Supporting “those kids”: Behavior Assessment Training project in Illinois

Louise M. Yoho, Phd
Southern Illinois University

Michelle Connet, M.Ed.
Southern Illinois University
Welcome and Introductions
Session description

Culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse children and youth with disabilities make up a disproportionate percentage of students who receive punitive, restrictive, and often exclusionary disciplinary actions. This presentation will offer information and activities focusing on implementation of responsive, evidence-based behavior interventions to minimize exclusionary discipline and increase student success.
Participant outcomes

1. Identify assumptions and biases related to challenging behavior by culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse students.

2. Best practices for addressing behavior and developing BIPs.

3. Discuss current issues related to understanding a student’s background and adhering to evidence-based behavior interventions.
The Behavior Assessment Training (BAT) project provides professional webinars by content experts on implicit bias, culturally responsive functional behavior assessment (FBA) practices, behavior intervention plans (BIPs), the impact of trauma and other adverse circumstances, family collaboration and early childhood.

This project is funded by the Illinois State Board of Education through an IDEA Part B Federal Grant.
Importance of topic

Culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse children and youth with disabilities make up a disproportionate percentage of students who receive punitive, restrictive, and often exclusionary disciplinary actions.
• The BAT Project was formed as a response to address Illinois school districts identified as having significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of children with IEPS (Indicator 4).

• Data utilized for this analysis have been submitted to ISBE by local districts through the state student information system for 3 consecutive years.

• Identified districts are required to complete a root cause analysis and an in-depth analysis of policies, procedures and practices to identify why a discrepancy exists.

• Targeted districts are required to submit progress reports demonstrating that the strategies and activities outlined in their Corrective Action Plan are being implemented with fidelity and will result in systemic change.


Indicator 4: Suspension/Expulsion (isbe.net)
## Illinois vs US Suspensions

### IL Out-of-School Suspensions (2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>26,115</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students of Color</td>
<td>82,048</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>795,834</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students of Color</td>
<td>1,625,589</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Number of students receiving selected disciplinary actions in public elementary and secondary schools, by type of disciplinary action, disability status, sex, and race/ethnicity: 2017-18*

*Expulsions, Suspensions, and Truants by District (isbe.net)*
# Illinois vs. US Suspensions

## IL In-School Suspensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>50,982</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students of Color</td>
<td>120,415</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## US In-School Suspensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>982,006</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students of Color</td>
<td>1,550,560</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Number of students receiving selected disciplinary actions in public elementary and secondary schools, by type of disciplinary action, disability status, sex, and race/ethnicity: 2017-18

Expulsions, Suspensions, and Truants by District (isbe.net)
## Illinois Expulsion with Educational Services

- 2017 – 2019 Average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students of Color</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Expulsions, Suspensions, and Truants by District (isbe.net)*
Big Picture
Reasons Students With IEPs Gave for Dropping Out of High School

- **Academic difficulty/Poor grades/Not doing well**
  - SLD: 9.7%
  - OHI: 6.8%
  - All disabilities: 8.7%
- **Does not like school/Poor relationships with teachers, school staff, students**
  - SLD: 4.9%
  - OHI: 4.9%
  - All disabilities: 5.0%
- **Family needs/Change in family situation**
  - SLD: 14.2%
  - OHI: 13.0%
  - All disabilities: 13.2%
- **Illness or disability**
  - SLD: 9.7%
  - OHI: 6.8%
  - All disabilities: 7.9%
- **Other reason for leaving secondary school**
  - SLD: 22.9%
  - OHI: 31.1%
  - All disabilities: 28.2%

% of NLTS2 Respondents Who Dropped Out of High School
What the BAT project is doing about it

• Monthly Webinars
• Annual Conference
• District-specific support
• Guidance document
• Technical assistance library

We have reached over 90 attendees from 54 educational entities from across the state of Illinois.
Foundational Framework

• Topic 1: Implicit Bias
  • Part 1: Implicit Bias & Stereotype Awareness: viewing student behavior through a personal lens
  • Part 2: Evaluating our own bias: viewing student behavior through a contextual lens
  • Part 3: Legal & Ethical requirements of FBAs and BIPs: viewing student behavior through a professional lens
  • Part 4: Viewing student behavior through an action plan

Topic 2: Culturally responsive FBAs/BIPs
  • Part 1: Culturally responsive evidence-based behavioral interventions
  • Part 2: Culturally responsive evidence-based functional behavior assessments
  • Part 3: Culturally responsive evidence-based behavior intervention plan
  • Part 4: Expanding on Major Themes
Culturally Relevant

• a focus on student learning and academic success

• developing students’ cultural competence to assist students in developing positive ethnic and social identities

• supporting students’ critical consciousness or their ability to recognize and critique societal inequalities.

Culturally Responsive

“When academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference for students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly.” ~ Geneva Gay, 2000
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994): is "a pedagogy of opposition specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment."

