



Dissociative Disorders

Instructor Manual

Editors: Dr. Regan A. R. Gurung and Dr. Aaron Richmond

Contributing Authors: Dawn Albertson, Bethany Fleck, Travis Heath, Phil Kreniske, Linda Lockwood, Kristy Lyons, Aliza Panjwani, Janet Peters, Kasey Powers, Amanda Richmond, Anna Ropp, Jeremy Sawyer, Raechel Soicher, Sunda Friedman TeBockhorst, Courtney Rocheleau

The Dissociative Disorders module introduces students to debates surrounding dissociative disorders as well as presenting a brief history of the disorder and a review of the disorders symptoms. The instructor's manual provides information to help you craft either a one- or two-class lesson supporting the module material. The PowerPoint presentation includes activities, videos, and discussion questions that are designed to accompany the two-class period version of this lesson. The instructor's manual also contains additional outside resources and information that may be useful when presenting dissociative disorders.

Learning Objectives

Content Specific Learning Objectives

- Define the basic terminology and historical origins of dissociative symptoms and dissociative disorders.
- Describe the posttraumatic model of dissociation and the sleep-dissociation model, and the controversies and debate between these competing theories.
- What is the innovative angle of the sleep-dissociation model?
- How can the two models be combined into one conceptual scheme?

Relevant APA Learning Objectives (Version 2.0)

- Describe key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychology (1.1)

- Develop a working knowledge of psychology's content domains (1.2)
- Describe applications of psychology (1.3)
- Use scientific reasoning to interpret psychological phenomena (2.1)
- Demonstrate psychology information literacy (2.2)
- Engage in innovative and integrative thinking and problem solving (2.3)
- Build and enhance interpersonal relationships (when recommended discussion or debate are used) (3.2)
- Demonstrate effective writing for different purposes (4.1)
- Interact effectively with others (when recommended discussion or debate used) (4.3)

Abstract

Dissociation is a state of disconnectedness. Specifically, it is a lack of integration between thoughts, feelings, memories, bodily sensations, and the experience of consciousness. This module provides an overview of dissociative disorders, including the definitions of dissociation, its origins and competing theories, and their relation to traumatic experiences and sleep problems.

Class Design Recommendations

This module can be taught over one or two class periods, depending on the number of videos and activities you use. The Noba PowerPoint slides will also assist you in determining your class schedule.

An Example of a Two-Class Lesson

1st Period (50-75 min)

- Introduction of topic
 - Briefly introduce the learning objectives.
 - *Warm up activity:* Have students write their daydreams (see Activities/Demonstrations

below and the Noba PowerPoint slides).

- The three main topics are (1) the history of dissociative disorders, (2) defining dissociative disorders, and (3) measuring dissociation. With the following three topics to be covered in the next class: (1) dissociation and trauma, (2) dissociation and sleep, and (3) implications and conclusions.
- The History of Dissociative Disorders:
 - Review brief history of dissociative disorders
 - Explore relationship with media coverage
- Defining Dissociative Disorders
 - Review DSM-5 definition
 - Contrast “trait” and “state”
 - Discuss types and clusters of dissociative disorders
- Measuring Dissociation
 - Introduce Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES)
 - Give example of the items
 - Discuss the uses of a clinical interview
 - CAT or Alt CAT (see ppt)

2nd Period (50-75 min)

- Review topics covered in previous class and re-introduce the three topics for the current class.
 - The three main topics are (1) dissociation and trauma, (2) dissociation and sleep, (3) implications and conclusions
- Dissociation and Trauma
 - Introduce the posttraumatic model (PTM)

- Explore possible reasons why individuals dissociate
- Review empirical support presented by Vermetten and colleagues
- Causality and evidence
 - Introduce debate around PTM
 - Present three main limitations
 - In this classroom assessment technique (CAT) students complete a one-minute paper explaining a limitation of PTM (see Activities/Demonstrations below and the Noba PowerPoint slides for more details).
 - Students are then asked to share their perspectives in small groups and later with the class.
- Dissociation and sleep
 - Review history of this connection
 - and relate specific relationships of types of dissociation with sleep
 - Present anecdotal and empirical links
 - Including studies showing increase in sleep loss related to increase in dissociation symptoms
 - And reduction of sleep problems was related to reduction in dissociation disorders
 - Review history of this connection
 - and relate specific relationships of types of dissociation with sleep
- Implications and Conclusions
 - Ask students what are some similarities and differences between PTM and sleep-dissociation model?
 - Ask students if they think PTM or the and sleep-dissociation better explains

dissociative disorders, why?

