



Understanding Diversity: Teaching sustainable diversity through the use of an E-portfolio

What is the issue?

Understanding unconscious biases is critically important to the delivery of inclusive services because no matter how many laws are enacted or how much anti-discrimination training received, decisions made will align with a person's unconsciously generated biases

What did the researcher do?

The researcher administered Pohan and Aguilar's Personal Beliefs and Professional Beliefs about Diversity Scales to assess the professional and personal biases of 47 adult learners. Four e-portfolios consisting of a scenario that described the equity problems of sexual orientation, physical or mental abuse, ageism, and marital/family status were distributed to study participants to record their reflections.

The study was conducted between May 2013 and June 2014.

Why is this research Useful?

Biases contribute to the persistence of stereotypes against minorities and disadvantaged groups. This research is useful as it shows that awareness through reflection, not training, is the answer to addressing diversity disparities.

What were the outcomes?

This research found that one's personal and professional beliefs with respect to retaining one's mother tongue and learning in English might contribute to delays in the translation of documents and access to translators. Segregating minorities on economic status and intellectual abilities may hinder professional development and promotional opportunities to minority employees. Awareness through reflection, not training, is the answer to addressing diversity disparities.

About the Researcher

Caterina Valentino is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Health Services Management at the Ted Rogers School of Management. Her interdisciplinary work focuses on decision-making, inclusion, online course design and technology in the classroom.

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