The Disproportionate Representation of Minorities in Special Education

DIS/RUPT
What is Disproportionality?

- Refers to the “overrepresentation” and “underrepresentation” of a particular ethnic/culture group in special education programs.

- Overrepresented in special education services due to inappropriate referrals to special education.

- Underrepresented in intervention services, resources, access to programs, and rigorous curriculum and instruction—either through placements in more restrictive special education services or through discipline policies that remove students from school (NEA Truth in Labeling, 2007).
What is Disproportionality?

- Refers to the “overrepresentation” and “underrepresentation” of a particular ethnic/culture group in special education programs.

- Overrepresented in special education services due to inappropriate referrals to special education.

- Underrepresented in intervention services, resources, access to programs, and rigorous curriculum and instruction—either through placements in more restrictive special education services or through discipline policies that remove students from school (NEA Truth in Labeling, 2007).
Data Overview

- African American students are overrepresented in having an intellectual disability and emotional behavior disability category.
- American Indians are overrepresented in the specific learning disability category.
- Asian/Pacific Islanders are underrepresented in almost every category.
- Caucasian students are overrepresented in the gifted and talented programs and specific learning disability category.
- African American, Latino/Hispanic and American Indian students are underrepresented in the gifted/talented category.
Data Overview

- African American students are overrepresented in having an intellectual disability and emotional behavior disability category.
- American Indians are overrepresented in the specific learning disability category.
- Asian/Pacific Islanders are underrepresented in almost every category.
- Caucasian students are overrepresented in the gifted and talented programs and specific learning disability category.
- African American, Latino/Hispanic and American Indian students are underrepresented in the gifted/talented category.
• Nationally, 35 percent of African American students are enrolled in Special Education as having an intellectual disability.

• 17 percent are enrolled in the nation’s public schools.

• 26.4 percent are diagnosed with having an Emotional Behavior Disability (EBD).
• Nationally, 35 percent of African American students are enrolled in Special Education as having an intellectual disability.
• 17 percent are enrolled in the nation’s public schools.
• 26.4 percent are diagnosed with having an Emotional Behavior Disability (EBD).
• Nationally, 35 percent of African American students are enrolled in Special Education as having an intellectual disability.
• 17 percent are enrolled in the nation’s public schools.
• 26.4 percent are diagnosed with having an Emotional Behavior Disability (EBD).
Root Causes of Disproportionality

- Cultural Differences
- Lack of Prereferral Interventions
- Biased Testing/Assessments/Evaluation
Root Causes of Disproportionality

• Cultural Differences
• Lack of Prereferral Interventions
• Biased Testing/Assessments/Evaluation
Root Causes of Disproportionality

- Cultural Differences
- Lack of Prereferral Interventions
- Biased Testing/Assessments/Evaluation
Strategies to Reduce Disproportionality

- Culturally Responsive Classroom and Teaching
- Pre-Referral Interventions and Modifications
- Higher Expectations for Students of Color
Strategies to Reduce Disproportionality

- Culturally Responsive Classroom and Teaching
- Pre-Referral Interventions and Modifications
- Higher Expectations for Students of Color
Strategies to Reduce Disproportionality

- Culturally Responsive Classroom and Teaching
- Pre-Referral Interventions and Modifications
- Higher Expectations for Students of Color
The Teacher’s Role

Many teachers and students at all grade level report feeling disconnected from each other and at times even distrustful of one another. The foundation to any positive relationships is trust. Student-Teacher relationships is the key ingredient in helping culturally and linguistically diverse dependent learners authentically engage in school. (Cammarota and Romero 2006)
The Teacher’s Role

Many teachers and students at all grade level report feeling disconnected from each other and at times even distrustful of one another. The foundation to any positive relationships is trust. Student-Teacher relationships is the key ingredient in helping culturally and linguistically diverse dependent learners authentically engage in school. (Cammarota and Romero 2006)
Many teachers and students at all grade level report feeling disconnected from each other and at times even distrustful of one another. The foundation to any positive relationships is trust. Student-Teacher relationships is the key ingredient in helping culturally and linguistically diverse dependent learners authentically engage in school. (Cammarota and Romero 2006)
The Reality Pedagogy
The Reality Pedagogy
The Reality Pedagogy
Time’s Up!

• About you:
  – Name: Shalynn Leonard
  – Department: Special Education (Teacher Candidate and Masters in Education Candidate)
  – Contact Information: shayl2@uw.edu
  – Quick bio: Shalynn Leonard is a Paraprofessional for the Seattle Public Schools. She has a passion to serve disenfranchised at-risk youth and has been doing so for over 15 years, through coaching athletics and in education.