The Impact of White Teachers on the Academic Achievement of Black Students:
An Exploratory Qualitative Analysis

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The social structures that exist in the American educational system consist of students and educators (e.g., teachers and administrators). Based on the roles assigned to these individuals in the educational system of the United States, students are dependent persons, and educators are independent persons. The system creates expectations and evaluates outcomes based upon ideas, beliefs, and values generally accepted by the dominant culture of the school. As the United States of America progresses further into the 21st century, student populations are increasingly made up of greater proportions of Black students (Lewis, 2006). In these school systems, students of color, particularly in urban settings, represent the majority student populations (Lewis, Hancock, James, & Larke, in press). Interestingly, the educators—teachers and administrators—that comprise

these settings are predominately White, and, in turn, the students of color commonly face pressures that students who do not share the racial and cultural background of the educators do not (Landsman & Lewis, 2006).

More than any other time in U.S. history, Black students are being educated by people who are not of their racial or cultural background. Research (Lewis, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2004) reports that almost 87% of the United States elementary and secondary teachers are White, while only eight percent (8%) of those teachers are Black. The discussion about the lack of academic success of Black students often leads to consideration of factors external to schools, such as: (a) Black students' academic performance; (b) inadequate academic preparation; and (c) lack of family support for Black students. Given that a significant number of Black students in America's public schools are largely educated by White teachers (Landsman & Lewis, 2006), there is a pressing need to know more about the impact that White teachers have on Black students' school outcomes (e.g., academic achievement).

Critical Analysis of Education for Black Students

White Teachers and Black Students

There are marked disparities in the outcomes of education for Black and White students. In its 2004 report, the United States Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) noted that Black students do not achieve as well in school as White students. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2004) reported that Black students continue to trail White students with respect to educational access, achievement, and attainment. The report from the NCES does not discuss who is teaching Black students or whether these teachers are prepared to teach Black students effectively (Lewis, 2006). Research on effective teachers of Black students emphasizes, among other things, the teachers' collective belief that Black students' potential will not be realized in classrooms where teachers view Black students from a deficit perspective (King, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lewis, Hancock, James, & Larke, in press; Mitchell, 1998; Quiocho & Rios, 2000). Most often associated with White teachers, this approach does not assume Black students' potential but aims to compensate for what is presumed missing from the student's backgrounds (Foorman, Francis, & Fletcher, 1998). Because a deficit model of instruction attempts to make students fit into the existing system of teaching and learning, the model cannot build on the strengths of cultural characteristics or cultural preferences in learning (Lewis, Hancock, James, & Larke, in press).

The discussion about the lack of academic success of Black students tends to lead to discussions about factors external to schools, such as Black students' performance and inadequate preparation as well as lack of family support for Black students. According to Ayers (1995) and Kohl (1998), little is known about the effectiveness of White teachers with Black student achievement. Because an underlying tenet of multicultural education is that all students benefit from information about or models of persons with similar racial and cultural backgrounds (Manning &

Baruth, 2004), the lack of knowledge about this concept consistently undermines the efforts of teacher education programs across the country to adequately prepare White teacher education students as future teachers of Black students. This is especially problematic at a time in history when Black students are very likely to be educated by primarily a White teaching force (Landsman & Lewis, 2006).

Compounding the problem of some White teachers' cultural misunderstanding or indifference, additional research suggests that the gap between White teachers and Black students is exacerbated by powerful social conditioning that cultivates actual negative attitudes towards Black students. Researchers (Boykin, 1992; Darder, 1991; Scheurich, 1993) agreed that many White teachers work from within a hegemonic, Western, epistemological framework, which often predisposes them to have lower expectations of Black students and a lack of respect for the students' families and primary culture. Therefore, the possibility of effective teaching by these teachers is greatly reduced. This predisposition may account for the fact that, historically, Black students have not paralleled the academic performance of their White counterparts. This is true not only on standardized tests but also in graduation rates and college admissions rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). However, this is not stating that the presence of a Black teacher guarantees academic success for Black students or that the race of the teacher can be expected to overcome known debilitating effects on school performance. Lower income levels, inferior school resources, and less parental involvement, for example, have long been associated with Black students' lack of academic achievement in school (Hale, 2001; Irvine, 1990). However, the research literature does suggest that White teachers' failure to address or value Black student's primary culture could also be a significant factor in their academic success.

