On the Importance of African-American Faculty in Higher Education:
Implications and Recommendations

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Leveraging White Spaces for Faculty and Students

Intercultural competence, a critical component of individual student development, has become an essential 21st-century learning outcome for college students (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). In this article, we argue that the presence, influence, and contributions of faculty of Color can help higher education students achieve intercultural competence. We define intercultural competence as people's ability to communicate and function effectively across varying cultures. The question guiding this article is: In what ways do the contributions of faculty of Color help build students' intercultural competence? Through personal stories and experiences, we, as four African-American faculty members at predominantly White higher education institutions, share how we believe our work has helped

build and shape students'—all students'—intercultural competence in what we call "White spaces." Unfortunately, cultural differences can make it difficult for people to work together effectively (van Woerkom & Croon, 2008); therefore, building intercultural competence is essential if students are to function effectively in an increasingly diverse U.S. and global society. Faculty of Color who have a personal interest in or level of comfort with cultural issues may find greater value in integrating these cognitive experiences safely into higher education classrooms (Antonio, 2002; Griffin, Pifer, Humphrey, & Hazelwood, 2011).

We argue for the importance of providing higher education students with opportunities to build intercultural competence and believe that faculty of Color can play an important role in this process. We turn now to an elaborated discussion of intercultural competence.

Intercultural Competence

It can be argued that intercultural competence grew out of research that combined cross-cultural psychology with intercultural communication and multiculturalism to study how an individual adjusts and responds to experiences in a new cultural context (Taylor, 1994). Definitions of intercultural competence range from an awareness of other cultures (Mansell, 1981) to the appreciation and enjoyment of different cultures (Bennet, 1986), to an ability to alter a personal perspective in order to adapt and adjust to an unfamiliar cultural context (Kim, 1991). Friedman and Antal (2005) defined intercultural competence as the ability to recognize and use cultural differences as a resource for learning and behaving in specific contexts. Thus, intercultural competence can be defined as an individual's cognitive capacity and level of comfort in applying cultural awareness across cultural contexts, with the aim of successfully interacting with others without forfeiting or ignoring the core self. An individual who is interculturally competent is able to identify and connect with people of different cultures and to respect cultural differences without displaying an inauthentic or condescending attitude.

King and Baxter-Magolda (2005) argued that college spaces are ideal locations for students to develop intercultural competence. Small-scale studies, as well as those on an institutional or systemic scale, have examined the role of intercultural competence in higher education. For instance, Reynolds and Constantine (2007) found that if international students in particular did not develop intercultural competence they were more likely to have difficulty transitioning into their profession after college. In an effort to develop intercultural competence among social work students, the University of South Australia developed a program in which students were immersed in another culture with guided supervision (Tesoriero, 2006). The program demonstrated that reflective writings helped students become more aware of their cross-cultural defensiveness and sense of superiority, and also helped them begin to develop culturally adaptive behaviors (Tesoriero, 2006). These reflections enabled supervisors to document the development of students' cultural competence

and offer information to help them process their cultural experiences through less ethnocentric lenses.

Because intercultural competence requires transformation of the individual, the University of Waikato Management School has adopted a developmental approach to building its students' intercultural competence (Deakins, 2009). Students at the school engage in seven research-based teaching activities, beginning by critiquing a research study. They then work in groups to design a study on intercultural communication. With each subsequent exercise, students are asked to bring more of their own norms and values into their analyses. Through frequent exchanges with peers and a space to examine their own norms and values, students develop a deeper understanding of and comfort with cultural diversity (Deakins, 2009).

One difficulty in creating this type of cognitive experience is that many students will feel that their beliefs and worldview are being personally challenged and thus resist engaging with the activities. Therefore, the manner in which faculty present, nurture, and understand these experiences will play a significant role in fostering students' acceptance (Deakins, 2009). While there are systemic and institutional programs, such as those at the University of South Australia and the University of Waikato Management School, we argue that individual professors also can play an important role, even at the classroom level, in helping students build intercultural competence. Before explaining the ways we believe our work as African-American faculty members helps students build intercultural competence in the White spaces of higher education, we discuss some recent demographic trends among faculty and students.

Faculty and Students in Higher Education

Phillips (2002) has argued that changes in the higher education student population are evidence of the growing need for a more diverse faculty, but faculty diversity has not changed significantly over the last few decades (Umbach, 2006). In 2008, students of Color made up almost 40% of the student enrollment population with14% being Black, 12% Hispanic, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 3% classified as nonresident aliens. Between 1980 and 2009 Black college enrollment has almost tripled (from approximately 1.1 million in 1980 to 2.9 million in 2009) and Hispanic college enrollment has increased by 5-fold (from approximately 500 thousand in 1980 to 2.5 million in 2009)(U.S. Census, 2012). In fall 2009, some 7% of college and university faculty were Black (based on a faculty count that excludes persons whose race/ethnicity was unknown), 6% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 4% were Hispanic, and 1% were American Indian/Alaska Native. About 79% of all faculty were White; 42% were White males and 37% were White females (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). While faculty of Color have increased by roughly 8% since the early 1980s, the number of White students in the same time period has decreased by roughly 17% (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).[1] The growing presence of faculty of Color

and the relationships they build with the decreasing percentage of White students will be critical to the ability of U.S. society to evolve into a people that understands, appreciates, and coexists productively within a multiethnic context.

