Behavior Problems vs. Behavior Disorders

* From the module: connecting problem behavior with behavior disorder

* What's the difference?

* How does problem behavior become a disorder?

* A very subjective process…

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Serious Emotional Disturbance

One or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance

> Inability to learn not related to other factors
> Inability to build or maintain satisfactory peer or teacher relationships
> Inappropriate feelings or behavior under normal conditions
> Frequently unhappy or depressed
> Often fearful
> Definition does not apply to children who are "socially maladjusted"

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Common Characteristics of Children with EBD

Two primary behavioral excesses
> Externalizing behaviors (most common behavior pattern)
  • **Noncompliance**
  • **Temper tantrums**
  • **Property destruction**
  • **Threats of violence or violence toward peers and/or teachers**
> Internalizing behaviors
  • **Overly shy or immature**
  • **Withdrawn**
  • **Hypochondria**
  • **Easily upset and difficult to calm**

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Nick

Problems with IDEA Definition

- Definition is vague and subjective
  - What are "satisfactory" peer and teacher relationships?
  - What does "inappropriate" behavior look like?
- The definition, as written, excludes children on the basis for which they are included
  - How does one differentiate between "socially maladjusted" and true "emotional disturbance"?
- Individual teacher expectations and tolerances make identification a difficult and subjective process

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Common Characteristics (cont.)

Behavioral deficits
- Academic achievement
  - Low GPA
  - High absenteeism
  - At risk for school failure and early drop out
- Social skills
  - Less participation in extracurricular activities
  - Lower quality peer relationships
  - Juvenile delinquency

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Disproportionality in Special Education

Percentages of African American Students with Emotional Disturbance in General and Special Education

States Representing the Greatest Disparity	General School Population	Emotional Disturbance	Disparity
All 50 States and Outlying Areas	17.00	27.30	+10.30
New York	20.40	45.29	+24.89
North Carolina	31.20	52.16	+20.96
Louisiana	47.70	66.80	+19.10
Kentucky	10.40	27.64	+17.24
California	8.40	24.75	+16.50
Delaware	30.40	46.54	+16.14
Nebraska	6.50	21.28	+14.78
New Jersey	18.10	32.55	+14.45
Maryland	36.60	51.04	+14.44
Florida	25.41	39.40	+13.99
Illinois	21.40	34.44	+13.04
South Carolina	42.00	54.98	+12.98
Missouri	17.30	28.87	+11.57

Note. Data from U.S. Department of Education (2002).

Race, Poverty and Special Education

Percentages of African American Students with Emotional Disturbance in General and Special Education

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Louisiana			
Kentucky			

Why is this?

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Overrepresentation

- ❧ *Greatest overrepresentation among African-American male students*

- ❧ *Primarily in the special education categories of Mild MR and Emotional, Behavioral Disorder*

- ❧ *Mild MR and EBD notable for subjective definitions and clinician discretion in formal placement*

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Mental Retardation

✿ AAMR (common definition)
  ➢ Subaverage intellectual functioning (IQ measure)
  ➢ Deficits in adaptive behavior

Mild MR cases make up about 85% of all persons labeled as having MR

✿ Mild MR (IQ: 50-55 to around 70)
  ➢ Usually not identified until school age
  ➢ Most students master many academic skills
 ➢ Most able to learn job skills well enough to support themselves independently or semi-independently

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IDEA-Definition of
Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED)

Consistent, serious, and of considerable duration:

➢ Externalizing behaviors (most common behavior pattern)
  • **Noncompliance**
  • **Temper tantrums**
  • **Property destruction**
  • **Threats of violence or violence toward peers and/or teachers**

  • Definition does not apply to children who are "socially maladjusted"

(Heward, 2006)

