Healing for Children of A Darker Hue: An in-depth look at the affects and effects of Special Education in relation to African-American students.

George Williams, Jr. & Tarrance D. LeNoir
Doctoral Student Masters Student
geowillj@unm.edu africanangel4u_70yahoo.com

With Dr. T. Peele-Eady, Department of LLSS

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Advance Organizer

- History of African American education 
  (Anderson and Kluger)
- Facts on Public Education
- History of Disproportionate students
- What is Overrepresentation?
- Recommendations (Foster and Peele-Eady)
- Q’s and A’s
EDUCATION AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE
Nineteenth Century

- Slaves’ fundamental belief in the value of education
- President Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation
- Equality and freedom for Blacks in America
  - Voting rights
  - Equal opportunity
- The next 100 years
Civil Rights Movement

African American families wanted their children to benefit from the same resources and facilities provided to white children.
“THE AFRICAN AMERICAN STRUGGLE for desegregation, did not arise because anyone believed that there was something magical about sitting next to whites in a classroom. It was, however, based on a belief that the dominant group would keep control of the most successful schools and that the only way to get full range of opportunities for a minority child was to get access to those schools.”

- Gary Orfield, Co- Director at the Harvard Civil Rights Project
Brown V. Board of Education of Topeka

- May 17, 1954
  - the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that racial segregation in public schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution

- The 1954 decision declared that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal.
FACTS ON PUBLIC EDUCATION
Academics

- 12 percent of African American 4th graders have reached proficient or advanced reading levels (Gordon, 2005)

- Black children scored 16 percent below white children on a national assessment in reading ability (Gordon, 2005)

- Many Black 17 year-old students graduating high school have the math skills of White 8th graders (Peele-Eady, Nasir, and Pang, 2007)
Promotions, Retentions, Suspensions, and Expulsions

- 18 percent of Black students have been retained at least once (Gordon, 2005)

- 1/3 African Americans students in the seventh- twelfth grades have been suspended or expelled at some point (Gordon, 2005)
HISTORY OF DISPROPORTIONATE STUDENTS
Civil Rights Movement - 1960’s

- The issue of disproportionality of minority students in special education first received national attention.

- Researchers and practitioners studied the issue in an effort to:
  - understand and explain the processes used to identify, assess, and place students in special education programs.
Lloyd Dunn

Examined concerns that African American children were disproportionately placed in special education re-segregated into substantially separate classes for the mentally retarded (Dunn, 1968).

With the belief that current special education practices were morally and educationally wrong, he stated:

“In my best judgment, about 60 to 80 percent of the pupils taught by these teachers are children from low-status backgrounds—Afro-Americans, American Indians, Mexicans, and Puerto Rican Americans; those from nonstandard English speaking broken, disorganized and inadequate homes; and children from other nonmiddle class environments” (p.6).
Landmark Court Case

- **Larry P. v. Riles**
  - The outcome of this trial was to declare the disproportionate representation of African American students in programs for students with MMR discriminatory
  - Ban the use of IQ tests with African American students, and order the elimination of overrepresentation of African American students in Educable Mental Retardation (EMR) programs
WHAT IS DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION?
What is Disproportionate Representation?

- The overrepresentation or under-representation of students from a specific group in an educational program being higher or lower than one would expect based on their representation in the general population of students. (Townsend, 2001)
Mental Retardation

FIGURE 2-1  Risk indices for mental retardation: 1974-1998 OCR data.
Emotional Disturbance

Learning Disabilities

Gifted and Talented

“Overrepresentation” can be assessed by calculating the odd students from one ethnic group, to be placed in a special education program, compared to students from another ethnic group (or compared to all other groups).

50 (African Americans in E/BD classes)

\[
\frac{50}{250} = 0.20
\]

250 (All African Americans at the school)

20 (White students in E/BD classes)

\[
\frac{20}{400} = 0.05
\]

400 (All White students at the school)

0.20 (Percent of African Americans in E/BD classes)

\[
\frac{0.20}{0.05} = 4.0
\]

0.05 (Percent of White students in E/BD classes)
RECOMMENDATIONS
Practice responsive and responsible teaching

- Deviance vs. Difference
- Instructional strategies that empower students
- Teach more about success in the mainstream culture
Build your functional cultural knowledge

- Teach in a variety of ways that are culturally appropriate.

- “Must Know to Survive, Promote, and Enhance Learning” notebook.

- Collaborative reflection
Activities

- Discuss academic challenges, racial encounters, and other social issues
- Organize classroom settings to reflect Afro-cultural themes
- Incorporate affirmation breaks
Affirm as Students Learn

- Affirm cultural identity
- Nurture caring and supportive learning environments
- Be a professional
How can “WE" as pre/post professional educators & researchers eradicate the consistent over-representation of African American (Black) children in special education and still provide them with a quality PK-12 education?
I KNOW YOU HAVE QUESTIONS...