Assensoh (2003) noted that hiring racially and ethnically diverse faculty mem-

Table 1
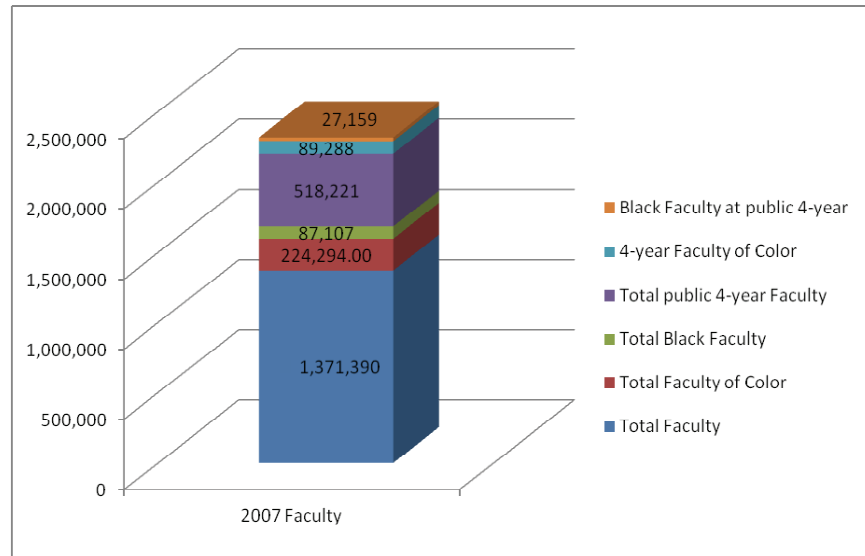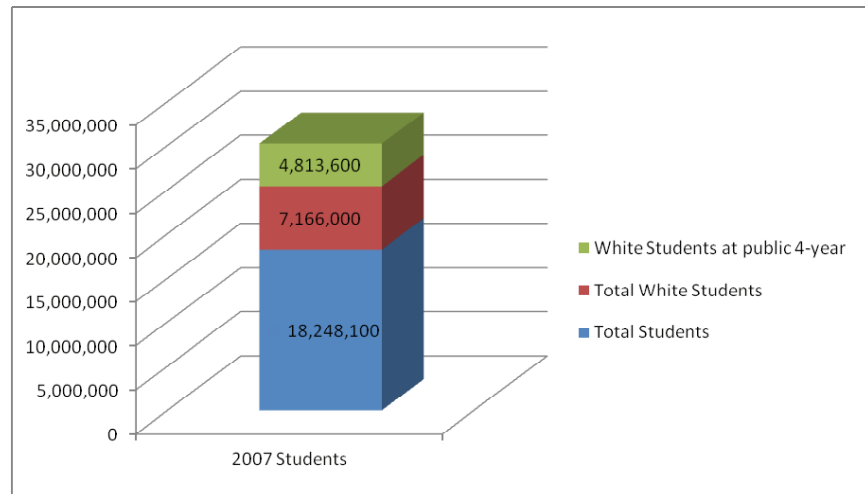*Faculty at 4-Year Public Colleges and Universities, 2007*

Table 2
Students at 4-Year Public Colleges and Universities, 2007

bers is necessary if the academy wishes to remain relevant and continue to grow. Using Boyer's (1990) four areas of scholarship, Antonio (2002) found that faculty of Color are more likely than White faculty to concentrate on the area of scholarship most beneficial to the student—that is, the scholarship of learning. Boyer (1990) argued that scholarship has four main areas: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. The scholarship of discovery refers to traditional research conducted in a single discipline with the aim of presenting original ideas at conferences and in journals. Integration involves connecting knowledge across disciplines in order to understand and add depth to a singular piece of knowledge. Application covers service-oriented scholarship intended to address social issues, whereas the scholarship of teaching recognizes innovation in pedagogy and efforts to infuse critical thinking and active learning into the classroom.

In a survey of 21,467 full-time undergraduate faculty across 313 four-year institutions, Antonio (2002) found that faculty of Color displayed values reflecting a scholarship of teaching, with a focus on learning, and application more strongly than White faculty. Faculty of Color also were more likely than White faculty to place great importance on students' affective, moral, and civic development. These findings further substantiate our premise that faculty of Color can make a significant contribution to students' intercultural competence. Turner (2002) suggested that one of the more important contributions made by professors of Color, especially women, is new knowledge and the development of fresh ideas that sometimes lead to completely unexplored and exciting fields of study. The use of Critical Race Theory as a lens for examining curriculum, instruction and assessment (Ladson-Billings, 1989) is just one example of the new knowledge faculty of Color bring that transforms how education is delivered and received. Thus, faculty of Color seem to play a critical role in building intercultural competence not just in students but across higher education. Turner (2002) maintained that

> . . . faculty of Color possess a variety of scholarly and academic perspectives that are crucial to [the] functioning of public universities in a pluralistic society . . . In light of the significant demographic changes brought about by the new immigration and dramatic increase in students of Color in institutions of higher education, the very viability of academe may depend on its ability to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body and American population. (p. 6)

Relying on evidence gathered through interviews with university faculty of Color, Turner (2003) explored rationales for increasing diversity. One argument for diversification, according to Turner, rests on the belief that "contributions of a diverse faculty enhance teaching and learning as well as contribute to the development of future scholarship" (p. 117). The perspectives and experiences brought by faculty of Color will lead to new areas of study and make important contributions to the growth of scholarship.