- Ask students if these models be integrated? If so, how, if not, why?
- Ask students about to share their understandings of the strengths and weaknesses of these models.
- Present your concluding thoughts on topic

An Example of a One-Class (90-min) Lesson

- Introduction of topic
 - Briefly introduce the learning objectives.
 - *Warm up activity:* Have students write their daydreams (see Activities/Demonstrations below and the Noba PowerPoint slides).
 - The three main topics are (1) the history of dissociative disorders, (2) defining dissociative disorders, (3) measuring dissociation (4) dissociation and trauma, (5) dissociation and sleep, and (6) implications and conclusions.
- The History of Dissociative Disorders:
 - Review brief history of dissociative disorders
- Defining Dissociative Disorders
 - Review DSM-5 definition
 - Contrast “trait” and “state”
 - Discuss types and clusters of dissociative disorders
- Measuring Dissociation
 - Introduce Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES)
 - Give example of the items
 - Discuss the uses of a clinical interview
- Dissociation and Trauma

- Introduce the posttraumatic model (PTM)
 - Explore possible reasons why individuals dissociate
- Causality and evidence
 - Introduce debate around PTM
 - Present three main limitations
 - In this classroom assessment technique (CAT) students complete a one-minute paper explaining a limitation of PTM (see Activities/Demonstrations below and the Noba PowerPoint slides for more details).
 - Students are then asked to share their perspectives in small groups and later with the class.
- Dissociation and sleep
 - Review history of this connection
 - and relate specific relationships of types of dissociation with sleep
 - Present anecdotal and empirical links
 - Including studies showing increase in sleep loss related to increase in dissociation symptoms
 - And reduction of sleep problems was related to reduction in dissociation disorders
- Implications and Conclusions
 - Present your concluding thoughts on topic

Module Outline

- **Introduction:** All of us have had moments where we daydreamed or perhaps we have had a moment where you felt like you were not yourself, maybe you were angry, or tired. These feelings might give us a small sense of what someone who struggles with dissociative disorders may feel on a daily basis.
- **The History, Definition and Measurement of Dissociative Disorders:** This section outlines the history of dissociative disorders, including reviewing the previously used term multiple personality disorder. The lecturer will explain this disorder, and perhaps use the example that at times a person might act as an adult while at other times they behave as a child.
 - Introduce the issue that this disorder was rarely diagnosed until the 1980s, and the question of the relationship between media coverage and diagnosis. In this section the lecturer may also review the DSM-5 definition of dissociative disorders and the ways that clinicians measure this disorder.
- **Theories of Dissociation:** This section focuses on two main theories of dissociation. One of these theories is the Posttraumatic Model (PTM) and the other is the Sleep Dissociation theory. The strengths and weaknesses of these theories will be discussed. While reviewing the theories in this section, the lecturer can also introduce a discussion of causality and how each of these theories may or may not explain the *cause* of dissociative disorder.
 - PTM is the most widely held perspective on dissociative symptoms. This theory holds that symptoms are a defensive response to highly aversive events, often traumatic experiences during childhood. The section on sleep dissociation theory proposes reviews the history of the theory and presents empirical studies that support the theory. This literature includes research focused on sleep problems as well as research on inducing and reducing sleep problems.
- **Implications and Conclusions:** In this section the lecturer will review the content covered to this point and then ask students to take a position on which theory best explains dissociative disorders.
 - The lecturer may also introduce a debate on whether dissociative disorders is a legitimate diagnosis based on the supplemental materials provided such as the short video.

Difficult Terms

Amnesia
Borderline Personality Disorder
Causality
Cognitive failures
Cross sectional design
Defensive coping mechanism
Dissociation
Insomnia
State
Trait
Trauma

Lecture Frameworks

Overview: Begin the class with a warm up activity where the students write creatively about a daydream. Next provide an outline of the history of dissociative disorders and present the DSM-5 definition of dissociative disorders. Describe to the students the approaches to measuring and diagnosing dissociative disorders, and engage the students in critical thinking regarding these methods. Then ask students to respond to the muddiest point CAT. Address students' muddiest points and proceed to introduce the theoretical perspectives on dissociative disorders. Direct students to reflect on causality and evidence as it relates to the Post Traumatic Model (PTM). Lead a discussion of the overall implications and conclusions. Organize a debate of the question, "Does DID really exist". Conclude with a CAT where students reflect on one of five possible questions.