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) by Geneva Gay (2000) is used to describe "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively."
BEING CULTURALLY RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE

Know Your Learners
- How do I develop deep knowledge about individuals to know how they learn best and where they are in their learning?
- How do I form strong relationships with student families and caregivers to embrace a collaborative approach to learning?
- How do I design curriculum in which learners see themselves reflected in it?
- How do I hold an asset-based approach with each learner that fosters cultural and linguistic pluralism?

Hold High Expectations
- How do I ensure each student is being appropriately challenged?
- How do I ensure learners have the right types of scaffolds to engage in the learning process?
- How do I create a safe, productive, and kind learning space for all?
- How do I use a variety of assessments to inform student actions as they achieve these expectations?

Desire to Make a Difference
- How do I commit to being a change agent to make education more equitable for all learners?
- How do I work to remove existing barriers and create conditions for learning that are beneficial for all?
- How do I teach my students that who they are and how they treat others is just as, if not more, important than what they know?
Strengths-based

• What do your students do well?
• What strengths do they bring with them?
• How does their presence enhance your room?
Disproportionate Representation

▶ **Overrepresentation:** a situation in which greater numbers of students of certain groups are placed in special education than you would expect based on their numbers in the school population.

▶ **Underrepresentation:** fewer students in a particular category than one might expect based on their numbers in the school population.
There is typically an *overrepresentation* of historically marginalized students in special education programs.

There is typically an *underrepresentation* of historically marginalized students in gifted and talented programs.
Issues with over- and underrepresentation occur in disability categories in which professional judgement and opinion play a key role in the decision-making process.
Figure 9.1. Percentage of 3- to 21-year-olds served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, by race/ethnicity: School year 2015–16
Racial Disparities in Discipline

• 2017 – 2019 Average of Illinois Discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Discipline</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-School Suspension</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>48,035</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students of Color</td>
<td>113,989</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Discipline</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-School Suspension</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>24,379</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students of Color</td>
<td>76,195</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expulsions, Suspensions, and Truants by District (isbe.net)
Discipline disparities

• Racial disparity in special education has not meaningfully changed since initial passage of IDEA

• Suspension is a social justice issue
  • Racial/ethnic disparity
  • Disability inequities in addition to learning difficulties

• Suspension and/or expulsion can lead to dropping out

• Larger number and lengthier time out of school for Black students can contribute to negative outcomes

Factors Contributing to Over- and Underrepresentation

- Relationship between family socioeconomic status (poverty)
- Identification procedures by professionals from culturally dominant backgrounds
- Instructional methodologies reflect dominant culture
- Dominant culture teachers’ perceptions of diverse students’ learning needs
Subjectivity in behavior descriptions and expectations

The Three D's
Defiance
Disrespect
Disruption
Common understandings help eliminate ambiguity and confusion

- Consistent expectations
- Consistent feedback
- Consistent data collection
Vague Terms

- Inappropriate/Appropriate
- Insubordinate
- Rude
- Aggressive
- Loud
- Polite
- Dis/Respectful
(Un)Measurable Terminology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationalize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Neighbor Check In

• Discuss vague terms with your neighbor
• Replace vague terms with more specific terminology.
• Briefly share with the larger group.

2:00 minutes
When to use what

Evidence-based interventions

• Validated for a specific purpose with a specific population
• Only useful for a range of problems
• Must be paired up with the right situation.

A hammer is not an effective tool for every job.
Fidelity and Match

Evidence that supports interventions assume that the treatment is used in the manner that it was researched.

Changing parts of an intervention, while typical, can invalidate the evidence-based intervention.

There are many ways to change an intervention (frequency, materials, setting), which can alter the effectiveness of the evidence-based interventions.
Interventions Based on Data

- Data-based individualization (DBI) is the systematic use of assessment data to monitor student progress and provide intensified interventions.

- Allows teachers to determine if an intervention is improving student outcomes with concrete information and make adjustments if needed.

https://exceptionalchildren.org/topics/data-based-individualization

intensiveintervention.org
One size does not fit all
Early Feedback

- Webinar trainings feedback
- Needs assessment tool for districts
- Limited participation
State Guidance Document

- 1996
- Based on survey data
- Outdated practices
State Guidance Document

- Sections edited, taken out completely, and added
  - Trauma-informed practices
  - Juvenile justice
  - Restorative practices
  - Early childhood
  - MTSS
    - PBIS
- Working groups
  - Teachers
  - Special education faculty
  - School nurse
  - BCBAs
  - Lawyers
  - Parents
  - District administrators
Future opportunities

• Graduate student opportunities
• Guidance document revisions
• Webinars
  • Focus on administrators
• Annual conference
Thank you for your participation!

This project is funded by the Illinois State Board of Education through an IDEA Part B Federal Grant.
Let's continue the conversation

Louise M. Yoho, PhD
School of Education
223H Wham Hall
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901
louise.yoho@siu.edu

Michelle Connet, M. Ed.
STEM Education Research Center
Pullium Hall 204
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901
michelle.connet@siu.edu

Behavior Assessment Training | STEM Education Research Center | SIU