As far back as 1960, there has been evidence that institutions recognize the important role faculty of Color can play in addressing the needs of students of Color (Weems, 2003). We argue in this article that White students are benefitting from

the presence of faculty of Color in ways similar to students of Color. Moreover, as students become more aware of the contributions faculty of Color are making, they will become better prepared to navigate an increasingly multiethnic nation outside of higher education. Using self-authorship and cultural capital theories, we next explain how faculty of Color can help to build and shape the intercultural competence of all students, including Whites.

Self-Authorship and Cultural Capital

We now discuss two theoretical constructs, self-authorship and cultural capital, which we believe are relevant and appropriate analytic tools to help explain the role faculty of Color play in helping students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds build intercultural competence.

Self-Authorship

Kegan (1994) coined the term "self-authorship," a construct often used in the student development and higher education literature to describe how an individual evolves from passively accepting external definitions of the world to critically examining those definitions and developing the capacity to measure them against their own beliefs. One can construct from Kegan's (1994) concept that a self-author's internal identity is the master of the values, beliefs, generalizations, convictions, loyalties, and ideals that inform his or her behavior and actions. A self-author is able to realize that different people hold different views of the world for legitimate reasons (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). For instance, realizing that a Democrat and a Republican could make opposite arguments on an issue and both be rational and sane could help someone begin to develop an internal understanding of issues, rather than relying on external authorities. Or, in another relevant example, a self-author who follows the Muslim faith would not automatically oppose the opinion of a Christian. He would instead wait to determine how much the Christian's opinion concurred with his own beliefs and values before deciding to agree or disagree. Thus, the Muslim is the author of his perspective on the Christian's opinion, rather than accepting the perspective constructed by his membership in a group.

Becoming a self-author means an individual is becoming more authentic, is learning to speak and behave in a manner that is consistent with their character. Learning to behave in accordance with one's character regardless of context increases the possibility of developing comfortable relationships with others and the probability of maintaining them. Kegan (1994) theorized that, in order to achieve self-authorship, three dimensions must be addressed: epistemological (how we view the world), intrapersonal (how we view ourselves), and interpersonal (how we view others). Making progress across these three dimensions is driven by rich experiences that ignite an internal mechanism for interpreting those experiences that functions to maintain progress. The research suggests that self-authors are better equipped to meet the challenges of adult life when leaving college than individuals who still rely on external definitions to shape their perspectives and opinions and

who lack an internal mechanism to critically examine them (Baxter Magolda, 2008). Because self-authors do not passively accept others' perceptions or perspectives and are more likely to behave in an authentic manner, they should be more capable of establishing and maintaining relationships with diverse others (Baxter Magolda, 2008). This is especially important for navigating the 21st-century social terrain.

Baxter Magolda (2001) found that, before a student is able to adopt an identity informed by an internal mechanism, she or he typically must encounter a rich experience that is termed "the crossroads." Similar to many ethnic identity models, the crossroads is the point at which an individual recognizes a flaw or incompleteness in the external definitions of a phenomenon.

Crossroad experiences are dependent upon the culture of the individual and thus are not experienced by everyone in the same manner, if they are experienced at all. Some students, therefore, are given a navigational advantage determined by the cultural capital or resources (a point that will be elaborated on later in this paper) present in their college experience. We argue that a unique source of the cultural capital necessary for self-authorship in the 21st century can be provided by faculty of Color, and that the experiences faculty of color bring to higher education can lead all students, and especially White students, to question more areas of their lives while concurrently gaining a better understanding of and interest in connecting to others. Students who, because of the influence of faculty of Color, are willing to question stereotypes while connecting to and understanding others' cultural experiences could be advantaged over students who were not taught by faculty of Color (Pittman, 2010, 2012).

Cultural Capital

We believe that, in addition to self-authorship, cultural capital plays a huge role in helping students develop intercultural competence. We argue that faculty of Color pass on tools and critical knowledge that can advantage students attempting to navigate multiethnic contexts.

