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Purpose

The Interdisciplinary Journal of Teaching and Learning (IJTL) - formerly the E-Journal of Teaching and Learning in Diverse Settings, is a scholarly, triple-blind, peer reviewed, open access electronic refereed journal that is published three times each year by the College of Education at Southern University - Baton Rouge. Publication occurs in the Spring, Summer, and Fall.

The IJTL is designed to provide opportunities for divergent ideas, views, and opinions on various topics and issues from professionals in diverse disciplines and professional arenas. It strives to be highly interdisciplinary in content that is likely to be of interest to teachers, principals, other school administrators, policymakers, graduate and undergraduate students, researchers, and academicians.

Manuscripts that focus on special education, general education (including subject content areas), bilingual education, cultural and linguistic diversity, innovative methods in teaching, assessment, exemplary programs, technology (assistive and instructional), educational leadership and reform, public policy, current issues and practices, and research relevant to education are encouraged.

Manuscripts submitted to the IJTL should be interesting, thorough, innovative, informative, well-documented, and have practical value that embraces and contributes to effective teaching and learning.

Call for Manuscripts

The Interdisciplinary Journal of Teaching and Learning (IJTL) welcomes submissions that contribute to effective teaching and learning. It provides a forum for the dissemination of articles focused on a wide variety of topics and content subject areas.

The IJTL is comprised of four departments -- Feature Articles, Educational Tweets, Online Resources, and the Event Zone.

Feature Articles provide scholarly articles on important topics, theoretical perspectives, current issues, practices, strategies, and research related to teaching and learning in PK-12 and higher education settings. All manuscripts submitted to this department undergo a triple-blind peer review.

Manuscripts for feature articles may be submitted by faculty, graduate students (whose work is co-authored by faculty), school administrators, policymakers, researchers, classroom teachers, and other practicing educators on current and compelling educational topics, issues, practices, and concerns at all levels (PK-12 and higher education) from a wide range of disciplines.

Manuscripts that focus on special education, general education, bilingual education, cultural and linguistic diversity, innovative methods in teaching, assessment, exemplary programs, technology (assistive and instructional), educational leadership and reform, public policy, current practices and issues, and research relevant to education are encouraged. The manuscripts should

be interesting, informative, well documented, appeal to the IJTL diverse audience, and have practical value that embrace and contribute to effective teaching and learning.

Additionally, the manuscripts should be original, well written, and offer new knowledge or a new and insightful synthesis of existing knowledge that has significance or importance to education. They should also have a solid theoretical base and offer an appropriate blend of teaching and practice. The conclusion, summary, final thoughts, or implications should be supported by the evidence presented.

The complete review process for manuscripts submitted to this department may take up to three months. The author guidelines provide additional information on what you should know about the submission process.

Educational Tweets features brief informative tidbits, views, and opinions on hot topics, current events/issues, educational policies, interesting readings, and other areas that impact education or inform teaching and learning. The information, views, and opinions tweeted in this department reflect those of the author.

Papers submitted to Educational Tweets are limited to 350 words and are generally solicited by the section editors. Persons interested in submitting a paper should make an inquiry. Include in the subject line "Educational Tweets".

Online Resources highlight Internet Websites that provide information on instructional resources for PK-12 classroom and preservice teachers as well as resources that may be of interest to school administrators and teacher education faculty in higher education. Resources featured in this department are generated by the section editors.

The Event Zone features educational events such as conferences, meetings, workshops, forums, professional development opportunities, and webinars sponsored by various agencies and organizations that embrace effective teaching and learning. Events featured in this department are generated by the section editors.

Submission Deadlines		
Spring 2015 (March/April)	Summer 2015 (July/August)	Fall 2015 (October/November)
Manuscript Deadline November 15, 2014	Manuscript Deadline February 15, 2015	Manuscript Deadline May 15, 2015

Author Guidelines

The Interdisciplinary Journal of Teaching and Learning (IJTL) is a scholarly, triple-blind, peer reviewed, open access electronic refereed journal that welcomes manuscripts from scholars, academicians, teachers, researchers, graduate students (whose work is co-authored by faculty), administrators, practitioners, and policymakers on a variety of topics and content areas as well as educational issues, evidence-based practices, and topics of educational significance.

