



Access and Equity



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Access and Equity: Central Questions

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

- Enhance your understanding of the how **access, equity and privilege** are so firmly **intertwined** that an examination of *one* cannot occur without an honest **conversation about them all**.
- *You*, personally are not responsible for **America’s past**, but you **are responsible** for what happens **today** and moving forward by intentionally becoming **informed** about America’s past and **digesting** the **facts** about how **privileges** and **opportunities** have been **unequally** distributed historically. (“Tray-tables...”)

Brave Spaces not “**Safe**” Places



The Association of
BLACK PSYCHOLOGISTS



“What Ought to Be...”

... listening requires not only opened eyes and ears, but opened hearts and minds. We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our *beliefs*. It is not easy, but it is the only way to learn what it might feel like to be someone else and it is the only way to start the dialogue.

- Lisa Delpit



Access and Equity: Asking Why?

Interrogate your **assumptions, biases and beliefs** concerning deficit models based on race, gender, ethnicity or SES status.

Teachers must **learn more about the students** they teach, the contexts in which those **students learn best**, and **the environments in which they live**.

One cannot move towards **access and equity** until he/she is willing to **investigate the biases** we have all learned through **socialization** from the dominant American culture.

These **shifts in consciousness** → *inform shifts in practice*

S.A.I.L.

The environmental preconditions that should be experienced by students prior to initiating formal instruction include...

Safety (physical and emotional)

A cceptance (no “put-downs”)

Inclusion, **i**nteractions and **i**nvolvement

(interpersonal/social aspect of memory formation)

After satisfying these prerequisite neurophysiological and hierarchical conditions, students are biologically ready for

Learning (*students feel their immediate environment is secure enough for them to take risks, explore and discover*).

*Students who have to **worry about safety** concerns also tend to under-perform academically (Pratt, Tallis, & Eysenck, 1997)*



Access and Equity

All learners *cannot* be treated the same because their **different learning, social, cultural, emotional, psychological and physical needs naturally give rise to **varying interventions** that will be effective for them to achieve, but **perhaps not for others.** --Bradley Scott, 1995**



Access and Equity

Table discussion (3 min.): “Equality can often become the sponsor of unequal outcomes.”

Is an equal chance in **participation** parallel to an equal chance of **success**?

Equality is only possible when every student enters school with indistinguishable educational achievement **histories**, where they **benefited equally** by **responding identically** to the **same academic offering/information** over a given period of time.



Access and Equity

Equality: the **sameness** in educational opportunities, services, rewards, treatment, as well as financial and personnel resources with no acknowledgement that each student may

(a) **start** from a different **level** of overall **academic need**

(b) **need** access to **specific resources** to maximize his/her achievement (a math tutor, writing help, the availability of advantageous learning resources/tools, financial assistance, etc.

(c) be unaware that **seeking help** is acceptable (tutoring, counseling, SAT prep, etc.) and/or institutionally-endorsed/encouraged.



Distinguishing Equity from Equality



Equality = everyone receives the **same** sized shoe



Equity = everyone *receives* a shoe that is **right for him/her**. It might even be a *slightly different* shoe



A New, Emerging, “Fair” Definition of Merit?

- **“Merit”** becomes the measurement of *the distance* between the **academic level reached** by a student and the **diverse handicaps** he/she had to overcome (conditions of schooling, social, cultural, geographic, ethno-racial background, disabilities, etc.) in order to perform well academically
- This measurement is based on **various indicators** depending on national, regional, and local history and the corresponding **cultural restrictions** (“traditions”).
- How *have* some students been **marginalized**? How *are* they and other students **still being** marginalized?



Access and Equity

Equity: the allocation of educational opportunities, services, and the financial and personnel resources that will allow each student to perform at his or her maximum capability and fullest potential.



Operationally, **equity** is achieved only when educators (both classroom practitioners and administrators) intentionally and strategically distribute the educational opportunities services, along with the financial and personnel resources in such a manner that each student can perform to his/her fullest potential. Being able to draw from all of these resources gives each student an opportunity for successful **academic inclusion**.

Cognitive science: the brain of every student is **different**. Giving students the same treatment is not sufficient to bring about true equity.

Equity is an essential ingredient in achieving true **equality**, but the reverse is not true.