Cultural capital in its simplest form can be defined as an individual's ability to advantage himself or herself in a given context. The term often is used in sociological contexts to describe the tangible and intangible elements that give certain individuals specific social advantages. Although it has been challenged and reshaped by a number of scholars over the years, Bourdieu (1977) is most often credited with coining the term in the 1960s and for developing the concept's foundational principles as the means by which the skills and strategies for success in a particular culture are transferred to an individual based on his or her perceived cultural membership and status. In other words, cultural capital is the means by which individuals are taught how to exist within a particular cultural context in order to thrive to the greatest extent possible. For example, imagine a room in which 10 fifth graders are getting ready to play the newest and most popular video game. An adult enters the room holding the only manual available for this new game. Regardless of the reason, the student with the most cultural capital receives the manual. Something about that

individual enabled him or her to receive information necessary for context-specific success. That "something" is the individual's cultural capital.

Bourdieu (1986) argued that cultural capital can manifest itself in three states: the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalized state. The embodied state encompasses one's physical disposition and sense of being, and is usually the result of unconscious cultivation and inculcation via cultural exposure. This state can include modes of thinking, language, recognition of behavioral cues, and an understanding and appreciation of cultural tastes or preferences. For example, students with a mode of thinking that is fairly collaborative may be more advantaged in colleges that promote cooperative teaching and learning than students who have not been exposed to such interdependent group work before entering college.

The objectified state works in tandem with the embodied state, as it is more focused on material items and their capacity to transmit culture via selling and acquisition. This state includes the physical items or objects of a culture that may advantage an individual over another. In college, this could range from having a vehicle or particular software or even just an easily accessible copy of a course syllabus. Each of these objects or items can elevate the status of, and thereby advantage, an individual on a college campus. A college student with a vehicle, for example, may be welcomed more readily into social circles on campus due to the importance of "having wheels" to get around. A person with the newest version of some well-respected software may be more welcome at gatherings of the successful business students. And, if a class is forming groups to plan for a project, students with a copy of the syllabus may have more status and be given more respect in terms of group membership.

The institutionalized state is one in which academic qualifications are used to legitimate one's cultural capital. Often this institutionalized cultural capital consists of markers of expertise, such as a job title or degree that can afford one a certain level of power and respect within a culture. In college, students can accumulate institutional capital through their membership in a particular organization or by earning an important scholarship. For example, imagine that Student A and Student B both applied for an unpaid position assisting the director of public relations at University X. Student A has a 4.0 GPA, is a successful entrepreneur, and has a better volunteer history than Student B. Student B, however, is a Rhodes Scholar. Because of the international recognition and reputation of a Rhodes scholarship, Student B may be hired over Student A and thus be afforded the experience of working with the director. Cultural capital often leads to successful outcomes because it provides access and exposure to the experiences within a culture that are typically tied to success.

In examining the relationship between cultural capital and school success, Dimaggio and Mohr (1982) found that "educational attainment is a very imperfect proxy for cultural capital" (p. 199). However, cultural capital correlates closely with college attendance, level of educational attainment, and marriage (Dimaggio & Mohr, 1985). One's cultural capital can lead to attending college, graduating from college and even being able to marry someone within the a certain class status.

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For marriage, specifically, they found "cultural capital was a preferred strategy of mobility for tradition-minded women from high-education families" (p. 1253) during the middle of the 20th century.

Lareau (1987) summarized a qualitative study of the relationship between families and schools in White working-class and middle-class communities. Lareau's data suggested that "social class position and class culture become a form of cultural capital in the school setting" (p. 82) and that, more often than not, middle-class parents have stronger social networks and acquire valuable information more easily than their working-class counterparts. Furthermore, whereas working-class parents entrusted the bulk of their children's educational experience to the school, middle-class parents were more engaged in the schooling process and thus were better able to identify the strategies for school success that they should encourage in their kids in order for them to succeed in their particular cultural context.

For example, one middle-class parent who volunteered at the school observed that her child was not performing as well as the other students in spelling. As a result, she helped her child develop better study habits that were focused on spelling, and he moved from the bottom third to the top third in the class (Lareau, 1987). Lareau observed that middle-class parents were more likely than working-class parents to request additional study/homework resources for their children, to ask for school psychology services, and to initiate the process for gifted placement. Kingston (2001) argued that intellectually stimulating conversations and family reading sessions are other valuable sources of cultural capital that help children thrive in the school context.

Through their life experiences and the cultural capital they have accrued, faculty of Color are able to make important contributions to higher education campuses and classrooms that are valuable to the education process, especially as those contributions relate to building intercultural competence. Turner (2002) recognized the personal investment, as models, mentors, admission advocates, and educators for young women of color aspiring to be educators, that many women of Color carry alongside their scholarship enables them to "bring their experiences and knowledge into campus dialogues in the classroom, in the literature, and in their communities" (p. 89). Once those experiences are in these classroom, literature and community spaces, it challenges others to revisit their own awareness and competencies.

We next will share our own personal experiences that may be considered crossroads as conceptualized through self-authorship that created opportunities for students to build intercultural competence.

Experiences That Shape Intercultural Competence

In this section, we provide four personal stories that self-authorship may conceptualize as crossroads, which we believe helped to build and shape students' intercultural competence through the higher education experience. As African-American professors at predominantly White institutions of higher education, we shed light on how our experiences contributed to students' building and shaping

intercultural competence. We hope these experiences demonstrate the value of having African-American faculty and other faculty of Color in higher education.

