Neutralizing Implicit Bias in School Discipline

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Overview of Today’s Session

1. Complete some activities to explore disproportionality in school discipline
2. Share an intervention approach for enhancing equity in school discipline
3. Guide you through a data driven process for:
   1. Identify causes and solutions
   2. Change environments to prevent challenges
   3. Build skills in responding to challenges

Handouts: http://www.pbis.org

Stroop Task: A test of automatic associations

- Our brains are wired to look for patterns
- When we are forced to make quick decisions, we use our automatic associations to respond
What is implicit bias?

- Unconscious, automatic
- Generally not an indication of our beliefs and values
- We all have it (even those affected by it)
- Based on stereotypes
- More likely to influence:
  - Snap decisions
  - Decisions that are ambiguous

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Implicit Attractiveness Bias
(Salter, Mixon, & King, 2012)

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Implicit Height Bias
(Judge & Cable, 2004)

One inch of height is worth $789 per year in salary

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Implicit Bias in Refereeing
(Carlson, 2014)
Implicit Bias in Refereeing
(Carlson, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Home game differential</th>
<th>Away game differential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boston College</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clemson</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida State</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Tech</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
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<td>Miami</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.C. State</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notre Dame</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-18</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syracuse</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Tech</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wake Forest</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So...are all referees terrible people?

"the challenge is not a small number of twisted white supremacists but something infinitely more subtle and complex: People who believe in equality but who act in ways that perpetuate bias and inequality."

-Nicholas Kristof, *The New York Times*
Implicit Bias in Early Learning
(Gilliam et al., 2016)
Implicit Bias in Early Learning (Gilliam et al., 2016)

**Track the eyes: Which students are teachers watching?**

- Black girls: 10%
- White girls: 13%
- Black boys: 42%
- White boys: 34%

Preschool teachers tend to more closely observe blacks than whites, especially black boys, when challenging behaviors are expected.

Disproportionality in Preschool Discipline (OCR, 2016)

- Black children represent 19% of preschool enrollment, but 47% of preschool suspensions.
- White children represent 41% of preschool enrollment, but 28% of preschool suspensions.

Implicit Bias predicts the extent to which...

- **Arbitrators** decide labor grievances in favor of women over men (Girvan, Deason, & Borgida, 2015)
- **Teachers** of students with ASD experience anxiety, depression, and professional burnout (Kelly & Barnes-Holmes, 2013)

- **Police Officers** use force when arresting Black children as opposed to White children (Goff et al., 2014)

- **Pediatricians** recommend less pain medication for Black children than White children with identical symptoms (Cooper et al., 2012; Sabin & Greenwald, 2012)

Where do implicit biases come from?
Pop Quiz: What % of the Black population is incarcerated?

Disproportionality in School Discipline (Losen et al., 2015)

If you’re aware…

...you’re halfway there.

A 5-point Intervention Approach to Enhance Equity in School Discipline

http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis
5-point Intervention Approach

1. Use engaging academic instruction to reduce the opportunity (achievement) gap
2. Implement a behavior framework that is preventive, multi-tiered, and culturally responsive
3. Collect, use, and report disaggregated discipline data
4. Develop policies with accountability for disciplinary equity
5. Teach strategies to neutralize implicit bias

http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis

2. How do we make schools more inviting for all students?
Why start with a foundation of PBIS?

1. Proactive, instructional approach *may* prevent unwanted behavior and exposure to biased responses to unwanted behavior.
2. Increasing positive student-teacher interactions *may* enhance relationships to prevent challenges.
3. More objective referral and discipline procedures *may* reduce subjectivity and influence of cultural bias.
4. Professional development *may* provide teachers with more instructional responses.

(Griffund et al., 2014)

Effects of PBIS on Discipline Disproportionality

- **Vincent et al., 2011**
  - Statistically significantly lower Black-White ODR disproportionality in 72 schools implementing SWPBIS than in 81 schools not implementing SWPBIS.
- **Vincent et al., 2009**
  - Decreases in ODRs seen across racial/ethnic groups in 69 schools implementing SWPBIS.
- **Scott, 2001**
  - Larger decreases in suspensions for Black students when SWPBIS implemented.
- **McIntosh et al., 2014**
  - Sustained decrease in suspensions over eight years of SWPBIS implementation in an Indigenous school.

Culturally Responsive PBIS Implementation

- Develop and revise school-wide systems with active involvement of families, students, and the community.
### Culturally Responsive Adaptation: Personal Matrix

- Aka “behavior dictionary”
- Tool to assist in “code-switching”
- The tweak:
  - Take school expectations and...
    - Add differences at home
    - Add differences in community

### Expectation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>At SCHOOL it looks like...</th>
<th>At HOME it looks like...</th>
<th>In my NEIGHBORHOOD it looks like...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Safe</strong></td>
<td>• Keep hands and feet to self</td>
<td>• Tell an adult if there is a problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Treat others how you want to be treated</td>
<td>• Include others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do my own work</td>
<td>• Personal best</td>
<td>• Follow directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Respectful</strong></td>
<td>• Keep hands, foot, and belonging to myself</td>
<td>• Allow for the privacy of others</td>
<td>• Enter and exit with a pass or my teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keep quiet in QUIT ZONES</td>
<td>• Carry my own belongings</td>
<td>• Keep hands locked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Flush</td>
<td>• Use appropriate fixtures</td>
<td>• Go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Responsible</strong></td>
<td>• Teachers will supervise groups of students at all times</td>
<td>• Teachers will enforce safety</td>
<td>• Teachers will monitor students by being at their doors and in the hallways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Treat others how you want to be treated</td>
<td>• Include others</td>
<td>• Listen to adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do my own work</td>
<td>• Personal best</td>
<td>• Follow directions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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- **Safety First**
  - Walk directly to my designated area
  - Stay in my area
  - Talk softly
  - Keep hands, feet, and belongings to myself

