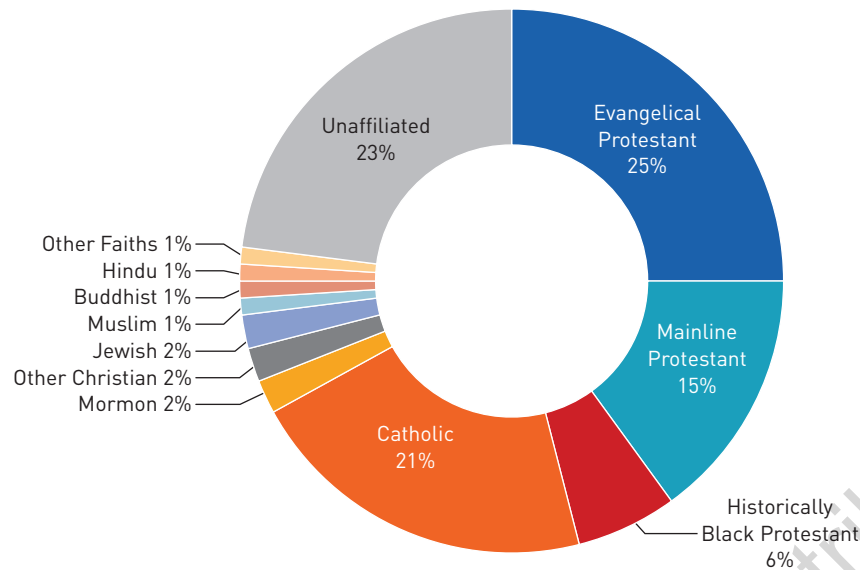
The United States has strong Judeo-Christian roots. Some Christians believe that God led the European founders to establish this country as a Christian nation. An increase of Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants after the 1960s made the United States more religiously diverse. Mosques and temples have been built in communities that were formerly all Christian. Most urban and suburban areas are home to numerous religious groups and beliefs. Metropolitan areas may have a number of megachurches with thousands of members and their own schools.

Seven in ten Americans identify themselves as Christian, with Protestants currently representing 48% of the population. Catholicism grew greatly after Southern and Eastern Europeans immigrated to the United States in the twentieth century, and now makes up one-fifth of the population (Pew Research Center, 2018). Within all religious groups are liberal, moderate, and conservative or fundamentalist sects. The fundamentalist groups believe in the literal translation of their holy documents (e.g., the Bible, Qur'an, and Torah). Liberal religions, on the other hand, accept the validity of diverse perspectives that have evolved from different historical experiences. One in four people describes himself or herself as **born again** or **evangelical** (Pew Research Center, 2018) and is often identified as a member of the religious right. The religious affiliations of the U.S. population are shown in Figure 2.6.

Although Jews, Protestants, and Catholics once were expected to marry only members of their own faith, marriage across those three groups is fairly common today. Time will tell whether the borders against intermarriage with members of non-Western religious groups will also be permeable.

Addressing Religion in Public Schools

If you teach in an urban or metropolitan area, you can expect to have students from a number of different religious groups. Even smaller midwestern and western towns have had an influx of Asian,

FIGURE 2.6 ■ Religious Preference in the United States

Source: Adapted from Pew Research Center. (2018). Religious landscape study. Retrieved from

African, or Middle Eastern immigrants who are bringing their cultural versions of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism to communities that previously had only a few different Christian denominations.

Accommodations will be needed in schools to respect the religious diversity of the community. Christian holidays are already acknowledged through school holidays and the singing of Christian songs at some school convocations. Jewish students will not attend school during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Islamic students will fast during the month of Ramadan and are expected to have daily prayers. Policies that prevent the wearing of a hijab or yarmulke discriminate against Muslim women and Jewish men. School officials could involve the parents of their religious communities to provide Professional Development about their religious traditions and cultures as well as advice for guaranteeing that the **civil rights** of their children are not violated.

Religion is very important to some families and of little or no importance to others. In some communities, religion plays a major role in the lives of families, requiring attendance not only on a specific day but also at services and activities throughout the week. Religious stories reinforce the values of the religion in Sunday school, Bible classes, and other organized religious education programs. Parents in these communities may expect schools to reflect those same values, sometimes enrolling their children in private Catholic, Jewish, Islamic, or Christian schools that reinforce their values and teach their religious doctrine. They may decide to homeschool their children to ensure they are not exposed to values of which they disapprove.

