

Domain 8: Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations

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Introduction

Domain 8 from the Professional Standards of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations. With respect to domain 8, school psychologists must have respect for and knowledge of individual students, including their own abilities, differences, disabilities, and diverse characteristics. Additionally, it is important for the school psychologist to keep in mind that each of these characteristics have their own impacts on learning and development. Understanding diversity is a crucial task, and being familiar with research and principles that are related to children, schools, families, and communities with factors ranging from culture, child development, and cultural identity to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and race. Evidence-based strategies are implemented by school psychologists in order to strengthen services in special and general education, as well as address influences that are possibly related to diversity. School psychologists keep various lenses in mind when providing professional services for individuals, families, and schools that have diverse characteristics and differences. Three key ideas that school psychologists take note of include respecting diversity within learning and development, advocacy for social justice, and equitable practices for diverse populations. These three principles are foundational to effective service delivery, thus, must be taken seriously and thoughtfully. When it comes to equality, equity is more favorable because it ensures that each student receives what they need to succeed from various services, whereas equality only ensures that there is access to general and special education.

Discussion

Within a school, knowledge about diversity, inclusion, and equity are key to making sure all students feel safe, respected, and seen. School psychologists are tasked with some other responsibilities as well to ensure that students do feel safe, respected, and seen in this way. To start, school psychologists apply the influential understanding of culture, background, and individual characteristics when designing and implementing interventions for individual students. By using inclusive language, school psychologists can help individuals, families, schools, and communities receive equitable practices all around. Knowledge of special education is also important to ensure that children with disabilities get as much educational attention and help as those in general education. By working with families and community liaisons, school psychologists can address and understand the needs of diverse learners. School psychologists employ a strengths-based approach to address the learning needs of English learners. Another thing that is critical for school psychologists to recognize is the subtle biases- from racial to gender to class- that they may bring to their own work. Being aware of these biases allows for them to not impact the important work they do with children of many different characteristics and backgrounds. By doing so, school psychologists are able to give their best support to students who need it. When working with diverse student populations, school psychologists recognize both within- and between-group differences. Lastly, school psychologists promote equity and social justice in educational programs and services by ensuring that all children and youth learn in safe, supportive, and inclusive environments. School psychologists actively engage in efforts to address factors that limit equity and access to educational opportunity.

Reflection

Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations is a topic that will continue to be important in my future career as a school psychologist. No matter the setting, there will always be diversity. Whether it's racial differences, gender differences, or even physical differences. In every setting, there is bound to be something that separates us. It is crucial- especially when working with children whose opinions are forming and are learning from those around them- to be as inclusive as physically possible. To include everyone, regardless of their differences, provide them with equitable access to resources, and to celebrate diversity. By being an inclusive role model, my future as a school psychologist will be a bright and influential one.