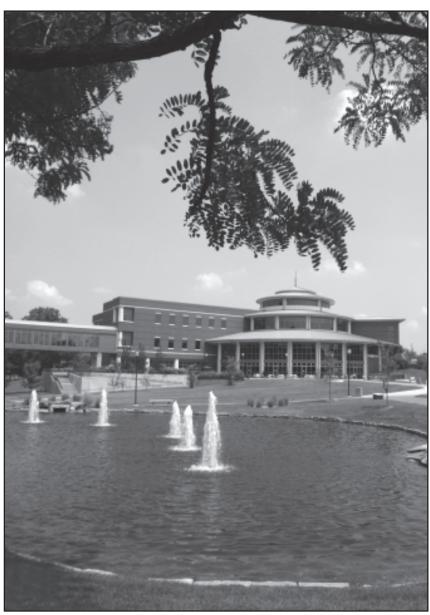# MID-WESTERN
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University of Missouri at St. Louis

Guest Edited Special Topic
**Advocating for African American Students:
Cultural Perspectives on Best Practices**

On The Cover

The University of Missouri at St. Louis was established in 1963 as one of four statewide campuses of the University of Missouri System. UM-St. Louis is the largest university in the St. Louis area and the third largest in Missouri. This affords students all the advantages and opportunities of a major research university.

This year, the NCATE-accredited College of Education at UM-St. Louis celebrates its 40th anniversary, continuing its commitment to preparing high quality professional educators for the 21st Century. Growing from a Division of Teacher Education in 1964 to a professional School of Education in 1966, the School applied for and received standing as the "College" of Education in 2000. Through its four divisions—Teaching and Learning, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Counseling and Family Therapy, and Educational Psychology, Research and Evaluation—the College offers a full range of education, counseling and teaching certification programs with degree programs at the Baccalaureate, Masters, Ph.D. and Ed.D. levels.

As one of the largest suppliers of educators in the state, the College of Education at UM-St. Louis educates a major portion of teachers, principals, and counselors for Missouri's largest metropolitan area and chief economic region. More than 70 full-time faculty teach in the College, including an unprecedented 14 endowed professors, and 11 faculty who share appointments in both the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education. The College's award-winning Technology and Learning Center, dedicated solely to serving education students and professionals, offers unmatched opportunities for faculty, students and practicing teachers to use state-of-the-art technologies that improve learning.

The College of Education has **developed a responsive, field-based, collaborative approach to preparing new, and continuing the knowledge of practicing professional educators**. More than 200 partnerships through research grant and program initiatives involve teachers, education counselors, students, parents, schools, universities, community resources such as the corporate and business community, cultural institutions, youth service organizations and other health and welfare organizations throughout the region, nation and world.

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Advocating for African American Students: Cultural Perspectives on Best Practices

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"We are in revolutionary situation, no matter how unpopular that word may be. You must understand that in the attempt to correct so many generations of bad faith and cruelty, when it is operating not only in the classroom but in society, you will meet the most fantastic, the most brutal, and the most determined resistance."

James Baldwin, A Talk to Teachers

The words of James Baldwin, though written over 40 years ago, prophetically and cogently convey the "revolutionary," critical, and vital need to address the educational needs of African American students by teachers and educational researchers alike. Moreover, Baldwin's imperative call to action is tempered in contemporary schooling contexts by the shifting demographics of public schooling, where African American students are overwhelmingly likely to attend racially re-segregated, under-funded, highly tracked and tested, poor performing schools. In light of these well-known and disparaging factors, our research on African American women teachers provides insights on how teachers have historically and currently make valuable contributions to students' lives while offering significant insights on how best to reach African American children. The voices of African Americans are at best, rarely heard in the teacher education and best practices literature, and thus, commonly marginalized in larger conversations of improving the academic performance of African American and other children of color. For example, Dixson (2003) researched how the intersection of teachers' race, class and gender identities influenced their pedagogical philosophies and practice. Dingus (2003) examined the influence of race, family, and cultural perspectives on the teaching philosophies and conceptualizations of African American teachers' roles. Both studies describe African American students' responses to teachers based on not only race, but also cultural knowledge employed to engage students.

While the intent is not to approach best practices as easily remedied with prescribed, recipe-like approaches, this special edition is intended to instead expand examples of best practices articulated through racial/ethnic, cultural, and familial frameworks. As such, the articles in this special issue of *MWERJ* provide an examination of both pedagogical practices and educational policies that take culture into consideration as a way to engage African American students and ensure their success in school.

Two of the articles in this volume examine the policies and programs that can affect the engagement and success of African American students. First, James Moore, Donna Y. Ford, Delila Owens and their colleagues suggest that colleges and universities have worked beyond just recruitment of African American students, but looked at retaining them as well. They argue that we can look to the retention efforts of higher education to recruit and retain African American students into gifted education. Given that college admission

is in large part premised on scholastic performance coupled with the increasing expectations and the inflation of grade point averages, the work presented in this article can positively impact college-going among African American students if they can access a significant and primary entry to college—gifted education. Similarly, Thandeka Chapman and Nikola Hobbel discuss a pre-college program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison aimed at the recruitment and retention of under-served youth. The program uses a culturally relevant pedagogical approach to draw on students' strengths and attend to building on their academic needs. Ultimately, the goal of the program is to make the students college-ready and admissible to the University of Wisconsin-Madison as part of the University's diversity plan called, "Plan 2008." Chapman and Hobbel provide a closer examination of the program's first class of high school graduates who are now matriculating at UW-Madison.

The next two articles in this special issue examine more closely the pedagogical practices that teachers use or can use to engage African American students in the learning process. The first paper to look at specific pedagogical practices is by Kenneth J. Fasching-Varner, a doctoral candidate at The Ohio State University and a former classroom teacher. Fasching-Varner provides an interesting reflective analysis of the pedagogical practices of three of his teachers who he believes significantly informed his pedagogy as a classroom teacher. He describes three Black women teachers and what he calls their "pedagogy of respect" that he draws from Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's work on respect and education. As the editors of this special issue, we offer an article that examines the challenges of and strategies we employ as professors of color to engage a mostly White and female, pre-service teaching student body. In the article, we focus on our own practice and the activities we use to engage our students in discussions of their positionality recognizing that it serves as the foundation for culturally relevant and responsive pedagogical practices with African American students.

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Retention of African Americans in Gifted Education: Lessons Learned from Higher Education

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Abstract

Predominately White institutions of higher education have focused a considerable amount of attention on the underrepresentation of African American and other ethnically diverse students in colleges and universities. To address this problem, colleges and universities have focused not just on recruitment but also on the retention of African American students in these predominately White institutions. They have recognized that efforts to address underrepresentation cannot be limited to recruitment efforts; they must also consider factors associated with retention in the underrepresentation equation. We contend that gifted education embodies many of the same attributes, challenges, and barriers that predominately White colleges and universities possess for African American students. We recognize that, in public school systems, educators—teachers, school counselors, and administrators—have made much progress in recruiting culturally diverse populations in gifted programs. Despite the efforts, too many African American students are not being retained in gifted education programs. Using Sedlacek's non-cognitive variables (1987, 1989, 1991, 1994, 1996, 1998), we examine the notion of retention and its many implications for gifted education. Thus, we offer, using these variables, recommendations for improving the retention of African American students in gifted education.

A persistent problem in public schools is the underrepresentation of African American students in gifted education and enrichment programs. Each year, many public school systems, around the country, expend substantial resources and funds to attract these students to gifted education programs. These efforts have led educators—teachers, school counselors, and administrators—to use a variety of approaches (i.e., referral, screening, assessment, and placement) to increase the representation of African American students and other students of color in gifted education.

In 1994, Ford postulated that the representation of African American students can only improve when educational professionals (i.e., teachers, school counselors, administrators, etc.) begin to focus more on "recruitment and retention." Furthermore, Ford advocated that educators go beyond the notion of "recruitment"—finding and placing students in gifted education. She further advised educators: (a) to

find effective measures, strategies, policies and procedures to better recruit diverse students; (b) to find more effective and inclusive ways of retaining these students in gifted programs once recruited; and (c) to collect data on factors affecting both the recruitment and retention of diverse students in gifted education in order to more fully understand the underrepresentation problem.

In the research literature, there is a dearth of articles, book chapters, books, and monographs that focus on the "retention" of African American students in gifted education. A disproportionate of the literature focuses on retention (Moore, Ford, & Milner, 2005b). The primary "culprit" for African American students' underrepresentation has been attributed to recruitment issues, usually associated with testing. In other words, the vast majority of research and scholarship on gifted education suggest that poor test performance is the most salient reason why African American and other

students of color are underrepresented in gifted education and other enrichment programs. However, the fundamental research question is: *Once we successfully recruit African American students into gifted education, how successful are we at keeping or retaining them?*

This article extrapolates from the higher education literature to closely examine the different conditions inhibiting the representation of African American students in gifted programs nationally (Ford & Moore, 2004a, 2004b; Moore, et al., 2005b). Since White students disproportionately comprise gifted education programs, it is quite possible that the research literature that has focused on retaining African American students in predominantly White colleges and universities has a lot to offer teachers, school counselors, and administrators closely engaged with gifted education and enrichment programs (Moore et al., 2005b). Why don't African American students persist in gifted education after being recruited (i.e., screened and placed)? What conditions hinder their academic outcomes? What can teachers, school counselors, and administrators do to retain African American students in gifted education? Toward this end, this work explores the literature regarding retention of gifted students in light of the Sedlacek's (1987, 1989, 1991, 1994, 1996, 1998) non-cognitive model of college retention.

College Retention in Higher Education: Sedlacek's Non-Cognitive Variables

Related to African American students, the research on college persistence and retention is replete. Thus, the research literature reflects apparent differences in the persistence of African American students versus White students. The rates of retention for African Americans are much lower. More specifically, African American students experience much higher attrition rates than their White student counterparts (Tracey & Sedlacek, 1987). Despite gains in high school graduation rates and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores or American College Test (ACT) scores, many African American students are not faring well academically at predominately White colleges and universities (Flowers, 2002; Flowers & Pascarella, 2003; Moore, Flowers, Guion, Zhang, & Staten, 2004). Unlike White students, numerous studies indicate that traditional academic measures (i.e., high school GPA and SAT or ACT scores) are not reliable in predicting academic success for African American students (Sedlacek, 1998; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1987, 1988). These conclusions have led researchers and social scientists to explore dimensions more relevant to African American students and other students of color.

In an attempt to find alternative ways for predicting academic success for African American students and other students of color, practitioners and researchers have begun to examine the validity and reliability of non-cognitive variables for predicting college success. Since the conception of non-cognitive variables (Sedlacek, 1983, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1994, 1996, 1998; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1982, 1987, 1988), many practitioners and researchers have gravitated to exploring this alternative of predicting academic success for African American students. Such researchers (Flowers, Zhang, Y., Moore, & Flowers, 2004; Moore, 2000a; 2000b; Moore et al., 2004; Sedlacek, 1994; 1996; 1998) postulate that academic success for African American students require different skills and support systems than White students, especially at predominately White colleges and universities. Student retention tends to be a function of numerous individual and institutional dynamics (Flowers, 2004/2005), which in turns, impact student retention (i.e., academic persistence or lack of persistence).

Over the years, non-cognitive variables are increasingly being substantiated by empirical research and used to predict college retention (Tracey & Sedlacek, 1982, 1987, 1988). More specifically, these non-traditional measures are increasingly becoming more widely accepted and used by student affairs professionals and higher education decision-makers. Sedlacek (1998) postulates that eight identified, non-cognitive variables are more effective in predicting academic persistence and success for African American students. These non-cognitive dimensions comprise the following variables:

1. *Positive self-concept or confidence*: strong feelings about self, strength of character, determination, and independence (i.e., The individual feels confident in being successful academically. In turn, the person expects to persist towards graduation);

2. *Realistic self-appraisal*: recognizes and accepts deficiencies and works hard at self-development, especially academically; recognizes need to broaden his/her individuality (i.e., The individual clearly understands that academic reinforcement has both positive and negative consequences; as a result, the person does not over-react to feedback);

3. *Understanding of and ability to deal with racism*: realistic based on personal experience of racism; is committed to fighting to improve conditions; not submissive to existing wrongs nor hostile to society; able to handle a racist system; asserts school or organization to fight racism (i.e., The individual has developed a method for assessing the academic, cultural, and racial environment in ways that breeds persistence and success);

4. *Preference for long-range goals over more immediate short-term goals*: able to respond to delayed gratification (i.e., The individual has developed a plan of action for accomplishing long-term and immediate goals. In addition, the person shows evidence of planning in academic and non-academic areas);

5. *Support of others for academic plans*: has a person that he/she can turn to for support (i.e., mentor, advisor, friend, etc.);

6. *Successful leadership experience*: has leadership experience in area(s) pertinent to his/her background (e.g., church, gang leader, sports, etc.);

7. *Demonstrated community service*: has involvement in his/her cultural community (i.e., The individual shows evidence of integration and connection in a community); and

8. *Knowledge acquired in a field*: has unusual and/or culturally-related ways of obtaining information and demonstrating knowledge; field may be non-traditional (i.e., The individual appears to be keenly knowledgeable about his or her proposed field of study. In addition, the person has developed innovative approaches to acquire information about his or her given field of study).

African American students' experiences with the academic and social environment provide the basis for developing a sense of efficacy. Therefore, it is imperative that their academic and social experiences do not foster a sense of inefficacy. Sedlacek's non-cognitive variables illustrate that educators who are concerned with the success of African American students in predominately white colleges and universities need to focus on the motivational and personality qualities of students (Sackett, Schmidt, Ellington, & Kabin, 2001; Sedlacek, 1998). For African American students and many other students of color, they often exhibit their academic abilities through means that are difficult to access in cognitive measures.

An underlying assumption of the eight non-cognitive variables (Sedlacek, 1983, 1989, 1998) is that African American students often find that they have to disassociate themselves from other African American students to persist in predominately White institutions. Stated differently, these non-cognitive variables suggest that African Americans are often forced to abandon traditional, African American values and beliefs to be successful in predominately White settings or environments. W. E. B. DuBois (1970) refers to this psychological quandary as "double consciousness." This notion suggests that academic gains are made at the expense of social/cultural gains or vice versa (Moore et al., 2005b).

