How to identify and minimize “signal” influences?

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICE

Francesca López
University of Arizona
College of Education

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5 Strategies to Start the Year Right!

1. Reflect on your own beliefs and challenge yourself to move beyond fixed ideas.
2. Welcome students by name as they enter the classroom (Learn to correctly pronounce students’ names).
3. Ensure that literature and instructional material reflect racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.
4. Seek multiple perspectives
5. Use students’ real life experiences to connect school learning to students’ lives.

Why should we care about this?
8TH GRADE READING NAEP

The graph shows the scale scores for 8th grade reading NAEP from 1992 to 2015. Different markers represent different racial and ethnic groups. The graph indicates trends over time and differences in performance among these groups. Red arrows highlight significant changes or trends in the data.
8TH GRADE MATH NAEP
Social Equity Theory (SET):

- Direct Influences
  - Parenting practices
  - Neighborhood influences
  - Quality of instruction

These socially transmitted influences affect all children and explain ALL achievement disparities...until children are about 8 years old.
DIRECT INFLUENCES NOT STATISTICALLY-CONTROLLED

Pre-K – Grade 2

Achievement
DIRECT INFLUENCES STATISTICALLY-CONTROLLED

Achievement

Pre-K – Grade 2
DIRECT INFLUENCES STATISTICALLY-CONTROLLED

Grade 3

Achievement
DIRECT INFLUENCES STATISTICALLY-CONTROLLED
DIRECT INFLUENCES STATISTICALLY-CONTROLLED

Grade 5

Achievement
DIRECT INFLUENCES STATISTICALLY-CONTROLLED

Grade 5 +

Achievement
Social Equity Theory (SET):

- **Direct Influences**
  - Parenting practices
  - Neighborhood influences
  - Quality of instruction

- **Signal Influences**
  - "social events that signal to members of negatively stereotyped groups that they are devalued because of their membership" (McKown, 2013, p. 1125)
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2. Welcome students by name as they enter the classroom (Learn to correctly pronounce students’ names).

3. Ensure that literature and instructional material reflect racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

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5. Use students’ real life experiences to connect school learning to students’ lives.

These matter because they reduce signal influences
Ladson-Billings (1995) argues there are three domains of culturally relevant pedagogy:

- Conceptions of self and others
- Conceptions of knowledge
- Social relations
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Today’s objective: to be able to identify and evaluate (and reduce) behaviors that transmit signal influences

I. Conceptions of self and others: Deficiency messages through “language of lacking”

II. Conceptions of knowledge: Challenging knowledge
We examine social interactions in schools/classrooms for:

I. Deficiency messages through “language of lacking”
   - Labels
   - Students’ names
   - Meritocracy
   - Microaggressions

II. Challenging knowledge
   - Who’s reality is validated?
As you watch the clips, jot down your impressions
- What is going on “right?”
- What requires redirection or intervention?

After we watch the clips, you’ll share your impressions with a few of your colleagues.
- What were the most salient differences between the teachers’ approaches in the two videos?
As administrators, when you see what is going on, think about:

- What is prompting this reaction?
- How would you intervene?
A BRIEF CLASSROOM CLIP
Two key questions to identify CR practices versus signal influences by gauging the source of the transmission of information:

- Is it rooted in biases that become a lens of “truth”? (Teacher-centered, 1st & 3rd video)
- Does it reflect multiple perspectives? (Student-centered, second video)
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PART I: SELF AND OTHERS
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Watch the video and see if you capture “language of lacking”

Demographics: 55% White, 8% Black, 10% Hispanic, 27% Asian
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In my own research, when I ask teachers:

- **What are the obstacles to your students’ success?**

I see two patterns:

- The limitations they see in themselves (wanting and taking steps to learn to be better) → more CRP
- The limitations they see in their students and students’ parents → more signal influences
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Let’s look at biases: what are they and why do we care?