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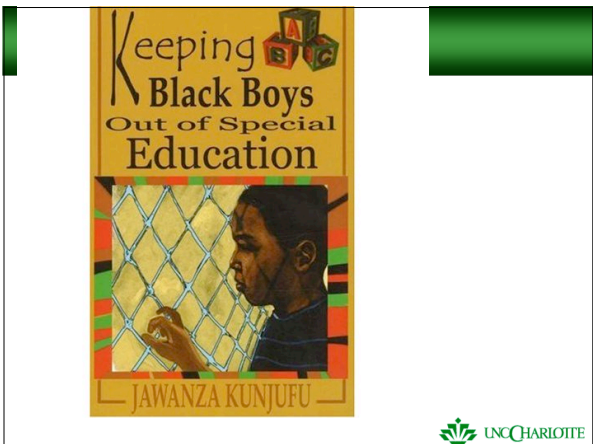
BIAS PROBLEMS

- 🌿 **Bias in test instruments**
- 🌿 **Examiner bias in test process**
- 🌿 **Bias in interpreting test results**
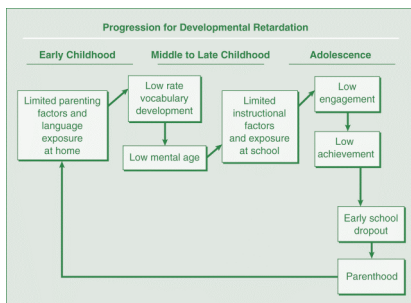- 🌿 **Bias in placement process**

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VARIABLES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO PLACEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

- 🌿 **Effects of Poverty**
  - ➤ Inadequate pre-natal, peri-natal, and post natal care

  - ➤ Environmental hazards such as lead poisoning, environmental health hazards

  - ➤ Childbirth among very young mothers

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Environmental Causes

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Race, Poverty, and Special Education

Just the facts…

- There are substantial differences by race and ethnicity in children's test scores as they begin kindergarten.

- Before even entering kindergarten, the average cognitive score of ***children in the highest SES group are 60% above the scores of the lowest SES group***.

- Moreover, average math achievement is 21% lower for Black students than for Whites, and 19% lower for Hispanics.

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Race, Poverty, and Special Education

- Race and ethnicity are associated with SES. For example, 34% of Black children and 29% of Hispanic children are in the lowest quintile of SES compared with only 9% of White children.

- Cognitive skills are much less closely related to race/ethnicity after accounting for SES.

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Race, Poverty and Special Education

- Family structure and educational expectations have important associations with SES, race/ethnicity, and with young children's test scores, though their impacts on cognitive skills are much smaller than either race or SES.

- Although 15% of white children live with only one parent, **54% of Black and 27% of Hispanic children live in single-parent homes.**

- Similarly, 48% of families in the lowest SES quintile are headed by a single parent, compared to only 10% of families in the highest quintile.

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Race, Poverty and Special Education

- Low-SES children begin school at kindergarten in systematically lower-quality elementary schools than their more advantaged counterparts.

- However school quality is defined-----in terms of
  - higher student achievement,
  - more school resources,
  - more qualified teachers,
  - more positive teacher attitudes,
  - better neighborhood or school conditions,
  - private vs. public schools-

  the least advantaged U.S. children begin their formal schooling in consistently lower-quality schools.

- This reinforces the inequalities that develop even before children reach school age.

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VARIABLES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO PLACEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Over- or under-referrals due to

- Differences in cognitive or learning style between teachers and students

- *Incongruent values between teachers and students*

  - *CULTURAL INCONGRUITY*

    overt racism has diminished but we still struggle with unconscious beliefs and differential expectations.

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Contributing Factors

- **Civil Rights era lead to widespread desegregation of schools but a dramatic decline in African-American children being taught by African-American teachers**

- **38,000 African-American teachers lost their jobs (Tyler et al, 2004)**

- **As desegregation lead to students of color attending traditionally White schools, many were assigned labels by their new White teachers such as**

  - *mental retardation* **or**
  - *cultural deprivation*

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RACE & GENDER GAP IN EDUCATION

❧ **70% of the Nation's teachers are women.**

❧ **Nationwide, 40% of schools have no faculty of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Riley, 1998)**

❧ **Most referrals originate in the elementary grades; however, African American men constitute only 0.4% of elementary and 2.2% of secondary special education teachers (Nettles & Perna, 1997).**

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❧ **Tobias et al. (1982) found that general education teachers were more likely to recommend students from ethnic groups other than their own for referral to special education (no matter what race).**

