

Black Parents' Perspectives on School Psychology

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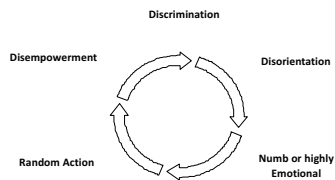
Dr. W.E.B. DuBois (1903) *Souls of Black Folk*



"They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? They say, I know an excellent colored man in my town, or, I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil?"

Discrimination Cycle

(victim or perpetrator) Gamble©2011, 2014



Discrimination Cycle (Break down)

A person can be discriminatory or discriminated against

Disoriented – Based on a lie and may even doubt yourself (Akbar, 1998)

Numb or High Emotions - Hypo or hyper emotional extremes. Vigilance of PTSD, numbness, disassociation, use of old thoughts and sensations that lead to stress (Williams, 2013; Wortham, 2015)

Random Action – Cognitive blocks, strange vocabulary, and trial and approach avoidance (Utesy et al, 2005)

Disempowerment – Less likely to try again and pain receptors more directly indicated for the next time (Williams, 2013). Lack of control, efficacy, or agency.

Mind/Body Check

How is your breathing?

Heart rate?

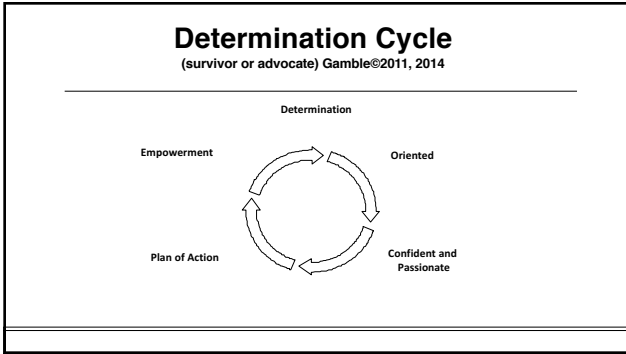
Like a movie, before we started you had a baseline and when the excitement came, what happened to your body?

Increase or decrease?

Dr. Asa Hilliard (1995) *The Maroon Within in Us*



W.E.B. DuBois said at the beginning of the century that, "The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line". The main difference between then and now is that in recent times the line has been drawn in "invisible ink".



Determination Cycle

Oriented – Rooted in people and culture. Family, friends, ancestors, and allies are sources of reality and “groundedness”.

Confident & Passionate – e.g. Mary McLeod Bethune, MLK, Fannie Lou Hamer, Malcolm X... They all called out the “isms”. Emotional awareness then regulation.

Plan of Action – See options, mobilization strategy, history review, synergy and innovation is the objective. Effectiveness over hype.

Empowerment – As sense of control over one’s life

Today’s Issues

- Appropriation
- Gentrification
- The school to prison pipeline
- Micro-aggressions
- Opportunity gaps
- School choice
- Black Lives Matter
- The “talk” for boys and girls about being the world (e.g. perception)

Check in On Feelings 3x3

Talk in groups of 3 for 3 minutes

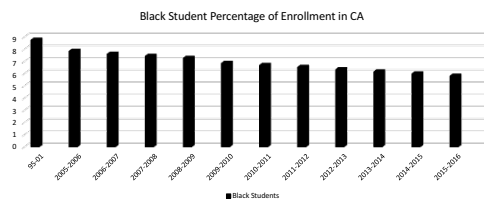
As a baseline, how do you feel going into this talk?

What comes up within your senses and thoughts when this subject arises?

Topics Today

- Parents in Cal in general and S.D.
- Larry P ruling and policy as a "passive micro-aggression"
- Disproportionality
- Accountability
- Waiver?
 - Break → Q & A
- Black Student Assessment and CASP
- Report writing and Larry P Statement
- Parent Study
- Resources in the Community and in the Literature

CA's Black Student Enrollment Has Dropped



California's Black Student Enrollment

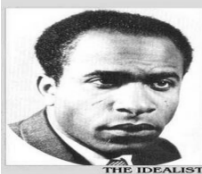
CA overall has 5.81% Black student enrollment

Trends that show Black families leaving urban areas (e.g. Bay Area to Stockton, Los Angeles to Riverside, West Coast to the South of the USA).