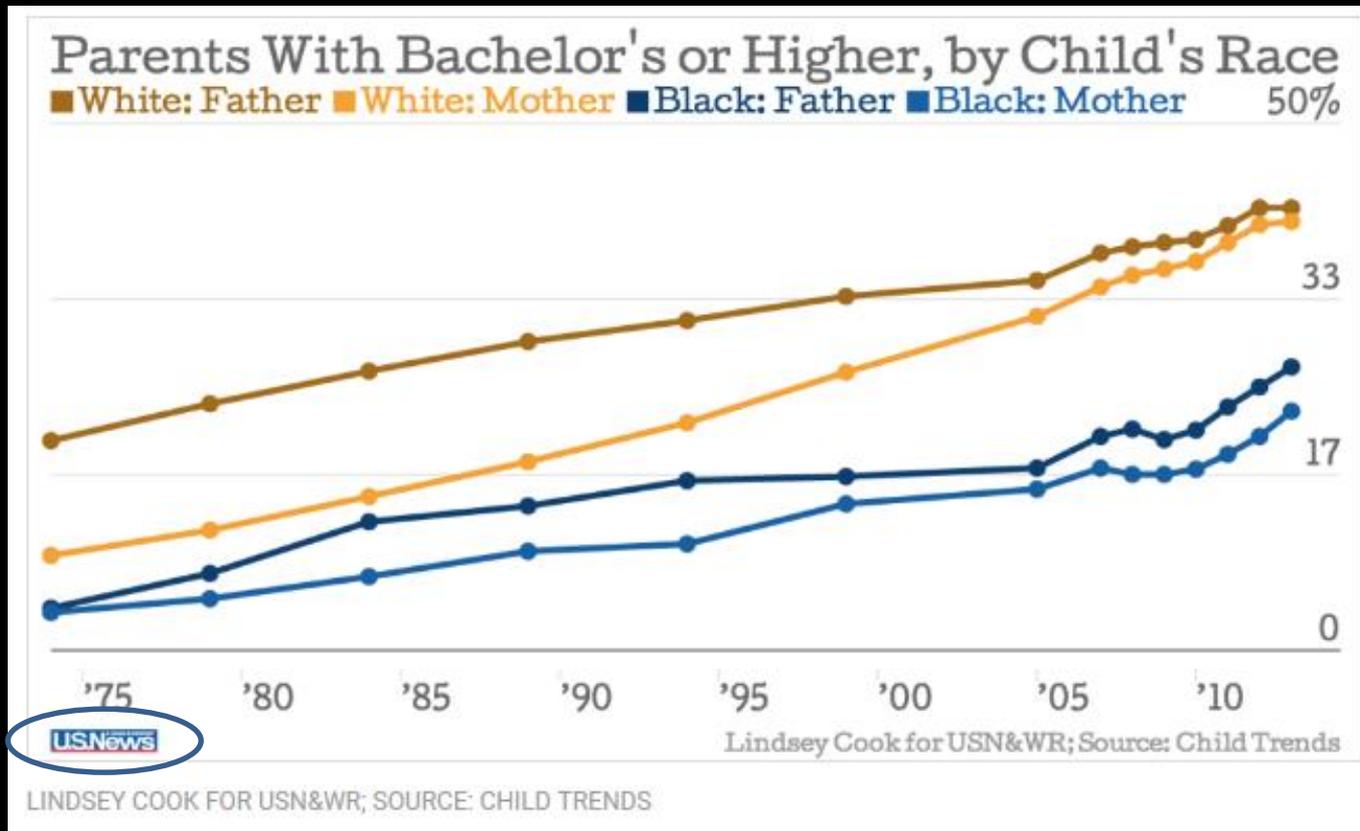


Access and Education

We can define “**educational accessibility**” as *having an unrestricted entrée to the resources necessary to achieve academically, and to “learn the very most in subject matter from the very best educators” irrespective of one’s personal background or condition.*



Different “Starting Lines”



Black parents who are less educated than their white counterparts, do not expect their children to attain as much education as white parents expect. Lower expectation become self-fulfilling prophecies, contributing to lower expectation from the student, less-positive attitudes about school, fewer out-of-school learning opportunities and experiences, and fewer parent-child communications about school.



