INHERENT BIAS

Wednesday October 26, 2016
1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Room 320
Equity & Excellence: Hidden/Implicit/Inherent Bias

Vincent R. De Lucia, NJSBA
Dr. Brian Zychowski, North Brunswick
Dr. Kayne Ellis, North Brunswick
Sydney Dawson, North Brunswick
My Inherent Bias: Hurricane Andrew
Essential Questions

• What are Hidden/Inherent/Implicit Biases?
• Is it important for a teacher to believe in his/her students?
• What is the impact of hidden/inherent biases on children?
• How can I identify my hidden biases?
• What is meant by disproportionality in Special Education and Discipline?
• Punishments vs Consequences
• Impact of Behavior Misperceptions?
How do Our Inherent Biases Develop?

• We are bombarded with millions of images and bits of information daily
• Our brains absorb each and everyone of those images and bits of information
• But, most of it registers subconsciously and not through a cognitive filter that processes and interprets that data.
• This unfiltered information influences our inherent biases
Inherent/Hidden Biases

• Penetrates various realms of society, from hiring decisions to medical care and even foul calls in the NBA!

• What about hidden biases in our everyday lives?

• Does it play a role in the neighborhoods we choose to live in?
  – The establishments we patronize?
  – The shows we watch?
Implicit/Hidden/Inherent Biases

• *Implicit Bias* refers to attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an *unconscious* manner.

• *It's different from* suppressed thoughts we might conceal to keep the peace; *it's the opposite of* explicit bias, which refers to attitudes or beliefs that we fully admit to.

Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
Ohio State University
It’s in the news!

- Recent assertions of overt and covert discrimination across our society from college campuses to public safety to police responses raises the question:
  - How does someone’s unconscious reaction to people of a different race, religion or sexuality influence their judgment and behavior?
- Experts say America is still struggling to reverse the legacy of institutional racism that has left many communities segregated today, creating the pool from which we form relationships and social circles.
- Research shows those relationships -- along with the interactions and experiences that come from them -- influence hidden biases. They can start forming in children as young as six years old and are reinforced in adulthood through social settings and mass media.
Who are your three best friends?

• Chances are, they're the same race as you,

• Socializing with…
  – 68% of whites (18-34) associate with other whites
  – 37% of Hispanics (18-34) associate with other Hispanics
  – 36% of Blacks (18-34) associate with other Blacks
Hidden Biases

• Do you automatically exclude certain neighborhoods as places you might live?
  – Or send your kids to school?
• Do you 'only date' a certain type?
• Do you have a 'gay friend'? A 'black doctor'?
Who are YOUR Trusted 10?

• Fold the Worksheet so that the only column showing is:
  – Name/Initials
  – Complete the First Column by listing the initials/names of personal friends and professional colleagues
  – DO NOT INCLUDE FAMILY MEMBERS
  – Complete the additional columns for each person you identified
Who are YOUR Trusted 10?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Initials</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Disability Yes or No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

For Reflection:

What patterns do you observe?
How many of your trusted 10 are “like you”?
Describe the diversity of your Trusted 10
Harvard's Project Implicit Project

- Battery of "implicit association tests" enables participants to measure their levels of implicit bias
- Results: tests reveal distressing things about how our unconscious minds work.
- https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/
- To measure your implicit bias levels:
  - Understanding Prejudice: Implicit Association Test
  - Teaching Tolerance: Test Yourself for Hidden Bias
  - Look Different: Bias Cleanse
Inherent Bias in Schools:

What does the data and research report?
Data-2010

- 70%+ of school arrests/referrals to law enforcement: Black or Hispanic
- Ed Week 72,000 k-12th graders studied:
  - Black students comprise 18% of sampled schools
    - 35% of those suspended once
    - 46% suspended more than once
    - 39% of all expulsions
  - Black students 3.5 times more likely to be suspended or expelled than White peers
Data: African-American Males

• Portland (OR)
  – AA students 5X more likely to be expelled/suspended than White peers

• Oakland (2011)
  – 20% of AA males suspended at least once
  – 6 times the rate of White peers

• Chicago (2009-10)
  – Black students = 45% of the student body
  – Black students = 76% of the suspensions
• Research Reports:
  – Black students 5 yo and up are routinely suspended/expelled for minor infractions:
    • talking back to teachers
    • writing on their desks.
  – The assertion that over-zealous application of “zero tolerance” policies is the cause is false.
  – African-American/Black males do not “act out” in the classroom any more than their White peers
• Research found that the hypothesis that African American students act out more than other students is not valid.