Black special education enrollment remains 3x as high for ED, 2x as high OHI & SLD. While ID and MD are at 8%, Aut and VI just above 7%

SDUSD Black student enrollment has decreased in several Handicapping Condition categories such as (e.g. ID, SL, ED, OHI, SLD, & AUT). General enrollment trends cannot account for all these decreases

Cognitive Dissonance



Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance. And because it is so important to protect the core belief, they will rationalize, ignore and even deny anything that doesn't fit in with the core belief.

- Frantz Fanon

Micro-aggression (For Black Parents and Black School

Psychologists... IQ Tests = MicroAgression)

Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment.

The Talk... What is the secret to the talk?



"It's the time of year when hundreds of thousands of American parents are shipping their children off to college for the first time. For most, it's a time of celebration. But for the black parents of college-bound sons, the rite of passage has long come with a quiet, unique sense of dread. These parents grapple with a scary open secret" ...

Approach Avoidance

- Multiple Approach-Avoidance describes the internal mental debate (sometimes called a conflict) that weighs the pros and cons of differing situations that have both good and bad elements. For school psychologists and parents, this occurs when:
 - School Psychologists* (e.g. This Larry P memo states I cannot give a Black child an IQ test yet the parents have consented for my assessment, what do I do?)
 - Black Parents* (e.g. My child needs help but I don't know anything about these tests and on top of that I hear they have to give my child an alternative test because they are Black?)

Meeting with Black Parents



What Black parents do make it to the school there are layers of trust issues. Some of which they have not discussed since they were in school. Inter-generational +/- info passed on Socio-economic factors A basic is that the parents and educators run in very different social circles but meet to talk about children

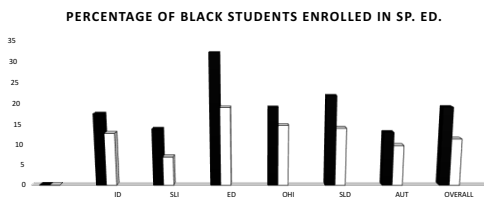
CASP & AB Psi History

<p>It is discriminatory to Black youth to not have access to proper testing</p> <p>School Psychologists should have the latest tools and freedom to use them</p> <p>Near 20 year hiatus from collaboration</p> <p>2013 at CASP Institute, Dr. William Thomas presents</p>	<p>Black youth are overrepresented in special education classes (CA Dept. of Ed., 2015)</p> <p>Alternatives to IQ testing and placement should be developed and refined.</p> <p>Near 20 year hiatus from collaboration</p> <p>2012 AB Psi in Los Angeles, CASP President Presents</p>
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Accountability vs. Test Kits

- For Black community members and families issues around assessment (e.g. macro and mirco) have to do less with the tests and more with the accountability to the community
- Lawsuits in SF, LA, and other places in the country where Black parents won had to do with the educators and/or school psychologists ignoring the life of Black students
- (e.g. Poorly trained psychometricians in the SF who did not do interviews or observations & in LA students placed in ED classes with a psycho-ed. report of BSP)
- The districts that have made progress in working with Black students have data-based accountability measures (e.g. LA, SD, MtD)
- Black parents don't care about your test kits, they care that you know their child and that you are using the best means to get to the root of the problem

An Example District in 2005 (L) and 2015 (R) comparison



Since Districts Like SD are Getting Right? Data-Based Waiver

- CASP's upcoming position paper on Assessment for Black Students recommends that districts or SELPA's like San Diego should apply for a waiver from the state
- For example, identify 3 to 5 schools where well documented assessment and interventions have been linked to overall academic and behavioral growth for Black students.
- Each of those sites' school psychologists should be allowed to using whatever means available to best assess and intervene for all young people at those school sites (e.g. RtI, PSW, Cognitive Tools, Neuro-Psych, Mediated Learning etc.)
- At the end of the 2-3 years, review the data make adjustments and apply it district wide.