Madyun: "It's Not Quite What I Thought It Was…I Think"

I am Na'im Madyun. I was born and raised in the Mississippi Delta. Even though I believed I was intelligent and often was told how smart I was for my age, I somehow came to believe that Whites were naturally more intelligent than Blacks. This caused me at times to suppress my efforts and avoid opportunities. It took me years to realize how much parental involvement and prior educational experiences and knowledge played in achievement outcomes in the preK-16 educational setting.

I was able to grow from feeling innately less intelligent than Whites to understanding the role culture plays in achievement outcomes, and I integrated this knowledge into my lectures on ability testing and intelligence to highlight less recognized factors that may influence educational outcomes, regardless of aptitude. When I talked about my personal revelation in class, I sometimes got feedback that questioned the generalizability of my experience. This sometimes led to discussions that forced students to question some of their own assumptions regarding cultural influences on achievement. These discussions sometimes functioned as crossroads experiences that pushed students, particularly White students, to develop a more sophisticated formula for defining the academic ability of students of Color.

The motivation behind my dissertation was a desire to explain why my middle school and high school classmates did not advance as far academically as I did, despite their having comparable or better academic habits and perceived intelligence. In searching for this explanation, I often used top-down processing in my classroom teaching, which is when individuals develop their perception of reality based on previous expectations and experiences. I found that the previous expectations and experiences that influence one's interpretation of the present and the future often are tied to a past that is very culture specific.

One particular activity I employed in my classes involved watching a short film in which two men, one Black and one White, are playing chess. By the middle of the game, the Black player is visibly losing and the White player appears to be enjoying himself immensely. The Black player then asks the White player to play for $100. After an exchange of words, they agree to the $100 bet. By the end of the chess match, the Black player has won and the White player is upset. Students were asked to discuss what occurred. The dominant response was that the Black guy tricked the White guy into placing a bet. After the discussion they were told that the film was designed to be neutral. Students' assumptions, expectations, and previous experiences about interactions of Blacks and Whites influenced how they interpreted the behaviors they saw on film. The activity brought forth many examples of top-down processing, and subsequent lectures and discussions prodded the students to become more aware of how their culture can influence their perceptions, whether logical or not. Realizing the central role a cultural past can play in their perceptions caused many students to question their perception of what

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an intelligent person looks or sounds like, or what the physical characteristics are of a leader or close college friend.

One particular pedagogical approach I used was to give group assignments in a competition format. I designed an activity that made it difficult for one student to complete the entire activity alone; in fact, the more diverse the group, the higher the probability of completing the entire task. The task called on baseball trivia, fictional and nonfictional references, popular culture, prior course content, and a current concept or theory. The competition often brought out more of students' personalities, thus allowing them to see more of their peers' identities. It also increased the likelihood that a student will realize how diversity increases the richness of the process and quality of the end-product. Entertaining and defending differing perspectives, pushing for uniqueness and creativity, and developing skills to reach a respectful consensus seems to add to students' identity development within the classroom and to contribute to their intercultural competence. These experiences give White students in particular another rationale for widening the diversity of their social and academic circles, in addition to sharpening their ability and willingness to include diverse peers in that network. By sharing my experiences with the classroom and challenging the manner in which my students define their world, I am able to help some students develop a more sophisticated internal mechanism for defining their reality and becoming self-authors.

Williams: Integrating Desegregated Spaces in the Classroom

I, Sheneka Williams, the second author of this article, am a native of rural Alabama, where I was born into a family of educators. I grew up believing that I could be anything I wanted to be, but I also realized that I had to work twice as hard as White students to get recognition for my academic accomplishments. Following in the footsteps of my grandfather, father, and uncle, I began my career in education as a high school social studies teacher. After six years of teaching high school, I realized that I needed to have a greater impact on the field of education, which led me to leave K-12 education and pursue a doctoral degree in education. My current position as researcher/teacher gives me the academic freedom to feed the intercultural competence of my graduate students.

I always attended desegregated schools; however, I noticed that the percentage of Black teachers seemed much lower than the percentage of Black students. Those percentages seemed even lower as moved on to graduate school. I did not take classes from any Black professors during my entire undergraduate experience, and I only had three Black professors during my graduate studies. One of the three was female. Having the opportunity to learn from a Black female professor further motivated me to pursue a career as a researcher/teacher.

I am in the early stage of my academic career, and I currently work at a university that is similar to my undergraduate institution. Because I teach in the graduate program of a large research university in the South, I have little to no interaction with undergraduates and there are few students and faculty of Color. To be clear,

however, I want to note that the college and department in which I teach include a higher percentage of both students and faculty of Color than most other colleges and departments within the university.

Being a Black female professor at a research university in the South is a privilege I do not take for granted. For instance, the position allows me to bring my expertise to an audience that has not seen many who look like me. Given the South's history of racial segregation, many students are surprised to see a young Black scholar at a predominantly White institution. Moreover, I specialize in educational policy, a field that few Black scholars enter.

My dissertation research examined cross-racial friendships in desegregated schools and classrooms. My reasons for choosing this topic related to my educational and social experiences during middle and high school. I was one of a group of five Black students who were tracked into higher-level academic courses. I remember being in the "A" group in middle school, and I often wondered why my friends and I were always clustered in majority White classes. Being enrolled in these classes encouraged me to interact and develop friendships with White students, which made me an outlier among African-American students. One of my African-American friends often called me "Oreo" (Black on the outside, White on the inside). My own school experiences compelled me to gain a deeper understanding of how the implementation of desegregation policy looks in today's public schools and classrooms.

I often lecture on my dissertation topic to teach the concept of policy implementation. I also describe my schooling experiences to give my students background information. I believe that sharing my personal experience, dissertation research, and current research (student assignment policies) provides students with a broader lens through which to examine student interactions at their respective schools. I share with them how ability grouping, extracurricular activities, and classroom organization may lead to within-school segregation, thus making a distinction between desegregation and integration.

I believe it is important to share both my personal journey and my research journey with my students, most of whom are White and from the South, as it allows them to own the privilege that rarely requires them to think about their position as a student or a teacher, especially in the context of desegregation. I believe that one intended lesson can teach multiple unintended lessons. In sum, the combination of my personal story and my professional scholarship help advance the intercultural competence of the students in my classroom and my department program by providing access not only to other cultural realities but to the factors that legitimize current issues within that reality. White students who experience my teaching may have a more sophisticated understanding of how peer groups (e.g., calling Black high achievers Oreos) or structural realities (e.g., tracking) can lead to academic underperformance in K-12 settings. Moreover, students who are exposed to my professional and personal journeys may have a "crossroads" experience if they are able to grasp how my journeys contribute to my research and teaching.

McGee: "Don't Become That [Black] Researcher That Focuses on Black Students"

I am Ebony McGee, the third author of this article. I am an assistant professor of diversity and urban schooling within the Department of Teaching and Learning at Vanderbilt University. To understand the importance of Black faculty, I will have to go back in time to my undergraduate degree. I received my bachelor's degree in science electrical engineering from a Historically Black College/University (HBCU). At my HBCU, I took for granted the opportunity to interact with hundreds of Black students who were skillful future scientists, engineers, technologists, and mathematicians (STEM). Many of my teachers also were Black, and they believed in their students' academic and life potential. Therefore, when I entered a doctoral program in educational psychology, I was dismayed by the constant bombardment of statistics that situated Black students' underachievement in the STEM fields as normal. I quickly realized that the existing research on African-American students in the STEM disciplines did not reflect my experience of fellow classmates who excelled in STEM-based majors.

Highly resistant to this narrative, I began taking classes that complemented my personal and professional experiences with African-American college students who had overcome myriad obstacles and exhibited resilience in their academics and in life. My plans were to understand more fully, and in a very principled way, what internal and external factors impacted STEM college students' identity, success, and resilience. At that time, I believed that enrolling in the educational psychology program would afford me the best opportunity to develop my understanding of these issues.

However, the department often accused me of being too unorthodox in my course selection and research interests, which led me to look outside the educational psychology department to find more nurturing and culturally relevant classes and professors. The department then demanded that I "stop the confusion and chaos" and navigate through the traditional pathways it provided. I pointed out that students like me bring with us experiences that might make it appear that our research interests are unorthodox, but that this unorthodoxy possibly reflected shortcomings in the educational research. My advisor at the time warned me about typecasting myself out of a faculty position and strongly suggested, "Don't become that [Black] researcher that focuses on Black students." In spite of my protests, the department continued to push me into simplistic theoretical frameworks, such as "acting White," to understand African-Americans' academic success.

When Danny Martin arrived at the University of Illinois at Chicago I was two years into the educational psychology program, but I was on educational life support, and dropping out of the Ph.D. process was a real possibility. Although I had all the mainstream measures of success and achievement (e.g., grades, conference presentations, fellowships), I was on the brink of crashing and burning. So when Martin, a longtime mathematics educator and researcher, showed up with extensive documentation on the mathematics experiences of African-American adults and

adolescents—in particular, how complex sociohistorical, community, school, and intrapersonal forces interact to produce mathematics success and failure among African Americans—I felt a renewed sense of purpose.

I confided in Martin about my experiences in educational psychology. He and others (Rico Gutstein and Lena Khisty) thoroughly analyzed my course transcript and determined that my coursework had a clear focus and concentration on students of Color and mathematics learning from an identity and racial perspective. Martin also illuminated the coherence between my coursework and my dissertation, which explored the role of race and racial identity construction among academically successful African-American students who major in mathematics or engineering at the university level. Needless to say, this was the true recognition that I desperately needed. After only a few meetings with Martin, I started the paperwork to change my concentration from educational psychology to mathematics education. Martin became my advisor and mentor, and was of tremendous assistance in helping me crystallize my research interests and dissertation topic goals.

Martin truly helped me follow my dreams and not conform to others' "soul-selling" standards. For example, in the summer of 2005, Martin received a $1,000 stipend from the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago to purchase research materials. He gave me the entire $1,000 grant so I could buy the equipment I needed for my dissertation study. I was able to purchase video-recording equipment so I could record the interviews for my study. Seeing the faces, expressions, and gestures of the high-achieving Black college STEM students I interviewed continues to serve as a powerful reminder of the obstacles they face, and is a tool I employ to provide "living" counter stories on Black STEM college success.

Although I had received some negative feedback from other professors about the possibility of receiving the Spencer Dissertation for Research Related to Education Fellowship, Martin was never discouraging. He provided glowing letters of recommendation for over 20 different fellowships I applied for, even for those I now realize were way out of my league. I rewrote one Spencer essay about 11 times before Martin deemed it satisfactory, and he still had further suggestions to improve it. Even though I had to swallow my pride, Martin did not give up on me so I did not give up either, and as a result my writing improved tremendously. In fact, I did receive the Spencer Fellowship and several other financial awards to support my Ph.D. education. Honestly, there were many occasions when Martin demanded better writing and more critical research methods from me, but he never made me feel I was not capable of doing excellent work. Martin's mentoring and support found the delicate balance that can make the difference between someone completing a Ph.D. or dropping out. Most importantly, Martin always believed in the legitimacy of my study, whereas I previously frequently had to justify my rationale for studying mathematically high-achieving African-American students but not also low-achieving African-American students.

Martin and I have published together often. As he does with his current graduate students and assistant professors, Martin encouraged and pushed me not only to develop my ideas but also to present, publish, share, and act on my knowledge, and to engage with the greater academic community within and beyond the borders of mathematics education. Martin's influence has had a tremendous effect on my decision to become a faculty member, as he is one of the most devoted, dedicated, and demanding professors I have ever met. The lessons learned from this crossroads experience with Martin is very visible in the advising I do for all my students. And because of him, I am a better researcher, writer, teacher, and student. Thanks Danny!

Milner: "But This Class Is about Teaching, Not Race"

I'm Rich Milner, the fourth author of this article. I was born and raised in the South. Although my parents did not have college degrees, I grew up with many material possessions and was expected to attend college. My family was not rich, but I did not know what it meant not to have clothes to wear or food on the table. Race and conversations about race became common in my family as far back as I can remember. I recall that one of my White classmates called me a nigger once when I was in the fourth grade, and my parents, especially my father, had a very frank discussion with me about race—in particular how racism worked on both the individual and systemic levels. I recall how one of my mathematics teachers in high school literally taught to the "White side" of the classroom and how all the Black students in the class would discuss the teacher's actions but never complained about it. In short, I had some intimate experiences related to race and education, and those experiences shaped my work to build and shape intercultural competence among my students in higher education.

I have worked as a professor for over a decade in both public and private predominately White settings. I now teach in a public predominantly White university. I work with both undergraduates and graduate students, preparing future teachers to teach and graduate students to do research, mostly at the doctoral level.

I had gotten somewhat used to my teacher education students querying me about my credentials—whether or not I had taught before and for how long, and even about my family background. However, I was caught a bit off guard the third time I taught a required secondary education course because it felt as if the students had gathered before and after class to protest the focus of the course. I did not apologize for emphasizing issues of race, as my classes covered the different themes of the course. My curriculum and instructional practices were deliberately shaped by and infiltrated with race. For instance, when the class talked about curriculum development in their subject-matter areas, the classroom experiences were shaped so that students were guided to consider the complex centrality of race and racism in curriculum development.

Many of the students in the course, all but three of whom were White women, were not happy about the emphasis on race. They were explicit: "Why do you make everything about race?" "I thought this class was supposed to prepare me to become

a teacher. I don't see how race and racism relate to this course." Even more troubling for many of my students was my direct emphasis on the educational experiences and needs of African-American males in public school classrooms. Clearly, my own racial, ethnic, and gender background and reality played an enormous role in how I taught my class. When race was covered more generally, many students frowned, some questioned the relevance of my focus, and others defaulted to a place of silence. When I facilitated and guided the discussion to include African-American males, though, an even deeper sense of frustration and silence permeated the room. "Kids are just kids. I don't think it's useful for us to 'essentialize.'" As an assistant professor on a tenure track early in my career, my concerns were deep-rooted and multifaceted. Should I allow the students to push me (or, as I felt, bully me) away from a focus that I knew to be gravely important for their own work as teachers and also for their students? Should I allow my students to force me to compromise my own convictions around what it means to teach all students well?

My classroom seemed to provide a crossroads experience for many of my students. Throughout the semester, students shifted their protest and dismay to conversations that seemed to be enlightening. They started to reflect on their own experiences and to offer insights into their own schooling experiences, what they were reading, and what they observed as practicing teachers/observers in schools in different contexts. It was only through hard work and dedication that I was able to provide a space where students did not feel I was bullying them, and to create a space where students came to realize that each of us in the class (including myself) was learning and developing greater intercultural competence.