Frequently, gifted African American students in K-12 settings experience the aforementioned tug-of-war, feelings of having to choose between academic success and social acceptance (Ford, 2002b; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Lindstrom & San Vant, 1986; Howard, 2003). Thus, some of these students see academic success as a good thing but the subsequent feelings of loneliness and isolation from being the only one or few African American students in the gifted program as a bad thing (Ford, 2002b). According to Ford (2002b), "[w]hen caught in this tug-of-war, some Black students attempt to sabotage their achievement (e.g., procrastinating, failing, to do assignments, exerting little effort). Efforts are reprioritized, with energy devoted to seeking and securing social acceptance and belonging as the need for affiliation outweighs the need for achievement" (p. 159). The psychological and emotional tug-of-war of having to choose between academic success and social acceptance often induces distress in academic domains in which African American students are underrepresented (Howard, 2003;

Moore, 2000a, 2001; Moore et. al., 2005b; Moore, Madison-Colmore, & Smith, 2003). This is especially true for African American students who are acclimating or transitioning into the alien, academic culture (i.e., gifted education classroom or program). The process of moving from a familiar (i.e., neighborhood school and community) to an unfamiliar environment (i.e., new school out of community) often creates a heightened level of anxiety for African Americans (Bailey & Moore, 2005; Moore et al., 2005b; Steele, 2003). To persist, it is quite likely that African American students must adjust academically, socially, psychologically, and institutionally (Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985; Herndon & Moore, 2002; Moore et al., 2005b; Moore et al., 2003; Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999). Equally important is ethnic or racial group representation. Such representation frequently enhances bonding as well as increase feelings of solidarity among students (Smith, 1989).

Applying the Non-Cognitive Variables to Gifted Education

Like at predominately White colleges and universities, African American students are under represented in gifted programs. In this segment, we use Sedlacek's (1998) eight non-cognitive variables to explain how educational professionals—teachers, school counselors, and administrators—can better retain African American students in gifted and enrichment programs. Similar to Moore et al. (2005a), the non-cognitive variables are categorized into two broad areas: social and psychological.

Social Non-Cognitive Variables

When examining the retention of African American students in gifted programs, it is critical that educational professionals adequately assess the learning environment to determine whether or not the classroom or school is culturally responsive (Ford, 2002a; Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997). For the social category, four non-cognitive variables are extrapolated from Sedlacek's (1987, 1991, 1998) work. "Support of others for academic plans" is one of main ingredients of these non-cognitive variables. More importantly, it refers to having someone to turn to for support. Peer and teacher support is discussed, as well as "understanding of and ability to deal with racism."

Understanding and Ability to Deal with Racism. Of all the variables discussed, "understanding and ability to deal with racism" is one of most salient non-cognitive variables. It represents the frames of reference and coping mechanisms of African American students that provide patterns for acting, feeling, and being in a racist society. In this section, we separated this non-cognitive variable into the following: (a) peer relationships and support and (b) teacher relationships, support, and expectations

Peer Relationships and Support. Peer relationships play a critical role in African American students' educational lives. Many researchers (Phelan, Yu, & Davidson, 1994; Steinberg,

Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992) have found that African American students often become psychologically, emotionally, and socially disengaged when they are alienated or unable to connect with their African American or non-African American peers. Their inability to connect with others significantly contributes to African American students' underachievement (Moore et al., 2005a; Moore et al., 2003).

Few studies have explored the perceptions of gifted African American students' hold of their peers. However, one example is Grantham and Ford's (1998) case study on a gifted African American female (Danisha, age 15). This particular student indicated that she was having much difficulty engaging and connecting with White students in the gifted program.

Additionally, Danisha, the student in Grantham and Ford's study (1998), expressed her discomfort with not having many African American students in her predominately White gifted classes. Danisha also felt "alone" and often "alienated" in these classes. Similar to Danisha's experiences, Harmon (2002) found that African American students are often frustrated and angry about being isolated from other African American students and alienated from their gifted White counterparts. They and other students of color reported being teased, taunted, and intimidated by some of the White students in their gifted education classrooms.

Danisha (Grantham & Ford, 1996) also confirmed what many scholars and researchers have noted—many African American students equate achievement with "acting white," which often discourages and distracts gifted African American students (Ford, 1996; Ford & Moore, 2004a, 2004b; Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Like many African American students in gifted education programs, Danisha complained that she had few African American friends. This often occurs when few African American students are identified as gifted and, thus, are not in her classes, and too many African American students have learned to shun achievement. In both instances, feelings of isolation and alienation can often hinder African American students' motivation and self-efficacy to remain in gifted education programs.

Teacher Relationships, Support, and Expectations. Hébert (2002a, 2002b) conducted several qualitative studies with gifted African American students. In these studies, he discovered that student-teacher relationships and expectations significantly impacted these students' school outcomes (i.e., achievement and motivation). Ford and Harris (1996) also found that most of the gifted African American students in their study did better in school, when they had positive relationships with their teachers and when teachers tried to understand them. While all students can benefit from positive student-teacher relationships and expectations, these variables seem particularly important for African American students (Flowers et al., 2003; Howard, 2003; Grantham & Ford, 1998, 2003; Moore, 2003).

In Grantham and Ford's work (1998), Danisha suggested that teachers' perceived attitudes and expectations of Afri-

can American students really affected these students' academic achievement. Toward this end, Danisha also identified numerous examples of teachers accusing her of misbehaving or acting out. When some of the African American students "acted out," the other African American students were considered "guilty by association." In other words, the stigma was also associated with the non-guilty students. Clearly, the relationships or lack of relationships students have with teachers influence their school outcomes (Flowers et al., 2003; Grantham & Ford, 1998). In another study, Harmon (2002) reported that many teachers had low expectations of African American students, even those individuals identified as gifted. They discussed teachers' stereotypes about African American students. Similarly, these gifted African American students' comments parallel Sedlacek's (1991, 1998) non-cognitive variable, "understanding of and ability to deal with racism," because they relate to African American students' persistence at predominately White colleges and universities.

According to Sedlacek (1991, 1998) and others (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001; Moore, 2001; Moore et al., 2005b; Moore et al., 2003), students who are able to cope with racism and discrimination are more likely to persist at predominately White institutions. For example, Harmon (2002) found that gifted African American students are often subjected to racist attitudes of White teachers and students. Thus, these students are expected to cope with negative interactions with White teachers and students. For example, one student in Harmon's study, stated: "They would mostly hang out with their own color and talk about the kids of our race… They would call us niggers and Black people and racial things. They would come up to us and say it in our faces and other things like that" (p. 71). This burden associated with racism is not usually endured by White students but frequently contributes to the emotional and psychological obstacles faced by African American students (Moore, 2000a; Steele, 2003). Additionally, many of these African American students second-guess their abilities, become unmotivated, or feel inadequate when compared to White students (Ford, 2002a).

Like previous work, Ford et al. (2002) contend that educators' deficit thinking about African American students are at the foundation of African American students' academic persistent and pervasive underrepresentation in gifted education. Typically, deficit thinking focuses on students' weaknesses rather than strengthens. Too many educators—teachers, school counselors, and administrators—harbor the belief that African American students are academically inferior to White students (Howard & Hammond, 1985).

Availability of Academic Supports. As previously discussed, "social support for students is not limited to emotional support and interpersonal relationships" (Moore et al., 2005a, p. 59). Therefore, it is essential that educators and researchers examine students' academic support systems and their predictive school outcomes. In 1996, Ford presented research from various studies on underachieving

gifted African American students. The anti-achievement ethic and basic skill deficits were discovered to contribute mostly to gifted African American students' underachievement. She also discovered that few of the gifted African American students put forth the necessary effort into studying, and very few understood the positive correlation between studying and making good grades. Consequently, many of these students also poorly managed their time and devoted little time to academics. Based on these findings, it is clear that underachieving students are likely to not persist in gifted programs. More importantly, schools that fail to focus students' study skills and the shortcomings of their work ethics are likely not to be successful retaining African American students in gifted classrooms or programs (Moore et al., 2005b).

Psychological Non-Cognitive Variables

It is widely accepted in education that self-esteem, self-efficacy, motivation, and attitudes of resilience significantly influence students' school outcomes. Based on Sedlacek's (1987, 1991, 1998) college retention model, he refers to two non-cognitive variables—"positive self-concept or confidence" and "realistic self-appraisal." When looking at the retention of African American students in gifted programs, it is worth closely examining these variables.

Positive Self-Concept and Realistic Self-Appraisal: When examining the self-perceptions among students of color, some educational scholars (Ford, 1996; Ford & Moore, 2004b; Moore et al., 2005b) argue that educators—teachers, school counselors, and administrators—must not only consider self-concept and self-esteem but also weigh in students' racial identity development. Tatum (1997) defines racial identity as a "process of defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a particular racial group" (p. 16). Consequentially, African American students tend to face unique racial identity developmental issues. More specifically, they often experience a myriad of adverse messages, including Black is not the standard of beauty, being intelligent equates to acting white, and a strong emphasis on athletics and entertainment. These messages tend to negatively affect African American students' academic outcomes as well as their career aspirations. Therefore, many researchers (Moore et al., 2005a, 2005b; Witherspoon, Speight & Thomas, 1997) postulate that racial identity, both positively and negatively, influence African American student's academic achievement.

Generally speaking, racial identity development for gifted African American students tends to be an arduous experience in predominately White gifted education programs. These students are not only in racial identity development formation, but they must also establish grounds to negotiate the negative images about their racial group (Moore et al., 2005b). With this in mind, several research investigations have discovered that de-identification can have a host of negative consequences, including lower school performance (Ford, 1996; Grantham & Turner, 2001). Therefore, racial

identity development should be a major focus for educators (Cross, 1995, Worrell, Cross, & Vandiver, 2001; Ford, 1996; Fordham, 1988; Rowley & Moore, 2002; Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Cook, 1998; Tatum, 1997).

Cross' (1971, 1995; Worrell et al., 2001) theory of Black racial identity development has been frequently cited in the research literature on topics related to academic outcomes. Several of these studies indicate that racial identity development is highly correlated with school outcomes. More specifically, "the weaker or poorer their racial [development] identity, the lower students' achievement (e.g., grades in school) and the lower their work ethic (e.g., willingness to study, willingness to do school work and then to socialize)" (Moore et al., 2005b, p. 59). In 1994 and 1996, Ford discovered that underachieving gifted African American students had lower levels of racial development identity than their high achieving African American counterparts. In addition, students of color who have low racial identities may become vulnerable to peer pressure. Fordham (1998) wrote that ethnic minority students may equate academic achievement to "acting white" or "selling out" which then contributes to little effort in school and low academic performance. Further, Lindstrom and Van Sant (1986) wrote that gifted students of color must choose between the need for achievement and need for peer affiliation. Unfortunately, these students often give into negative social pressures so the need for peer affiliation over shadows the need for academic excellence.

Realistic Self-Appraisal. Based on Ford's (1994, 1996) work, high achieving, gifted African American students tend to be more realistic about their academic abilities and the strong correlation between effort and achievement. This notion might best be explained by the attitude-achievement paradox, coined by Mickelson (1984). Her work suggests that African American students often support the achievement ideology in its abstract form, but do not support it in concrete terms. In short, many African American students say they believe that hard work and effort contribute to success, but they seldom exert high levels of effort. Thus, the gifted African American underachievers, studied by Ford (1994), were less likely to work hard to improve their achievement. Further, they relied on external motivators from educators and parents for encouragement rather than internal support. Rowley et al. (1998) had similar results.

The aforementioned findings parallel Sedlacek's (1987, 1991, 1998) work on African American student persistent at predominately White colleges and universities. Hence, it is important that educators—teachers, school counselors, and administrators—are familiar with racial identity development and how it can influence school outcomes for gifted African American students, especially in predominately White gifted classrooms (Grantham & Ford, 2003; Moore et al., 2005a, 2005b). These findings also point to the need for African Americans to hold realistic self-appraisals of their efforts and the positive connection between effort and achievement.

Other Non-Cognitive Variables

Few studies, if any, have examined non-cognitive variables (i.e, leadership experience and community service, knowledge acquired in a field, and long-term goal orientation) with gifted African American students. Such variables tend to influence these students' retention in gifted education programs.

Leadership experiences and community service. Using Hébert's (2002a) work, examples of these non-cognitive variables were explored. More specifically, he found that gifted African American students spend a great deal of their time performing community service (i.e., church) and participating in extra-curricular activities (i.e., sports, enrichment programs, etc.). The author also suggested that many of these gifted African American students were seen as leaders in their schools and communities.

Knowledge acquired in a field. Another non-cognitive variable is "knowledge acquired in a field." Studies on mentoring experiences are most relevant for the current discussion. Seminal studies in gifted education have noted the presence of mentors in the lives of highly successful, eminent people, such as Presidential Scholars (Kaufman, Harrel, Milam, Wooverton, & Miller, 1986; Torrance, 1984). Likewise, Hébert and Olenchak (2000) examined how mentorships can increase African American students' school performance and academic engagement and subsequently retention in gifted programs. In their study, many teachers and administrators expressed concern about these students' poor academic outcomes and negative social skills (e.g., behavioral problems).

Long-Term Goal Orientation. Another non-cognitive variable is, "long-term goal orientation." This variable tends to have a profound effect on African American students' retention at predominately White colleges and universities. With this in mind, we postulate that this non-cognitive variable has similar effects on African American students' school outcomes in gifted education programs. Toward this end, Moore (2000b), Torrance (1994), Brown (2001), and Ford (1996) suggest that students who set long-term goals are more likely to have better academic outcomes than those students that did not.

Recommendations

Earlier, we applied Sedlacek's eight non-cognitive variables to African American students in gifted education. Relying on work conducted with gifted African American students, we shared the results of studies that examined one or more of these variables. Our review of the literature helps us to feel confident in concluding that non-cognitive variables fundamentally influence the achievement and motivation of African American students in gifted programs. We present the following recommendations based on the different studies and articles reviewed:

1. *Research*: Teachers, school counselors, and administrators need to *constantly* collect data on their retention efforts. Such data collection should *always* address the following questions: Once identified and placed, how many African American students persist in gifted education classes? What conditions inhibit and enhance these students' academic persistence? How do the conditions differ for those who persist versus those who do not persist? Based on gender and socio-economic status, what differences exist?

2. *Mentoring*: Teachers, school counselors, and administrators need to closely monitor the academic progress of gifted African American students, as well as proactively approach and communicate with these students about different resources to improve their academic achievement (Moore et al., 2004; Moore et al., 2005b; Moore, 2006). More specifically, Ford (1996) recommends that unsuccessful gifted African American students be provided ongoing academic support (i.e., tutoring, study skills, time management skills, and organizational skills). Peer mentoring can also be used as a support system and mechanism for promoting positive academic achievement (Ford & Moore, 2004b; Moore et al., 2005b; Moore, 2006).