❧ **Majority of the nation's teachers are European American, lending some credence to the theory that teacher bias leads to overrepresentation in special education.**

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VARIABLES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO PLACEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

❧ Over-referrals due to cultural incongruity

Several studies (e.g., Neal et al. 2003) indicate teachers believe African-American male students exhibiting distinct culture-related movement styles are

- *lower in achievement*
- *higher in aggression*
- *more likely to need special education*

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Recent Research

🌿 Cognitive Science
  ➢ Rapid cognition manifests itself in unconscious beliefs and perceptions about members of non-dominant group (by all races)
    (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998)
    Measuring Individual Differences in Implicit Cognition: The Implicit Association Test

🌿 Urban Education
  ➢ Diminished expectations and perceptions
    (Haberman, 2004; Kunjufu, 2007)

  Need to examine the special education referral process.

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Characteristics of Culture

It is often difficult to recognize your own culture.

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MANIFESTATIONS OF CULTURE

🌿 **Values**
🌿 **Non-verbal communication**
🌿 **Language**

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Is there a mainstream American culture?

❧ **What are the characteristics of American culture?**

❧ **How do outsiders view us culturally?**

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MACROCULTURE

The American macroculture is the universal or core culture with Western European roots, especially white Anglo Saxon Protestant. Today not limited to WASP influence, but heavily influenced by the middle class.

Some values inherent in the U. S. Macroculture:
❧ Status based on occupation, education, wealth.
❧ Achievement valued over inheritance.
❧ Work ethic.
❧ Cleanliness as an absolute value.

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MICROCULTURE

❧ Examples include cultures related to:

❧ "Microcultures are subsocieties or subcultures which exist within the context of the larger society sharing values, political and social institutions which may not be common to the macroculture."

ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, language, age, and exceptionality.

Gollnick and Chinn (1998)

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- 🌿 **What are the characteristics of your own culture?**

- 🌿 **In what way do you represent a microculture?**

- 🌿 **This contributes to your cultural identity.**

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MODEL FOR MULTICULTURAL CHANGE

Levels of Change	Elements	Lesson
Exclusive	Content	Purpose, goals, objectives, schedule, readings, materials
Inclusive	Instruction	Assignment, schedule, lesson description
Transformed	Assessment	Assignments, Policies
	Dynamics	Educational Beliefs, Lesson Description, Support Services

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The Exclusive Level

The Exclusive level teaches minor aspects of diversity at the lowest level.

- 🌿 Diversity is restricted to one part of the lesson.
- 🌿 Gender and diverse groups are discussed in relation to stereotypes.
- 🌿 Activities are limited to the four "f's- food, folklore, fun and fashion."
- 🌿 Content encompasses traditional mainstream experiences and stereotypes.

The Exclusive Level

- Reading materials focus on authors who perpetuate and confirm myths.
- Instructional strategies are mainly basic question and answer, and other basic didactic methods.
- Instruction is teacher-centered.
- Exams are objective & assignments focus on content only.

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The Inclusive Level

The Inclusive level adds diversity content but retains the traditional, original structure.

- Diversity is discussed throughout the lesson and compared to the dominant norm.
- Reading materials include authors with varying & diverse viewpoints.

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The Inclusive Level

- A wide array of assessment methods and various speakers add flavor to the content.
- Instruction remains teacher-centered.
- A variety of methods are used to relate new knowledge.
- Students are encouraged to construct their own knowledge and use critical thinking skills in conjunction with peer learning.

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The Transformed Course

The Transformed lesson and curriculum challenges traditional views and encourages reconceptualization and new ways of thinking.

- Instructors engage in critical pedagogy .
- Instruction is student-centered and students self-evaluate through projects & related assignments that contribute to real-life change.

The Transformed Course

- Students learn from each other and concepts and personal experiences are analyzed.
- Transformed courses represent a paradigm shift that present content from a diverse perspective.
- Self-assessment and reflection techniques are employed that encourage sharing, diverse perspectives and equity in participation and critical problem solving.
- Instruction centers on content related vignettes that require application and examination of values.