



6 Quick Tips for Educators Supporting South Asian American Students

1. KNOW THAT SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS ARE DIVERSE.

Know there isn't a single, monolithic "South Asian" culture; South Asian Americans are extremely diverse; become familiar with the data on their experiences. They can come from a lot of different places. Or they might just be Americans with South Asian ancestry. They can speak a lot of different languages. Or they might just speak English. They might have a thick accent. Or they might not have any accent except the one associated with the region in the U.S. they live in. They might be straight-A students. They might be struggling to maintain a C-average. They might seem to fit the model minority stereotype. They might be as far from the model minority myth as you can get. They might not have any special needs. They might have a variety of special needs. They might be interested in STEM fields of study. They might be interested in the Arts. They might be interested in chess. They might be interested in basketball. They might not need any help from their teachers. They might need a lot of help from their teachers. They might ask for it. They might not.

There's one thing that's for sure: You have to get to know the individual student in order to find out what they are and what they're not.

2. DEVELOP YOUR CULTURAL COMPETENCE.

Become culturally proficient, and arm yourself against stereotypes, such as the harmful "Model Minority Myth." Arm yourself with knowledge of the data. Visit ISAASE.org/the-data.

3. SUPPORT ALL YOUR STUDENTS.

Provide socioemotional and academic support to all of your students (and know about the dangers of not doing so). Don't assume South Asian American students (or any other students) don't need help.

4. PRONOUNCE NAMES CORRECTLY.

Make it a point to say names properly; you can see tips for making this happen at ISAASE.org.

5. ACKNOWLEDGING BY CELEBRATING.

If it is necessary or relevant to acknowledge students' cultures and backgrounds, do so in a positive, celebratory way.

6. ESTABLISH THE RIGHT CLASSROOM CLIMATE.

Establish a zero-tolerance policy for intolerant or abusive language in the classroom. You can lead by example, and establish the kind of culture in the classroom that doesn't allow for racism, or even subtle "light-hearted" mocking of students' backgrounds or cultures.

Developed by Dr. Punita Chhabra Rice (punitarice.com) for ISAASE.

ISAASE is dedicated to Improving South Asian American Students' Experiences. Visit ISAASE.org to get involved.