3. *Multicultural Curriculum*: A multicultural curriculum can improve gifted African American students' academic outcomes, social relationships, and their racial identity development (Ford & Harris, 1999; Ford, Moore, Harmon, 2005). In gifted education classrooms, African American students tend to be more engaged and interested in course content, when the curriculum reflects their cultural background and/or experiences. Toward this end, it is important to note that educators should make every attempt to avoid oppressive content in both the curriculum and classroom (Ford, 1994; Ford et al., 2005). Aligned with this notion, Ford (1994) asserts that "all children, regardless of race, benefit both from multiethnic education (which focuses on race and ethnicity) and from multicultural education (which focuses on human diversity and individual differences in gender, race, socioeconomic status, and geographic origins" (p. 84). Additionally, a multicultural curriculum promotes "mutual respect, comradeship, collegiality, social and cultural awareness, and ultimately resilience" (Ford, 1994, p. 84).

4. *Teacher-Student Relationships*: Fostering meaningful teacher relationships with African American students can improve their academic achievement and persistence (Corbett & Wilson, 2002; Flowers et al., 2003; Harmon, 2002; Moore, 2001; Moore et al., 2005a, 2005b). The relationships African American students have with their teachers and classmates (i.e., White and African American classmates) must be supportive and affirming. Positive student-teacher relationships help gifted African American students develop a "strong" sense of belonging, while decreasing feelings of alienation and isola-

tion in predominantly White gifted programs (Hébert, 2002a; Howard, 2003; Moore, 2000b; Moore et al., 2005b). According to Moore et al. (2005b), "when educators make home visits, attend community events, and hold consistent one-on-one conversations with students, they can build positive, closer relationships" (p. 63).

5. *Student-Student relationships*: It is equally important to address relationships between gifted African American students and White students; and gifted African American and other African American student. Oftentimes, gifted African American students express feelings of isolation in such settings (Flowers et al., 2004). They also commonly become discouraged and are reluctant to engage both socially and academically (Ford, Moore, & Milner, 2005; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001; Moore et al., 2003). As a way of countering these pitfalls, educators can use collaborative teaching strategies and cooperative grouping strategies to facilitate relationships between students. When students find themselves co-dependent on each other for assignments and otherwise in situations where they must work together, this increases their understanding of others. Sample strategies include buddy systems, peer tutoring, study groups, and group assignments and projects.

6. *Academic and Social Counseling*: Both individual and group counseling are excellent ways to facilitate gifted African American students' emotional, social, and academic development. More specifically, counseling is an effective intervention, because it can assist African American students with coping or overcoming difficult experiences in predominately white gifted education programs (Moore et al., 2005a). Further, group counseling is frequently offered for such situations. It gives these students an opportunity to share their experiences and concerns, as well as giving them opportunities to develop mutual coping skills and strategies (Ford & Moore, 2004a, 2004b; Moore et al., 2005b).

7. *Career Counseling*: Counseling students on career/vocational issues can motivate gifted African American students by giving them a sense of direction and goals. Interest inventories, internships, and shadowing programs can contribute in significant ways to helping African American students prepare for postsecondary educational opportunities. Career counseling helps these students as well as other students to see the benefits of doing well in their classes and to see the connection between academic success in school and career options.

8. *Staff Development and Continuing Education:* Regardless whether it is general education or gifted education, it is critical that educators—teachers, school counselors, and administrators—receive ongoing staff development and continue education. Many educators enter classrooms ill-equipped to educate and work with African American students, and many of them lack the multicultural preparation or seldom have the necessary experiences with such student populations. More spe-

cifically, educators may experience difficulty understanding, teaching, and promoting academic excellence among gifted students of color, when they do not understand the cultural experiences these students bring to the schools (Ford & Moore, 2004b). They may not even fully understand the different learning and cultural styles that these students bring to the classroom. It is quite likely that teachers' pedagogical styles may not match these students' learning styles (Ford & Moore, 2004b). Therefore, it is essential that educators are constantly exposed to culturally relevant teaching strategies and "best practices" for working with African American students. It is imperative that educators are required to take coursework or attend continuing education workshops on topics relevant to "teaching and working with gifted African American students." The content should reflect, but limited to, understanding identification issues, appropriate curriculum, learning styles, and cultural beliefs of gifted students of color (Ford, 2002b; Ford & Moore, 2004b; Ford et al., 2005).

Summary

The research literature refutes that highly intelligent children have high levels of task engagement and are eager to learn (Ford, 1996; Moore et al., 2004). Many gifted children are underachievers in general education classrooms (Gross, 1993; Whitmore, 1980; Moore et al., 2005a). Numerous studies have revealed that gifted underachieving African Americans perform poorly for many reasons (Flower et al., 2004; Howard, 2003). In this article, we suggest that underperforming academic achievement is simply a symptom of larger issues. This being the case, educators—teachers, school counselors, and administrators—must take pivotal steps to first understand and then to effectively address some of the non-cognitive factors that gifted African American students face. These non-cognitive concerns can stand in the way of the pursuit of academic excellence for African American students. Consequently, African American gifted students appear to be an "endangered" student population (Jackson & Moore, 2006). It is clear that retention issues are a major problem in gifted education for African Americans. It is also evident that both school and non-school factors contribute to these challenges. Thus, African American gifted students' academic persistence can be determined by non-cognitive variables—not simply by grades or standardized test scores.

In short, as educators, we must understand how to identify and support gifted African American students. Furthermore, a keen awareness of the non-cognitive issues that are affecting performance is crucial. A number of factors (i.e., individual, family, school, and community) must be examined when trying to understand retention in gifted African American students. Toward this end, it is believed that this article offers various considerations in the retention of these students.

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Enrichment and Exposure in Secondary Literacy: Evaluating a Programmatic Response to Institutional Diversity Initiatives

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Abstract

The following paper presents the findings from an evaluative research project that investigated the merits and challenges of an academic bridge program between Milwaukee Public School high school students and the University of Wisconsin Madison. Using a mixed-method design, the researchers focused on evaluating the three-week writing workshops held during the first two summers of the program. Data were collected from students who had already taken the workshops and currently are enrolled at the university. The analysis reflects needed alterations in the program as well as political and educational struggles indicative of large urban districts that are beyond the scope of the program. The researchers discuss the tension between providing multicultural learning experiences that are geared towards enriching students' engagement in writing and with literature, on the one hand, and providing more technical skill-based exercises to supplement gaps in their high school curricula on the other. The researchers suggest that bridge programs that attempt to recruit and retain students from urban areas with high fluctuations in academic rigor from school to school face certain challenges when building a comprehensive program that meets the needs of the targeted population. As public universities continue to address disparities among various groups that have access to higher education, attempts to connect universities to the varying affective and academic needs of African American, Latino, and Asian American students from urban districts prove an important piece of these ongoing conversations.

Context and Background

In 1998 the University of Wisconsin-Madison entered into a partnership with Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), as well as local and state businesses to create a bridge program that would attract secondary students of color from Milwaukee Public Schools to the flagship UW campus. This program set forth the goals of retention and recruitment as a directed response to the UW-System 2008 Diversity Initiatives, which targeted, in part, the dearth of racial diversity at UW-Madison. Specifically, the student population of UW-Madison does not reflect the racial demographics of the state, nor does it reflect Milwaukee which is the largest urban area. The small percentage of students of color at the university hail primarily from Madison and other small cities in Wisconsin, leaving African American, Latino, Asian American students in Milwaukee grossly under-represented on the campus by the lake. Moreover, smaller, more rural campuses such as UW-Whitewater and UW-Green Bay have had better success recruiting and retaining Milwaukee students due to university-community pipelines created by the admissions offices and various programs at the other universities.

The under-representation of Milwaukee's students at UW-Madison poses several problems for the state. Milwaukee is the largest urban center in the state of Wisconsin and hosts the majority of the racial diversity of the state. Beyond altruistic notions of fairness and balance, Milwaukee students who leave the state to attend top colleges are more likely to remain out of state and less likely to return to their home city and develop a career. This means the city's most precious human resource is drained and unreplenished by the education system. Significant amounts of revenue are also lost when students leave the state for college. A recent study in Illinois reported that Illinois loses approximately $27 million a year when its African American students leave the state to attend historically Black colleges and universities (*The Cost of Losing Black Students*, 2005).

Although Milwaukee students do attend a number of other UW System schools, Madison hosts the wider expanse of academic programs, scholars, immediate library resources, and state-of-the-art facilities. It captures the lion's share of the state's budget and brings together regional, national, and international students in ways unavailable to the smaller campuses. Thus, by not attending UW Madison, Milwaukee students limit or deny their access to various types of resources, experiences, and future opportunities that are paid for by their parents' and communities' tax dollars. Additionally, students at UW-Madison are denied the opportunity to interact with students from the state's most populated and important areas for generating state revenue and job opportunities, making Milwaukee continue to appear as an unknown and unwelcoming city that is seemingly severed from the rest of Wisconsin.

The PEOPLE Program

To begin to rectify the disparities between the numbers of people of color in the state and the numbers of those students attending UW-Madison, the $1.5 million dollar program known as PEOPLE (Pre-college Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence) was developed. The PEOPLE program was created based on prior research documenting successful retention and recruitment strategies for students of color and low-performing students (Ackermann, 1991; Garcia, 1991; Richardson & de los Santos, 1988; Robert & Thompson, 1994). When a PEOPLE student fulfills all program components and meets the admissions criteria for the university, that student receives a five-year tuition scholarship to UW-Madison. Currently, the PEOPLE program is in its seventh year, and the first cohort of students will graduate in May 2006.

The PEOPLE program was designed to create opportunities for enrichment and exposure for college-bound urban students of color, of which over 75% are African American. The students come from the eighteen large traditional high schools in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), the 220 Student Exchange Program[1] between Milwaukee residents and surrounding suburbs, and small charter and private schools in Milwaukee. Students from urban areas in Wisconsin who have a 2.75 GPA or higher are invited to apply to the program. Students are chosen based on their GPA, their written statement of purpose, teacher recommendations, extracurricular activities, and space availability. In its first few years, the program accepted 90% of all students who applied; however, the growth and success of the program has made the program more competitive in the last five years. Targeted students who met the academic criteria for the program take college-bound course work at their school. Therefore, the goal was not to create college-bound students, but to recruit that particular population for UW-Madison. Beginning in 1999, the PEOPLE program invited Milwaukee's best and brightest to attend summer sessions at the university with the hope that the students would find the combination of rigorous programming, extensive resources, and paid tuition an irresistible combination.

Each year PEOPLE recruits 100 MPS students to join the program after they have completed their freshman year of high school. As of 2003 when this research was conducted, over 657 students from Milwaukee, Kenosha, and Racine were in the PEOPLE pipeline. The bulk of the program runs during the summer. The first two summers the students spend three weeks on campus. During this time, students take four workshops: writing, math, science and fine arts. In addition, they attend orientation seminars sponsored by different campus organizations. With the exception of math, which places students according to their previous math courses, students are not ability tracked in their writing, science, and fine arts classes. The third summer, after their junior year, the students are matched according to their career interests

with a seven-week long, paid internship in Madison. The final year of the program is only for those students who have applied and been accepted to UW-Madison. These students take a math and composition class during the eight-week summer session that results in six credits towards their degree. With the exception of the three-week and science seminars, the program is mainly staffed by graduate students from across UW-Madison schools and departments.

Milwaukee Public School (MPS) teachers are also invited to teach in the three-week writing, math, and science programs that the students attend after their freshman and sophomore years in high school. MPS teachers are teamed with a UW-Madison graduate student for the duration of the workshop. These teams co-create and co-teach the lessons for the workshops that meet the curriculum goals of the program (discussed later in this paper). In combination with the team-teaching, MPS teachers also attend a three-credit professional development seminar to explore issues of diversity and multicultural education and their subject matter. Given the constraints of standardized curricula, many teachers do not have the opportunity to explore and discuss innovative curricula or pedagogy in their classrooms. Therefore, the seminar and the team teaching acts as a professional development opportunity to stimulate institutional change at the classroom level (Dixson, 2003).

Research Design

As this programs looks forward to graduating its first class from UW-Madison, the curriculum programmers wanted to better explore how the program had benefited the students who are currently at UW-Madison. At the end of each summer, the high school students are asked to evaluate their experience in the portion of the program that they just completed. These evaluations are used to make changes in the program to the benefit of the students the following year. For example, the first two cohorts of students asked to have a math section included in the summer sessions; so the program now offers this section in the first two summers.

Because the students who entered UW-Madison have not been asked to reflect on how these summer sessions were helpful to their matriculation through the university, what is missing from these evaluations is the connection between the students' ability to succeed at UW-Madison and the goals of the various program components. Covering an entire evaluation on the program is beyond the scope of this paper. The evaluation researchers involved with the PEOPLE program worked primarily with the building and implementation of the writer's workshop portion of the program. Therefore, the focus of this evaluation was limited to the three-week writing workshops conducted during the first two years of the summer program. The question the researchers sought to answer is: How do UW-Madison students perceive the program's influence on their own current college literacy practices? By surveying students currently at the university,

the researchers documented the challenges and strengths of the two three-week literacy programs that are completed after the students' freshman and sophomore years of high school.

This information is not only useful to the PEOPLE program, but is meaningful to all educators who attempt to alleviate harsh injustices in higher education related to the under-representation of urban minority students at flagship institutions. The researchers wish to share the data analysis in hopes that other Midwest universities will use the success of this program to inform their recruitment and retention efforts, and to conduct research on how models of quality education can be replicated. This evaluation serves to inform policy makers, teacher educators, and program developers of the scholarship on university-public school partnerships and enrichment opportunities for urban high school students.

The researchers draw the framework for this paper from the research on strengths-based approaches to evaluative research (Kana'iaupuni, 2004). Specifically, the researchers are conducting a collaborative evaluation (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2002; Creswell, 2003) which means that various stakeholders have helped to design the study based on their interests in understanding the facets of the program which might contribute to its success or failure, and their interests in replicating the program design at other sites. As internal evaluators, they hold a precarious position: they have worked in the literacy program, contributing to its design, and investing in the success of the students. Although the researchers are no longer actively contributing to the program's continued success, they maintain close relationships with the original design team members, many of whom are still working with PEOPLE.

The PEOPLE program is at a crucial juncture as the first cohort will be completing their university degree programs by May of 2006. This small, mixed-method study was conducted over a two-year period (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002). Data collection included the material documents from the program, informal interviews with students attending UW Madison, background information on Milwaukee's high schools, and the student questionnaire. Demographic data concerning the students who are attending UW-Madison was gathered from the program administrators. The researchers' professional knowledge of the students and the program is also included in the discussion and analysis of the data.

The survey being presented in this article was first conducted in the spring of 2002 and repeated in 2003 and 2004. Only three cohorts of PEOPLE students were enrolled at the UW Madison at the time of completion. The first year, the students were given the survey during a monthly PEOPLE meeting. The next two years, the students were e-mailed the survey in the spring of their freshman year at UW Madison and asked to send it back to the researchers collecting the data. The survey consisted of both quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative component adhered to a Likert scale question format that consisted of eleven questions and five available responses: poor, below average, average, good, above average, and excellent. The qualitative aspect followed the first two quantitative questions by asking the students to further explain their forced choice. Questions five through ten asked students to write responses reflecting on their skills and the program's assistance in building their writing ability. Informal interviews were also conducted with groups of students during the primary researcher's data collection process.

Thirty-eight of the eighty-one students in the program and at UW-Madison returned a completed survey, for a 46.9% rate of return. Among the thirty-eight returns, twelve were from the first cohort Class of 2006, eleven were returned from the Class of 2007, and fourteen were returned from the Class of 2008. Table one displays the demographic background of the students. These categories reflect larger social categories for the students, not the more distinct ethnic and multiple categorizations that the students often use to identify themselves individually. The racial distribution of the students is commensurate with the racial distribution of students of color in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). Milwaukee Public Schools are 60% African American, 18% Latino, 17.3% white, 4% Asian American, and 1% Native

Table 1

PEOPLE student enrollment at UW Madison

UW Madison Class of	Total # Enrolled	# African American	# Latino Students	# Asian American	Total # Returned surveys	Rate of Return (%)
2006	22	16	4	2	12	54.5%
2007	20	14	4	2	11	55.0%
2008	39	26	8	5	14	35.8%

Table 2

Student participation in the survey

UW Madison Class of	Total # Returned Surveys	Rate of Return (%)	# African American	# Latino	# Asian Americans
2006	12	54.5%	9	1	2
2007	11	55.0%	6	4	1
2008	14	35.8%	8	3	3

American (Instruction, 2003-2004). Although PEOPLE does not exclusively serve African American students, they are the primary stakeholders in the success of the program because of their high representation in Milwaukee, the PEOPLE Program, and other urban areas that have similar characteristics and bridge programs.

Moreover, much of the curriculum was created with the various racial groups of students in mind, meaning that other components of the program reflected the cultures of the students. The programmers sought to make connections between faculty and Madison students from matching racial groups, giving students the opportunity to learn fine arts that originated in various geographic locations and cultures, as well as encouraging dialogues about race, gender, understanding, and equity across groups.

The Curriculum

Sensitivity to issues of race, class, and gender was consciously filtered throughout the program and is reflected in the writer's workshop curriculum. The curriculum for the two three-week workshops was built on the theoretical framework of critical multiculturalism, also labeled the "action approach" for Banks (1995) and "social reconstructionist" for Grant & Sleeter (1998). McLaren (1997) suggests that critical and resistance multiculturalism (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001) make adequate attempts to deal with the complexities of meaning and identity constructions and to confront the larger societal challenges surrounding social justice. When explicating the idea of difference, McLaren states:

> Difference is always a product of history, culture, power, and ideology. Differences occur *between* and *among* groups and must be understood in terms of specificity of their production. Critical multiculturalism interrogates the construction of difference and identity in relation to a radical politics. [emphasis in original] (1997, p. 53)

McLaren supports critical and resistance multiculturalism because the concept advocates systemic change, which is absent from the lower levels of multicultural typologies.

In this transcendental approach to multicultural education, students are asked to move forward in their academic careers with critical thinking- and problem solving-skills that help them understand and also question the multiple communities in which they live. The students are able to make relevant connections between their academic knowledge and their future goals. Teachers encourage students to become conscious agents of change in their everyday lives and future endeavors. Multicultural scholars (Banks, 1995; Gay, 2004; Grant & Sleeter, 1998; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2000) would agree that the final levels of the various multicultural typologies for education are the ideal goals for pedagogical practice; they also would admit that few teachers and fewer schools have invested the resources and time necessary to

meet the standards for teachers to work towards these difficult goals. Therefore, it was important to the curriculum planners to provide the students with a brief exposure to critical multiculturalism that they had not encountered in their urban classrooms.

In part, this exposure was provided through extensive multicultural literature that the students could read and use as writing models or foci for analytic analysis. Grant affirms the importance of multicultural literature when he states, "Literature is one of the foundational subject areas of multicultural education. For more than twenty years, key questions, sources of evidence and support for challenges to multicultural education have been located in discussions of literature-..." (Harris, 1997, xii). Literature is a powerful tool for examining all aspects of society. Through fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry, students encounter people they initially perceive as similar or dissimilar to themselves. The critical analysis of characters and situations leads to broader understandings of historical and societal contexts and allows students to contemplate the "why" of people's actions.

Harris makes a distinction between literature written by an ethnic author and literature that provides insights and critiques of various elements of society. The focus is not on the ethnic identity of the author, but on the text itself and the issues that are addressed in the body of the work. The author may be from any ethnic and racial background so long as the text can be used as an entry point for discussions of plurality and difference in society. Through dialogues and interactions with multicultural literature, new realms of understanding occur, highlighting unfamiliar practices and beliefs, as well as examining how personal practices and beliefs are constructed and lived, resisted and accommodated. Multicultural literature was used to further acknowledge the values and experiences of diverse groups as well as providing ample fodder for discussions and writing activities.

In keeping with critical multiculturalism's focus on the individual and her place as an agent of change in society, the writing assignments asked students to reflect on issues of identity and society. The students were encouraged to investigate issues of family and community relationship within the scope of broader issues of race, class, and gender in the U. S. and the world. The goals of the workshops were to expose the students to new ways of thinking about literature and their writing process. Because of the limited time frames for the workshops, they were not focused on grammar and sentence structure. Although these areas of writing were handled through revision and rewriting and individualized teacher conferences, they were not specifically addressed as foci for the workshops.

The summer writer's workshops followed a specific sequence: in the first summer session (populated by students who had just completed their freshman year), writing focused on the autobiographical: genres included poetry about the self, reflections on family life, and autobiographi-

cal incidents. In the following summer, students were asked to produce analytic writing: one paper of literary analysis, another a synthesis of findings from the science workshop. Teachers were provided with readers and anthologies, which included such authors as Maxine Hong Kingston, Octavio Paz, Mark Mathabane, Chester Himes and Zora Neale Hurston. This sequence provided a progression: moving from a critical reflection about one's self and community to a pro-social engagement with equity concerns beyond those that may narrowly affect only the self. While teachers were provided with a broad range of materials, the teaching teams were free to design the specific scope and sequence of their three-week courses based on these broader touchstones. The rationale of this approach, in part, was to honor teacher professionalism and personal style.

Findings

The conclusions from other recruitment and retention research support the findings from this study. What the researchers highlight from the quantitative and qualitative components of the study are programmatic areas of success and challenge that reflect the wider body of literature on recruitment and retention efforts and issues more specific to this component of the program. The researchers suggest that the survey is a reflection on the program and the university, but more so a reflection on the urban schools where these students have learned. Many of the comments gave the researchers more insight into what the students were lacking in their former schools.

Thus the strengths and the weaknesses of the PEOPLE program parallel the strengths and weaknesses of other predominantly white universities' attempts to recruit and retain students of color and low-achieving students (Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001; Kezar, 2000b; "Most College-Bound Students Underprepared," 2005; Reisberg, 1999; "What Works in Student Retention," 2005). Hoyt and Sorensen found that students from urban areas who had completed college preparatory classes were still placed in remedial courses upon entering the university, thus raising concerns about the rigor in several districts. A recent study showed that almost one-third of all college students are underprepared for the rigors and responsibilities of college ("Most College-Bound Students Underprepared," 2005). In his discussion of recruitment and retention strategies, Reisberg (1999) and a recent national survey published in *Recruitment and Retention in Higher Education* (2005) suggest that in order for programs to be highly successful, universities need to have a clearer picture of the academic needs of the targeted group. In another vein, studies report that bridge programs are most successful in building the self esteem of minority students, in providing personal connections to faculty and administration, and in highlighting campus resources (Dumas-Hines, Cochran, & Williams, 2001; Fields, 2002; Kezar, 2000a; Nealy, 2005).

Enjoyment and a Network of Support

The researchers welcomed the students' rigorous critique as part of an ongoing discussion concerning the outcomes and goals of the program. Overall, the students stated that they enjoyed the program and the writer's workshop. The students felt that the program helped them to adjust to the UW Madison climate that contrasted so starkly from their urban communities. Students[2] stated:

AD: It has allowed me to meet new people, explore the campus, and experience classes.

AJ: I was given the chance to work and experience the college life before my college days had even started. I took courses that prepared me for things like the ACT or just classes that I may have encountered going into the next year of high school. I was able to form connections with people like ---- and ----. I also had the chance to learn the campus. I had a good time being in the PEOPLE Program.

DC: It helped me to learn things that I otherwise would not know. My summer experience in Madison has also been very beneficial in becoming familiar with the campus and resources available.

JH: I greatly appreciate the courses that we took and I felt even more prepared for the approaching year after the classes that we took.

They also felt that the program had created a support network of adults and peers to sustain their progress. Other researchers have documented the strength of these connections as successful practices to retain students of color (Dumas-Hines et al., 2001; D. Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; D. Solorzano & Yosso, 2001a; Villalpando, 2003; "Tailor Your Parent Program to Fit Your Campus Culture," 2005). The findings in this project parallel previously documented outcomes from other research. Specifically, a clear attention paid to the affective environments of students generally results in higher levels of student engagement and, consequently, retention (Fields, 2002; Garcia, 1991; Greene & Greene, 2002; Robert & Thompson, 1994; "What Works in Student Retention," 2005).

Quantitative findings

Understanding Academic Needs

The quantitative questions were designed to evaluate how students perceived the content and instruction of the writing program with regard to their own academic needs. Table three indicates how the students responded to each question. While the students counted their overall experience in the program as above average and excellent, they were less enthusiastic about their time spent in the writer's workshop. However, their perception of the workshops as a whole is not commensurate with their responses to the individual questions that rate the various aspects of the program

in the above average and excellent range. Question 3 and its four parts asks the students to rate their experiences performing certain skills and their exposure to content. Question 4 and its five parts asks the students to evaluate the quality of the following areas of the program.

With the exception of question 2, the students' responses ranged in the average to above average categories. One drawback of small sample size is the impact a few low scores can have on the aggregated data analysis and interpretation. However, when looking at the raw scores from the data, a more accurate picture of the students' responses is available. The raw scores show that, with the exception of questions 2 and 4d, the students' rankings of above average and excellent far outweighed low and middle choices for each question. The two areas rated the highest for students were the caliber of the writing instruction and the instructors' attention to diversity and multiculturalism. The reasons for these high rankings come across more clearly in the students' responses that are addressed in the qualitative data analysis.

Albeit small, this sample serves to underscore the reliability of the qualitative data. The students ranked *results* generally higher than their perceptions of *process*; that is, they indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the caliber of writing instruction, they were proud of the final drafts they submitted for publication in the PEOPLE anthology,

and they especially lauded the teachers' attention to issues of multiculturalism and diversity. In terms of process, the rankings varied more widely. One interpretation of this variance is that students remember tangible features such as their own published works, while they forget particular moments during the workshops where teachers might have indicated the origin of a kind of literature, for example.

Understanding academic needs, then, is clearly complex. It seems that many students don't necessarily view their own academic needs in the same terms that were used in the survey. Explicit and consistent use of learning terms (comprehension, literary analysis, and process, for example) might improve the consistency of these findings. The qualitative findings bear out in better detail that which seems somewhat at odds in a Likert scale response: that the overall experience was ranked below "Fair," but that the caliber of the writing instruction was ranked as "Very good."

Qualitative findings

The students' comments presented an array of perceptions about the PEOPLE writer's workshop. Even within the diversity of their statements, the researchers were able to choose several themes. These themes are: an overall positive effect, strong personal relationships with teachers, con-

Table 3
Survey responses provided by PEOPLE participants

Question	Number of Responses	Average	Standard Deviation	Frequency of Responses in Each Questions				
				1	2	3	4	5
1. My overall experience in the PEOPLE Program has been ...	38	3.18	0.69	0	6	19	13	n/a
2. My overall experience in the PEOPLE Writing Workshops has been ...	38	2.82	0.90	2	13	13	10	n/a
3a. Writing literary analysis.	37	3.59	0.96	2	1	12	17	5
3b. Learning about literature and its origins	37	3.30	0.88	2	2	18	13	2
3c. Comprehension/reading skills	37	3.65	0.95	2	0	13	16	6
3d. Writing process	36	3.75	0.91	0	3	11	14	8
4a. The caliber (quality) of writing instruction	35	3.97	0.75	0	0	10	16	9
4b. The content of course readings	35	3.60	1.03	1	4	10	13	7
4c. The finished writing pieces you turned into your teachers.	35	3.83	0.98	1	0	14	9	11
4d. Your level of preparation in doing college-level writing.	35	3.40	1.01	2	2	16	10	5
4e. The workshops' instructors' attention to issues of diversity and multiculturalism.	36	3.94	1.07	1	1	12	7	15

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Annual Meeting
October 11–14, 2006

The Westin Great Southern Hotel
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❧ ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧ *Thursday Keynote Address* ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧

Featured Speaker

Dr. Ron Owston

Dr. Ron Owston is Professor of Education and founding director of the Institute for Research on Learning Technologies at York University in Toronto. He has spoken at numerous national and international conferences, and published in a variety of fields including technology in education, program evaluation, and teacher development in journals such as *Educational Researcher*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Journal of Computer-Based Instruction*, *Journal of Information Technology in Teacher Education*, *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, and *Journal of Research on Computing in Education*.

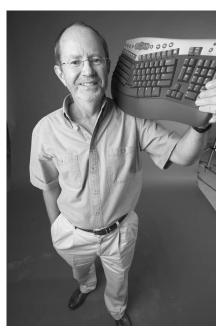He led four major studies during the 1990s on children's use of word processors: a three-year longitudinal study, a two-year study examining laptop computers and writing, and two comparative quasi-experimental studies. During this period he wrote an article in *Educational Researcher* that was one of the first academic analyses of the role of the web in education and continues to be widely cited today. He also authored two books on the practical use of the Web for teachers and students.

More recently, Dr. Owston completed a three-year project in 2003 as a lead researcher, in collaboration with SRI International and University of Twente, in the Second International Technology in Education Study, Module 2 (SITES-M2) that examined innovative pedagogical practices using technology in schools in 29 countries. Additionally, over the last several years he completed a two-year evaluation of Health Canada's public health information system; an evaluation of student and teacher use of Tablet PCs in eighth grade; an evaluation of the Advanced Broadband Enabled Learning Program for teacher professional development; researched blended learning courses in Canadian universities; and completed an evaluation for a two-year blended learning program for middle school teachers of mathematics and science.

Currently, Dr. Owston is domain leader for methodology and tools research in the Simulation and Advanced Gaming Environments (SAGE) for Learning research network in Canada; external evaluator for Health Canada's online courses in epidemiology for public health professionals; and lead researcher for the Literacy and Numeracy Learning Connections project sponsored by the Ontario Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. His website is at http://www.edu.yorku.ca/~rowston.

Join us for a **Fireside Chat** with **Dr. Owston** on Wednesday evening.

The atmosphere is casual and refreshments will be provided!

 ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ *Friday Keynote/Luncheon Address* ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

Featured Speaker

Dr. Fred Conrad

Fred Conrad is an Associate Research Scientist at the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan. He works at the interface of cognitive psychology, human-computer interaction and survey methodology. The theme that underlies much of his current work is the reduction of survey measurement error by better understanding how respondents answer questions. For example, he has a long standing interest in how respondents' understanding of survey questions affects the accuracy of their answers; his recent work in web surveys is due in part to the rich set of techniques afforded by the medium to clarify the meaning of questions.

After receiving a doctorate from the University of Chicago in cognitive psychology (his dissertation concerned language comprehension), Dr. Conrad conducted research on intelligent tutoring systems as a post-doctoral fellow at Carnegie Mellon University. Before moving to Michigan in 2002, he spent eleven years at the Bureau of Labor Statistics where he investigated interviewing and automated data collection techniques. His research results appear in various journals including *Public Opinion Quarterly, Psychological Review, Cognitive Science, Applied Cognitive Psychology,* and the *Journal of Official Statistics.* Conrad is currently editing a book on the future of survey interviewing.

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fusion about the source of academic skill development (more basic skills and more literary analysis), and a presentism regarding current needs influencing memories of the program. These themes are consistent with the research literature on recruitment and retention of students of color in predominantly white institutions (Ackermann, 1991; Kezar, 2000; Greene & Greene, 2002).

The following quotes are taken from the students' written response to question number two: "My overall experience in the PEOPLE writing workshop has been…". Some of the students' comments were very general about their experiences, but they nevertheless indicate a generally positive experience.

AD: I found that the writing classes were helpful. The only reason I found them not to be as successful is because organization was lacking which had an overall effect in helping people's writing skills.

EG: I don't really enjoy writing but the workshops provided by the PEOPLE Program helped me a lot with my writing.

LF: The writing workshops helped a lot. I think the variety of writing assignments that we had to complete were why it was so helpful.

RC: I never was good at writing, but the workshops did help.

TT: I think the writing program was such a preparation for my high school English classes in the following years. I know I was much more prepared than most.

In terms of general effect, the following comments represent the mixed bag of reactions to the writer's workshop. Many of the students felt that they gained a better sense of themselves as writers or were able to work on some writing skill.

AJ: I had the chance to take courses that enabled me to enhance my writing, especially college writing.

CP: I learned new techniques and ways to memorize and how to write 3 page essays. The writing workshops helped me think critically and allowed me to question the authors' motives and movies' themes. Also, I learned about morals of short stories.

DJ: As I remember my experiences with the PEOPLE Program writing curriculum, I remember a lot of free writing. This was of some help as it helped me organize my ideas and thoughts into clear, cohesive paragraphs. I also got exposure to journal research, which was of great help. I think that the program should emphasize the importance of it. Remembering my past summers, I remember doing writing samples without really knowing the objective of them. As I compare this to the IB English curriculum that I had in high school, I find

that the workshops need more structure. Also, I think that not enough literature analysis was made. This is a skill that is very necessary as I had to master it in higher levels of English classes in high school and even now in college.

DC: It [the writer's workshop text] was very useful. I still have the book we got from the class.

KK: I think that the writing workshops worked real well, for me at least. I enjoyed them and feel they bettered my writing while giving me time to practice them.

MA: I gained writing experience through practice. Additionally, I was exposed to literature that I would not have otherwise read.

Others commented on the teachers in the program and the level of confidence or types of activities they conducted during the workshop. Research supports the notion that the strong personal relationships students and teachers built in a short time proved memorable, and likely led to better retention in the PEOPLE program and in the students' matriculation through UW Madison (Greene & Greene, 2002; Kezar, 2000a; Richardson & de los Santos, 1988).

KR: The writing workshops, from what I remember, were pretty good. The professors/instructors helped a lot but too much because they would change or even write our papers more than show us what we did wrong.

MX: I don't remember much about the Writing Workshops but that my teachers were awesome! I think I did two literary criticisms on two stories. Also, I was trained to "read the words" more than to "read the book." I thought that was something different and interesting. It is a very useful skill now.

RM: Same thing I said above. It was the instructors that really made the experience delightful.

SG: There is not much that I can remember but I can say that I truly enjoyed [teacher's name]. She made the writing class that much easier to handle and made it a fun learning experience all together. I think if it wasn't for her I probably wouldn't have gotten a lot out of the workshop.

WS: The teachers were always friendly, and they really seemed to actually care about the students' work. I also always loved the fact that the writing classes always had teachers from our own schools in Milwaukee.

XC: The instructors were encouraging and the assignments weren't overwhelming.

The students are both complementary and critical of the program in their comments. Interestingly, each comment is as

unique as the student, demonstrating the intellectual and personal diversity found among the groups of students. Managing the academic potential of such a diverse group remains problematic for bridge programs that wish to provide academic stimulation without overwhelming some students or boring others.

In the qualitative component of the survey, students critiqued the program for the lack of time spent practicing more basic grammar and structure skills for writing. Several students commented that they wanted more structure to their workshops and would rather work as a group with a lead teacher conducting the course. Others commented that they would have liked more work with literary analysis. Since the surveys are confidential and not anonymous, the researchers were able to match comments with the high schools that the students attended. Not surprisingly, students arriving on campus from elite public high schools engaged more fully with the seminar style of the workshops. Students from schools in which rigid student-teacher relationships were the norm often indicated that more structure was necessary.

More Basic Skills

As in any district, the quality of schools may vary greatly. Coupled with magnet schools and choice programs in urban areas, where some schools have virtually been left to die a slow death, these differences in schools become even more stratified. In Milwaukee, two college preparatory schools have maintained records of high achievement, graduation rates, and college graduates. Overall, the students from these two programs did not comment on the need for basic skill work. However, when asked, "In thinking about the PEOPLE Writing Workshops (the first two summer sessions), what areas (types of skills and practices) did you need to concentrate on more?" many students responded with a call for basic skills instruction:

CP: Grammar and thinking more about the morals of stories.

EG: Well for me I think that it was important to focus on all the skills and practices so that I could improve my writing.

KR: GRAMMAR and critiquing literature

RM: Concepts, organization, and clarity

ShR: The correct forms of grammar and punctuation. Analyzing different works to find the hidden meaning.

WS: I needed to practice more in taking the time to actually edit the work that I did.

When students employed home languages such as AAVE (African American Vernacular English) in their personal writings, instructors viewed this as a point of strength. It is unfortunately not entirely clear whether this is what students are indicating in their comments on "correctness." The teams of writing teachers certainly did emphasize correctness of grammar and punctuation in final drafts, even if they did not explicitly teach particular rules.

By contrast, other students wanted more literary analysis and conceptual thinking:

AJ: I needed to focus more on how to analyze and interpret complex pieces of writing such as prose poetry.

DJ: Free writing. I think that serves us well to get thoughts written out, but literary analysis is important too.

KK: I think I would need to practice more on my creative writing as well as my style of writing. What the writing workshop did was allow me fully appreciate writing and, more importantly, make me work on my writing.

The students were quite thoughtful about their individual needs during their high school careers. Clearly, they wrestle with different aspects of the writing process, all of which demand sustained practice and instruction in writing.

Course structure

Similarly, the students who struggled with grammar and cohesion also wrote that they would have liked more directed instruction and more individual time with the teacher. Again, the researchers view these comments within the context of urban classrooms.

AD: More organization, one on one action with the students, ask the students if the need help in certain areas, and focus on that area with them and if change is needed.

AJ: Add more writing instructors so that they can work with smaller groups of students and focus on individual needs instead of working with a big group of students with many different needs and concerns.

While a significant group of students were comfortable with individualized writing time and informal class discussions on literature and society, others had had limited exposure to these class activities. These students also wrote that they did not benefit from working on their own projects and found it difficult to complete their two assignments with this format. Students who were not familiar with a workshop format often found it difficult to manage their time and work independently. Still others felt that they did not have enough time with the teacher, regardless of their ability level, to interact and share ideas and comments. Additionally, students commented on technical aspects of the classes, such as shared computer times that kept them from running as smoothly as possible.

Literary Analysis

Almost all the students who made comments mentioned the need for more literary analysis in the workshops. The students quantitatively ranked this experience as valuable and wanted more chances for practice. This comment was made particularly by the freshmen taking Composition 101, which involves producing several analytic papers, indicating a kind of presentism in perceived needs. That is, the needs students perceived in the moment of the survey may not reflect accurately the needs they had as sophomores in high school.

> DJ: Reforming the curriculum to perhaps analyzing 1 novel during the 3 week (or segments of it)and writing papers that analyses the literary terms, authors purpose, and the effects of literary devices, focus on ethos, logos, pathos.

> MX: Focus more on the actuality of writing the literary criticism and not so much if it's right or not. Write an argumentative essay.

> RC: Writing an analysis for a paper and organizing ideas.

> SS: Analyzing the structure of academic writing.

> SG: Preparation for college writing styles.

These students felt under-prepared for the rigors of the freshman composition course and expressed a desire to practice this form of writing much more before they entered UW-Madison. In questions 5 through 10, students referred to their desire to have more analysis as college preparation for the course work.

Points for Discussion

The students' rankings and thoughtful comments lead the researchers to consider several points of discussion. While the researchers noted that the quantitative data placed the program in a favorable light, they recognized that the program will continue to struggle with some fundamental conflicts between the goals of the program, the students' expectations of the program, and the challenges of urban schools to meet the needs of all students. These issues are specific to this program, but also endemic of all bridge programs that seek to connect large populations of students of color living in urban centers with flagship universities that are committed to serving the educational needs of the state.

First, the breadth of the students' comments spoke to the challenge of creating a meaningful workshop that was not ability tracked, for all students from the eighteen different high schools. Even in a class of fifteen students, skill ability ranged dramatically, as did familiarity with academic English. The teams of teachers struggled to insure that all students completed the workshop with a valued final draft and a new understanding of their writing, literature, and even society. Clearly, these are lofty goals for two three-week

workshops. Yet, the choice to limit the curriculum means forsaking aspects of the curriculum that they may find useful at some other time in their academic or professional lives.

Second, the students' comments about grammar pointed to pieces missing from their high school education and the PEOPLE program. Since the program was designed to facilitate the transition between high school and college by introducing them to college level thinking and assignments, and not as an academic skill building program, it cannot easily compensate for what the students did not receive in their high schools. During the first few years of the program, other attempts were made to maintain yearlong contact with the students and conduct more extensive writing workshops. However, negotiating time and space between Madison and Milwaukee became a problem as well as did recruiting students to participate who already had packed academic schedules. The yearlong design eventually became a few fieldtrips to Madison for the students to see a play or attend a conference so that they could experience the campus during the year when the 30,000 undergraduates and 10,000 graduates were also on campus.

Last, the PEOPLE program is set in place for both recruitment and retention. In concert with the literature on successful bridge program practices, the emphasis on multicultural literature and the discussions around societal issues concerning race, class, and gender served as a recruitment tools as well as pedagogical practices to engage the students (Kezar, 2000; Kelpe Kern, 2000; Dumas-Hines et al., 2001). These classes were modeled from upper-level seminars that students would not take until their junior or senior years at UW-Madison. Thus by not making explicit the model for the class, the program contributed to the culture shock experienced by the students when they entered classes such as Composition 101 in a lecture hall of two hundred students.

Concluding Remarks

Our research indicates a few pointed suggestions for improving the writing program. First, there needs to be more explicit discussion about the goals of the PEOPLE program and how they may relate to the students' future experiences at UW-Madison (Greene & Greene, 2002; Kezar, 2000). Students and parents should be given a conceptual map of the program that they can use to frame their experiences. The second suggestion, that the students start the program in middle school (Waller et al., 2002), is already coming to fruition. The early connection with the university allows students more opportunities to become comfortable in unfamiliar settings. Extended contact may also take the forms of after-school tutorials and other academic resources to boost the skill levels of students from less-rigorous schools and adequately prepare them for the level of rigor ("Most College-Bound Students Underprepared," 2005). The final point is that the writing program may need to scale back its learning outcomes, focusing more on writing and reading, pro-

ducing only one final draft rather than two. This may alleviate the burden of shifting from one type of writing to another, thus giving the advanced students the opportunity to take on something more challenging while the struggling students can concentrate on various elements of the writing process. These suggestions are provided for the PEOPLE program and other programs that want to enrich and expose students' academic opportunities without further marginalizing their chances for success.

Another, more complex concern points back to preparing students for success: better university-public school relationships need to be pursued in order to ensure that students do not arrive at elite universities lacking basic skills in academic writing ("Most College-Bound Students Underprepared, Studies Say.," 2005). This dilemma cannot be solved by bridge programs alone, but it can be addressed through sustained partnerships which support public schools in increasing academic rigor and performance expectations for all urban students.

As educators look towards creating future opportunities for equity and equality in public academic institutions (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Roscigno, 1995; Sleeter & DelgadoBernal, 2004; Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Solorzano & DelgadoBernal, 2001), it is imperative that universities, particularly those serving the public and supported by government funding, find unique means to become inclusive, equitable sites for all citizens who wish to successfully contribute to society.

Footnotes

[1] The 220 program is a student exchange program between Milwaukee and several surrounding suburban districts. This program allows Milwaukee students to attend schools outside their district.

[2] The initials refer to the students from the pseudonyms given to the participants at an earlier time.