Academic Achievement Level of Black Students

The academic gap between the achievement of Black students and White students is one of the most infuriating problems affecting education, especially when White students are also performing at mediocre levels (Hilliard, 2003). Singham (2003) points out that there are no genetic or other immutable traits that could conceivably be the cause of the gap. "The repeated attempts to explain and solve the vexing problem of the achievement gap have clearly been inadequate…" (p. 586). However, the problem does exist, and it is one that can and should be solved. Part of the problem is that the topic is filled with myths. They are not necessarily false myths but are ones that are normally accepted by the public without criticism (Singham, 2003). There are a number of causes for this gap. Toward this end, Singham (2003) posits:

> You will find a range of analyses (and a corresponding variety of suggested solutions): biased standardized tests, tests that do not match the learning styles of Black students, less money spent on educating Black students, socioeconomic differences, lack of motivation, negative peer pressure, lack of family support for education, teacher biases, and many other possibilities. All of these figure prominently in the menu of causes. (p. 587)

Deeply embedded in American society, racism negatively affects the quality of teacher-student relationships (Carter, 1992). According to Martin and Baxter (2001), the Black-White achievement gap will continue to persist because of the poor quality of teacher-student relationships in the classroom. Schools have not totally ignored the problem of racism. "As a way to combat the negative effects of racism and improve interracial relations, schools have embraced Multicultural Education, the curricula that expose students to a socially diverse variety of heroes, historical events, and holidays" (Martin & Baxter, 2001, p. 382). These authors also discuss the Antiracism Education model as a way to change the achievement level of Black students. Antiracist education principles work to provide both a basis for teachers to develop a common language around the problem and experience of racism and a means for the creation of instructional practices that promise to ameliorate its negative impact on school children (Martin & Baxter, 2001).

Effective White Teachers

The research literature on White teachers of Black students is not as directly relevant to the study as the literature on Black teachers. The main reason is that, despite the common fact of White teachers and Black students, empirical studies of effective White teachers in practice comparable to any of the aforementioned empirical studies of in-service Black teachers are few. This may be attributable to prevailing sensitivities around cross-race research on teachers and students. The White teachers-Black students' interactions can be viewed from the perspective of how White teachers view the characteristics of Black students. Kemp, Morrison, and Ross (1994) assert that teachers should know the characteristics of the students for whom instruction is to be designed. According to Hawkins (1970), the quality of the relationship between teachers and the Black students must be one of depth. Hawkins goes on to state:

> Teachers must communicate concerns for and belief in Black students in such a way that the students see themselves as being able to face and solve their problems, whether these problems be in the school, in the home, or in the general community. (p. 45)

Carter (1992) suggests that teachers must think strategically about Black learners, their cultural differences and their differing needs, the community context, and ways to engage Black students with substantive ideas.

More traditional research on teachers of Black students in Catholic schools offers a collective view from a parochial school perspective. Although the research exists, York (1995) points out that there are widely-recognized flaws in the research, such as the issue of population comparability, self-selection, and the use of standardized tests to measure achievements. Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993), reporting on the high school and beyond data, showed that approximately 94% of the teachers in Catholic schools are White. York's (1995) review of the research found that Catholic schools were more effective than public schools with Black students. Targeting teacher

characteristics, the summary suggested that teachers of Black students in Catholic schools emphasized academics more than public school teachers.