- “Beliefs based on stereotypes”
- Stereotypes build with confirmation bias
- Stereotypes are assumed to be “truth”
- They are the lens used to evaluate
- Biases inform behaviors
- These promote
  - language of lacking
  - limitations within students rather than self
Identifying signal influences: Conceptions of self and others

- Deficiency messages through “language of lacking”
WAYS WE TRANSMIT DEFICIENCIES

Labels
Labeling is the assignment of a descriptor to an individual based on selected behavioral and/or physical characteristics.

In society, an assigned label essentially places the individual into a specified group possessing similar characteristics.

By design, a label can serve the discriminatory purpose of distinguishing the individual (and others similarly labeled) from the rest of society and provide information about the individual regardless of its accuracy.

(Gold & Richards, 2012)
Let’s look at all the labels we use, and identify what they reflect.

How can revise the labels?
8TH GRADE READING NAEP
I want to argue that this all-out focus on the “Achievement Gap” moves us toward short-term solutions that are unlikely to address the long-term underlying problem. (Ladson-Billings, 2006)
Ladson-Billings (2006)

Not Achievement Gap, but Opportunity Gap: Debt

- Historical
- Economic
- Sociopolitical
- Moral
Achievement gap → Opportunity Gap

Notice that the first term is imposed and can place the blame on the student; the second reflects the situation that perpetuates obstacles.
- Achievement gap → Opportunity Gap
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Achievement gap → Opportunity Gap

With your groups, identify other often-used terms and what some replacements might be

Goal: reframe and rename the otherwise deficiency language we use

“...by casting Latino students as bearers of valuable assets—language and cultural knowledge—we may find that they have as much or more to offer as students who have traditionally garnered success in US schools. Perhaps we could even “relabel” Latino students in a way that also allows them to believe in their own potential.” (Gándara, 2015, p. 460)

English language learner → Emergent bilingual
NAMES
BIASES

- What does the teacher say his background is?
- What are the student demographics?
By conveying the absurdity of changing names, the sketch is an opportunity to view more critically the ‘stereotypes’ and how we enforce them in our behaviors (or what we believe)
Mispronouncing or even worse, renaming students has been shown to have a negative, lasting impact on students.

What does your name mean to you? We receive our names from beloved family members or special people who are close to our family. We may be named after a family member, a saint, or a positive personality characteristic. Our name may recall an event, tell where the stars were at our birth, or state an aspiration of our future.

Since each of us is unique, so is our name. Because our name is tied to our identity, we would not wish to have our names changed or mispronounced. When our name is changed or unintentionally mispronounced, it is a misrepresentation of who we are -- because our name represents our identity.
And teachers can also incorporate students’ names to be culturally inclusive

See METX 00051
WAYS WE TRANSMIT DEFICIENCIES

Meritocracy
Meritocracy:

Sociological term introduced by Michael Young (1958).

System whereby those who deserve to yield power do because of merit (intelligence and effort).

Notion of equal opportunity; no bias exists.
Watch the video and see if you capture "language of lacking" in terms of meritocracy

Demographics: 100% Black
Why was that language of lacking?

- **Demographics: 100% Black**

Analyses of more recent data all come to similar conclusions: a sizable proportion of racial disparities in prison cannot be explained by criminal offending.

By claiming “perfect people” don’t go to prison, it suggests that the disproportionality seen in incarceration rates are all the fault of people. It ignores the data on the school-to-prison pipeline. Although the clip was in Tennessee, where African American males are 3.5 times as likely as White males to be incarcerated, it is about 5 time as likely in AZ. It is not an innocuous statement when we understand the social context.
**MERITOCRACY**

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- Demographics: 100% Black

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OTHER WAYS WE TRANSMIT DEFICIENCIES

Microaggressions
What are they?

“brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a .... minority group” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273)

Although subtle in delivery, researchers have found microaggressions to be cumulative in nature and “more problematic, damaging, and injurious to persons of color than overt racist acts” (Sue, 2003, p. 48)
"What ARE you?"