• Research found that African American students appear to be referred to the office for less serious and more subjective reasons.

• When combined with extensive and highly consistent prior data, these results argue that disproportionate representation of African Americans in office referrals, suspension and expulsion is evidence of a pervasive and systematic bias that may well be inherent in the use of exclusionary discipline (Skiba, 2000).
• Implicit Bias: major contributing factor of racial disproportionality in school discipline.
• In this context, implicit bias is the *mental process that causes us to have negative feelings and attitudes about people based on characteristics like race, ethnicity, age and appearance.*
• Because this cognitive process functions in our unconscious mind, we are not consciously aware of the negative racial biases that we develop over the course of our lifetime.
• In the general population:
  – Implicit Bias supports the stereotypical caricature of Black youth (especially males):
    • irresponsible, dishonest, and dangerous.

• In an ideal world:
  – teachers and school administrators (among others) would be immune to these unconscious negative attitudes and predispositions about race

• 2003 study: students who displayed a “black walking style” perceived by their teachers as lower in academic achievement, highly aggressive and more likely to need special education services).
Kirwan Institute Research Suggests:

- Implicit bias is implicated in *every* aspect of racial and ethnic inequality & injustice.
- Powerful consequences of implicit bias: it robs us of *compassion for* and *connection to* individuals and groups who suffer society’s burdens of racial or other *inequality* and *injustice*.
- Implicit bias contributes to an *unconscious* “*hierarchy of caring*” that influences who we care about and what groups and individuals are *beyond our caring*, in a place of invisibility or disposability.
• Implicit bias may influence a teacher’s expectations for academic success.
• Meta-analysis of research found statistically significant evidence that teachers hold lower expectations—either implicitly or explicitly, or both—for African American and Latino children compared to European American children

(Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007)
Disproportionality

- 2008-2009 academic year, Black students in North Carolina public schools were suspended at rates significantly higher than White students:
  - 8 times higher for cell phone use,
  - 6 times higher for dress code violation,
  - 2 times higher for disruptive behavior,
  - 10 times higher for displays of affection
Disproportionality

• NJ DOE identifies districts with over representation or disproportionality of African-American males who are CLASSIFIED or SUSPENDED
• Districts are required to develop action plans to address the disproportionality
Hidden Bias Shapes Expectations & Discipline

• Psychology research documents self-fulfilling expectation of delinquent behavior

• A student “labeled” as “defiant” or “problematic” is “more likely” to internalize these labels and act in ways that match the expectations that others have set for him/her…

• Labeling and exclusionary practices can create a self-fulfilling prophecy that results in a cycle that can be difficult to break
Punishment vs. Consequences

• Schools often “punish” the students who have the greatest needs.
• Misbehaviors are often the result of a child’s needs not being met by the school
• Children who act out often:
  – Are experiencing abuse of neglect
  – Have hunger of food insecurity
  – Have internalized low expectations
  – Are unable to perform at grade-level
• Punishments
  – Demeaning
  – Unrelated to the offense
  – Diminish self-esteem
  – Are not instructive
  – Do not change behaviors

• Consequences
  – Respectful… Maintain student dignity & esteem
  – Related to the offense
  – Restitution—making it better
  – Guidance to change behaviors
4 Goals of Misbehavior

- To Get Attention
- To Get Power
- To Get Revenge
- To Avoid Failure
Behavior Misperceptions: Pedro Noguera

- Boys struggle more than girls with traditional academic system; the mismatch between learning styles and educational practice can lead to the disconnect of boys at an early age.
- Girls are more successful at soft skills like knowing how... to listen, to work with others, and to sit still... things with which boys struggle
- The “boy code” further complicates issues of academic underachievement—especially for boys of color
  - Society expectations: tough, independent, and strong
  - Latin/Hispanic male “machismo” archetype reinforces these messages
  - “As boys struggle to hide their academic vulnerabilities, a false bravado may be erected.”
- Subsequent disconnect from school can lead to elevated rates of depression and suicide attempts among young Latino/Hispanic males
Behavior Misperceptions: Pedro Noguera