First Class (50—75 min)

- **Introduction and warm up activity:** Briefly introduce the learning objectives. Highlighting the learning objectives at the beginning of a unit helps students know what topics will be introduced.
- *Warm up activity:* Have students write their daydreams (see Activities/Demonstrations below and the Noba PowerPoint slides).
- **Direct Instruction of the History of Dissociative Disorders (DID) and Definition and of DID:** Provide an outline history of dissociative disorders and relation to media coverage.

Present DSM-5 Definition of Dissociative Disorders

- **The Woman with 7 Personalities Video:** The purpose of this video is to illustrate patients suffering from DID. This video will provide students with footage of someone who struggles with dissociative disorder. This can be used to introduce the topic of dissociative disorders or as supplemental material relating to the debate over diagnosis.
- **Direct Instruction of Measurement of Dissociative Disorder:** Introduce the Dissociation Scale (Bernstein & Putnam, 1986), the Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES) and the structured clinical interview. Present the uses and importance of a clinical interview. Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5 (SCID-5) <https://www.appi.org/products/structured-clinical-...>
- **Measurement Approaches Activity:** Consider measurement approaches. Present students with excerpts from the Dissociation Scale (Bernstein & Putnam, 1986), which was later modified to create the Dissociative Experience Scale (DES). Ask students to consider why the DES alone cannot be used to diagnose dissociative disorder
- **Muddiest Point CAT:** The purpose of this CAT is to have students engage with and communicate to the professor any concept they are still struggling to understand following the lecture. It is a great way for an instructor to assess what areas need to be addressed in the subsequent class.

Second Class (50—75 min)

- **Discuss Muddiest Point Activity:** The purpose of this is to address some of the muddiest points the instructor deems to be most important or most prevalent based on the students' muddiest point responses. An instructor might say, "many of you seemed to struggle with..." and then proceed to note the muddiest point communicated by students. Then the instructor might present a muddiest point and ask students – "How would you respond to this?" Alternately, the instructor could use direct instruction to address and re-explain the muddiest point.
- **Direct Instruction of Theories of Dissociation Disorders:** Introduce the posttraumatic model (PTM), the most widely held view of dissociative disorders and holds that symptoms are a defensive response to highly aversive events, often traumatic experiences during the childhood. Present strengths of the model, many people who have dissociative disorders appear to have experienced traumatic events in childhood. Present the weaknesses:

- The empirical evidence that trauma *leads to* dissociative symptoms is the subject of intense debate.
 - Outline the three main critiques. 1) mainly based on cross-sectional studies, 2) often self-reported trauma questionnaires, 3) high dissociative individuals report more cognitive failures than low dissociative individuals.
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- **ActivityOne-minute paper on Causality and Evidence:**The purpose of this activity is to engage students in a critical thinking activity regarding causality and evidence with a specific focus on the content of PTM. This activity will encourage students to address the strengths and weaknesses of the PTM model, and their work can be used as a scaffold for the later CAT where students are given the choice of writing about a future study on dissociative disorders.
 - **Direct Instruction of Sleep Dissociation Theory and Evidence:**Note the historical and anecdotal evidence linking sleep issues with dissociation. In addition, high rates of sleep problems and dissociation symptoms in U.S. Outline the relationship between reducing sleep problems and reducing dissociative symptoms and the related literature. With the main point being that decrease when measures are taken to improve sleep patterns there is a decrease in dissociative disorders.
 - **Implications and Conclusions:**The purpose of this is to...
 - Consider asking the following questions to generate a class discussion and review of the material: What are some similarities and differences between PTM and sleep-dissociation model? Do you think PTM or the sleep-dissociation model better explains dissociative disorders, why? Can these models be integrated? If so, how? Based on your understandings of the strengths and weaknesses of these models how might you design a future study?
 - After a brief discussion ask students to select one of these questions and to write a one one-minute paper (see PPT for details). This is the CAT activity.
 - **A Topic for debate: Does DID really exist?** The purpose of this activity is to involve students in a debate regarding the DID diagnosis.

