SUSPENDED:
THE DYNAMICS OF DISCIPLINE, RACE, AND GENDER IN SCHOOLS
VIDEO: A NOT-UNUSUAL EXAMPLE
YOUR QUESTIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

- In general, from your own experience?
- How these might intersect with race and gender? (the “discipline gap”)
WHAT DO THESE STUDENTS WANT FROM THEIR TEACHERS, AND WHAT DOES THAT TELL US?

1. I will care about you. I will never be mean to you. I will never yell at you or call you out.
2. I will understand when you need a break.
3. I will always let you ask lots of questions.
4. I will be patient with you.
5. I will listen to what you say and try to understand what you are saying.
6. I will try to explain things clearly to you.
7. I will look around the room before I call on students to make sure that everyone is getting turns to talk.
8. I will walk around the room and help when you are working on your own or are very frustrated. I will help you to be a good learner.
9. I will give you homework that is medium hard and is interesting to do so that you can learn a lot of math.
10. I will make sure that the class is respectful when you share your ideas in class (for example, no laughing or loud disagreeing when people say what they think)
TONIGHT’S GOALS

1. To learn about contemporary problems and patterns with classroom discipline
2. To consider possible solutions to these problems
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<th></th>
<th>BLACK</th>
<th>HISPANIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALES</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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FROM ACHIEVEMENT GAP TO OPPORTUNITY GAP
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE “DISCIPLINE GAP”?

Black students make up—

16% of school ENROLLMENT

42% of those SUSPENDED more than once
IT STARTS EARLY

- Black preschoolers 3.6 times more likely to be suspended than White children
- 19% of preschool population; 47% of suspensions

Yale study (2016) with 135 teachers
- Videos of Black boy and girl, White boy and girl
- No problematic behavior in either video
- Eye-tracking technology showed that teachers were watching the Black children more
- 42% of the teachers said that the Black boy’s behavior needed attention

Gilliam, Maupin, et al. (2016). Do Early Educators’ Implicit Biases Regarding Sex and Race Relate to Behavior Expectations and Recommendations of Preschool Expulsions and Suspensions? Yale University Child Study Center, New Haven, CT.
TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

- Many studies that show effects of racial and gender bias in teachers’ perceptions, interpretations, and interactions with students.
- These affect: assignment to special education and gifted/talented programs, discipline (including suspensions and expulsions).
CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS OF K–12 STUDENTS

- White: 59% (2003), 50% (2013), 46% (2025)
- Black: 17% (2003), 16% (2013), 15% (2025)
- Hispanic: 19% (2003), 25% (2013), 29% (2025)
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 4% (2003), 5% (2013), 6% (2025)
- American Indian/Alaska Native: 1% (2003), 1% (2013), 1% (2025)
- Two or more races: 3% (2003), 4% (2013), - (2025)
TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS: RACE AND GENDER

82% WHITE
76% WOMEN
DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDE IN THE U.S.: K–12 TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

- **Teachers:**
  - Of Color: 18%
  - White: 82%

- **Students:**
  - Of Color: 48%
  - White: 52%
WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

- Adults—especially white adults—routinely perceive children of color as:
  - older (biologically and socially)
  - less innocent
  - more defiant

- Transgressions by children of color are more often viewed as intentional and malicious (rather than the result of immature decision-making)

- Children of color disproportionately receive harsher discipline than their white peers
A BRIEF FIELD TRIP TO A FIFTH GRADE CLASSROOM
MEET VIRSHAWN

10 years old, Black male

In fourth grade:

- He was often sent out of the room, to the hall or the principal’s office
- He was in trouble often
- He wasn’t doing well in math
- He was articulate and liked to write
THE MINICOMPUTER

- Abstract mathematical context for work on number relationships, mathematical structure, arithmetic properties (e.g., distributive property), even and odd numbers
- Also a setting for developing skills of mathematical argument and analysis, as well as proof
- Novel and complex mathematical environment for children

(Papy Minicomputer)
REASONING WITH THE MINICOMPUTER
WHAT SHAPES HOW WE PERCEIVE CHILDREN?

Virshawn between 11:19 – 11:25

What do you think about Virshawn?
At 11:26, the teacher says, “You know what, Virshawn, I am going to need you to come up here closer where you can see and hear and won’t be distracted.”
Over the next minute, Virshawn is raising his hand to answer questions.
At 11:27, the teacher says, “Virshawn, you get to come up and make a number because you are the closest person to the board.” “You can have two checkers and you can put them wherever you want, and make a number, and then you can call on somebody.”
AT 11:28, VIRSHAWN TAKES THE ROLE OF “TEACHER”
VIRSHAWN, ONE WEEK LATER

THE TWO-CHECKER PROBLEM

What numbers are possible to make on the Minicomputer with exactly two positive checkers?
ADDING A NEGATIVE CHECKER

The children found that 7, 11, 13, 14, and 15 were impossible with exactly two checkers.

EXTENSION:
Can you make 7, 11, 13, 14, and 15 if you have a negative checker?
You must use both positive checkers and you can use one negative checker if it is useful.
VIDEO: VIRSHAWN, ONE WEEK LATER

Then the purple is a four, the red is a two, and the white is a one, so you couldn't do it without a- without if- without another negative number.
WHAT SHAPES HOW HIS TEACHERS MIGHT PERCEIVE VIRSHAWN?

- Views about what counts as “engagement” or being “off-task”
- Their own knowledge of math and what “doing math” involves
- Decisions about how to “read” him, and actions following those decisions
INTERVENING ON THE DISCIPLINE GAP THROUGH TEACHER EDUCATION
QUESTION
Which rod is three times as long as light green?
LEARNING GOAL RELATED TO INTRODUCING NORMS AND ROUTINES FOR CLASSROOM DISCOURSE AND WORK

1. Identifying specific norms and routines for classroom discourse

2. Naming ways norms and routines are introduced to the children

3. Developing practice-based consciousness about racial/gender narratives: Noticing specific children’s strengths with taking up the norms

- Notice specific norms that are being introduced:
  - Which are explicit?
  - Which are implicit?
  - What is your evidence?

- Identify at least one way that the teacher introduces the norm/routine to the class

- Name two examples of children taking up the norm and identify a way that they might be “read” and how you see their strengths
VIDEO: FIRST DAY OF CLASS
QUIZ

1. What is the “discipline gap”?
2. According to research, what is one way that racial and gender biases shape the “discipline gap”?
3. What is one thing that could be done to close the “discipline gap”?
4. How are patterns of disproportionate school discipline related to larger social problems?
THANK YOU!

dball@umich.edu

Slides will be available on my website
("Google" Deborah Ball)
Data on slide 8:

Data on slide 11:

Data on slide 12:

Data on slides 13:

Graphic on slides 17, 18, 24, 25, and 26