My course evaluations at the end of the semester allowed me to reflect. At the beginning of the course that semester, the students were loud and clear in their feedback, and the themes of their feedback were powerfully influential to me:

> The professor is smart and knows a lot about teaching. I learned a lot. However, he focused too much on race, on African-American students, and on African-American male students particularly. This course was supposed to be about teaching not race!

Although the students seemed to "give in" a bit after several weeks, in the beginning of the course they insisted that I must have an agenda because I found it important to focus on race in a course that they thought was "about teaching." The students struggled to understand how central and salient race and teaching are. My experiences and pedagogical approach clearly contributed to the students' building and shaping of intercultural competence, and the students' interactions and experiences in my course seemed to serve as a crossroad for them.

As an African-American male teacher educator, my pedagogical agenda, in the students' view, conflicted with theirs: I wanted my students to learn the content and themes of the course and to gain insights about the interrelated nature of race and the rest of the course content. The irony is that the students in the course never thought about how their agendas as White women could put them very much in

conflict with their African-American male students, yet their students did not have the power to damage these White teachers, based on their agendas in teaching evaluations, as did the teachers in my course. Besides, in the students' view, they had a right to contradict me and my curricula and pedagogical decisions because the class was about teaching, not race—at least in their view.

Still, the student evaluations were overwhelmingly clear. The following response—"I was forced to think about issues I had never considered in the past. I learned SO MUCH"—was common and quite consistent. My being an African-American male teacher educator richly shaped what I decided to teach and what the students were exposed to. My presence also helped shape the students' intercultural competence through the crossroad experiences provided by the course.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In this article, we argued that beyond the diversifying the racial and ethnic make-up of postsecondary faculty and the increased number of role models for students of Color, faculty of Color provide a set of classroom experiences that is valuable to the development of students' intercultural competence. The experiences that shaped our respective journeys as African-American scholars currently teaching at predominantly White institutions can advantage all students, and especially White students, by equipping them with a more sophisticated ability to understand realities across cultures and apply their new knowledge to the intercultural relationships necessary to thrive in the 21st century. Moving forward, we make the following recommendations.

Recruitment and Retention of Faculty of Color

It is important for higher education to be more innovative in recruiting and retaining faculty of Color. Faculty members of Color sometimes have experiences that are devastatingly negative, due to systemic isms and phobias (cf., Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, & Galindo, 2009; Griffin et al., 2011; Milner, Husband, & Jackson, 2002). Faculty of color often feel neglected in being "the onlys" or "a few others" in their departments, schools, and colleges, and they often find themselves working under the spotlight (Hagedorn & Laden, 2000; Pittman, 2010, 2012; Turner & Myers, 2000). This spotlight feeling takes away the ability of some faculty of Color to find their voice and may present difficulties in embracing self-authorship. Furthermore, research conducted by Williams and Williams (2006) and Jacobson (2012) concluded that higher education institutions must advocate an approach more centered on (academic) community-building in which renewal from within must take place to foster the sense of ownership and belonging that is currently missing. This, in turn, may increase the retention rates of faculty of Color at predominantly White institutions.

Intercultural Competence Training for Faculty

It cannot be assumed that faculty of Color or White faculty automatically

have the knowledge and experience necessary to help students build and shape their intercultural competence in higher education. Training sessions are needed to help faculty build the knowledge and skills necessary for this type of work in the higher education classroom (Deardorff & Jones, 2012). One way to achieve this may be to include the voices of scholars whose expertise is in narrative inquiry, which might provide an outlet for faculty to write about themselves while at the same time discovering their value in academe. This, in turn, may highlight faculty members' cultural capital within an academic setting.

Support from Student Services

To leverage the cultural capital faculty of Color will bring to the classroom, it will be critical that advisers and student services are prepared for the journey students will take. If students are both being exposed to knowledge and experiences and having their own assumptions challenged, there must be a healthy climate outside of the classroom that includes multiple outlets for processing and critique. Advisers should be trained to support students on their journey to become self-authors and to assist students in understanding and digesting the new knowledge and experiences in a manner that is healthy for them. As themes emerge from classroom discussions and experiences, student services should be willing to hold follow-up brown-bag lunches and forums to allow students the opportunity to continue their learning in an academic community.

Our experiences at majority institutions have given us the opportunity to introduce into the classroom some lessons typically not present in the curriculum. We challenge and strengthen our students' worldviews and consequently have a deeper understanding of and appreciation for their own perspectives. Their new perspectives inform their behaviors, rather than their behaviors being informed by vague assumptions and lightly validated stereotypes. In sum, they are the authors of their own selves. Becoming self-authors increases students' willingness and ability to function with competence across cultures. Becoming more interculturally competent increases students' odds of developing a more diverse set of relationships and resources. Given current demographic trends, establishing intercultural competence is crucial. We argue that, beyond the research scholarship, community service, and mentoring that faculty of color can provide, their presence on majority campuses can plays a timely role in students' development of intercultural competence.

Note

[1] In 2007 there were 1,371,390 faculty members at our nation's colleges and universities; approximately 17% (224,294) were faculty of Color (U.S. Department of Education, 2009), compared to 9% in 1983 (Umbach, 2006).

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