Manuscripts submitted must be an original contribution that has not been previously published (in whole or substantial part), or is being concurrently considered for publication by another publisher. A cover letter stating these conditions should accompany the submission.

Manuscripts must be submitted electronically using word processing software. Acceptable formats include Microsoft Word (doc /docx) and Rich Text format (rtf).

Manuscripts should be formatted for printing on standard 8 x 11 inch paper with 1-inch margins, double spaced (including quotations and references), and prepared in Times New Roman 12-point font size. Titles, headings, and subheadings should be in upper and lower case fonts.

Manuscripts should not exceed 25 pages in length, including the title page, abstract, references, and tables or figures.

A separate cover sheet should provide the author's full name, organization or institutional affiliation, mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address; and the corresponding author should be identified. The author's name should not appear on any other pages of the manuscript. It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to notify the corresponding editor of the IJTL of changes in address, organization, or institutional affiliation occurring during the review process.

An abstract (100 - 150 words) should be included that summarizes the content of the manuscript. Five or six key words should be placed below the abstract.

Tables and figures should be placed in a separate file, and need not be double-spaced. Tables should only be used when appropriate and should include only essential data. Figures should be camera ready. Indicate the location for tables and figures in the text in boldface, enclosed in brackets, on a separate line.

The author is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of all references. References should be double-spaced and follow the specifications of the 6th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. The author is also responsible for obtaining permission to use copyrighted material, if required.

Photos or artwork must be camera ready. The acceptable electronic format is jpeg of at least 300 dpi. Authors should never assume that material downloaded or extracted from the Internet may be used without obtaining permission. It is the responsibility of the author to obtain permission, which should accompany the manuscript submission.

Submit completed manuscripts or inquiries to the editor at coeijt1@subr.edu. The IJTL is published by the College of Education under the auspices of the Executive Editor, Vera I. Daniels, Southern University and A & M College, P. O. Box 11298, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813. Telephone/Fax (225) 771-5810.

Review Process

Manuscripts submitted to the IJTL undergo a triple-blind peer review. All identifying information about the author is removed to ensure that the author's identity is not revealed.

Manuscripts received will be screened by the journal editors for conformity to the editorial guidelines, appropriateness of topic, and appropriateness for the journal readership. Manuscripts will also be assessed for content, relevance, accuracy, and usefulness to those in educational settings and stakeholders with an interest in educational policies and issues.

Appropriate manuscripts will be sent to peer reviewers. Poorly written or incorrectly formatted manuscripts will not be sent out for peer review.

All manuscripts received by the IJTL are assigned an identification number that is used to track the manuscript during the review process.

Within two weeks of receipt of the manuscript, an e-mail acknowledging receipt of the manuscript with notification of the assigned identification number will be sent to the author. The author may contact the journal corresponding editor at any time during the review process to obtain information about the status of their manuscript. Include in the subject line "Request for Manuscript Status Update (Manuscript # ____)."

The manuscript review process is generally completed within three months. This process may be slightly longer during major academic breaks or holidays.

Peer reviewers make one of the following decisions concerning a manuscript: (a) accept for publication (b) accept for publication and request minor revisions, (c) consider for publication after major revisions with the stipulation for a second peer review, (d) reject with resubmission invited, or (e) reject and decline the opportunity to publish.

Authors of manuscripts that have been accepted for publication will be notified by e-mail through the corresponding author. In some instances, authors may be asked to make revisions and provide a final copy of the manuscript before it is forwarded for publication.

Manuscripts accepted for publication may be susceptible to further editing to improve the quality and readability of the manuscript without materially changing the meaning of the text. Before publication, the corresponding author will receive an edited copy of the manuscript to approve its content and answer any questions that may arise from the editing process.

The IJTL is always looking for peer reviewers to serve on its Board of Reviewers. If you are interested in being considered as a peer reviewer, click on the link [Peer Reviewer](#) to obtain an application. Please return the application by e-mail (coeijt1@subr.edu) or fax (225-771-5810).