BREAK TIME

2ND HALF CASP UPDATE CONTINUED
 REPORT WRITING AND STATEMENT ABOUT ASSESSMENT FOR
 BLACK STUDENTS
 PARENT STUDY
 RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

CASP's Papers Regarding Black Students

- Dr. James Hiramoto and BG, via the CLD committee, Legislative committee, and ABPsi have worked on 3 ideas
- CASP and CDE: *Mis-communication, Myth & Confusion* (Clarifying our position amongst members and the CDE, expresses frustration). Already out
 - CASP's Statement Regarding the Assessment and Placements of African American Students (School Psychologists)
 - Four reasons why the CDE ought to Lift the ban on administering cognitive ability tests to Black students (Focuses on Lifting the Ban)

CASP's Efforts to Connect with Parents

- From the 1980's to 2013 focused primarily on trying to convince parents that the SP's view point made the most sense and we sought out like minded parents (e.g. thought IQ tests were good for GATE, college entrance, good science)
- Politically, we never had a strong connection with Black parents or community group (e.g. ABPsi) and they were the constituency that brought the winning lawsuit against a Black Superintendent of CA's Education (Mr. Riles).
- Since 2013 CASP has made efforts to forge alliances and listen to Black parents and ABPsi members

What is Your District doing to connect with Black Parents?

3x3 (Group of 3 for 3 minutes)

Discuss in your groups the known contacts with Black parents.

Those unknown that you would like to make connections with...

At least 5 people ready to report out but also share those with your direct supervisor.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to learn more about parents' self-reported attributes of school psychologists as well as experiences in schools with educators and/or mental health providers in schools.

Black Ways of Being – Dr. Harold Stevenson (2003)

All bodies of water are not the same if you track their currents, temperatures, salt content, or role in the lives of the continents and people they boundary. Yet these bodies of water constitute a common substance, and the same exists among African Americans in a cultural urban context. (p. 522)

When we know more about the technology of the scientific collaboration and “partnership” and less about the humanity of the people who make up these “partnerships... we are contributing to a technology of missing data creation (p. 523)

“Suspending Damage” – Dr. Eve Tuck

DuBois asked, “How does it feel to be a problem”??? (1903)

“I invite you to join me in re-visioning research in our communities not only to recognize the need to document the effects of oppression on our communities but also to consider the long-term repercussions of thinking of ourselves as broken... (pg. 409)... (T)he danger in damage-centered research is that it is a pathologizing approach in which the oppression singularly defines a community (pg. 413)

(e.g. the Doll test by Kenneth and Maime Clark)...

“One alternative to damage-centered research is to craft our research to capture desire instead of damage. I submit that a desire-based framework is an antidote to damage-centered research” (pg. 416).

(e.g. Self photographs of Black people at the turn of the century to counteract stereotypes)

Other research examples are Dr. Shaun Harper’s college men study (2010) and Ta’neisha Coates discussion of Howard University’s homecoming as examples Black joy, pain, and brilliance (2015).

Method

Qualitative interviews with 9 open ended questions developed by members of the CASP Culturally Linguistic Diversity Committee, CSU faculty, and members of AB Psi residing in CA. Today, we’ll focus on 3 main questions.

A convenience sample from churches, colleagues who work in K-16 and higher education, historically Black fraternity members, social media, blogs, and word of mouth (i.e. snowball)... A sample of 34 parents. One couple.

Recorded and transcribed

Content analysis (still ongoing)

Demographics

- AGE: Ranged from 26-60 y/o. Most respondents between 38-48 y/o
- ETHNICITY: African & American (16), Caribbean (8.5) Black (7), White (2) Filipino (1), Latino (.5). An interesting mix of ethnicity. Black is diverse.
- GENDER: 15 men and 18 women
- MARITAL STATUS: Married (17), Div./Sep. (6), Single (4), Re-Married (3), Other (2)
- CHILDREN: ½ of the respondents had a combination of 1 boy and 1 girl. 8 had 2 boys. 4 families had more than 3 girls.
- SCHOOLING: Public (21.5), Private (11), Home school (.5). A good mix.
- EDUCATION: Master (17), Bachelor (8), S. College (4), Doctorate (4), High School (1). Highly educated sample
- WORK: Education (10.5), Business(7.5), Medical/Mental H (6), Gov./Military (3) , Others (1). Diverse background but Education overrepresented.
- YEARS WORK: 20+y (13), 10-15y (12), 15-19 (4), Less than 10 (3)... Stable work force

Research questions

1. What general types of support or help do Black parents think of help for their child, social/emotional, or family support?
2. How do Black parents perceive the role of the school psychologists? If they do have experience with a school psychologist, what was the quality of that experience?
3. What do Black parents expect of school psychologists in workshops?