Activities & Demonstrations

- **Write Your Daydream Activity:** This activity is based loosely on Balch's (2009) theory that using exemplifications helps to teach psychological disorders. In this exercise, students write about a time they daydreamed, or fantasized. The activity includes a description of this fantasy world: the environment, the characters and possible social interactions. The instructor can then direct students to consider how it might feel if they were not able to end this dream or fantasy. The feeling of being stuck in a dream, or in a world that is somehow not fully real is analogous to the feelings by someone who has a dissociative disorder.
 - This is a warm-up activity to help students make personal connections with the content of dissociative disorders, and develop empathy for and an understanding of people with dissociative disorders. Balch's (2009) article supports the teaching approach of using student-created examples to teach psychological disorders. The article outlines how students were asked to write an original example of a psychological disorder. The author theorized that the activity fostered a self-reference effect. In this example students were more likely to remember lecture content after engaging in activity that helped them connect the lecture to their personal experiences. The current activity incorporates students own imagined experiences and then helps them to connect this with a symptom of dissociative disorders.
 - Time: 10-15 minutes.
 - Materials and Resources: A piece of paper and copy of Balch's (2009) article.
 - Directions:
- **The Woman with 7 Personalities Video:** The purpose of this video is to illustrate patients suffering from DID. The woman with seven personalities. This video will provide students with footage of someone who struggles with dissociative disorder. This can be used to introduce the topic of dissociative disorders or as supplemental material relating to the debate over diagnosis.
 - Time: 10 minutes (depending on if instructor chooses to show entire clip and also how lengthy a conversation the instructor chooses to have following the clip).
 - Materials: Access to WiFi.

- Directions:
- **Measurement Approaches Think-Pair-Share:** The purpose of this cooperative learning activity is to have students gain experience with, and cultivate critical thinking in relation to the actual measurements and assessments that clinicians use in the field.
 - Time: 15 minutes
 - Materials: Dissociation Scale (Bernstein & Putnam, 1986)
 - Directions:
 - Present students with excerpts from the Dissociation Scale (Bernstein & Putnam, 1986). Ask students to review these for 3-5 minutes.
 - Two examples of questions from the scale are as follows
 - 1. Some people have the experience of driving a car and suddenly realizing that they don't remember what has happened during all or part of the trip. Mark the line to show what percentage of the time this happens to you" (Bernstein and Putnam, 1986, p. 733). Eight other question examples are included in the PowerPoint notes.
 - 2. Some people find that sometimes they are listening to someone talk and they suddenly realize that they did not hear part or all of what was just said. Mark the line to show what percentage of the time this happens to you.
- Students identify and write down three strengths of the Dissociation Scale (Bernstein & Putnam, 1986).
- Students identify and write down three weaknesses of the Dissociation Scale (Bernstein & Putnam, 1986).
- Students share with class or with partner.
- Ask students to consider why the Dissociation Scale (Bernstein & Putnam, 1986) alone cannot be used to diagnose dissociative disorder.
- **One-Minute Paper on Causality and Evidence:** The purpose of this activity is to engage students in a critical thinking activity regarding causality and evidence with a specific focus on PTM. This activity will encourage students to address the strengths and weaknesses of the PTM model, and their work can be used as a scaffold for the later CAT where students

are given the choice of writing about a future study on dissociative disorders.

- Time: 10 minutes
 - Materials: Pen and paper.
 - Directions:
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- **Debate Activity: Does DID really exist?** This activity based on Budesheim and Lundquist (1999) actively engages students in debate to foster their comprehension and topic mastery. When assigning students to each side of the debate consider Budesheim and Lundquist's (1999) two main findings: "First, students who argued a position consistent with their initial attitude almost always maintained or strengthened their initial attitude. Second, students who argued a position inconsistent with their initial attitude were likely to weaken their confidence in that attitude or change their attitude to the opposing position" (p. 109).
 - With these points in mind instructors may choose to assign students to position which they already hold or to an alternate position. Or for convenience sake and as suggested below simply divide the class in half.
 - Time: 20 minutes
 - Materials and Resources: These are two reports (e.g., Budesheim & Lundquist, 1999; Moeller, 1985) that outline best practices for using debates in the classroom. Among other topics these detail considerations of student grouping and offer evidence regarding what is to be gained by using the debate activity.
 - Directions:
 - Show the following short film that presents a debate between clinicians and researchers on the topics of brain imaging, recovered memories, and false memories. Brain scan—switching on command (<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/24/us/debate-persists-over-diagnosing-mental-health-disorders-long-after-sybil.html> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcFRZsD8DLk>).
 - Consider assigning one side of the room to each side of the debate.
 - Ask students to individually write what they think are the three strongest arguments for their side (they can reference the film as evidence but are not required to).
 - Ask students to select one spokesperson to give a 2-minute introduction to their