- **Work Together Respectfully**
  - Walk quietly in a single, straight, and short line so others can continue learning and working
  - Walk to the right side of the hallway
  - Conserve supplies: 2 quarts of water
  - 2 pouches/tumblers on the paper towel dispenser
  - Dispose of trash in the trash can
  - Accept feedback and discipline from staff by listening, asking questions, and following directions
  - Be ready to learn
  - Be present and focused

- **Accept Responsibility**
  - Teachers will supervise groups of students at all times
  - Teachers will enforce safety
  - Teachers will monitor students by being at their doors and in the hallways
  - Teachers will stand by bathrooms to monitor the noise and behavior from the hallway
  - Teachers will arrive on time and pick up students on time
  - Teachers will stand by bathrooms to monitor the noise and behavior from the hallway
  - Teachers will arrive on time and pick up students on time

- **Goal Setting**
  - Be Safe
  - Be Respectful
  - Be Responsible

- **Culturally Responsive Adaptation**
  - Personal Matrix
Culturally Responsive PBIS Implementation

- Develop and revise school-wide systems with **active involvement** of families, students, and the community
- Use **regular student and family surveys** to assess acceptability and fit

5. How can we reduce implicit bias in our decision making?

What is a Vulnerable Decision Point (VDP)?

- A specific decision that is more vulnerable to effects of implicit bias
- Two parts:
  - Elements of the **situation**
  - The person’s **decision state** (internal state)
Situations: Options for Identifying VDPs

1. All ODR/suspension decisions (general self-instruction routine)
2. Identify specific VDPs
   a) Through national data
   b) Your own school or district data
   c) Your own personal VDPs

Using Discipline Data within SWPBIS to identify and Address Disproportionality: A Guide for School Teams

SWIS Drill Down (www.swis.org)

Add demographic group of interest as a filter (click to "Include in Dataset").

Click each graph and compare to overall patterns.

VDPs from national ODR data

- Subjective problem behavior
  - Defiance, Disrespect, Disruption
  - Major vs. minor
- Hallways
- Classrooms
- Afternoons
Multidimensional View of Bias

Racial Bias → Disproportionate Discipline

Vulnerable Decision Points:
- Subjective Behavior
- Vague Discipline System
- Unfamiliar with Student
- Hunger
- Fatigue

Resource Depletion in Action

- Outcomes of parole hearings (Danziger et al., 2011)

Decision States: Resource Depletion (Girvan et al., 2014)

- As we become fatigued, our filters for appropriate behavior can be affected
- Effects of hunger (Gailliot et al., 2009)
- Decreases in willpower later in day
  - “The Morning Morality Effect” (Kouchaki & Smith, 2014)
  - Examples…

Resource Depletion in Action

- Outcomes of parole hearings (Danziger et al., 2011)

Two-step Neutralizing Routine for Staff:

- When you see unwanted behavior, stop and ask yourself:
  1. Is this a VDP?
     - Situation
     - Decision state
  2. If so, use an agreed-upon alternative response
Neutralizing Routines for Reducing Effects of **Implicit Bias**

**Neutralizing Routine Examples**

- **If this is a VDP…**, 
  - **Delay decision until I can think clearly**
    - “See me after class/at the next break”
    - ask the student to reflect on their feelings/behavior
    - am I acting in line with my values?
  - **Reframe the situation**
    - “I love you, but that behavior is not ok”
    - “How do we do that at school?”
    - picture this student as a future doctor/lawyer
    - assume student’s best effort at getting needs met
    - respond as if the student was physically injured
  - **Take care of yourself**
    - take two deep breaths
    - recognize my upset feelings and let them go
    - model classwide cool-down strategy

**Sample Neutralizing Routine**

- **TRY**
  - **T**ake a deep breath
  - **R**eflect on your emotions
  - **Y**outh’s best interest
    - “Let’s **TRY** that again.”
    - “Let’s **TRY** it a different way.”
    - “Let’s **TRY** it how we do it at school.”

What makes for a good neutralizing routine?

1. If-then statement
2. Brief
3. Clear steps
4. Doable
5. Interrupts the chain of events
Classwide “Reset” Routine

- **TRY** for students
  - Take three deep breaths
  - Reflect on your emotions
  - You got this!
- Social-emotional Theme
  - Mistakes are part of the learning process
  - We won’t always do it right the first time
  - We can’t succeed unless we **TRY**

School Example

Urban K-8 School

Risk Indices

**Referral Risk Index**
Major, 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Pacific</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Not Listed</th>
<th>Multi/Elem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage (Out of 100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Black/White ODR Risk Ratio = 2.67**

**Drill Down: Phys. Aggression on Playground**

**Referral Risk Index (Ethnicity)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity &amp; Enrollment</th>
<th>Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Pacific</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Not Listed</th>
<th>Multi/Elem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage (Out of 100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Black/White ODR Risk Ratio = 4.5**
The School PBIS Team’s Intervention

- ODRs and observations indicated differences in perceived basketball rules
- Team clarified rules for staff and students
  - Aka “code-switching”
- Additional teaching, practice, and acknowledgement
- Monitor with ODRs and Black-White RRs

Progress over Time

Office Discipline Referrals Per Day Per 100 Students

(McIntosh, Ellwood, McCall, & Girvan, in press)

Big Ideas

- Thinking about and discussing solutions is the first step
- Pick a neutralizing routine and try it out
- Use your data to assess and monitor
  - If you don’t have the data you need at hand, advocate for it
- This is hard work – but you know how to do it!
Please complete this anonymous evaluation to help improve it!


Contact Information

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  @_kentmc

Handouts: http://www.pbis.org

References


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