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Black, Beautiful, and Brilliant Females: Telling OUR Story, Sharing OUR Realities

Guest Editor: Donna Y. Ford, PhD

This issue focuses on Black females – an overlooked and neglected population in the scholarly literature. Black females have been whited out and blacked out, leaving their (our) stories and journeys often untold, misunderstood, and trivialized. We share such issues as sexism, motherhood/parenting, body issues, with our White female counterparts. However, when race and culture are added, our issues and needs are different. Likewise, we face barriers to reaching our full potential with Black males, such as racism, deficit thinking, and under-representation in gifted education. However, gender differences exist and cannot be discounted or ignored as we ensure that our male counterparts, who undeniably face more social and academic barriers than we, are supported. The authors in the special issue hone in on the above issues and topics, but also provide solutions and recommendations to improve the lives of these under-studied Black females. The authors place special attention on gifted and high-achieving Black girls who are school age.

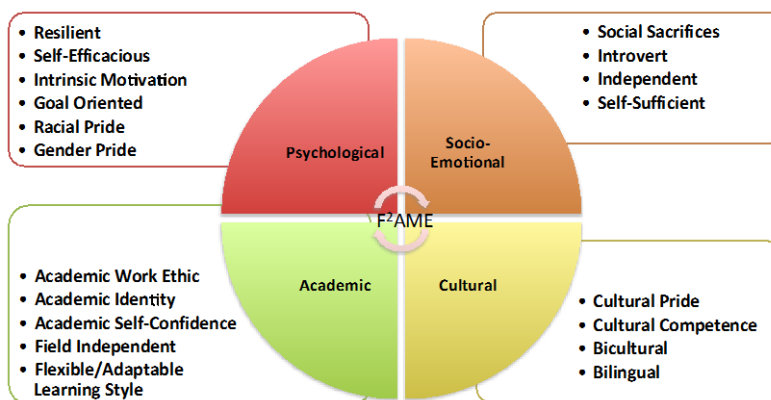
The authors cover an array of topics, including: (1) *academic/educational* issues and needs, specifically as high-achieving and/or gifted Black females; (2) *mothering* issues and concerns when advocating for the educational rights of their daughters; (3) *racial and gender identity* issues and needs (e.g., skin tone, colorism, Black identity development; and (4) *socio-emotional and counseling* needs and concerns (counselors and helping professionals becoming culturally competent; college and career readiness); and (4) *social issues* (e.g., stereotypes and biases, microaggressions, feminism, sexism, racism).

A few of the authors referenced F²AME (The Ford Female Achievement Model for Excellence), a modified version of the Scholar Identity Model for Black Males (Whiting, 2006) that I have tailored to the special and specific socio-emotional, psychological, academic, and cultural needs of Black females. F²AME is guided by resilience and self-efficacy in the context of gender and race.

This issue is truly special given that we know of no journal or special issue devoted to Black females who are gifted and/or high achieving. As significant as

these articles are, we know that much more can be and must be shared. It is impossible to capture the issues and needs of gifted and/or high achieving Black females in four articles. We hope the articles herein promote more scholarship and advocacy for this underserved and underrepresented population in and for gifted programs.

Ford Female Achievement Model for Excellence (F²AME 2013)



Donna Y Ford 4/2013

Falling through the Cracks: Black Girls and Education

Shawn Arango Ricks

Winston-Salem State University

The needs of Black girls are often overlooked by teachers, administrators, and policy makers. This oversight has contributed to a lack of educational programming and policies that address the impact of the intersection of racism and sexism on the educational experiences of Black girls, with some attention to the achievement gap. Policies simply focusing on race or gender ignore the unique positionality in which Black girls live and learn. Compounding this discussion is the recent focus on post-racialism in America. This article addresses this neglect, and suggests a framework to assist teachers and administrators in bridging this gap in educational programming and policies.

Keywords: Black girls, achievement gap, racism, sexism, post-racialism

Black males and females are at risk for many types of school failure such as poor test scores, high dropout rates, achievement gap, low grades, high suspension rates, however, promises of educational reform are on the forefront. The federal government is increasing its focus in this area with initiatives such as *Race to the Top*, *My Brother's Keeper*, and a sweeping reform of *No Child Left Behind* (Koebler, 2012; The White House, 2014); and philanthropists are supporting educational initiatives (e.g., Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2012; Perez-Pena, 2010).

Although well-intentioned, oftentimes these initiatives ignore the complexity of systemic and interlocking forces at work in education, which can sometimes lead to a band-aid approach. Band-aid approaches neglect the individual and combined impact of variables such as race, racism, sexism, and gendered racism on educational experiences and outcomes of underrepresented groups. Compounding these issues is the national discourse on 'post-racialism' -- a concept that connotes an imagined era in which issues of race are no longer at the forefront of the national discourse. The term 'post-racialism' has been particularly pervasive since the election of President Obama (e.g., see http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/11/08/no-such-place-as-post-racial-america/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0). By default, if our nation is post-racial, our educational system must be post-racial, which leads or misleads educators to believe and espouse that racial injustices do not exist in schools. Too much data reveal otherwise, especially when considering the achievement gap, which exists nationally, and in the majority of states and school districts. Black males and females continue to lag behind their White counterparts upon entering school – and the gap widens during the 13 years (Barton & Coley, 2009).

With approximately eight million Black students participating in the U.S. educational system (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013), tracking educational attainment and progress has been noted as one measure of academic and social success. For determining progress and achievement in regard to student outcomes, dropout and graduation rates have been used as

markers However, the trends regarding these outcomes for Blacks continue to focus extensively on Black males. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), Black males experienced a major reduction in dropout rates (from 13% to 7%) between 1990 and 2011 in comparison to the 5% dropout rate for Whites and 14% drop out rates for Hispanics during the same time period. Admittedly, dropout rates are only one measure and they do not accurately capture or reflect the complexity of the challenges facing students of color. In addition, these statistics largely ignore the experiences, performance, and outcomes of Black girls.

Given that females of color will comprise approximately 53% of the U.S. population by the year 2050 (Center for American Progress, 2013), the idea of dismissing or leaving them out of a national discourse on education and asking them to subsume themselves under other group identities (by gender and/or race) is educationally unsound and inequitable. Yet, this is the situation in which Black girls currently and frequently find themselves. Although Black girls continue to experience marginalization, oppression, and ‘chilly’ classrooms, there is an obvious failure on the part of researchers to examine and conceptualize the integrated issues of race and gender (Boston & Baxley, 2007; Mirza, 2009; Pinder, 2008). Instead, when researchers examine marginalized groups in education, the focus is almost exclusively on Black males and White females, with little attention devoted to the unique experiences and needs of Black females. According to Evans-Winters and Esposito (2010):

... because feminist epistemologies tend to be concerned with the education of White girls and women, and race-based epistemologies tend to be consumed with the educational barriers negatively effecting Black boys, the educational needs of Black girls have fallen through the cracks (p. 12).

This, once again, relegates Black females to the margins, which begs the question—What about our Black girls? — Why are they falling through the cracks?

This paper argues that despite an active role in education, throughout multiple historical time periods, the unique (i.e., race and gender) needs of Black girls have been overlooked both theoretically and pragmatically. This oversight is complicated by the current political landscape, including views of post-racialism. With attention and focus on Black males and White females, there is the distinct potential for educators to provide a disservice to Black girls by ignoring their unique needs -- the intersection that their race and gender demands. Although Black girls have adopted coping and defense mechanisms to deal with gendered racism, these methods are often misinterpreted by teachers and school personnel as personality and/or cultural characteristics instead of responses to living with daily microaggressions (e.g., administrators, counselors, assessment personnel). This paper urges teachers, school personnel, and administrators to recognize and attend to the needs of this unique group, and engage Black girls through programming.

Historical Role of Black Women in Education

“I freed thousands of slaves. I could have freed thousands more, if they had known they were slaves.” -- Sojourner Truth

Historically, education has been a recurring act of resistance across historical time periods for Blacks. In particular, the role of Black females in education, and as educators, is well documented (Bennett Jr, 1988; Camp, 2004; Franklin & Moss, 2011; Gaspar & Hine, 1996; Giddings, 1984; Harrison, 2009; Kolchin, 1993; Lerner, 1972; Morgan, 2004; Sterling, 1984; Takaki, 1993). Slaved/enslaved females recognized the importance of reading and writing and found ways to teach others what they learned. Sometimes, this information came in less organized gatherings, while other women went so far as to organize schools. Here is one example:

In Natchez, Louisiana, there were two schools taught by colored teachers. One of these was a slave woman who had taught at a midnight school for a year. It was opened at eleven or twelve o'clock at night, and closed at two o'clock a.m. . . . Milla Granson, the teacher, learned to read and write from the children of her indulgent master in her old Kentucky home. Her number of scholars was twelve at a time, and when she had taught them to read and write she dismissed them, and again took her apostolic number and brought them up to the extent of her ability, until she had graduated hundreds. A number of them wrote their own passes and started for Canada. (Lerner, 1973, pp. 32-33)

Milla is just one of example of how female slaves went to extraordinary life-threatening lengths to change their environments through education. Her simple yet terrifyingly brave act of educating slaves left an impact on hundreds of slaves.

While education was viewed then and now as a necessary act of freedom and liberation by Blacks, the concept was and is threatening for many Whites. Subsequently, many states created laws prohibiting the education of not just slaves but also free or freed Blacks. According to Anderson (1988), “between 1800 and 1835, most of the southern states enacted legislation making it a crime to teach enslaved children to read or write” (p. 2). Despite these laws, Blacks continued to seek educational opportunities as a way up and a way out of slavery through the Civil Rights movement.

At the start of the Civil Rights movement, the now infamous 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling overturned *Plessy vs. Ferguson's* separate but equal doctrine in American education. This was considered by many to be a major victory for Blacks in seeking equity and justice in the educational system. The ruling promised to repair or fix a faulty system of education and provide equal educational opportunities for all children. Sixty years since that landmark decision, Blacks, regardless of gender, age, educational level, and income level, find themselves continuing to fight the same battle—demanding educational equity and fighting for the rights of their children.

Post-Racial America?

Complicating the fight for educational equity is the current political landscape. The election of our nation's first Black president, Barack Obama, has proven to be a catalyst for dialogue grounded in post-racialism. As a victory for African Americans in the United States, and a celebratory phenomenon for Blacks throughout the diaspora, Barack Obama's presidency could

be inadvertently complicating policy issues now facing Black students in the classroom. Alemán, Salazar, Rorrer, and Parker (2011) stated:

The historic nature of Barack Obama's election as the 44th president of the United States is evident. However, the notion that the salience of race and racism, and the idea that we live in a so-called post-racial society solely because a person of color was elected to the office of the presidency, we believe, is naïve and shortsighted at best, and potentially detrimental to efforts that attempt to critically address the historical, structural, and institutional nature of inequity. (p. 480)

This is not to suggest that President Obama's election does not hold immense significance for the nation and world. For some, including African Americans, his election was a marker of a change in the social climate, including an end to the heated and complicated discourse on race. The symbolic nature of the election did not erase the realities of lived social experiences. However, viewing the election in symbolic terms is dangerous in part because of the potential of suspending policies that target inequities in education. According to Teasley and Ikard (2010), "many political proponents of post-racial thinking are agitating for the end to all race-and ethnicity-centered social policy mechanisms aimed at reducing social inequities" (p. 413).

Many definitions have been attributed to the term post-racialism. According to Bobo (2011), post-racialism:

in its simplest and least controversial form...is intended merely to signal a hopeful trajectory for events and social trends, not an accomplished fact of life. It is something toward which we as a nation still strive and remain guardedly hopeful about achieving (p. 13).

A more controversial and harmful view of post-racialism is more aligned with the well-rehearsed notions of colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). This definition posits that U.S. citizens, especially those in power and education, have moved beyond the racial divisions of the past.

The latter definition of post-racialism persists despite continued evidence of educational inequities, as well as issues of racism, classism, sexism, and gendered racism. This 'colorblind' approach is dangerous as it creates an environment of overt covertness—meaning the inequities may be visible to all who are willing to see them; yet, so subtle and sublime that one cannot easily point them out (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). As Ford (2010) maintains, colorblindness is an ideal that has yet to be achieved. Given the extent and magnitude of racism, colorblindness is an excuse and smoke screen used to detract from racial inequities in our schools, including gifted programs. Race, like gender, is a socio-demographic variable. Educators attend to gender, ensuring that neither males nor females are discriminated against in schools. Ford argues that we do the same with race so that race and racial differences via a cultural lens is not ignored or demonized.

The insidious nature of operating from a post-racial ideology is neglectful at best. For Whites who choose to operate from this ideology, it provides the opportunity to ignore White privilege, and instead place blame on marginalized groups for not attaining success in general, and success

comparable to Whites. The faulty logic of post-racialism, which negates White privilege, has been refuted by multiple scholars (e.g., Alemán et al., 2011; Cho, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2011); however, marginalized females and males continue to struggle with the charge of proving that the problem of racism still exists.

Although accurate and well-meaning, the concerns regarding post-racialism focuses on issues solely influencing race. Very little research and discussion exist issues of post-racialism as they intersect with gender. This creates the potential for further marginalizing, an already dangerously disenfranchised group—Black girls – who are falling through the cracks.

Falling Through the Cracks

Whether or not issues of educational equity are viewed through the lens of post-racialism, it is important to note the role of gender in discussions of equity and education. Currently and understandably, the bulk of gendered-based research focuses on the experiences of Black boys or males in the educational system, however, their over-representation in special education and under-representation in gifted education cannot be ignored (Ford, 2010). At the same time, there is no sound rationale or need to ignore or discount the experiences of their female counterparts, hence the reason for this special issue.

While the social and educational crisis for Black males has reached historic levels and prompted the creation of programming specific to Black males (Holzman, 2012; *My Brother's Keeper*, 2014; Whiting, 2009, “Scholar Identity Model and Scholar Identity Institute”), this neglect or oversight of emphasis on Black girls is reminiscent of other historical events. For example, during the civil rights movement in the 1960s, Black women were asked to privilege their identities and decide if they wished to support Black men in gaining their right to vote. Their gender was all but disregarded. Further, during the women’s movement, Black women were asked, expected, and perhaps even required to suppress the unique role their race or blackness played in the way they experienced, viewed, and understood the world. Both of the stances are unacceptable because they ignore the impact of intersectionality of oppression (Crenshaw, 1995) and the matrix of domination (Hill Collins, 1990). In addition, by asking Black girls to privilege their race or gender identities, rather than embracing both, we deny them the opportunity to embrace their ‘multiplicities of self’ (Lorde, 2007).

Roles Black Girls Play

Asking Black girls to privilege their identities places them at risk for falling through the cracks. In conditions that have repeatedly told girls, indirectly or directly, that they do not matter, it is important to develop survival, coping, and defensive skills. One of the ways Black girls have learned to survive in school is by adopting a “race-less” persona, which is “... the absence of behavioral and attitudinal characteristics related to a particular race” (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010, p. 12; Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). In essence, if Black girls deny who they are and adopt the characteristics of the majority culture, they can be successful as Black girls in education. This logic is problematic in that it teaches Black girls that in order to be successful, they cannot be who they are organically. Moreover, it challenges and influences academic success, as it is challenging and difficult to excel in environments that fail to value every aspect

of one's identity or identities (Rollock, 2007). Hence, additional theory, conceptual models, and research have shown that resiliency, racialized identity, and a social justice disposition may also be necessary for Black girls to be successful in education (Evans-Winters, 2005; Ford, 2010; Fordham, 1998; O'Connor, 1997). While these methods may help Black females survive the educational system, they do so by asking such females to alter parts of themselves.

One way Black girls have learned to alter themselves is by learning to become invisible—to be seen but not heard, as in keeping with Ellison (1952). Educational research supports the notion of invisibility for Black girls (Henry, 1998; Mirza, 2009), while Apple (1999) discusses the way issues of race are minimized when examining educating policies and standards. To push back the margins, many Black females have found ways to increase their visibility, including adopting such labels and stereotypes as being angry, aggressive, promiscuous, and/or loud (Koonce, 2012; Evans-Winters, 2005). Black girls are also punished for refusing to be discounted and demonized, and run the risk of being stereotyped and dehumanized, while simply fighting to be heard and validated. They rail against being allowed to participate, but not fully included.

Goodness of Fit: Where Do Black Girls Fit?

Marginalization, the social process of being made or becoming marginalized (relegated to the fringes, made to seem unimportant, pushed out of or not accepted in the mainstream) (hooks, 1990) is defined by hooks as the outer edges in which Black females and women live as “part of the whole but outside the main body” (p. 149). The question becomes: Where do Black girls fit within a society that has historically marginalized them based on race *and* based on gender? This challenge is complicated by the minimal research conducted on or about Black females. In general, most theories are framed from a White male perspective and most theories pertaining to females are framed for White females, vis a vis feminism. Both have forced Black women to speak for themselves and each other regarding the importance of a more inclusive theoretical framework. One of the seminal works relating to this issue is Hill Collins' (1990) *Black Feminist Thought*. The ideology of this work has helped Black females recognize that their ways of knowing and being in the world were and are indeed valid. Hill Collins discusses the importance of recognizing the validity in Black feminist epistemology, and reminds us that historically Black females have participated in shared histories and stories that bear repeating. These stories allow Black females to view themselves through a non-deficit lens; thus, we learn to embrace a style of learning, living, and being that we have been continually told is not valid.