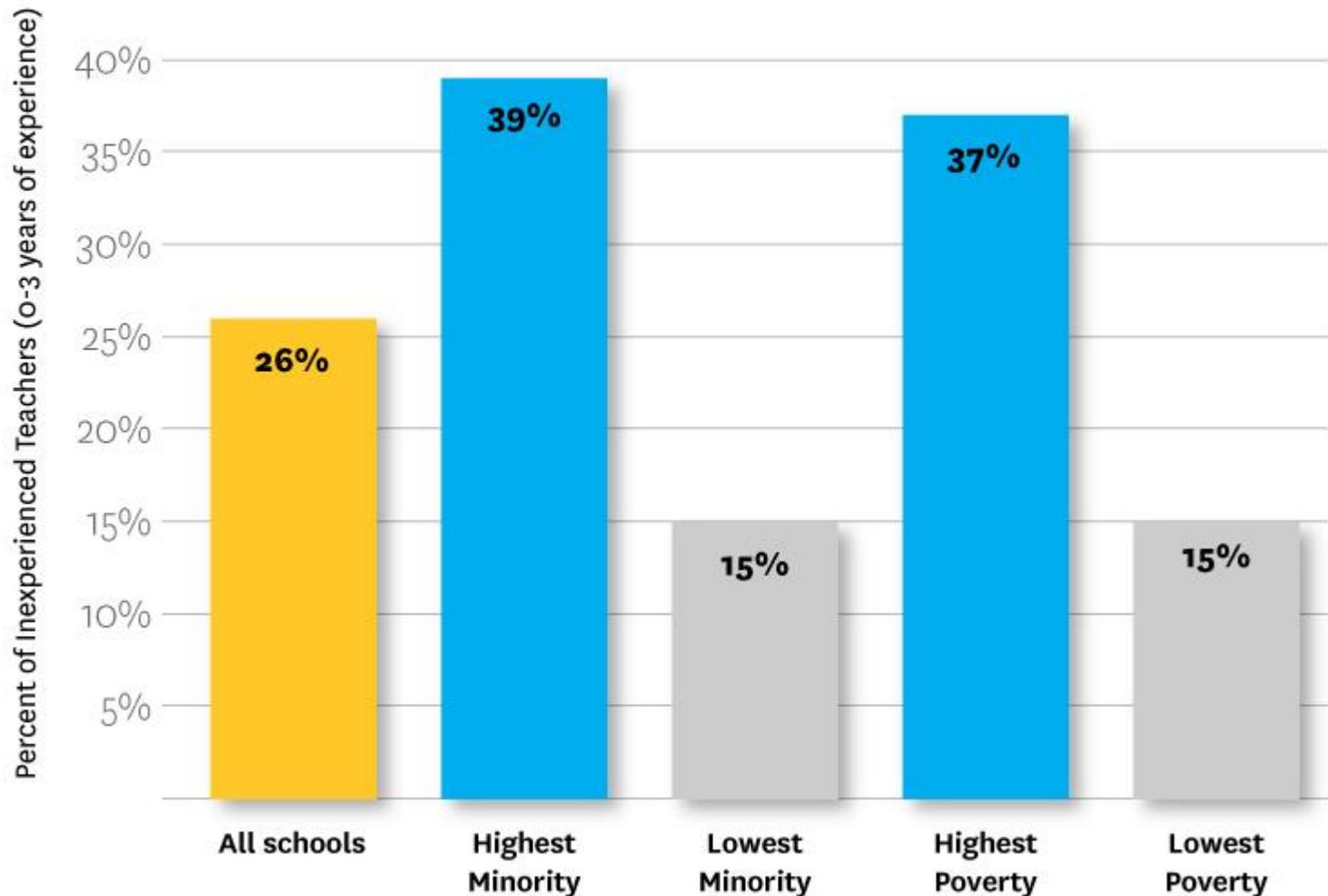
Access and Education

Table discussion (3 mins): Is access to a high-quality education (in mathematics and science/STEM) equal for all students in L.A. County?

1. **Who** are the students that lack access?
2. What are the **underlying causes** for the gaps in educational accessibility?
3. What are the **barriers** that make high-quality education inaccessible to some students?
4. Are there specific **measures or action plans** that your school/district has put in place to **eliminate** the identified **gaps in access** to a high-quality math/science education?



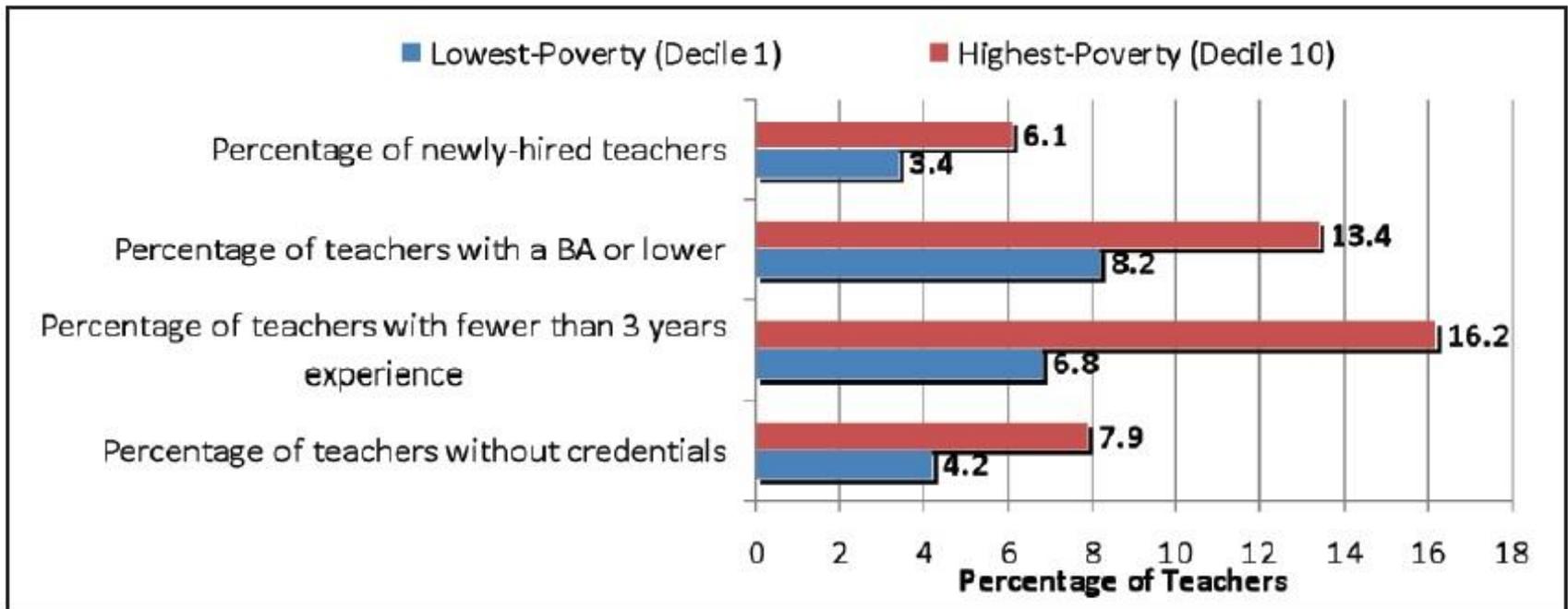
Students in high minority and high poverty districts are disproportionately taught by inexperienced teachers





Access and Equity

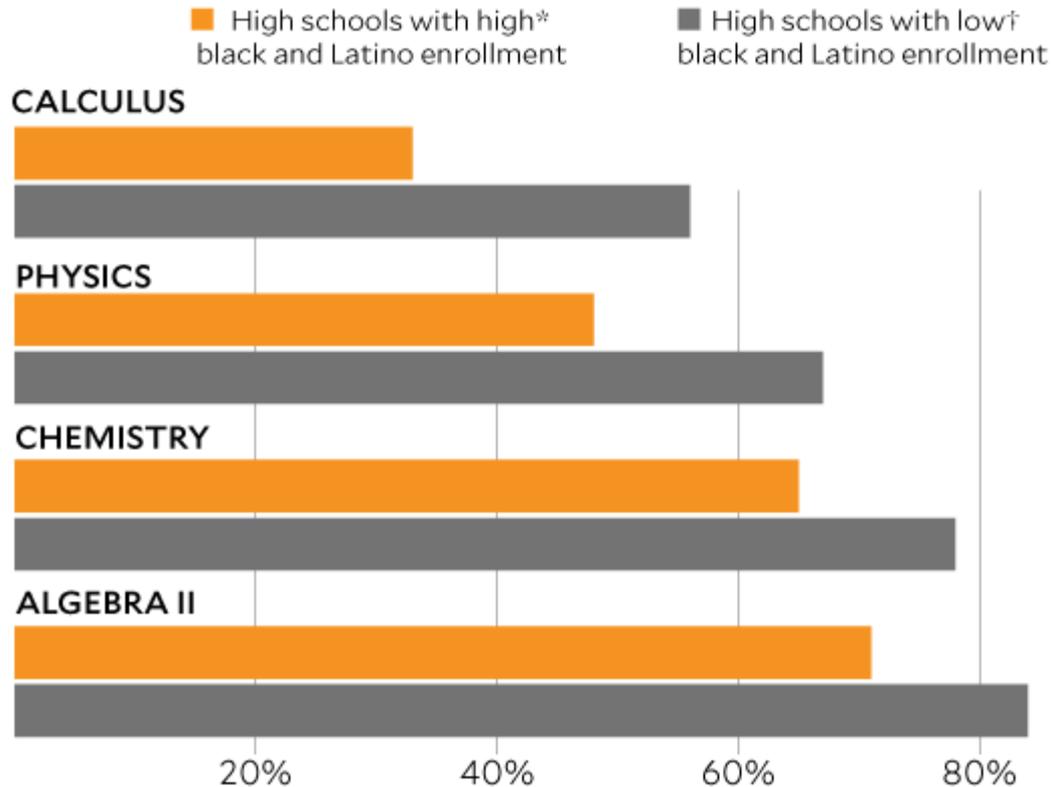
Figure 7: Teacher Quality in High- and Low-Poverty Districts in California
(Percent of Students Eligible for Free- and Reduced-Price Lunch)





Access and Equity: Achievement Gap or an “Opportunity Gap”

High-minority schools are less likely to offer these math and science courses:



Disparities in **course offerings** mean students of color have **fewer** opportunities to challenge themselves with more difficult courses -- **math, science, and STEM**. Fewer black students have **access** to a full range of HS math and science courses – algebra I, geometry, algebra II, calculus, biology, chemistry and physics (as well as **AP classes** and AP prep).

* more than 75% black and Latino
† less than 25% black and Latino



Education

Poverty → illiteracy → poor employment opportunities → low-paying jobs → more poverty and economic vulnerability → restricted to living in virtually uninhabitable slums → a seemingly **endless cascade of deleterious consequences**



Access and Equity

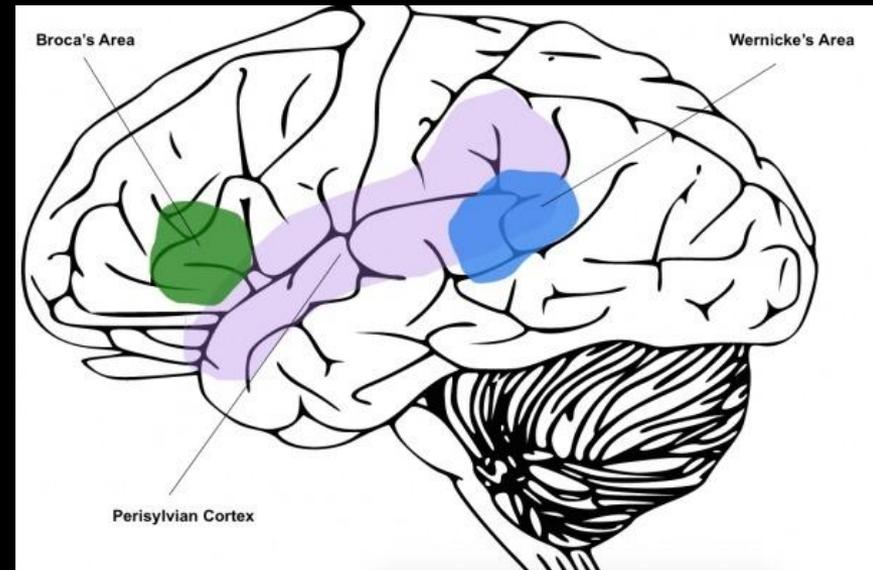
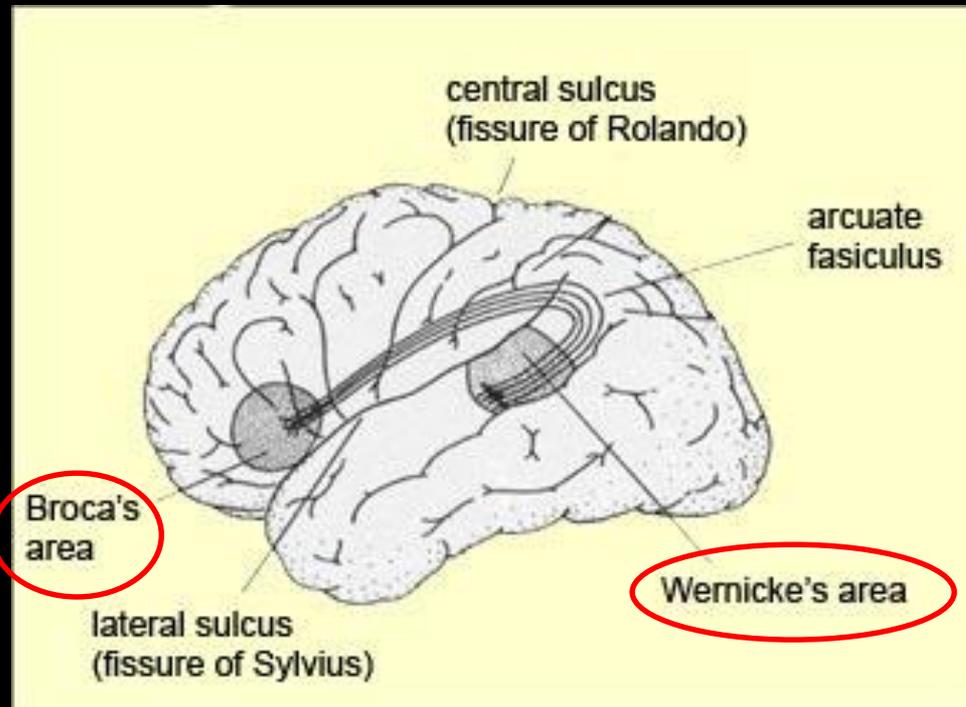
High poverty schools *are more likely to have*

- **less funding (Carey 2005);**
- **lower teacher salaries (Karoly, 2001)**
- **more limited computer and Internet access (Gorski, 2003)**
- **larger class sizes**
- **higher student-to-teacher ratios**
- **poorly maintained facilities (older buildings, dilapidated yards, dirty and/or inoperative restrooms, etc.)**
- **a less-rigorous curriculum (“dittoes don’t = dendrites”**
- **fewer experienced teachers (Barton 2004)**
- **large numbers of teacher vacancies and substitute teachers (teacher turnover problems)**
- **more teachers who are not licensed in their subject**
- **teachers who are paid less**
- **inadequate or nonexistent learning facilities, such as science labs**



Human Language: Unique

- Over the past 80 years, we have learned about **two critical language areas in the left perisylvian cortex**, primarily from individuals' diseases, misfortunes, and brain damage. (SES can account for **30%+ variation**).





Vocabulary Development

- **Poverty** can seriously **restrict the vocabulary** that children bring to school and it makes attaining an adequate vocabulary quite challenging task (Coyne, Simmons, & Kame'enui, 2004; Hart & Risley, 1995).
- **Underserved/less-advantaged students** are likely to have substantially **smaller vocabularies** than their more advantaged classmates (Templin, 1957; White, Graves, & Slater, 1990).
- **Lack of vocabulary** can be a crucial factor underlying the school failure of disadvantaged students (Becker, 1977; Biemiller, 1999).



Poverty

- Constantino (2005) gathered data on six communities in the greater LA area → children in **high-income** communities had access to significantly **more books** than their low-income counterparts.
- She found that in some affluent communities, children had more books **in their homes** than low-SES children had access to in all their **home and school** resources **combined**.



“The 30-Million Word Gap”

- Research shows that **vocabulary knowledge** is profoundly influenced by **SES**. By **age 4**, the average **accumulated experience** with **words** for children from...
 - ✓ professional families = approx. **45M** words
 - ✓ working-class families = **26M** words
 - ✓ welfare families = only **13M** words.

(Hart & Risley, 2003)
- Research from Keith Stanovich found that kids who have a **solid word base** get ahead **faster** and achieve **more** in school, while students with a less-developed vocabulary to **progress more slowly**. K students in **lowest 25%** for vocabulary development are **3 grades behind** by Gr. 6.
- State of **AZ**

Developing Early Literacy through Active Learning

All children, and particularly children from **language-impooverished backgrounds**, benefit most from learning environments that are:

- **Experience-rich**
- **language-rich** (“serve and receive” verbal interactions -- primary caregiver feedback)
- **print-rich** (classrooms with word walls, writing samples, books of every genre, real-world objects, etc., and homes where parents/siblings *model* that *reading and dialogue* have tremendous power and value)





Environmental Cumulative Deficit Hypothesis

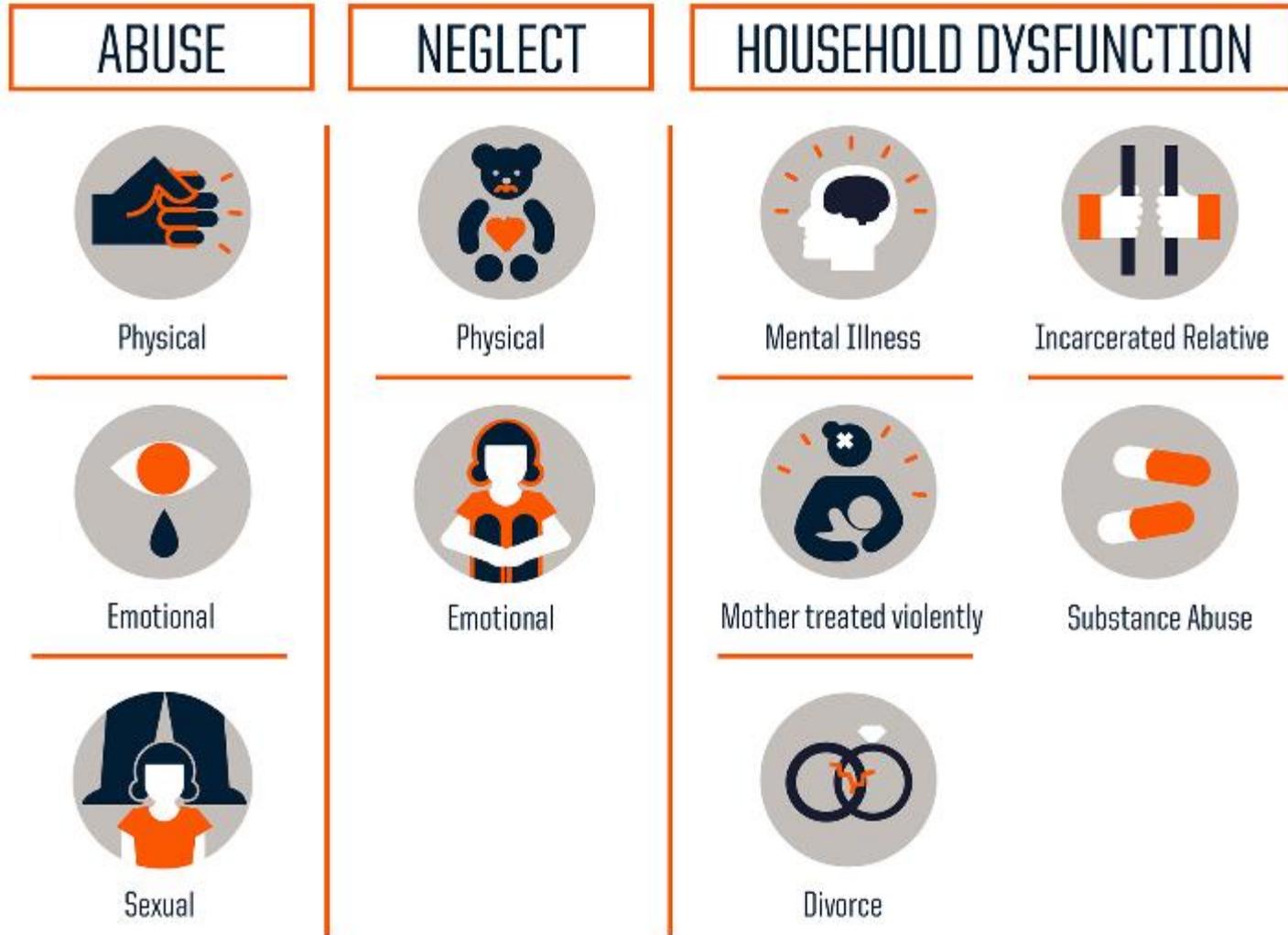
The negative effects of underprivileged rearing conditions **increase** the **longer** children remain in those conditions (parental divorce/discord, job loss, moving frequently, illness, death in the family, etc.). As a result, **early cognitive deficits** lead to still **more deficits**, which become more difficult to overcome (Klindberg, 1963)

“ACES”



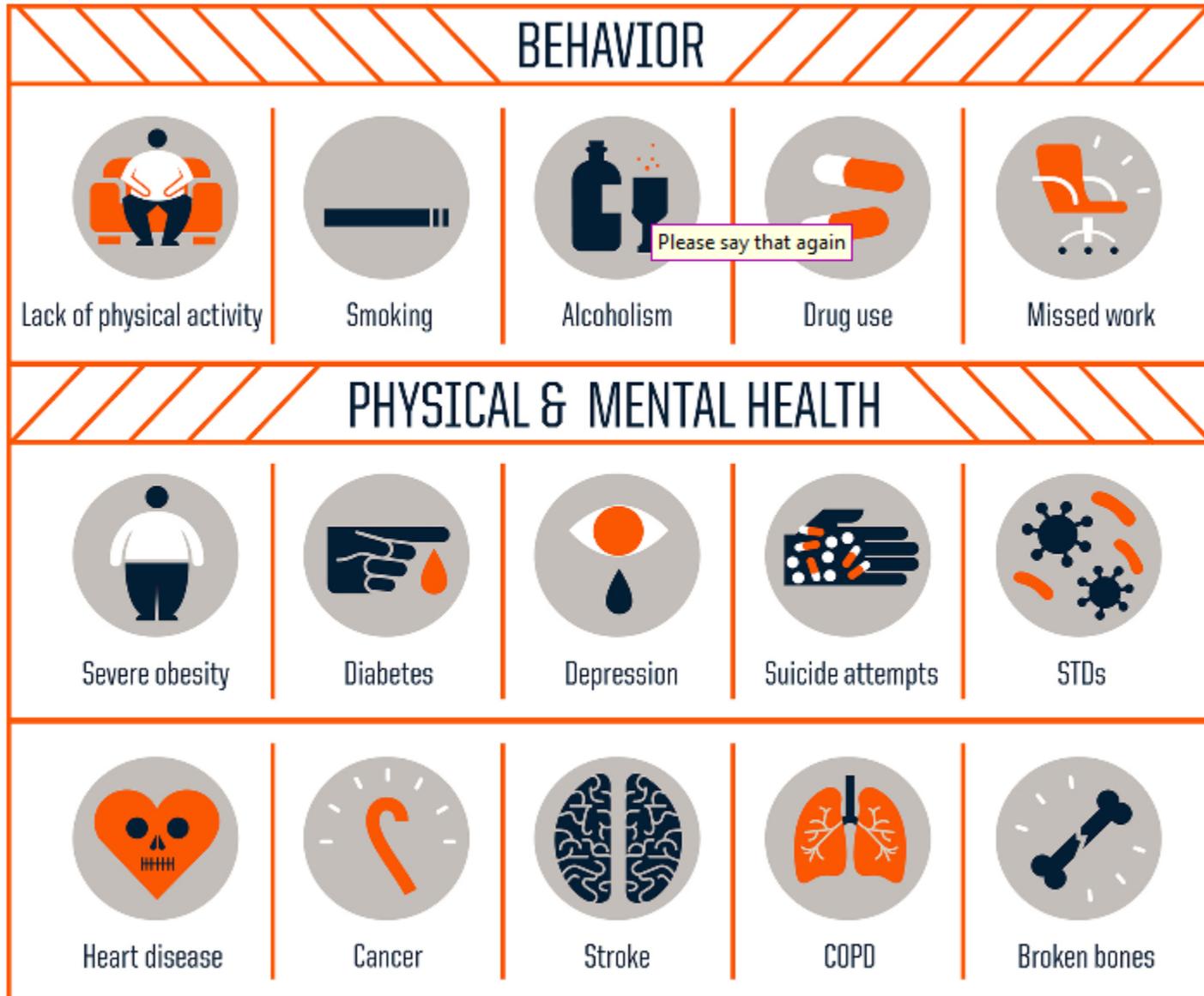
Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACES)

Three Categories of ACEs





ACEs: linked to a variety of adult conditions



(Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)



Poverty and Stress

chronic stress...

- children living in poverty experience significantly greater chronic stress than do their more affluent counterparts (Almedia, Neupert, Banks & Serido, 2005) →
- adolescence is a particularly vulnerable time period to be exposed to **chronic stress** (Fishbein et al., 2006)



Poverty and Stress

Chronic stress...

- is linked to over **50%** of all school **absences** (Johnston-Brooks, Lewis, Evans & Whalen, 1998)
- impairs **attention and concentration** (Erickson, Drevets, & Schulkin, 2003)
- reduces **cognition, memory, and creativity** (Lupien, King, Meaney, & McEwen, 2001)
- diminishes social skills and **social judgment** (Wommack & Delville, 2004)
- reduces **motivation, determination, and effort** (Johnson, 1981)
- increases the likelihood of **depression** (Hammack, Robinson, Crawford, & Li, 2004)
- reduces **neurogenesis** (De Bellis et al., 2001)



Toxic Stress

Chronic stress or “**toxic stress**” can

1. lead to the **physical destruction** of neurons in the **hippocampus** (an area in the brain associated with **learning/memory storage**.)
2. modifies the hippocampus, reducing a child’s learning capacity (Vythilingam, 2002)
3. **shrinks neurons** in the frontal lobes decreasing one’s **executive functions** - planning, judgment, controlling impulsivity (Cook & Wellman, 2004).



Students who have **chronic safety** concerns
also tend to ***underperform academically***

(Pratt, Tallis, & Eysenck, 1997)



Poverty is neurotoxic



High-achieving students in *under-achieving* schools:

- a. receive more academic **support** at home
- b. have more **literature** in the household
- c. live in **low-stress** environments
- d. establish **personal goals** (self-motivated)
- e. take advantage of the **resources** available
in school
- f. are motivated by **challenging** and stimulating
work
- g. are less likely to be “**labeled**”
- h. are not **punished** in front of other students
 (“humiliated”)



Stereotype

What *definitions and distinctions* can we offer for the following terms?

- Stereotype
- Prejudice
- Discrimination
- Institutionalized bias



Stereotype: believing that you “know” the contents of a can of soup without ever bothering to look inside (a label is sufficient).



Stereotype



...definitions and distinctions

- **Stereotypes** – generalized categorical beliefs (**cognitive**)
- **Prejudice** – a *learned* (parents, movies, stories, etc.) preconceived negative attributions, opinions, predispositions or deficit models pertaining to groups of people (**emotional-attitudinal**)
- **Discrimination** – unjust, negative or prejudicial treatment directed at different categories of people on the grounds of race, age, or sex. (**behavioral**)
- **Institutionalized discrimination/bias** - stems from systemic **stereotypical** beliefs held by those in economic, social and political power, where **prejudices** are put into practice, and the subsequent **discrimination** is codified into law, generally accepted, and challenging the institutionalized code is a punishable offense → the norm. (**legally enforceable**)

Whose culture is admirable?



Who is intelligent?

Who is “normal”?

Who is “a problem”?

Who is “deficient”?

What constitutes beauty?

Whose customs are strange?

Whose language is “standard”?

Who decides? Who will benefit? Who loses?

What are the **consequences** for each?



Table discussion:

If we all voice the universal declaration of our
“**commitment to equality in the classroom,**”
what accounts for the vast differences in
student achievement outcomes?

List the factors.

What degree of responsibility (%) can we/do we
take for these factors?



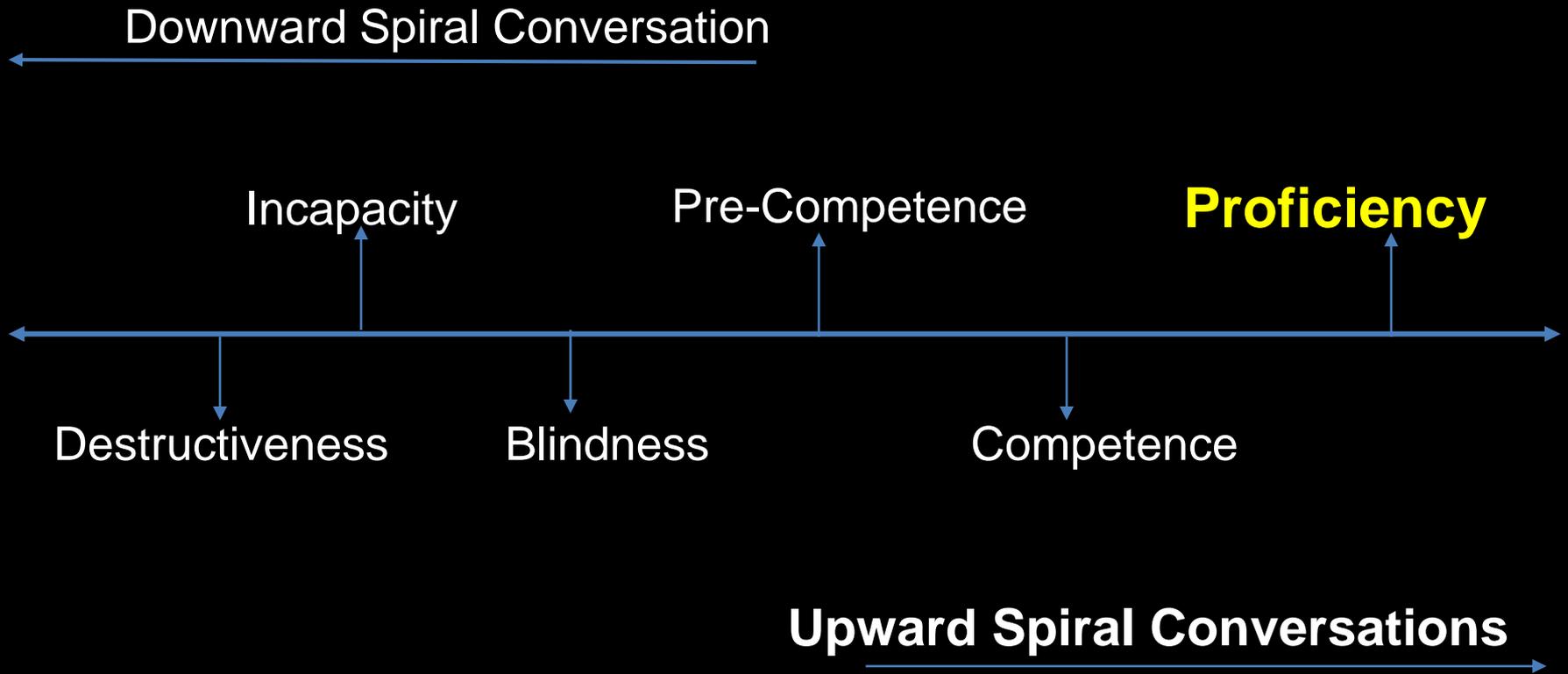
The Cultural Proficiency Continuum

There are six points along the cultural proficiency continuum that indicate unique ways of perceiving and responding to differences.

- **Cultural Destructiveness**
- **Cultural Incapacity**
- **Cultural Blindness**
- **Cultural Pre-Competence**
- **Cultural Competence**
- **Cultural Proficiency**



Cultural Proficiency Continuum





Cultural Proficiency Continuum

1. **Cultural destructiveness**: negating, disparaging, or purging cultures that are different from your own.
2. **Cultural incapacity**: elevating the superiority of your own cultural values and beliefs and suppressing cultures that are different from your own.
3. **Cultural blindness**: acting as if differences among cultures do not exist and refusing to recognize any differences.
4. **Cultural pre-competence**: recognizing that lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding of other cultures limits your ability to effectively interact with them.



Cultural Proficiency Continuum

5. Cultural competence: interacting with other cultural groups in ways that recognize and value their differences that motivate you to assess your own skills and expand your knowledge and resources and that, ultimately, cause you to adapt your relational behavior.

6. Cultural proficiency: honoring the differences among cultures and viewing diversity as a benefit, and interacting knowledgably and respectfully among a variety of cultural groups. Lindsay (2005).



Cultural Destructiveness

“If you see any differences, stomp them out.”

*Using one’s institutionally sanctioned power to **marginalize or eliminate** another culture or group.*

- **Avoid** certain curriculum **topics** (race, slavery, etc.)
- Deed restrictions
- Chinese Exclusion Laws; Black Exclusion Laws (OR)
- Refusal to **validate** someone else’s experience of racism

“When we **redistrict**, can we get rid of **neighborhoods** like **theirs?**”

“Why are those kids always **speaking Chinese** at lunch?”

“There are so many **problems** coming from Central Los Angeles.”

“If we could get rid of some of these **black and brown** students, our **test scores** might improve.”



All students should receive a *high-quality* and an *appropriate* education within their school building.

1. Teachers, administrators, and policymakers must recognize that regularly *recalibrating content*, pedagogy, treatment, and the supportive academic resources that are necessary for *inclusion* are a *never-ending process*
2. our institutional goal is “*to understand student differences until those differences no longer make a difference,*” because the necessary supportive resources are available to students who need them. (Identify and eliminate educational barriers to participation, inclusion, and student achievement).
3. Extinguish *negative stereotypes* and their subsequent *discriminatory attitudes and behaviors* that prevent students from maximizing their full cognitive, academic, emotional, social, and creative potential.



4. **Eliminate institutional barriers**, policies, obstacles or traditions that effectively marginalize any student or student group.
5. “Learning deficiencies” are often **institutional deficiencies**. Create inclusive, positive, responsive, healthy, protective, and supportive academic environments for all children that encourage students to engage in learning at their fullest capacity. *We are our brother’s and sister’s keeper.*
6. Expand the opportunities for **PD on Access and Equity** for all educators -- should be informative, progressive, and part of a long-term plan for changing classroom experiences for all students.



Reflecting On “Deficits”



The relationship between you and your students

- What are the strongest messages that my teachers consistently communicate to my students about **themselves**, about **school**, and about **learning** (+ and -) on a daily basis?
- How do our students regularly **unpack** these messages?
- What **emotional impact** do these messages have on my students?
- Are there long-term learning consequences?



Even on your very *worst* day, you are still some child's very *best* hope.



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