Tests for Hidden Bias

All of us have preferences or biases. Sometimes people say, “I may be biased, but I think______ is better than ______.” Can you remember a time when you made such a statement? It may have been in reference to a particular type of food, car, or clothing. It is natural and consistent with human behavior to have such preferences or biases. Research also demonstrates that we have hidden biases. They are not conscious or intentional but they can influence our beliefs, attitudes, expectations, and behaviors.

This activity provides a unique opportunity to self-examine one’s own hidden biases. Though this may be an uncomfortable, the research on teacher expectations clearly demonstrates that as educators we must be ever diligent in surfacing and challenging hidden biases that may have a negative influence on our classroom interactions with students. This is a completely confidential activity. You will not be asked to share the results. The intent is to enhance self-awareness and self-knowledge that can lead to more equitable classrooms and schools for students.

To begin, access http://tolerance.org/hidden_bias/index.html. This page is part of the Teaching Tolerance website which is a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. The site offers a wealth of resources for teachers and you may want to explore it more fully at another time. Access the survey at the following URL and click on the link that says "I Wish to Proceed."
https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/measureyourattitudes.html

There are 14 separate tests available, but for our purposes, choose one of the following that relates to the achievement gap:

- Test the Gender IAT
- Test the Race IAT
- Test the Disability IAT
- Test the Skin-tone IAT

Please read each page carefully and follow the directions fully on each subsequent page. You will be asked to complete a few self-reflection questions and to provide some background information vital to researchers before you begin the actual test for hidden bias. Keep in mind that the tests are completely confidential. At the end of the test, click on the read Tolerance.org’s tutorial to learn more about bias, stereotypes, and prejudice in our society.

After completing the entire process, which will take 20-30 minutes, please take some private reflection time to ponder the following questions:

- How did you feel taking the test?
- What made taking the test a comfortable or uncomfortable experience for you?
- Did the test results surprise you? Why or why not?
- What insights did you gain from taking the test?
- What are the implications of the test for you as an educator?