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Pedagogy of Respect: The Inter-Generational Influence of Black Women

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Abstract

There is a large corpus of literature that not only speaks to the nature and qualities of Black women teachers, but that further disrupts the way these educators have been historically located at the margins of 'education,' by highlighting their political and culturally relevant/responsive approaches (Ladson-Billings, 1992/1994/2000; Gay, 2000; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 1997/1999/2002; Irvine, 1989/1990/2003; Irvine & Hill, 1990; Collins, 2000; Siddle Walker, 1996/2005; Dixson, 2002/2005; Dingus, 2003, among others). This work, that looks at the larger political movement of Black women teachers, comes at a time when researchers are beginning to better blur the traditional boundaries that defined 'center' and 'margin' for educators. In this piece Fasching-Varner presents vignettes that describe the pedagogy of Black female teachers whom educated him, showing how they each have embodied various aspects of **Respect** *as has been (re)defined by Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000/2001), and how that pedagogy informed his own work with students, particularly African American and Latino/a students.*

Introduction

There is a growing corpus of research (Ladson-Billings, 1992/1994/2000; Gay,2000, Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 1997/ 1999/2002; Irvine, 1989/1990/2003; Irvine & Hill, 1990; Collins, 2000; Siddle Walker, 1996/2005; Dixson, 2002/ 2005; Dingus, 2003, among others) by Black women educators that 'looks' at the efficacy, political motivations, and the qualities of Black women and their pedagogy. Not only is this work angled toward seeing and describing the unique experience(s) of Black women educators, but has become fundamentally important in (re)conceptualizing a more inclusive 'center' for educators that recognizes effective pedagogy. This work then has created a space to help educators better understand the deep epistemological underpinnings that Black female educators bring to bear on the profession and on their students' lives.

As a White male committed to urban education, my experiences have been deeply shaped by the pedagogy of the Black women teachers who taught me when I was an elementary school student. My experiences as a teacher span a career as an elementary bi-lingual Special Education teacher, as a secondary Spanish teacher working primarily with students of color (African American and Latino/a) in the Rochester New York area, and now, for the past two years as a doctoral student, college instructor and adjunct professor at two midwestern universities in the same city. In this paper, I will provide several narrative vignettes that help to conceptualize the pedagogy of Black women educators in terms of what I describe as a pedagogy of Respect (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000). It is my hope that not only will these narrative vignettes pay tribute to these educators, by highlighting the ways in which their respect- steeped pedagogy spread beyond their students and informed my own pedagogy, but also may serve as a continued call for scholars to locate,

highlight, celebrate, and document the accounts of Black women educators.

In this piece, I hope to contribute to the literature on Black women teachers by discussing those teachers who have been influential in my life. These teachers are themselves part of this larger educational and political tradition aligned with what is understood about the pedagogy of Black women educators. The work of locating Black women's pedagogy as an epistemologically centered political endeavor has been researched and conceptualized in a variety of ways including Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and/or Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2000).

To achieve these goals, I use a narrative style to write about my own memories of childhood and young adulthood as a student of many Black women educators. As a student I would not have used constructs such as political, culturally relevant, or culturally responsive to describe these women, in part because I did not posses such a theoretical toolkit to describe what it was that they did with and for us as their students. Theoretical toolkit aside, I recognized even then, that these teachers' pedagogy as special.

Approach

I use stories about the teachers to show what was significant about their pedagogy and to highlight how their pedagogical practices are consistent with how others have researched Black women's pedagogy. In particular, I intend for these narratives to demonstrate how the teachers' pedagogical practices influenced me as an elementary and high school teacher who worked with African American and Latino/a students in Rochester, NY. The call for papers in this special issue states "the voices of African Americans are at best, rarely heard in teacher education and best practices literature, and thus, commonly marginalized in larger

conversations of improving the academic performance of African American and other children of color." Therefore, the approach of this article hopes to allow not only insights into my experiences with these particular teachers, but also to show how the effect of being a student in these teachers classes spread to my own practice, and toward the larger aim of making less marginalized the conversations of "improving the academic performance of African American and other children of color."

In many cases, I am writing from experiences of my childhood. I hope to shed light on the larger conversation about pedagogy that can best be used with African American and other students of color in a way that has not been particularly explored before, namely how as a Pre-K student my future practice as a White male teacher working primarily with students of color was shaped by a respect-based pedagogy that the teachers engaged in. The goal, in other words, is to capture the "essence" of my experiences with these women, as the experiences helped shape my own pedagogy. In capturing the "essence," these vignettes hope to engage in a "…probing, layered, and interpretive…" vista that speaks to "qualities of character" stepped in respect as I know it to be in my experiences with these women (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman-Davis, 1997, p. 4). Finally, it is my hope that this paper, along with all the other scholarship and research that locates its focus on Black women educators, addresses hooks' (1984) concern that "...there are so few images of intellectual women who are non-white," and consequently so few images of sound pedagogy that is effective for students of color" (p. 114).

Respect—A Frame(Work)

Respect is a word that is used by various educators, often describing its presence, or more often its absence, in asymmetrical power relationships, such as those of teacher/ student, administrator/teacher, and school board/administrator. It is concerning, however, that while respect, or lack of respect, is often used as a construct to describe relationships, its use and meaning is often left ambiguous. In the following vignettes, I will explicate the way my understanding of respect is informed.

I use Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's (2000/2001), components of respect as defining characteristics of respect to help undergird my use of respect in this article. Lawrence-Lightfoot's work is supported by other work preceding hers, such as work from Behar (1996) whose focus is on witnessing, Jacobs (1995) who examines respect in a 'moral' world, Kant (1782) who Lawrence-Lightfoot believes must always be in the background of respect, as well as from work coming after her's like that of Siddle Walker & Snarey (2004), Siddle Walker (2005), and Duncan (2004), amongst others, whom all look at race and education with underpinnings of respect. In fact many have written about respect, but it is Lawrence-Lightfoot's combination of empowerment, dialogue, curiosity, self-respect, attention, and healing that best

provide a frame(work) for the use of the word respect, keeping in mind of course the contributions of those who informed Lawrence-Lightfoot and those who have kept respect going after Lawrence-Lightfoot's (2000) *Respect*. The multi-faceted approach to defining respect, that Lawrence-Lightfoot uses helps me to understand the importance and weight of respect as a construct, and thus encourages me to be judicious not only in my use of the word, but in selecting those whom, for me, are illustrative of these qualities of respect. It is with great care, therefore, that I use components of Lawrence-Lightfoot's notion of respect to locate my experience with Black women educators, all of whom **always** use/ d respect as a means to create symmetrical relationships between themselves and students, despite the seemingly asymmetrical relationship that is often assumed to exist between student and teacher.

In the following vignettes three of the of the components of respect (dialogue, attention, and self respect), will be explored along side a narrative of one of the Black women educators who I feel has most embodied this particular quality. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2001) suggests that "respectful relationships also have a way of sustaining and replicating themselves…" and that her interest is in "…how respect grows, the dynamic interactions that create and sustain respect" (p.10). For this reason, at the end of each of vignette I will also present the connection or link to how my practice was informed by each particular educator and her embodiment of respect, as it is important in understanding that the respect given to me was crucial to informing my own practice. I will conclude by briefly discussing "respect as healing" as a means to locate all of my experiences with Black women educators as part of the larger movement that works to describe the political and empowering pedagogy of Black women educators. It is important to note that in each vignette, I am choosing to present and bind the experiences I have had with these women as those most salient in my memory.

Respect as dialogue ... Ms. Sarah Gibson

Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000/2001) has framed dialogue as a means of demonstrating respect by engaging in communication that is authentic. In a speech given to the Coalition of Essential Schools, Lawrence-Lightfoot (2001) described respectful dialogue as both listening and responding "supportively."

Sarah Gibson was a tall woman with short curly hair, for some reason the image of her face has stuck longest with me some 20 years after having her as a teacher back in 1985-1986. I did not get to know Ms. Gibson until the third week of school. I remember it was the third week of school because it was still September and the calendar in my original room still had the 'apple motif' signifying September, and very soon after the switch, I remember 'pumpkins' being the motif on Ms. Gibson's calendar. At 6 years old I was unaware as to why we were moved, but was intrigued at having a new setting, new classmates, and most importantly a

new teacher. Now, as an educator I understand 20 and 30 day shifts in classes based on student enrollment, and I am sure that this led to a re-balancing of the students in the first grade, but in 1985 the reason really did not matter. I was to have Ms. Gibson. I remember Ms. Gibson introducing herself to us, her new class, a mix of students she already had for three weeks, and the new lot of us that came from across the hall. Ms. Gibson told us she was from South Carolina, and she pulled down the United States map that hung above the chalkboard to show us where that was, and I distinctly remember that neither my kindergarten nor my original first grade teacher told us they were from anywhere. Ms. Gibson made herself human to us, and I remember that it was then that I understood teachers left the school, had lives, had families, and came from somewhere.

Ms. Gibson was the kind of teacher that you loved so much, and you would do anything to get positive attention from her. She often walked around the room and would touch our shoulders, or praise us for reading; the little things that mean a lot to a 1st grader. For that reason, receiving the praise of Ms. Gibson, or that special little conversation she would take the time to have with you, was special, and I suspect that my classmates, like I, did anything for her to be pleased with us, actively avoiding of disappointing behavior. I had a horrible habit of following Ms. Gibson around the room and poking at her middle just above her skirt (Ms. Gibson always wore skirts), on her blouse or sometimes on her hand, and to this day I see the image and the smile that preceded the "Why Kenny, now what can I do for you?" Ms. Gibson never yelled at me for 'behavior' that was not unlike what I did in other grades that was often a cause of being chastised. Ms. Gibson cared, she listened, and she always made sure that whatever she said back to me was meaningful and demonstrative of her paying close attention to what I had to say—I mattered, and I remember mattering.

I knew, and still know that Ms. Gibson loved me like she loved all her students. 1st grade was 20 years ago for me, and I surely do not remember the content of my 1st grade conversations with Ms. Gibson, but I distinctly remember that despite our lopsided dialogue, which often involved me talking and Ms. Gibson listening, Ms. Gibson always listened. I also remember, both in her interactions with me and in observing her interact with other students, that whenever we were done talking Ms. Gibson always had something "important" to say that simultaneously acknowledged she listened, she supported us as her students (and in many ways as her metaphorical children—children she deeply cared for), and she always left us with something to think about. It was leaving us with something to think about before we talked again that made our 'talk' not mere simple conversation, it became dialogue, ongoing and continuous. Dialogue was always a critical part of Sarah Gibson's classroom, and is the supportive listening and responding that Lawrence-Lightfoot identifies as so crucial to respect. As an educator myself, I have to assume that dialogue was a critically important part of her pedagogy, a pedagogy that

was indicative of a culturally specific way of participating in meaningful dialogue with us as her students.

As a 4th grade bi-lingual classroom and 7th-12th grade Spanish teacher, in both Rochester City Schools as well as a suburban district near Rochester New York, I always tried to remember the patience and care with which Ms. Gibson listened and responded to us. I never perfectly mastered dialogue, or at least not such a culturally specific dialogue that Ms. Gibson was able to engage us with. I tend to get excited and loud when I talk to anyone, and my friends often "shhhhhshd" me or ask if I know how loud I am being. Ms. Gibson had a quiet power in her way of listening and dialoging with us, but what I did make a point of doing in my craft and practice as a teacher was to listen and respond as a means of respecting students and parents. I was and continue to be genuinely interested in what students and parents have to say to me, and as a K-12 teacher wanted to give back to my students and their families what Ms. Gibson gave to me. One aspect of my practice throughout my K-12 teaching career was to eat with students three to four times a week during lunch. From the fourth graders, all the way to the high school seniors I taught, I always made it a point of eating, listening, and talking with students during lunch. Not only were students able to see me as human, but they were able to talk, and have me listen, and always leave them, like Ms. Gibson had done with me, with something "meaningful" to think about. Dialogue was not just left to the lunchroom. Dialogue was always present in the classroom as well. Weekly class meetings, individual conferencing, and discussions with students during class allowed me to gain a considerable amount of insight into my students and their lives, their hopes, their fears, and their challenges in a system where they do not feel that they are important. Through our dialogue, students, particularly students of color who were and are often marginalized by an education system that silences their wealth of intellect and experiences, had the opportunity to teach me and for me to listen in a way where they were positioned as teacher. I gained a wealth of knowledge about music, language, food, life, and "academic" subjects from the students that I would have missed had I chose not to engage in meaningful dialogue.

Another practice influenced by Ms. Gibson's dialogue was a system I developed in order to call three parents a night for three minutes each. Ms. Gibson did not engage in this particular practice herself, but my hope in calling home was to replicate the type of dialogue and feelings that go along with the way Ms. Gibson engaged both with students and parents. My calling practice, from the first to the last day of school, allowed me to communicate with parents at least monthly (weekly when I taught fourth grade). For families that had no phone I would make home visits once a month spending a half hour or so with the families. The purposes of these phone calls and visits was to share positives about the student, and to also meaningfully listen to what parents had to tell me. Often knowing more about the nuances of their children than the children themselves, parents in my

experience have a lot of important information about their child and how to best work with the student that is surely missed when dialogue is not established. Through my phone calls, I feel that I had a direct line of dialogue between parents that helped bridge an often, and historically, strained relationship between home and school. Often in September the parents would say something like "it's the first week of school what could possibly be wrong?" When I shared that this was a positive phone call and explained the purpose, many parents informed me that no teacher had ever called home to share a positive about their child. One high school parent said "it took 13 years for someone to tell me they liked my child and care about not only how she does in school but how she is doing as a person." How often are students and parents really engaged in dialogue with educators? To the best of my ability I made time to engage in dialogue, meaningful to students and parents, sharing my voice with them, and in turn respecting the powerful voice they shared with me. Ms. Gibson taught me, through her practice, that dialogue was essential to respect.

Respect as attention…Ms. Geraldine McFadden

Another guiding principle of respect for Lawrence-Lightfoot is attention (2000/2001). According to Lawrence-Lightfoot (2001), attention involves being "fully present, completely in the room, sometimes engaged in vigorous conversation, and sometimes bearing silent witness." By respecting through attention, we give of ourselves to others, we give attention to the details, the small things, and we are able to carry those with us long after the moment has passed.

Ms. McFadden was the music teacher I had all 7 years that I attended #41 elementary school in Rochester, New York. I remember the light wood piano that eclipsed the body of Ms. McFadden, and so it was her face that I remember more than anything, but she too, always wore knee length skirts just like Ms. Gibson. Going to music was a journey, especially in the younger grades when her room was located all the way on the third floor. Ms. McFadden gave of herself to us as her students in a way that as an educator myself I can now say makes her stand out as one of the very best educators I have ever known. Ms. McFadden paid careful attention to each and everyone of us, and without even looking she could pick out the student who was off beat or struggling to get a note out on key—and I have to admit that was often me. Ms. McFadden, by paying attention to us was not only "fully present" in the moment, but her attention proved to us that she loved us with all our 'singing and dancing'— singing and dancing that really only a mother could love because it was often a mess, particularly in kindergarten when it seemed to be a lot of screaming and running, not really singing and dancing. The attention Ms. McFadden paid to her students was also critically important to the way she approached teaching us. Knowing I was German, I remember her picking some German language songs for us to sing, one in particular Edelweis, and likewise for other students, always singing a wide variety of songs that ranged from Jazz,

to Reggae, to Negro Spirituals, to Feliz Navidad, and to the Draddle song for Hanukah. #41 school was a low-income school with a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, and in my class there were Caribbean students, children of African and European immigrants, a Jewish student, and many students from working class backgrounds, African American, Latino/a, and white alike. We sang songs that celebrated who we were, and that was only possible because Ms. McFadden was so fully present in the way she gave attention and in the way she was able to know who we were.

Ms. McFadden could "lay a student out" as well, putting us "in our place" when we "acted up"; meaning that Ms. McFadden not only had standards but would correct our behavior in a swift and immediate way for behavior that was not acceptable for her. I remember several times Ms. McFadden getting on us, for being to "silly" or "goofy" in class. Once, when a group of us laughed uncontrollably for 5 or 10 minutes, distracting the others in class, she pulled us right out of her classroom by the arm and said "this behavior is just simply not acceptable." She would tell us about the love she had for us, and for me knowing that she knew me better than most any other teacher in the school, she was able to snap me right into place. Listening to us at times, talking to us at times, and talking with us at times, Ms. McFadden gave copious amounts of real authentically engaged attention, always doing whatever it took for us to feel like we had her full attention.

Some of my best memories of Ms. McFadden were in choir; I had no sense of rhythm or pitch, and am slightly tone deaf, but Ms. McFadden always made sure that anyone who wanted to could participate in choir. Participation in an elementary choir may seem a small detail for some, however for many of us, our sense of self and identity were wrapped up into what it meant to be full participants in our schooling experience. Many times in my K-12 experience I did not feel like I was a full participant in my schooling, that there was not a space that allowed me to be both myself and fully included/accepted by teachers and school adults in activities like sports, drama club, etc.; I felt like I had to change aspects of myself to fit a teachers notion of what it means to participate in the various aspects of school. As a White male I am cognizant that this sense of not belonging is compounded for students of color for whom the pedagogy of many teachers, as well as the full experience of school, is not centered on or designed for them. Therefore, so much of how Ms. McFadden paid attention to us as students is largely indicative of how she allowed our participation in choir; no one, despite lack of singing talent, was ever excluded. Ms. McFadden was also smart enough to know that paying attention to me, and other students, did not mean she had to jeopardize her choir, and there were many occasions where she simply told me, "Kenny, baby, you're just gonna pretend like your singing, move your mouth, but don't really let the words come out." For me I knew she was saying, "Kenny, you can't sing, but I still love and respect you, and no matter what you matter to me." This sense, that I mat-

tered, that she paid attention, was crucial for my well being as a youngster who often found school a difficult space that did not welcome my participation and my voice. Her honesty was also indicative of her attention and respect, because she did not patronize me or lie to me about my under-developed musical ear. Many other teachers would have said, "you are not going to be in this choir," or "you are such a good singer" (and then would have made fun of what a bad signer I was in the teachers lounge—I saw this happen far too often when I was a teacher, colleagues who gave false and empty praise only to make fun of the student in the spaces of school where students are not allowed like office space and teachers lounges) but not Ms. McFadden, and her request that I lip sync never felt like rejection, it felt like love and respect embedded through attention.

I recently spoke with Ms. McFadden, to tell her that I was going to be writing this piece and I was not surprised to find that she immediately remembered me, saying "Kenny Varner, how are you sweetness?" That is the kind of teacher that Ms. McFadden was—she paid attention to the details, 15 years after last having Ms. McFadden, she knew me; the detail to attention she paid mattered. Ms. McFadden asked how my parents were, and was so happy to hear from me. Then Ms. McFadden said "Kenny baby, I am so glad you called me, you are one student I will bring to the grave with me... a voice like that, but you came back every time, and I loved you for that." Again, this acknowledgement of my lack of singing ability, in a direct and honest way, is most indicative of the respect she paid through attention, a respect I could only aspire to attain as an educator.

As a teacher, respecting my students through paying close attention was a critically important aspect of my pedagogy that Ms. McFadden taught me. Many of the students that I taught, particularly students of color, were not used to having attention paid to them by their teachers, short of negative attention that is. In my teacher preparation I always kept Ms. McFadden's attention with me, and through coursework became better in tune with the way that other students, namely students of color, are often not paid attention to. I would not be able to teach and be a part of a system that allowed students to be subjugated by my pedagogy. I committed myself to engage in practice that was centered on students that made them the subjects of my attention. Attention often times came in the form of little things. For example, I always stood in the hallway before any class that I taught, personally greeting each student, every day, asking them how their day was, and making contact with other students going to their own classes. I made a very concerted effort to notice new haircuts, birthdays, and anything else that would help students know that I paid attention. Another pedagogical practice that I implemented was a systematic means of documenting classroom interactions with students and anecdotal observations on sticky notes, housing the anecdotal information in a notebook that documented the students experience in my class throughout the year. Whenever I met with students and parents, I was able to reference specific

quotes from the students, particular specific observations that I made. Assessment in my classroom always took place in narrative form so that students and parents knew that I was fully present and that students were paid attention to. Any student that was absent was missed, and I made sure as a teacher to follow up with students that were absent to make sure they were alright. As a teacher I began sending letters home every 5 weeks that summarized, personally for each student, the anecdotal information that I gathered. Students did not fail my class, as failure would have meant that 10 weeks went by without having paid careful enough attention to my students. A failure in my class would have indicated a failure on my part, not on the students' part. My self sense of success as a teacher was measured in carefully paying attention to each of my students. My practice was also honest, and while I never had to tell a student they did not know how to sing, I made sure that by paying attention I could be honest with children about both how they and I were performing. Every 10 weeks, students fully evaluated my practice and those evaluations were summarized and then shared with the students, parents, and administrators in my buildings. I was often criticized by my colleagues on this practice, particularly that I shared the results with students, parents, and administrators, including data which may not have been favorable for me, as they said students should not have a voice to offer feedback on teacher practice. For me, the practice was invaluable to my pedagogy by ensuring that it was steeped in paying attention to students and being willing to hear that which they enjoyed and that which they wished would change. Student evaluation, and change in my practice based on those evaluations, was important for me as an educator so that students knew that they had a voice, and that I paid attention and listened to their voices. Ms. McFadden was that teacher for me, and helped me develop a multitude of practices that were aimed at respecting my students through attention.

Respect as self-respect… Ms. Rosa Bell

The concept of self-respect as highlighted by Lawrence-Lightfoot (2001) deals with developing a "…self-confidence that does not seek external validation or public affirmation…learning to live by our own internal compass, one defined by a daily, private, vigilance." Of all of the qualities of respect, this has perhaps been the most difficult to consistently hold on to. In particular it is recently that I have been able to go back to understand what made Ms. Rosa Bell such a wonderful and special Black women educator, although her influence on my practice has always been important.

Ms. Bell was the house administrator, one of three at Charlotte Middle School, a large urban Middle school in Rochester New York. I remember that she was a very light skinned Black women, and she wore glasses, which I thought made her look distinguished with her business like suits. Ms. Bell stood tall, not necessarily with height (I really do not remember how tall Ms. Bell was/is), but with pride. Ms.

Bell was proud of her role as our administrator, and the respect she had for herself and for the job she did filled the hallways of the school. When she greeted us as we got off of the buses she would say "welcome to another good day in my house;" when she walked around the lunchroom, she would pick up something if it fell on the floor and ask us to do the same saying, "my house is a clean house;" when she visited classrooms she would always say things that showed she was proud to be there and we should be as well. We were in House A, the 1st floor and basement of what was a very large school, and the building itself was nothing really pretty—as a matter of fact the basement where many of my classes were, was a dark and cold place. Somehow though the pride and self respect of Ms. Bell, a true confidence that was not dependant on being validated or authenticated, seemed to fill the halls with something that was not there in terms of aesthetics. Ms. Bell filled the hallways with student art, messages of self-empowerment, and pride posters.

In 7th grade I remember getting in trouble for something and being "written up"—that is what teachers called having a discipline form written that documented alleged infractions—and sent to the office. I do not remember the specifics, and I was not accustomed to being in the office, certainly in large part to the White privilege that I receive, because I did as many 'bad' things as students of color who were frequently sent out, while I and other White students seemed to have a much larger leash in terms of our behavior before being sent out. I sat there worried about a lot of things as I waited for Ms. Bell to call me into her office: what would my mother say to me if she called home? Was this going in my permanent record? When Ms. Bell called me into the office I was shocked; she did not ask me "what will your mother think?" as I had expected, or spend a lot of time with a lecture about the deference I should show to the adults that sent me out of the classroom. Ms. Bell started by saying, "Kenny, is this good enough for you?, is this who and what you see yourself as being? I don't know about you, but when I get up in the morning I have to know that what I do and who I am is good enough for me, so I don't care right now about Ms. Crowley [the teacher who sent me out], your classmates, your mother, or even me; is this good enough for you Kenny?" This was a powerful intervention, although one that I often forget, as like many other people, I get caught up in how I am viewed and perceived by others. Walker (1996) writes, "I lost what attachment I had to the image others might have of me, since I learned decisively that this is an area over which I have little control" (p. 33). Like Walker, Ms. Bell knew that being validated or punished by others, being constructed or not constructed as this or that by others was something that she and I had little to no control over. It is pride, a confidence for myself that I do have control over, and Ms. Bell demonstrated and modeled what self-respect looked like for her so that we could draw from her lessons. I remember at the 8th grade graduation, Ms. Bell handed me my diploma and said, "now Kenny **this** is

good enough for you, isn't?" I smiled, and hugged Ms. Bell and said "Yes, yes it is!"

As a teacher I tried often to remember Ms. Bell in terms of my interactions with students so that I both demonstrated and advocated for self-respect. This was difficult, in a sense, at times because in my experiences as an educator, particularly once I taught high school, many of my students of color had been deflated by many years where they were told they were not good enough, that they were bad, that their work was bad, and that they were not capable of doing well. Many students came in to my class after having spent a whole day with people who focused on challenging any effort students made to see themselves as having self-respect. I myself have also battled with issues of weight, negative self image, and having worked in buildings where colleagues actively worked against my practice and pedagogy causing me to often operate with my colleagues from a defensive position. That is why, at times, even though Ms. Bell was with me, I think that the concept of self-respect, outside of my classroom walls, was a difficult challenge for both students and myself. However, in my class, we operated from a belief that all students could do well, and that doing well involved confidence and self respect.

One practice to encourage self-respect was to have students leave every class with an index card telling me one thing they did well today and one thing they would do well before they saw me again (which when I taught high school was every other day). I would also engage in this practice. This informal contract was meant to help both students and myself, and I used a language that encouraged us to respect our own selves, and to walk with a mission of doing well. At the beginning of class we would talk about our goals and if we had met them, and with time we were able to do this process in Spanish, the subject I taught to students, thus achieving not only encouraging our self-respect dialogue, but also achieving our academic goals of better learning and using Spanish for practical meaningful purposes.

Many of the high school students I taught had failed Spanish in the past, and so a strategy that I implored was to provide a large amount of positive feedback on students' papers and work, and plan activities where students could be successful from the very first day. Students, receiving grades of A's, that they **earned**, became a very important part of my classroom, and changed the students' views of themselves. Students began to see themselves in a way in which doing well was a respected act, both expected and noticed in my classroom, and thus changed the way in which students were able to engage in Spanish.

A final classroom practice that was meant to increase self respect as influenced by Ms. Bell was a pen-pal project that we conducted with a bi-lingual elementary school in Rochester, New York. The students I taught, 2nd and 3rd year Spanish students would write letters back and forth with 2nd graders who did not speak English. When the 2nd graders wrote back, and the letters indicated that they understood

what my students had written, the students' images of self changed, and a new confidence with their Spanish began to demonstrate a new self-respect students had. My students often became mentors for those 2nd graders, and the relationship was fundamental for increasing my students' belief that they could learn Spanish, use it in a meaningful context, and be a part of others lives in a positive way with a language other than English. Every year when we would go and meet the 2nd graders, my students walked around the elementary school like proud brothers and sisters, speaking Spanish with their pen pals.

Conclusion

Respect as healing…Ms. Gibson, Ms. McFadden, and Ms. Bell

In Ms. Gibson, Ms. McFadden, Ms. Bell, and all the other Black women educators I have had and continue to have as a university student, I have found both my metaphorical caretakers and healers. These women have not only informed my practice, but also allow me to continue to grow as an academic, hopefully continuing to spread the traditions, political and epistemological, of Black women educators. Respect **is** healing! Lawrence-Lightfoot (2001) talks about respect as healing in terms of "…nourish[ing] a feeling of worthiness, of wholeness, and well being." The Black women educators that have been presented in the preceding vignettes embody respect not only for the quality of respect highlighted for each, but also in their embodiment of healing; they have helped me to feel well and worthy both as a student and as an educator, embodying what Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000) has said about respect, namely that "respect generates respect; a modest loaf becomes many" (p. 10).

Before the presentation of the vignettes I posed a part of what bell hooks (1984) has articulated as a concern namely that "…there are so few images of intellectual women who are non-white" (p. 114). While I have not answered this concern directly, I hope that the presentation of the vignettes about Black women teachers who instructed me and their influence on me as both student and educator serves in the tradition of naming our intellectual mothers, our Black women educators. Further, I hope that highlighting these Black Women continues the work as part of this larger well fed and flourishing garden of academics and intellectuals whom are Black women. I would argue that work like this, along with the work of many scholars writing about Black women teachers, can present to others the images of intellectuals of color so that others understand that the images are in fact many. It is the work of scholars like Ladson-Billings, Gay, Beauboeuf-Lafontant, Irvine, Collins, Dixson, Dingus, and **many** countless others who have started this concerted and meaningful effort of making plentiful the images of intellectual women educators of color that more work is making its way to the forefront of discussion and understanding. In some small way I hope that the vignettes of these Black women educators I have presented, become part of the growing literature on the pedagogical practices of Black women teachers.

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Personal Investments, Professional Gains: Strategies of African American Women Teacher Educators

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Abstract

As African American mothers and teacher educators, the authors' investment in teacher education is both personal and professional. The authors' build upon these personal and professional investments in their teaching practices with primarily White pre-service teachers, in the hopes of better preparing them to teach African American children. This paper outlines pedagogical and curriculum strategies including reflective activities, the use of Black English Vernacular (BEV), and theoretical orientations. These strategies emphasize the a) political nature of teaching and the ways in which teacher positionality matters; b) importance of interpersonal relationships based on care, respect, and recognition of humanity; and, c) experiences students of color have in school and community.

Introduction

As mothers of African American males who attend public schools and as teacher educators, we are very concerned that schools and colleges of education are not preparing pre-service teachers to teach *all* children. We come to this conclusion based not only on personal perspectives, but also from our professional vantage points. Both authors are former K-12 educators who embarked on careers in teacher education to address the systemic neglect and mis-education of students of color, in particular, African American children. Our concerns lay squarely in the perpetuation of stereotypical representations of children of color, their communities, parents such as ourselves, and the continual process that others our children and casts them as "different."