arguments, and one person to argue a rebuttal, and one person to present a 2-minute conclusion (these should each be different people).

- Each group is given 2-minutes to introduce their main arguments, and 2-minutes for rebuttal.
 - Ask students to vote on which side they think “won” the debate.
 - Optional: Ask students to write a one-minute paper about what they thought was most surprising about the debate (could then share this with the class).
 - For further details on fostering productive debates see Budesheim and Lundquist (1999) and Moeller (1985).
- **One-Minute Paper Classroom Assessment Technique (CAT):** Have students write a one-minute paper on a one of the following four questions presented 1) What are some similarities and differences between PTM and sleep-dissociation model? 2) Do you think PTM or the sleep-dissociation model better explains dissociative disorders, why? 3) Can these models be integrated? If so, how? 4) Based on your understandings of the strengths and weaknesses of these models how might you design a future study?
 - This activity engages students in critical thinking about the lecture content, relevant theories, and general research design.
 - Time: 10-15 minutes (5 minutes without peer and class discussion components)
 - Materials/Resource: Drabick, Weisberg, Paul, and Bubier (2007) provides empirical support for using quick writing exercises, such as the one described here, as opposed to just *thinking* activities. The researchers showed that quick free-writing engages students in factual and conceptual learning. Students assigned to brief free writing performed better on a multiple choice exam as compared to students assigned to a non-writing condition. Additionally, Das (2010) found the one-minute paper enhanced students’ knowledge as compared to control conditions and research showed that adding one-minute papers to a course represented an intervention that produced increases in student performance (Adrian, 2010).
 - Directions:
 - Pull out a sheet of paper.
 - Select one of these limitations and write a one-minute paper (at least 5 sentences) explaining why this is a limitation for PTM.

- Discussion Activity: Now take turns with the person next to and share your explanations (allow 3-5 minutes).
 - Ask the class as a whole or continue with small group discussion: What were your explanations of the limitations?
 - Did you and your partner select the same limitations?
 - Did you explain them in the same way or differently, how?

Additional Activities

Poorman, P. B. (2002). Biography and role playing: Fostering empathy in abnormal psychology. *Teaching of Psychology, 29*, 32-36. doi:10.1207/S15328023TOP2901_08

- In this activity one student role plays the patient and the other the clinician. The clinician can use a sample version of the DES or clinical interview. This activity fosters the development of empathy and was designed especially for abnormal psychology courses. Students need a basic understanding of dissociative disorders. No advance preparation is needed, unless you wish to present the instructions for the research proposals as a handout or PowerPoint presentation. This is appropriate for any size of class and can be completed by students either in or outside of class.

Discussion Points

- Why is the Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES) suitable only for screening?
 - This question is designed to get students to consider the importance of using multiple measures when assessing patients. In addition, questions of cultural relevance and cultural norms might be considered.
- Do you think PTM or the sleep-dissociation model better explains dissociative disorders, why?

- This question is designed to promote students critical thinking about the theoretical explanations for dissociative disorders.
- Why are dissociation and trauma related to each other?
 - This question is also designed to promote students critical thinking about the theoretical explanations for dissociative disorders.
- Does DID really exist? The media made up this syndrome.
 - This question is designed to engage students in critical thinking about the ways that popular culture might influence the prevalence of a diagnosis, and to consider how in some instances clinicians may influence popular culture.

Outside Resources

Article: Extreme Dissociative Fugue: A life, Interrupted - A recent case of extreme dissociative fugue. The article is particularly powerful as it relates the story of a seemingly typical person, a young teacher, who suddenly experiences a dissociative fugue.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/01/nyregion/thecity/01miss.html?_r=0

Book: Schreiber, F. R. (1973). Sybil. Chicago: Regnery.

Film: Debate Persists Over Diagnosing Mental Health Disorders, Long After 'Sybil'. This short film would be useful to provide students with perspectives on the debate over diagnoses. It could be used to introduce the debate and provide students with evidence to argue for or against the diagnosis.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/24/us/debate-persists-over-diagnosing-mental-health-disorders-long-after-sybil.html>

Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5 (SCID-5)

<https://www.appi.org/products/structured-clinical-interview-for-dsm-5-scid-5>

Video: Depiction of the controversy regarding the existence of DID and show you some debate between clinicians and researchers on the topics of brain imaging, recovered memories, and false memories. False memory syndrome.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4NZ7_Hn-rl

Video: Patient Switching on Command and in Brain Scanner - This eight-minute video depicts the controversy regarding the existence of DID and relates some of the debate between clinicians and researchers on the topics of brain imaging, recovered memories, and false memories.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhM0xp5vXqY>

Evidence-Based Teaching

Moeller, T (1985). Using classroom debates in teaching developmental psychology. *Teaching of Psychology* 12, 207-209. doi:10.1207/s15328023top1204_5

Budesheim, T. L., & Lundquist, A. R. (1999). Consider the opposite: opening minds through in-class debates on course-related controversies. *Teaching of Psychology*, 26, 106-110. doi:10.1207/s15328023top2602_5

- These two sources present findings that show classroom debates can be a useful tool for promoting student learning and participation. In addition, the sources present an outline for how to incorporate debate into a course. For the current lecture, one possible debate could focus on the controversy regarding the existence of DID. Another possible topic could be that students argue for the theory that best explains dissociative disorders, either PTM or sleep-dissociation.

Links to ToPIX Materials

Psychological Disorders: This link contains a number of links to videos related to psychological disorders.

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/19981031/Psychological%20Disorders%20Video>

Psychological Disorders: This material provides links to a number of examples of dissociative disorders in the news. The materials are useful for linking the lecture content with current events and trends and introducing topics for discussion, such as the relationship between mental illness and incarceration in the United States.

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/26711727/Psychological%20Disorders%20in%20the%20News>

Tips for Leading Discussion: This ToPIX material outlines a number of techniques for fostering class discussions such as breaking the class into small groups, and having each group address a different question and then reporting back to the whole class.

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/45062800/Tips%20for%20Effective%20Classroom%20Discussions>

Teaching Topics

Teaching The Most Important Course

https://nobaproject.com/documents/1_Teaching_The_Most_Important_Course.pdf

Content Coverage

https://nobaproject.com/documents/2_Content_Coverage.pdf

Motivating Students

https://nobaproject.com/documents/3_Motivating_Students_Tips.pdf

Engaging Large Classes

https://nobaproject.com/documents/4_Engaging_Large_Classes.pdf

Assessment Learning

https://nobaproject.com/documents/5_Assessment_Learning.pdf

Teaching Biological Psychology

https://nobaproject.com/documents/6_Teaching_Bio_Psych.pdf

PowerPoint Presentation

This module has an associated PowerPoint presentation. Download it at https://nobaproject.com//images/shared/supplement_editions/000/000/245/Dissociative%20Disorders.pptx?1475699789.

About Noba

The Diener Education Fund (DEF) is a non-profit organization founded with the mission of re-inventing higher education to serve the changing needs of students and professors. The initial focus of the DEF is on making information, especially of the type found in textbooks, widely available to people of all backgrounds. This mission is embodied in the Noba project.

Noba is an open and free online platform that provides high-quality, flexibly structured textbooks and educational materials. The goals of Noba are three-fold:

- To reduce financial burden on students by providing access to free educational content
- To provide instructors with a platform to customize educational content to better suit their curriculum
- To present material written by a collection of experts and authorities in the field

The Diener Education Fund is co-founded by Drs. Ed and Carol Diener. Ed is the Joseph Smiley Distinguished Professor of Psychology (Emeritus) at the University of Illinois. Carol Diener is the former director of the Mental Health Worker and the Juvenile Justice Programs at the University of Illinois. Both Ed and Carol are award- winning university teachers.

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Contact Information:

Noba Project
www.nobaproject.com
info@nobaproject.com