- Black males: surroundings and environmental context construct masculinity and influence the ways black males experience and behave in schools
  - For some, projecting an image of a tough and angry Black man is protection
  - To be nice, gentle, kind, or sincere could make them vulnerable and bullied
  - Some Black male students - the way they express their thoughts has been described as flamboyant, non-conformist— a “cool pose”
  - The expressions are not problematic, BUT issues arise when they are misinterpreted by teachers.
- Several novice white teachers reported that they often perceived these lively debates occurring between black males as suggestive of aggressive behavior and concluded it was disrupting.
- To the students it was rooted in their construction of masculinity, not a sign of defiance
  - Misperceptions are also rooted in common definitions of “good behavior”
• Media reports contribute to misperceptions about black males: violent, disrespectful, unintelligent, and hyper masculinity
• Some teachers may rationalize such behaviors as defiant/intimidating, the result:
  **Black male students are more likely to be disciplined.**
• Latin/Hispanic and Black/African American males, researchers report the “stigma” of acting White: academic success and peer pressure to reject the norms associated with academic success.
• Simultaneously, Latin/Hispanic and Black/African American males confront the negative stereotypes associated with their behavior, their peer interactions, and their academic standing.
• The “stigma” of acting White among minority males is a reflection of their lack of identification with traditional norms of academic success which leads to them devaluing academics and education in the traditional sense.
• Since traditional academic norms of academic success have not worked; Is the problem the traditional academic structure itself?
Whether or not a teacher “believes in” her students and “expects” them to succeed has been shown to affect how well that student does in school, particularly among disadvantaged students.

But educators should be aware that those expectations can be influenced by their own implicit racial biases.
National Education Association

- 16,000 U.S. teachers interviewed
- Black and non-Black teachers were asked to predict their 10th-graders’ future educational attainment.
  - Would s/he graduate from high school?
  - How about college?
- When asked about any specific Black student:
  - Non-Black teachers were about 30 percent less likely than Black teachers to predict he or she would someday earn a college degree.
  - For White students, the teachers’ predictions, or expectations, were about the same.
NEA

- “We cannot determine whether the black teachers are too optimistic, the non-black teachers are too pessimistic, or some combination of the two…”
- “..systematic biases in teachers’ expectations for student success might contribute to persistent socio-demographic gaps in educational achievement and attainment.”

American University’s Seth Gershenson
NEA

• “These results are not meant to, nor should they, demonize or implicate teachers,”

• “Biases in expectations are generally unintentional and are an artifact of how humans categorize complex information.”

  Seth Gershenson.
Consider various ways you can gain some insight into your bias.

- Biases affect us all in ways we seldom fully realize, even when we have one we are aware of and would like to deal with.
- We may see ordinary, happy people living their day-to-day life in all kinds of environments, but they all have a bias of some kind which is directing their intentions.
- Biases can be positive or negative aspects of human nature; they all influence how we act and interact with other people and events.
- It's important to compare our biases, because the way we create biases in our minds is the same process for both mild biases and severe ones.
Recognize that the specific bias exists

• This is the beginning stage to enable you to overcome it. If you can, this means admitting there is a bias, as in really admitting it, not just thinking there is a bias.

• Often this is very difficult for most people to do honestly, as it is somewhat of a humbling act. But doing this will help you to explore it more in depth, as you are prepared to be more open.

• By recognizing your bias and what it relies on to stay in the mind, then you are one step closer to getting rid of it.
From Theory.........To Practice:

North Brunswick Twp. Public Schools
Challenging Biases, Building Equity
Objectives

- Provide ways to think about school culture and student achievement that may not have been considered
- Share our successes and challenges to help guide your work
- Understand the relationship between biases, expectations, and results
How Our Work Began

• Positive Behavioral Support in Schools Initiative
  – End-of-the-year Reporting
  – Required Staff Training
• Invited to serve on district committee
  – Multiple state citations for disproportionality in special education (over classification and suspension of minority males)
• Personal experience in the school and vested interest in promoting equity
Our First Steps

• Recognition that not everyone shared the same perspective, backgrounds, or experiences

• Professional Development was needed and it had to incorporate multiple data sets
To examine bias at NBTHS, we gathered data in 3 ways:

- Quantitative Data
  - Genesis Grades, Discipline, Tracking
- Qualitative Data
  - Survey of NBTHS Staff
  - Focus Group Interviews of Students and Parents (Video Played for Staff)
- Research Literature
### NBTHS RACIAL DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT

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<tr>
<td>TOTAL POPULATION</td>
<td>1183</td>
<td>1243</td>
<td>1395</td>
<td>1725</td>
<td>1799</td>
<td>1760</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>HISPANIC</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIAN</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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</table>
How Does Bias Manifest Itself?