Moreover, as teacher educators, we are invested, equally responsible, and constantly questioning the ways in which teacher preparation programs replicate cycles of mis-education for pre-service teachers of color who must essentially get "on-the-job-training" at the expense of our children because their teacher education program did not adequately prepare them to teach *all* children. In other words, as authors of this paper, we are in no way objective or dispassionate about the topic of teacher preparation. For us, this paper extends beyond just a scholarly interest in the topic; it represents the multiple facets of our positionality as African American women, mothers, community members, cultural workers, and scholars.

In this paper, we are attempting to look broadly at both multicultural education and multicultural teacher education because we see these two areas as inextricably connected. While multicultural teacher education is but one segment of the larger project of multicultural education, it goes without saying that if teachers do not understand the philosophical, curricular, and pedagogical underpinnings of multicultural

education at the pre and in-service level the project of multicultural education is tenuous at best. Given that most teacher education programs are predominantly white, we believe that teacher educators of color (authors included) have a particular vantage point in preparing pre-service candidates to work with African American students. In addition to "the overwhelming presence of White teachers" (Sleeter, 2003) in the nation's public school classrooms, a majority of the students are children from a variety of racial, ethnic, linguistic, and class backgrounds. This demographic imbalance presents challenges to not only teachers, but also students, parents, and communities. Thus, our work in teacher education is guided by the need to articulate the ways in which our positionality as professors of color informs our efforts to prepare pre-service teachers. In this paper, we draw upon this point, illuminating strategies and techniques we employ in our classrooms. We provide a context for our work, elucidating the challenges of working with a primarily White teacher education student body, in light of our positionality in predominately White institutions (PWIs). We then highlight the ways in which these contextual factors form a basis for practice, providing strategies for addressing such challenges yet, doing so in a manner that does not derail our primary concern—preparing teachers to teach *all* students. These strategies demonstrate attentiveness to teacher positionality, theory, and a belief that teachers are change agents.

The terrain of multicultural teacher education

In the time that we have worked with pre-service teachers and similarly in our own teacher preparation, we have become concerned about *how* effective the mostly monocultural environments, like most schools and colleges of education, are at preparing teachers for diversity and social justice? Teacher educators, as highlighted in a recent

Chronicle article, face increased levels of student resistance as conservative organizations challenge the use of "professional dispositions" in assessing pre-service teachers' ability to create democratic, socially just classrooms (See Wilson, 2005). This is further exacerbated by the growing preoccupation with testing (high stakes, standardization) and content area standards that render students, particularly students of color, invisible; they are seen as flawed and incapable of meeting test and performance standards. Pre-service and indeed in-service teachers, who want magic bullet solutions, view the inclusion of multicultural materials in K-12 classrooms as a distraction to testing and standards. Moreover, when multicultural materials are introduced as curricular tools, the treatments by pre-service and in-service teachers tends to be very superficial and/or students are unwilling, unprepared, or both to substantively engage the material (Shujaa, 1995; Chapman, 2002). While volumes of scholarship on preparing White teachers to work with racially, ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse populations exist, uncritical usage of such work exists. As Ladson-Billings (2005) reminds us, "racial texts" run the risk of becoming empty, if they are appropriated in a manner that proliferates color blindness and uncritical teacher practices amongst teacher educators. Thus, teacher educators must be mindful of how we play a significant role in silencing and rendering students of color invisible, while also contributing to resistance of pre-service teachers.

Student resistance is even more heightened for teacher educators of color, as demonstrated in negative evaluations, complaints to deans, provosts, and university presidents. Gender also contributes yet another layer to student resistance, as Harlow (2003) found that junior level Black females were most susceptible to student resistance, and thus, worked under social constraints in and outside of classrooms that White colleagues do not. Her work also highlights what she denotes as the "black tax" Black faculty incur on student evaluations, describing how student responses are consciously filtered through a racial (and I would argue, a gendered) lens (356). The work of Fries-Britt and Turner-Kelly (2005), Allen et al. (2001), and Thompson and Louque (2005) further describes African American faculty status, problematic interactions with White students, and the need to establish strong support networks with other faculty of color.

As Black female teacher educators, although we work at different PWIs (a private Northeastern institution and a large Midwest state institution), we face similar challenges in our work. Thus, we work collaboratively sharing course readings, co-constructing course syllabi and classroom activities. In the following section, we share the collaboratively constructed strategies that address student resistance, while keeping an eye on the larger goal of preparing teachers to work effectively with students of color. These pedagogical strategies emphasize the a) political nature of teaching and the ways in which teacher positionality matters; b) importance of interpersonal relationships based on care, respect,

and recognition of humanity; and, c) students of color they will encounter bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experiences that must be incorporated into their pedagogical practices.

The political nature of teaching

To help situate the nature and history of schools and curriculum as being inherently political, many of the readings challenge the traditional narrative of school and education as the "great equalizer." In doing so, these readings challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions and the common experiences our students hold as school as a place where everyone had the same opportunities. Indeed, many of our students are very adept at "doing school" and find it difficult to accept and/or believe that the very nature of schooling, as practiced in the U.S., is at odds with the notion of equal opportunity. Thus, many students fault faculty of color for presenting "grim" pictures of public education marred by racial, economic, and gender inequities. In our courses, a common question or comment on final course evaluations is: "Why do we spend so much time talking about race?" Many students enter teacher education programs with the conceptualization that teaching is politically neutral work, with limited understandings of the politically charged professional arena they are preparing to enter. Students' comments in-class, on written assignments, during meetings with us, on course evaluations, or in conversations with department chairs and deans, describe the ways in which readings offend them and fail to provide them with methods and lesson plans for use in their future classrooms. Thus, attempts on our part to challenge students to consider their positionality, engage with the readings, and further their analysis are often viewed as hypercritical attacks of a personal nature based on the fact that they are white and we are African American.

After sensing students were challenged by the readings, yet, reluctant to share their feelings, Dingus implemented a weekly writing activity she called "Bag Teachers." Dingus also sensed that students were having difficulty with some of the larger concepts of multicultural teacher preparation, including understanding the ways in which teaching is a political endeavor. As other multicultural teacher educators have experienced, when students encounter concepts such as race, privilege, social justice, and democratic classroom practices, they experience a certain amount of frustration, articulated as "not getting it." Thus, Dingus implemented Bag Teachers, in which students can sort through concepts they feel comfortable with, those they feel they need to develop, and those that they continue to revisit across the semester in a series of brown paper bags. Students are provided cue cards on which to write their "baggage" they bring to the classroom, based on their understandings of schools, children, and their own experiences. The baggage includes issues in the readings they find most challenging, those that run counter to their beliefs and accepted ideologies of schools and learners. They are also given several open ended ques-

tions to respond to including: As a future classroom teacher, I fear…? I find it difficult to accept…? And, I do not want to deal with…? The first bag houses these cards, while the second bag holds issues they believe they have resolved, addressed, or have experiences some progression. Students are provided with cards each week, at the start of class. At the end of the semester, they are free to share these issues, speaking specifically about what cards remained in the first bag, what transitioned to the second bag, and the reasons for certain cards remained or shifted. Thus, the bags become a symbolic space to process themes, issues, and concerns they do not feel comfortable sharing publicly.

Similarly, Dixson found that students held a number of stereotypes of urban versus suburban (and rural) schools. Many of the students are from suburban and rural backgrounds and tend to hold negative stereotypes and beliefs about both urban communities and the children and families who live in urban areas. They perceive urban schools as dangerous, poverty-stricken and places where there is virtually no learning going on. Conversely, they see suburban schools as well-resourced, safe and intellectually rich environments. Rural areas are described as close-knit and focused very strongly on community. All of the students' narratives about these contexts—urban, rural and suburban—suggest that the environments are racially homogenous and culturally static. Thus, in an effort to help students understand the ways in which their beliefs affect student learning, Dixson created a different version of the "Bag Teacher" activity. She asked the students to get into groups based on their potential teaching context—urban, rural or suburban—list characteristics of each environment and create a list that describes the "typical" student, in each context. She then had the groups sort their lists to respond to the following question: "What impacts student success in urban/rural/suburban schools?" The groups sort their lists as those aspects of urban/rural/suburban schools that supported or challenged student success. They then take their lists and write them on index cards. The index cards with the challenges are taped to bricks. The students selected one of their peers to represent the "typical" student described for their context. The "typical" urban, rural and suburban students come forward and Dixson gives them an empty backpack. In the backpack, group members place the bricks with the challenges and explain each challenge. Typically, most groups place between six and eight bricks in their backpacks. Dixson engages the students in a discussion about what the bricks represent—the beliefs that they bring to the classroom about their students and the students' communities. The students who have the bricks in their backpacks feel the metaphorical weight of carrying others' perceptions. For all of the students, the activity demonstrates how teachers' beliefs can be burdensome for some students and represent the real challenge to their success in our classrooms. Across both Dixson and Dingus' courses, students' responses to these activities were mixed ranging from anger at being "tricked" to surprise that they hold beliefs that could impact their students' success.

However, on a majority of the evaluations, the students cite the "Bag Teachers" activity as having a profound impact on them understanding their positionality.

Interpersonal relationships

As Black women teacher educators, our pedagogical practices allow us to teach through our own positionality. In doing so, we are very deliberate in incorporating Black English Vernacular (BEV) into classroom dialogues, from our opening remarks, personal interactions, the inclusion of expressions into larger class discussions and in the interpretation of texts. We ask students if they understand what we meant in using certain phrases, what meanings were conveyed, and what misinterpretations can arise from the usage. Dingus draws on the notion of academic/marketplace discourse to highlight the ways in which language functions across communities, and moreover, the ways in which it privileges some while disserving others. We also make a point of describing the usage of BEV in terms of critical race theory (CRT), drawing upon the tenet of counter story as a means of articulating experiences which may differ significantly from their own. We further emphasize the ways in which language usage is erroneously equated with perceptions of intelligence. In doing so, we find that many students are willing to more critically examine classroom-based interactions with students and parents. Thus, by teaching students through who we are, students can gain a better understanding of how language functions, and moreover, an understanding of their ability to interact with students and parents from communities and backgrounds that differ from their own.

In one instance, students in both courses completed readings on womanism and Black women teachers' pedagogy. Based on the weekly questions students submitted in a prior Dingus' course and the reaction papers they write in Dixson's course, we sensed that they were struggling to understand concepts about pedagogical practices and philosophies that challenge and are different from their commonly held beliefs and experiences. Both of us draw on personal experiences to demonstrate concepts in the readings we assigned. In most cases, students come back to class to share that they have witnessed the manifestation of the concepts or themes in the course readings in their field experiences.

An additional example is the implementation of embedded cores in our courses, where we address underlying themes in a way that students may or may not be aware. While course readings cover the prescribed topics, there exists an underlying emphasis on care. Students are thus challenged to think of the ways in which care is manifested on individual, classroom, building-level, and systemic bases. If teacher education programs seek to prepare practitioners who are knowledgeable, reflective, skilled, and caring, then suffice it to say, discussion on constructs of care are critical. Thus, students read a number of texts (see for example, Siddle Walker's *Their Highest Potential* and Valenzuela's *Subtractive Schooling*) during the semester, on caring. These texts are coupled with readings that use caring as a filter for class-

room management, reflective teaching, and other topics across the semester.

Experiences of students of color

Many teacher education programs place particular emphasis on the idea that teachers are agents of change. Given this, it is particularly striking how "change" often errs more on the side of *fixing* students of color, as opposed to recognizing their abilities, and the wealth of knowledge and experiences they bring to school. While many of our students have urban placements, we cannot assume that they are engaging with K-12 students in meaningful ways that will inform their pedagogy, positionality, and ability to care for students of color. In fact, we still find that many pre-service teachers still do not utilize their pre-service experiences to challenge their notions of students of color, but instead, focus almost entirely on the technical aspects of teaching. Establishing relationships with students, listening to their concerns and social critiques, is perceived as unimportant, time consuming, or not thought of at all. Thus, their placements do not necessarily guarantee meaningful contact with K-12 students in ways that dislodge perceptions and preconceived ideas of who students of color are and know.

To counter this lack of attention to students, we seek ways to incorporate the voices of students of color in teacher education. Who better to describe the ways in which teachers can function as change agents? Dingus directed a community service project with a secondary student. Dingus invites the student to speak to the masters-level students about his experiences in school, community, at home and with peers. We used the occasion to describe ways in which pre-service teachers can engage students in meaningful conversations, learning about youth culture, and how best to reach students. On another occasion, students from a local high school came in to converse with pre-service teachers on the topic of youth violence. In course reflections and on-line discussions, students commented that these sessions were the most meaningful, challenged their perceptions of urban students, exposed them to new viewpoints, and allowed them to realize intellectually steeped social critiques Black children can voice.

Conclusion

In teacher preparation programs where there is one token course on Multicultural Education, "difference (be it racial, class, gender, or disability) or "teaching diverse learners," it is exceedingly difficult to attend to these issues in substantive and meaningful ways that unpack social constructs of difference, the implications for teachers' positionality, and learners. Thus, we find it necessary to utilize a variety of methods and materials to encourage students to critically examine their positionality. Additionally, with limited course offerings, classroom discussions can quite often be restricted to "theoretical" and/or "academic" discussions of race and racism. This limitation in course of-

ferings constrains the course schedule and thus devalues and limits time for students to share and give voice to the experiences they have had with these issues as a way of talking *to*, and *against* theories of race, race relations and racism. The challenge for teacher preparation programs, and what we have endeavored to do in our courses is to create environments that engage all of the students and attend to their engagement with these issues that does not relegate them to simplistic and relativistic reductionisms that perpetuate the notion that experiences are similar. In our experience, and in reading the literature on multicultural education, it appears that issues of race often get conflated with culture or socio-economic class at the expense of gender and vice-versa.

In programs where there is one course, these issues get lost when trying to cover everything in a semester. As professors we have had to make choices about which issues we will spend more time on and others we will merely introduce. This is painfully similar to what happens in schools with respect to the teaching of content. In terms of multicultural teacher education, breadth cannot be favored over depth. Thus, again, our use of activities helps underscore the issues that may not get as much focused attention in readings we assign. We hope our use of activities, strategically co-constructing courses, and attending to the larger themes of teaching as political work, interpersonal relationships, centering students of color provide a foundation for pre-service teachers to draw upon in working with students of color who fuel our imperative to prepare teachers.

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Questions may be directed to Dr. Sharon Valente at the address below. Proposals should be submitted no later than November 15, 2006, to:

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