Catholic school teachers had "higher expectations for all students, believed in the practice of tracking, emphasized order and discipline, believed that the vast majority of their students were well behaved, and cultivated a sense of community among the faculty, families, and students" (York, 1995, p. 41). Shields' (1989) analysis of the much publicized Holy Angels School in Chicago contained a section on the role of the faculty. According to Shields, the teachers at Holy Angels are trained in the Holy Angel's excellence doctrine, which emphasized teacher responsibility and control. Bryk, Lee, and Holland's (1993) analysis included much discussion of the Catholic school as the true "common school" in America, where new and disenfranchised peoples, including Blacks, are invited to learn what is necessary, academically and socially, without sacrificing a common moral or social justice agenda. The authors also noted that Catholic schools are unapologetic in their view of themselves as a bridging institution, where the success of the student usually involves leaving their place of residence (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

Theoretical Foundation

This study on black student perceptions of their White teachers is grounded in Milner's (2006) theoretical assumptions, which focus on problems that White teachers commonly experience when teaching students of color, particularly African American students in K-12 educational settings. Milner documents that one theoretical assumption that should be addressed is White educators' deficit thinking concerning the academic ability levels of students of color. According to Milner, "teachers' perceptions that students of color do not already possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to succeed and learn can result in the development of curriculum and instruction that falls short of optimal teaching and learning" (p. 80).

Several scholars have reported that deficit thinking by White teachers is one of the most powerful forces working against students of color (Hale, 2001; Milner, 2006; Thompson, 2004). Hale (2001) supported this theoretical assumption by stating that "inferior educational outcomes are tolerated for African American children day in and day out, in inner-city, suburban, and private school settings" (p. 56). Further, Thompson (2004) reported that on a daily basis White teachers believe that African American students and many other children of color should not be held to the same academic standards either by their own beliefs or by pressure from administrators at the school site. As a result, Milner (2006) documents the theoretical assumption that deficit thinking inhibits teachers from valuing the knowledge that students, particularly African American, bring to the classroom. Unfortunately, due to this theoretical assumption of deficit thinking by educators, many African American students leave their schooling experiences without being properly trained and equipped for high-paying jobs and admission to four-year colleges and universities (Thompson, 2004).

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Methodology

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research design utilizing retrospective interviews was employed (Reiff, Gerber, & Ginsberg, 1997). The sample for this study was selected utilizing a purposive sampling method. It is typically used when a researcher wants to discover, understand, and/or gain insight of a specific population (Merriam, 1988). According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997), purposeful sampling is chosen because the sample is likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher is investigating. Therefore, one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most, which is the case in this study.

The eight Black students in this study included five females and three males. Each of these students was currently being taught by a minimum of one White teacher (the majority of the students in this study had all White teachers) in their core academic courses. All students were in grades 10-12 at the time of this study and each student maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 on a 4.0 grading scale. Further, even though the students in this study attended two different high schools in different parts of the state, the curricular materials covered in the core academic subjects were the same based on the State department of education requirements. Consequently, in limiting this study to eight participants, the researchers built an in-depth picture of the vital role that teachers play in the academic achievement of Black students.

Students were interviewed using an open-ended interview schedule of 10 questions. The questions were derived from the research literature on race and schooling, cultural mismatches between students and teachers, and the impact of racism in the educational system. The questions specifically focused on assisting students to detail their experiences as an African American student with their White teachers in these core academic courses. Each interview was conducted in a face-to-face format by the research team at a public library in northern Colorado and ranged from 90 minutes to over two hours. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What role do White teachers play in facilitating Black students' success or contributing to their academic failure?

2. Do White teachers' views of Black students allow them to address the educational needs of these Black students?

3. Do Black students have perceptions of White teachers' ideas, beliefs, and values that get in the way of their academic achievement?

For this study, qualitative data were analyzed after transcribing all interviews and coding them in three phases—open coding, refinement of coding, and axial coding (Glaser, 1992). In the final phase, key themes and patterns were identified and developed that transcended each of the coding categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The key themes and patterns—identified by the eight students in two different high schools—were not compared but were treated as one cohort group relating

their experiences with their White teachers. Four key themes emerged from the data analysis. Authenticity of results was attained by applying Lincoln and Guba's (1985) notions of trustworthiness to the data collection process and findings.

The articulation of researcher bias is a unique element in qualitative inquiry (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Since this is the case, researcher expectations and biases were discussed extensively by the team at the outset and throughout the course of data analysis. Throughout the process, team members consistently checked and monitored one another's work, discussing decisions carefully with the entire team to ensure accuracy of the data. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this extensive use of auditing enhanced data analysis dependability and conformability, thus leading to more useful results.

Findings

Based on the data collected during the interviews, four themes emerged that characterized the experiences of the Black in this study. These themes included: (a) Respect: I Need Respect; (b) Stereotypes: Don't Pass Judgment on Me; (c) The Administrators Need to Check Themselves; and (d) We Like This Environment. In addition, based on these themes, a series of consistent issues for improving the relationship between the White teacher and the Black student also emerged. Below the four themes are developed, and then, following the discussion of the findings, the ideas for improving the White teacher-Black student relationship are presented. Finally, several conclusions are drawn in the final section.

Respect: I Need Respect

The most powerful theme that characterized the experiences of the Black students being taught by a White teacher in a predominantly White school was the issue of respect. For several students, there were times when they felt they were not respected because of the color of their skin. This led to several students demanding respect from their teachers and peers. All of the students had at least one instance where they thought they were disrespected and they all addressed the issue immediately. Below are some of their comments:

> I think it's [respect] is important…It's one good quality that everyone respect each other because if you don't then you can't really have a relationship with the students whether you're Black, White, Hispanic or whatever.

> Well, I would say that I've always been respected but sometimes I get the feeling like maybe they [teachers] only respecting me because they're a teacher and they kinda have to…

> I felt really disrespected from a teacher when she threatened me like five times in a day and she said it's your grade, so you have to do it, it's your grade. They [teachers] always talking about if you don't do it, it's your grade. They won't actually help you out.

> …I had a math teacher last year and she wasn't really disrespecting me bluntly

but in little ways but I think she only respected me to a point because she was a teacher and she kinda had to.

I think me, I get respect in the classroom because I command respect from my teachers because I give respect to my teachers pretty much. Like honestly, pretty much if a teacher disrespects me or I feel like I'm disrespected, I'm gonna say something. I'm gonna tell them I'm not gonna listen to you because that's just me. I got a mouth.

Clearly, students experienced strong feelings about respect in the classroom. Many students felt that once they encounter a situation that feels disrespectful to them, they must address it immediately. Willie (2000) looks at respect as an outcome of the relationship between the teacher and student that is reciprocal and beneficial to all parties involved. "It is probably the absence of respect for all sorts and conditions of children that limits our contemporary efforts to improve and enhance public education" (p. 262). Most of these students felt that their teachers only respected them because of their profession. One wonders what would be the experience outside the school environment.

Stereotypes: Don't Pass Judgment on Me

This second theme emerged from the students because of the perceptions that their peers and teachers have of them. Most students felt that the teachers and their peers had negative perceptions of them, because of the color of their skin and/or the type of clothes they wear. Most students had to deal with stereotypical comments on a daily basis. Below are some of their comments:

…some teachers at my school, when you first get in their class they assume that you're bad and stuff because you are Black. Like, they think, 'I can tell this person is going to be bad.' And they don't even know you that much.

…and the way I dress, it's the stereotypes pretty much. You know, Black people are thugs and they smoke weed and they drink kool-aid. You know all that. That's what they be trying to do. They be trying to put that on you and some people do that but that's just not my thing.

I think being Black is power too because down here you're Black you get a lot of respect because you're Black. When people see you they're like 'oh you're Black, he might beat me up.

If you meet somebody for the first time they kinda feel like they have to be cool with you because you're Black and you might beat them up. There are kids that I've met and they're like 'oh my God, I love Black people.