School Psych Interactions

Reasons parents would contact a S. Psych?

Mostly indicated struggles in academics/career, emotions, social issues... Only 4 directly said mental health or school psychologist

Experience with a school psychologists or MH professional?

8 of the 33 interviews indicated a positive interaction with a school psychologist or other mental health professional. 9 had poor or mixed reviews

5 openly wondered what is a school psych or if there was one on their campus

8 Parents said, they had no contact with a school psychologist

5 parents chose to meet with other mental health providers

4 talked about school counseling experiences even after being promoted to talk about school psychologists. ¾ were negative experiences.

Workshop Topics?

- Parent/Child communication improved (8)
- Social skills, EQ, Depression/Suicide (8)
- Academics and career (7)
- Special Ed needs, services, and rights (5)
- Developmental milestones and gender differences (5)
- Bullying, peer pressure (4)
- Black or Culturally Relevant teaching and advocacy (4)
- PBIS, GATE
- Human Trafficking

Other Answers to be developed

Still working on coding the data with a more complex analysis

Some parents do not feel that schools can adequately advocate for their child and many of them were educators (i.e. our colleagues)

Most parents trusted teachers, administrators, coaches etc. before the school psychologists or school counselor but once they worked with us and had a positive interaction, they were likely to trust us

Limitations & Boundless Limits

Social circle helped to connect with parents of similar education to those who work in schools

Questions could be asked of any ethnic group

Skeptical parents --> Soapbox, especially for those with graduate education

Private vs. Public balance

Good balance of gender based on researchers' contacts

That said, each interview was eye opening and rewarding

Great opportunity! These folks are brilliant and passionate about their children.

Information from African immigrants (e.g. Ethiopians, Eritreans, Nigerians, Sudanese, Somalis etc.)

Dialogue

Preliminary results are consistent with:

Nancy Boyd Franklin predicted some of the responses regarding school psychologists.

Tried to adhere to Dr. Stevenson's admonition and found something surprising

Most of the parents would appreciate being asked about their opinion but also they want to know how to protect their child from bullying as well as better communicate with them

They don't want to hear about assessments, IQ, SAT scores etc. Protect from bullying and to be a better person!!! Related to Dr. Leon Caldwell's treatment via youth using Dr. Linda James Myers' Optimal Psychology

Recommendations 1

We can start with Stevenson (2003),

"The first step is to acknowledge the unpredictability of conducting research in urban communities.

"The second is to acknowledge the cultural relational clashes and connections that occur between and among community participants and researchers.

"The third and final recommendation is to appreciate the benefits when researchers successfully persuade key informants to behave in different but increasingly successful ways".

Recommendations 2

Set up workshops with parents that are based on these aforementioned or your own survey's needs.

Have ongoing conversations with Black parents about the services at the school

Do public relations, people don't even know who we are or how to access our services (e.g. 30 minutes of PR can save 3 hours of trying to establish rapport)

Read Black scientific literature, especially if you have more than the average Black population (i.e. +7%)... (e.g. the Journal of Negro Education, The Journal of Black Psychology, Journal of African American Males in Education etc.)

Black Parent Advisory Groups Examples in CA

African American Advisory Council of MVUSD
https://www.mvusd.net/parents/african-american-advisory-council_a_a_a_c

African American Parent Advisory Council of SFUSD
<http://www.sfusd.edu/en/councils-committees/african-american-parent-advisory-council.html>

Black Parents Association of San Mateo Union School District
<http://www.smuhsd.org/bpa>

Council for African American Parents
<http://www.councilofafricanamericanparents.org>

Local Resources and Contacts

Dr. Pamela Thompson (2014) Dissertation from UCSD
<http://gradworks.umi.com/36/21/3621608.html>

Riverside County African-American Achievement – Blueprint for Action. <http://www.rcoe.us/leadership-institute/riverside-county-african-american-achievement-initiative-rcaai/blueprint-for-action-2/>

Western Region of the Association of Black Psychologists – Representative is me... www.abpsi.org

Stevenson’s (2003) Final Thoughts

“I am not suggesting that all Black ways of being are the same, or that all Black people or communities are alike, but these ways are identifiable, even as they are diverse....

Finally, if this different but diverse orientation exists, its existence is important and its invisibility is detrimental to successful intervention research endeavors”.

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