HUMAN.

Being biracial doesn't make me a 'what'.
The limited representation of my race in your classroom does not make me the voice of all Black People.
When people think it's weird that I listen to Carrie Underwood
"You don't speak Spanish?"
" Courtney
I never
see you as
a black girl"

#survive
#OPENYOUREYES!
“You don’t act like a normal black person ya’ know?”
WHAT ARE MICROAGGRESSIONS?
“...brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273)

Essentially, it is a message transmitted wherein the microaggressor’s lens (stereotype) is imposed on person receiving the microaggressions
Activity: Why are these messages denigrating?

Note: context is critical. Some of the statements may not inherently be microaggressions in particular context.
MICROAGGRESSIONS

- “You speak good English.”
- “You are a credit to your race.”
- “You are so articulate.”
- Asking an Asian person to help with a math problem.
- When I look at you, I don’t see color.
So what is the answer?

Microaggressions are likely to occur when teachers impose their presumed knowledge to make a statement about the student’s identity.

This is why, with cultural responsiveness, it is student-centered: how does the student see themselves? How do they view their identity?

Multiple perspectives
- not only racial/ethnic, but other types of microaggressions (e.g., gender)
MICROAGGRESSIONS
Knowledge must be viewed critically

Knowledge is not static; it is shared, recycled, and reconstructed

(Ladson-Billings, 1995)
PART II: CONCEPTIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

METX 13124 6th ELA @ 9:00
Consider the teacher’s answer to her question, “What does it mean when I say authentic?”

“Authentic means real. Comes from a real, *published* author. Something that has been researched, and proven, and edited.”
Consider the teacher’s answer to her question, “What does it mean when I say authentic?”

Now consider two more things: her students and statistics about so-called “authentic” texts

- Title I school
- 2% White, 8% Black, 34% Hispanic, 55% Asian, 1% Other
THE DIVERSITY GAP IN CHILDREN’S BOOKS
21 YEARS ★ 1994–2014

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN’S BOOKS BY AND/OR ABOUT
PEOPLE OF COLOR

37% OF THE US POPULATION ARE PEOPLE OF COLOR
10% OF CHILDREN’S BOOKS IN THE PAST 21 YEARS CONTAIN MULTICULTURAL CONTENT

DESPITE THE BEST EFFORTS OF LEE & LOW BOOKS AND OTHER PUBLISHERS AND IMPRINTS THAT FOCUS ON MULTICULTURAL THEMES, THE NUMBER OF BOOKS THAT CONTAIN DIVERSITY HAS NOT GROWN.

MINORITY % OF US POPULATION

2012
118.2M
37%

2060
241.3M
57%

DID YOU KNOW?
THE US IS PROJECTED TO BECOME A MAJORITY-
“MINORITY” NATION IN 2043.

LEE & LOW BOOKS  blog.leeandlow.com
CONCEPTIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

- What does the teacher’s statement transmit to students given the context?
- Why should it be challenged?
REVISITING EVALUATIONS OF SIGNAL INFLUENCES

- We know “quality” teaching is important...
- ...but it is insufficient.
- Signal influences perpetuate disparities, and they are expressions of biases we all hold.
Two key questions to identify CR practices versus signal influences by gauging the source of the transmission of information:

- Is it rooted in biases that become a lens of “truth”? (Teacher-centered)
- Does it reflect multiple perspectives? (Student-centered)
We examine social interactions in schools for:

- Deficiency versus asset messages through signal influences
  - Labels
  - Students’ names
  - Meritocracy
  - Microaggressions

- Challenging knowledge
  - Who’s reality is validated?

- 2016-2017 Study → PLCs
REFERENCES

Teachers should read:

Examining the myth of meritocracy:

How to honor names and other classroom activities:
- [https://www.mynamemyidentity.org/](https://www.mynamemyidentity.org/)

Understanding the school to prison pipeline: