

Intersectionality is a framework used to understand how multiple overlapping social identities (e.g. race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or disability) impact and oppress certain populations (Crenshaw, 1989). The problems certain people face stem from the multiplied oppressions that accompany a particular combination of identities (Bell, 2016).

These shifting demographics indicate a strong need for school practitioners to understand increased risks for the students they service.

This topic is incredibly important due to the changing demographics of school populations.

In 2017, U.S. preK-12 school practitioners (special educators and related service providers) who serve students with increased social, emotional, or cognitive needs are homogeneous:

- 83% of school psychologists were female
- 87% were white
- 86% spoke only English (NASP, 2017; Walcott, Charvat, McNamara, & Hyson, 2016);
- 86.4% of special education teachers were female
- 81.3% were white
- 10.4% were Black or African American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016)

U.S. public school students are not homogeneous:

- 50% as "minority" racial or ethnic groups
- 9.4% as English language learners
- 13% of students had disabilities and received special education services (NCES, 2017; Proctor, Kyle, Fefer, & Lau, 2017)
- Almost 17% of students with disabilities also identified as American Indian/Alaska Native
- 16% as black
- 14% as white (NCES, 2016)
- "Disparities between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ youth [because] . . . youth may hold back sensitive information, which can lead to under- or over-estimates" (Strauss, 2017, para. 13).