Students whose religious beliefs differ from the majority in the community may be ostracized in school and social settings. Jews, atheists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, Muslims, and Sikhs are among the groups whose members are sometimes shunned and suffer discrimination in the United States. Educators must be careful that their own religious beliefs do not interfere with their ability to provide equal educational opportunities to students whose families are members of other religious groups.

CONNECTING TO THE CLASSROOM

This chapter has introduced you to the students who will be in your classrooms of the future. We have examined the diversity of their group memberships based on ethnicity, race, Socioeconomic Status (SES), native language, gender, sexual orientation, and religion. Below are some key principles for applying the information in this chapter to the classroom.

1. Curricula and instructional strategies should be relevant to the lives of students, drawing on their ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds and experiences to help them learn.
2. Teachers should be aware of biases they have about students based on their SES and ensure they have high academic expectations for all of their students.
3. Schools must provide language programs for English Language Learners to assist them in learning English and having full access to the curriculum.
4. Girls and boys can be taught to develop the skills and behaviors that are usually attributed to the other sex.
5. Teachers should be supportive of LGBTQ students and intervene when they are being harassed to create a safe climate for LGBTQ and other students.
6. Teachers should be aware of the religious groups to which their students belong and make appropriate accommodations in their classrooms.

SUMMARY

This chapter has explored the diversity of students who will be in your future classroom. Six major topics were addressed:

- Students come to your classroom with racial and ethnic heritages that should be recognized, respected, and integrated into the curricula.
- Students' families experience very different levels of economic stability that can affect their capacity to access resources that are needed for their children to be successful within a specific school context.
- In some communities in the United States, numerous languages other than English are spoken across a school district. Schools have the responsibility to ensure that ELLs have access to the content to be able to learn the content at the same level as their native-English-speaking peers.
- Attitudes about gender roles and responsibilities run deep in society, and teachers must constantly be careful not to reinforce stereotypes that might inhibit a student's chance of reaching his or her highest potential.
- Students whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual are often victims of bullying and do not always feel safe or supported in the school environment.
- Christianity has historically been valued in school, but today's student population is becoming increasingly religiously diverse, which can impact the way some topics such as sexuality are addressed and requires a climate that is supportive of students of all faiths.

KEY TERMS

achievement gap 42
 assimilation 57
 born again 58
 civil rights 59
 color blind 42
 couch surfing 47
 cultural capital 49
 culturally responsive teaching 44
 culture 38
 disability 38
 ethnicity 38

evangelical 58
 gender 38
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 Socioeconomic Status (SES) 38
 stereotypes 42
 tracking 43

CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The curricula of many schools privilege European American culture and history. How will you ensure that the cultures and histories of diverse students will be incorporated into the curricula? Why should all students know about the cultures and histories of other ethnic and racial groups as well as their own?
2. Half of K–12 students are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, indicating that their families have low incomes. What impact does poverty have on the education of students? What accommodations will you make so that the curriculum is more relevant and meaningful for students from low-income families?
3. More than one in five students has one or more foreign-born parents, many of whom speak a language other than English at home. Schools generally use bilingual education or ESL to help students learn English. Which program do you think more effectively serves the need of students and families in your community, and why?
4. Females today are attending college at higher rates than males. What are the reasons for this unequal participation in higher education? What could you do in your classroom to increase the participation of male students?
5. Many LGBTQ students feel very isolated in schools because teachers, students, and counselors do not understand them and provide little or no support for them. What role are you willing to take on to support the psychological and emotional development of LGBTQ students?
6. Religion can influence what families think should be taught in schools. In some religious communities, evolution and sexuality are taboo topics. How will you know how important a role religious groups have in the community in which you are teaching?

SELF-ASSESSMENT

What Is Your Current Level of Understanding Today's Students?

One of the indicators of understanding is to examine how complex your thinking is when asked questions that require you to use the concepts and facts introduced in this chapter.

Answer the following questions as fully as you can. Then use the Assessing Your Learning rubric to self-assess the degree to which you understand and can use the ideas presented in this chapter.