My brother wore a doo-rag [head scarf] to school and they said it was gang related and stuff and they had the officers come over and check him and he had to take off his hat and stuff and then it came up in our school newspaper and they asked me what I thought about it and I told them that a doo-rag is not gang related. It's actually like a hair necessity for Black people but because you see White kids that are gang related walking around wearing do-rags, they automatically think that oh a doo-rag is gang related.

The statements revealed the magnitude of stereotypical comments that the students face daily. Steele (1997) points out a phenomenon called "stereotype threat" as a social psychological situation that can have negative affects on stereotyped individuals. "The idea is that when stereotyped individuals are in situations where stereotype applies, they bear an extra emotional and cognitive burden" (Milner & Hoy, 2003, p. 265). That extra burden placed on a Black student can be a determining factor to whether they succeed or fail in school. Several of the students indicated that the attitudes of their teachers and peers are way out of line. They also feel that they have to carry the weight of all Black people on their shoulders. The students are constantly being asked their opinions about certain issues just to get a Black person's point-of-view. One wonders if it's out of fear or respect.

The Administrators Need to Check Themselves

One of the amazing discoveries of this project was the emergence of this theme. All students in this study felt that the administrators are totally out of touch with them. The Black students interviewed in this study felt as if the administrators did not try to establish a relationship with them and were constantly at odds with the student population. Some strong statements were made toward the administrators. Below are some of the students' comments:

> For my principal, I thought she was racist because every time I would end up in the office or I would be passing the office, I would always see African Americans in the office just writing down statements so they were always focused on Blacks.

> It's more of the administrators than anything…because they lost their cool over some dumb stuff. They trip out for real…But the administrators, when you mess up they just don't understand.

> It's more like the administration that is kinda more strict and doesn't really understand where kids are coming from these days and they don't understand why we do some of the stuff we do. They don't understand that we're still teenagers and we're still growing up and we're gonna learn from our mistakes.

> …but the administrators we see them every time we just get into trouble, so they only see the bad side of you. Well not the bad side but a negative part of what you've done, so they're quick to make their judgment like that, instead, they don't know me like everyday. They just know the things I've done, the few things I've done.

Based on the students' comments, it appears that the administrators are a part of the problem rather than a part of the solution. Most of the students perceived that the administrators are not approachable people. Jones (2002) conducted a study that looked at teachers' perception of principals' leadership in an urban setting and discovered that "...a person's socialization has an impact on the perception of and interaction with people who are ethnically, culturally, and socially different" (p. 9). This study suggests that the educational leaders' ethnicity had a strong impact on how they interacted with and were perceived by their followers. All interactions with administration have been somewhat negative for these Black students. The students

also commented that the administration is the one place a student should not go to for comfort and equity because their attitudes toward students are oftentimes negative.

We Like This Environment

The fourth theme addresses the school environment where the Black students in this study are currently enrolled. All of these students expressed deep satisfaction with being in a predominantly White school and community. Toward this end, they felt that this school or community environment was much better than their previous experiences in schools that were predominantly Black. Below are some of their comments:

> Don't get me wrong, I'm glad I moved here because I know for sure where I came from…I think this predominantly White environment is healthy for me because it gives me a reason to want something because it's so easy to get caught up somewhere else because everybody is doing the wrong thing, that seems like the right thing. Down here, the right thing seems like the right thing to do because there ain't nothing else to do down here.

> Oh definitely. I know the best of both worlds so I can go back there and be my old self and I can come out here and be me and I think it's really helped me because I think if I was out there [predominately Black school] I wouldn't probably be in school…I would probably be sitting up somewhere with a baby, maybe, and that's most of the people out there. They ain't doing nothing.

> Teachers out here hold you to a higher standard and down there they hold you to a lower standard because they say the whole education system down there is lower just to get them through high school and get them done. They not even worried about the kids. There's more of a personal level down here. Down there, seems like everybody's just trying to get a check and go on about their business. Down here you can get so much more. I don't know if it's because White people are here; I don't know what the word is. I don't know. I think they're just not as wild as us because I know where I'm from kids are wild and they just be acting up. They don't have no sense. And down here, they just act with sense.