- Achievement
  - Grades
  - Course Placement / Tracking
- Discipline
- Staff / Student Interactions
# Final Grade Distributions

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASIAN</td>
<td>1675</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>355</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>175</td>
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<tr>
<td>LATINO</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>462</td>
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## Discipline Data

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<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Asian</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>1651</td>
<td>1497</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tardies</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cutting</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulgar Lang.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defiance</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>11</td>
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## History Demographics

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<tr>
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<th>US II Found</th>
<th>CP US II</th>
<th>Honor US II</th>
<th>AP US II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</table>
Who is likely to take AP classes?

- Whites - 66%
- Asians - 75%
- Only 1 staff member said it was likely that Latinos will take AP classes.
- Only 2 staff members said it was likely that Blacks will take AP classes.

Despite these enormous disparities, we still believe students are tracked according to ability. Do we think Black and Latinos are stupid? Are these beliefs affecting our expectations for student achievement?
Who is likely to take Basic Skills classes?

- Asians 7%
- Whites 13%
- Blacks- 65%
- Latinos – 67%

Again, what are the consequences of these expectations? Are we simply putting the kids that we find “troublesome” and “violent” into low-level classes?
PD Format - Year One

- Present Staff with Data & Survey Results: Does perception match reality?
- Share Student Focus Group Video
- **Equity Walk** - Read statements about white privilege and staff move forward or backwards if it applies to them
- Address common beliefs about how different variables impact achievement
- Offer PBSIS strategies to help mitigate disciplinary issues
Year One - Lessons Learned

• Be prepared to navigate courageous conversations (people will have a range of emotions)
• Establish norms - this will not be solved in one workshop
• Focus on building a core equity team - (Who is passionate about this work?)
• Be ready to address common misconceptions for racial achievement gaps (poor parenting, socioeconomics, etc)
• Accept that you will not be able to answer everyone’s questions.
Year Two Focus

• *Mindset* (Fixed vs. Growth) - Carol Dweck
• Deficit Model - *The Pedagogy of Confidence* - Jackson
• Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teachers
• Classroom Management Techniques

Resource: RIISA (Rutgers Institute for Improving Student Achievement) consultancy.
Year Two - Lessons Learned

- There is no single “solution” for the problems caused by a system and a society where bias is omnipresent.
- Be ready to overcome overly simplistic solutions (i.e., recognizing holidays, hiring more people of a certain group).
- The school “system” is organized around a fixed mindset (grades, test scores, ranking, etc).
- Continued need for courageous conversations.
Year Three Focus

• Taking Action!
• Teaching Tolerance (online website)
• Anti-Bias Framework
• Teacher & Parent Interviews Video
• High Context vs. Low Context Cultures (explore the range in which behaviors vary across cultures)
• Embedded time for lesson and unit planning
• Schoolwide committees make a commitment to take action
Steps We’ve Taken

- Embed work into Strategic Planning / School Improvement Plan
- SMART Goal Setting
- Bilingual Services / ESL Classes / Tutoring
- Yearly Cultural Awareness PD
- Explore Alternative Discipline Strategies
- De-tracking
- Creation of Bridge Programs (Honors, AP)
- District Funds for PSAT & AP examinations
- Overt Celebrations of Diversity (Culture Fair, student performances / assemblies)
Let Us Help!

Dr. Kayne Ellis,
Supervisor of English & ESL
North Brunswick Township High School
732-996-0544
ellis.kayne@gmail.com

Mr. Sidney Dawson
Assistant Principal, Supervisor of English & Social Studies
Linwood Middle School
908-720-1634
sidneydawson@gmail.com
“Let us in education dream of an aristocracy of achievement arising out of a democracy of opportunity”

Thomas Jefferson