1. How can you bring the cultures of your students into the classroom?
2. What impact does the Socioeconomic Status of students' families have on teachers' expectations for the academic performance of students?
3. What is the teacher's responsibility for teaching students who are not authorized to be in the country?
4. How can boys and girls be damaged with education that focuses on the stereotypical roles of females and males?
5. What can teachers do to help LGBTQ students feel safe in school?
6. What are some ways in which the religious diversity of a community can be integrated into your classroom?

Assessing Your Learning Rubric

	Parts & Pieces	Unidimensional	Organized	Integrated	Extensions
Indicators	Elements/concepts are talked about as isolated and independent entities. Some important names are provided in isolation.	One or a few concepts are addressed, while others are underdeveloped, or not mentioned.	Deliberate and structured consideration of all key concepts/elements.	All key concepts/elements are included in a view that addresses interconnections.	Integration of all elements and dimensions, with extrapolation to new situations.
Relationships between the diversity of students and teaching and learning	Identifies the types of student diversity that exist without being able to explain the relationships to teaching and learning.	Describes a few of the impacts that diversity has on teaching and learning.	Provides examples of how student diversity can influence teaching and learning across cultural groups.	Analyzes the role of the teacher in using student diversity effectively to help students learn.	Explains how teachers can adjust their teaching to use student diversity positively to improve learning across cultural groups and develops a plan for increasing his/her knowledge about cultural groups with which he/she has limited knowledge.

FIELD GUIDE

FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT . . .

Today's Students

To further increase your understanding about today's students, do one or more of the following activities.

Ask a Teacher or Principal	Ask one or more of the teachers in the schools you are observing how they differentiate their instruction to serve students from different ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, and language groups. What are their greatest concerns about providing equity across groups? What do they suggest that you do to prepare to work in a school with diverse student populations?
Make Your Own Observations	When visiting a school with English Language Learners, observe two different classrooms. What are the native languages of the students in the two classrooms? What is the level of the ELLs' English proficiency? What ELL program is being used for instruction in the two classrooms that you observed? Ask the teachers why they are using a specific approach.
Reflect Through Journaling	This chapter indicates that some students are being better served by some schools than by others, as measured by achievement on the standardized tests required by Every Student Succeeds Act. In your journal, write why you think students from low-income families are not performing as well on these tests as students from more-affluent families. What difference do you think teachers can make in increasing the achievement of students from low-income families on standardized tests?
Build Your Portfolio	The degree of diversity at a school differs greatly across the country. Choose a school in the community in which your university is located or in which you grew up and describe the cultural makeup of the community and student population in the school, including individuals' racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, and language backgrounds. Schools or school districts should have policies on the provision of safety for students. Compare the policies in two school districts and determine what students are included in the policies. Identify how the policies incorporate LGBTQ students.
Read a Book	For ideas from educators on how to make students and their families feel respected and valued, read the special issue of <i>Rethinking Schools</i> (Fall 2017) on "Making Black Lives Matter in Our Schools." A former student and teacher in an urban school, award-winning educator Christopher Endin calls for a new approach to teaching in urban schools in his book, <i>For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood . . . and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education</i> (Beacon Press, 2016). <i>Tales of Two Americas: Stories of Inequality in a Divided Nation</i> by John Freeman (Penguin Books, 2017) includes powerful stories, essays, and poems that demonstrate how boundaries break down when the authors share their stories of the inequalities that have affected their or others' lives. The focus on LGBTQ students in this chapter was on safety, but that is only the beginning of the ways that schools should acknowledge and support these students. In the book, <i>Safe Is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students</i> (Harvard Education Press, 2016), Michael Sadowski highlights how educators can also support the positive development and academic success of LGBTQ students through LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum, a whole-school climate, and community outreach programs.
Search the Web	Rethinking Schools: To help you think about the issues raised in this chapter and read how teachers are addressing them in their classrooms, visit the website of Rethinking Schools (www.rethinkingschools.org). Teaching Tolerance: To learn more about incorporating diversity into the curricula and developing a classroom climate that supports students from diverse groups, visit www.splcenter.org/teaching-tolerance .

STUDENT STUDY SITE



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