> I think I'm in a better environment because my sister ran away and I think if I'm still living in [a city in the South] I would probably run away too because it's such a bad environment out there.

The above statements represent strong views of the environment the students are presently in. They all thing that they are in a better place academically and socially. Although there may be noticeable differences in cultures, the students feel that their present environment is much better than where they previously were. When asked if they would return to their former schools and communities, they all were totally against it.

Discussion

We began this research with three basic research questions: (a) What role do

White teachers play in facilitating Black students success or contributing to their academic failure? (b) Do White teachers' views of Black students allow them to address the educational needs of these Black students? and (c) Do Black students have perceptions of White teachers' ideas, beliefs, and values that get in the way of their academic achievement? There is a notion that Greeno (1989) refers to as "personal epistemologies." It addresses the way people think, which in this case, refers to educators, such as teachers and administrator. According to Shaver (1992), he states:

> Epistemology has traditionally been defined in terms of how persons come to know about reality—either the development of common bodies of knowledge, as though the scientific enterprise, or the establishment of personal knowledge, such as belief or disbelief in the existence of God. (p. 4)

Teachers don't think in neutral terms but according to or in terms of personal frames of references. These personal frames, biases and the like guide ones intentions and their interpretation of presently occurring experiences, specifically what they see and think about Black people. One student in this study directly addressed that issue through the following statement:

> …some teachers at my school, when you first get in their class they assume that you're bad and stuff because you are Black. Like, they think, 'I can tell this person is going to be bad.' And they don't even know you that much.

Teachers bring to their classrooms epistemological assumptions formulated from their earlier experiences and teachings. These beliefs may well influence significantly the way they teach. Pang and Sablan's (1995) research supports this notion. If a teacher's personal frame of reference is a dominating factor in the classroom, one tends to believe that it can have a negative effect on whether or not the White teacher can effectively address the educational needs of the Black student. If you come into a situation with a pre-conceived notion about a group of people, the relationship between the two parties is already at a disadvantage. As an educator, the White teacher has a responsibility to the Black student and this society to contribute to the academic success of that Black student, without any reservations.

On the other hand, students also bring to the classroom epistemological assumptions formulated from their earlier experiences and teachings. These perceptions that Black students have about White teachers may get in the way of their academic achievement, especially if they believe that the White teacher is a racist, as is evident in the following statement by one of the students:

> For my principal, I thought she was racist because every time I would end up in the office or I would be passing the office, I would always see African Americans in the office just writing down statements so they were always focused on Blacks.

Strong feelings, such as this, can definitely affect the way a teacher teaches and a student learns. The current focus should be a concern of the personal frames of reference that the teacher brings to the classroom, as well as the student's personal frame of reference.

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Weiner (1999) discusses the self-reflection of White teachers who teach Black students. Weiner's research revealed that teaching traditional methods often failed to yield favorable outcomes for Black students. Success in the classroom only came after a shift in their attitudes about teaching, learning and culture. Irvine (1990) argues that White teachers are not sensitive to the cultural needs of Black students in the classroom. Irvine points out those both verbal and nonverbal cues between the student and teacher are often misinterpreted and can lead to negative consequences, primarily for the Black student.

Sensitivity toward Black students' cultural needs must include embracing cultural practices and values in the classroom. It also involves a commitment to change the experiences of inequity and disenfranchisement of students through antiracist teaching (Beauboeuf-LaFontant, 1999). When teachers take time to get to know their students' backgrounds and special qualities as individuals, they can avoid stereotyping and find that generalizations apply in many, but certainly not all, cases.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Teachers

To improve the academic achievement of Black students in our public schools, teachers, White teachers in particular, must take a more active role than ever before. A review of the literature and the findings of this study indicate that all teachers, White teachers in particular, play a vital role in promoting the academic achievement in this setting. The following recommendations are made to all teachers, especially White teachers, as professionals on the front-lines with Black students:

1. Every attempt should be made to hold the Black student to the same academic standard as their White peers in the classroom. Different levels of expectations impede the Black student in their academic development (Kunjufu, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Thompson, 2004).

2. Every effort should be made to understand your personal epistemologies and the effect they have on the Black student in the classroom. These biases and assumptions can possibly have a negative affect on addressing the educational needs of the Black student (Landsman & Lewis, 2006).

3. Increased efforts should be made to push the Black student towards greater academic achievement. Too often, academic achievement is marginalized because of the teacher's perception that the Black student is incapable of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

4. Do not judge the Black student solely on their appearance. Many of these students are just as good as their White peers in the classroom but aren't given a chance because of the clothes they wear or their hair style (Landsman & Lewis, 2006).

Recommendations for Administrators

To promote the academic achievement of Black students, the role of the administrator is especially important. As the top official in the school, a standard must be set for all students and this standard should be one that is led by example through the administrator. The following recommendations are especially important for administrators in the public high school setting:

1. Efforts should be made with teachers and counselors to ensure that they know and understand that academic achievement is the number one priority for all students, regardless of personal perceptions. By doing this, the administrator can set the standard for academic excellence in the school setting.

2. Administrators should vigorously investigate any allegations of misconduct or inappropriate comments and behaviors of teachers reported by students, especially Black students. The student needs to know and understand that the administrator is overall responsible for the conduct of everyone in that school setting, teachers, counselors, staff personnel and students alike.

3. Administrators should have an open-door policy for all students so they can have a place to report any misconduct or inappropriate comments and behaviors of teachers, without any threat of repercussions.

4. Administrators should require all teachers, counselors and staff personnel to attend seminars and trainings that address the cultural differences of minority populations, especially the Black culture. This should be mandatory training that all employees, including the administrators must attend.

Recommendations for Schools, Colleges and Departments of Education

As the primary producers of certified White teachers in the country, Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education (SCDEs) must do a better job in preparing White pre-service teachers to work with Black students in elementary and secondary school settings. Given the importance of this issue, the following recommendations are critical for this constituent:

1. SCDEs should hire faculty who have experience in teaching in culturally and racially diverse environments. By doing so, these faculty members can bring their experience into the university classroom to better prepare these majority White pre-service teachers.

2. SCDEs need to review how classroom management is taught at the university level. Oftentimes, administrators in the K-12 educational setting report that new graduates from teacher preparation programs have no idea of how to manage a classroom. As a result, SCDE's should not just

have pre-service teachers read a chapter from a textbook on classroom management, they should be allowed time to work in a classroom with a veteran teacher on how to properly design classroom procedures that will be effective with all students, particularly Black students.

3. SCDE's should do a better job of teaching pre-service teachers skills for relating to all students, particularly Black students. Oftentimes, many White pre-service teachers have never interacted with Black students or the Black community. Then, after graduation, these teachers are responsible for the academic achievement of a group of students that they have never interacted with before. As a result, practicum hours for pre-service teachers should be in all types of school settings (i.e., suburban, rural, and urban). Given these actions, the White pre-service teachers can make an informed choice about the type of setting where they would like to begin their careers.

Conclusion

Several key conclusions can be drawn from this research. First, there was a powerful sense in each of the themes that originated from this study. The Black students feel they are treated differently because of their cultural background and their different beliefs and values that are not in line with the majority population in their school setting. Greater efforts are needed to reverse the stereotype White teachers have of Black students. White teachers need to become more sensitive to the specific needs of Black students and attend professional development workshops that will assist them in this understanding of a different culture than their own. Secondly, a teacher's personal epistemology can be detrimental to the academic success of Black students. Teachers need to be aware of their personal frames of reference and not let their personal feelings interfere with their profession, especially if it's not in the best interest of students, Black students in particular. The classroom environment should be free of biases and prejudices of all type. Lastly, teachers, counselors and administrators play a vital role in the academic achievement of all students, Black students in particular. It is incumbent of these professionals to hold all students to the same high standards of academic success and ensure that our schools are not places that breed hatred and deception but places that promote equality and academic success.

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