In contrast and in response to this societal invisibility, several noted Black feminist scholars such as those mentioned earlier began the discussion of empowering Black girls and women (e.g., Lorde, hooks, Walker, Hill Collins). Yet, relatively few Black female scholars have emerged with new theoretical frameworks to carry the torch. To be responsive to the unique needs of Black girls, we must address the historical oppression and marginalization of Black females through an emancipatory theoretical orientation—one which recognizes that Black females of all ages have shared experiences navigating the world, from slavery to the present.

Mentorship and Other Strategies

Raising awareness of the biases of the educative process is a priority in any attempt to stop Black girls from falling through the cracks. While there are multiple noted coping methods for Black

women, faith, social support, body ownership, and unique defense mechanisms (Daly, Jennings, Beckett, & Leashore, 1995; Howard-Vital, 1989; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; St. Jean & Feagin, 1998; Terhune, 2007; Wilson, 2009), there is less research on how Black girls cope and what educators can do to assist them in navigating the institution of education. One method that may be useful in addressing the needs of Black girls is mentorship.

Mentorship disrupts the narrative many Black females may be internalizing, and instead provides them access to the wisdom, experiences, and survival skills of their elders. Mentorship programs allow Black females to understand and validate their common experiences, and thereby further understand their shared viewpoint.

Ford's (2013) Female Achievement Model of Excellence (F²AME) is an example of one model for working with Black females. It builds upon the Scholarly Identity Model of Whiting (Whiting, 2009), which is designed to address underachievement among Black males. The F²AME model has as its goal increasing the resiliency, self-efficacy, racial and gender pride, which is accomplished by increasing awareness in four areas of Black girls' emotional and academic needs: (1) intrinsic motivation and work ethic, (2) internal locus of control, (3) willingness to make sacrifices, and (4) academic pride. The ability or skills of Black girls to successfully address these areas will increase their potential for academic and social-emotional success.

Another useful approach could be the CARE (Connection, Awareness, Retraining, and Encouragement) model (Ricks, 2014). The CARE model emphasizes the importance of an integrated and holistic approach to working with Black girls in education. This model is comprised of four areas (connection, awareness, programming, and encouragement) that work together to protect Black girls from falling through the cracks. Protecting Black girls in educational settings demands an increased awareness level and a willingness among professionals to enact meaningful changes at both individual *and* systemic levels. The components of the CARE model include:

- **Connection:** Administrators and teachers need to work at improving their connection with their Black female students. Developing connections with all students is important. Developing connections with students from marginalized groups is vital. These are often the most difficult connections to initiate, as there may be multiple cultural barriers. These connections will play a large role in the experiences students from marginalized groups have in class. Oftentimes connections are hampered by miscommunication and/or preconceived images held by either party. Yet, without this basic connection, the academic growth of a group of students can be thwarted.
- **Awareness:** In order to work towards connecting and creating environments in which Black girls can thrive; educational administrators, teachers and families need to increase their awareness of the unique issues Black girls face. This must be done at both institutional and individual levels. Opportunities for professional development, teacher training, and collaboration among parents and educational administrators should be provided by educational institutions. Qualified professionals (preferably consultants) should be available to begin the dialogue and help demystify the issues surrounding Black girls. In addition, these trainings should not be presented from a deficit lens.

- **Retraining:** Raising awareness is a step in the right direction, but it is not enough. Staff, administrators, and teachers must engage in programs that will assist them in retraining the way they interact with and view Black girls. Retraining should consist of programs aimed at increasing and encouraging Black girls to succeed in education. This type of programming should also be available parents to encourage a wraparound approach to care. Lastly, programming aimed at helping students retrain their understanding of their environments, their peers, and their reactions would complete the circle.
- **Encouragement:** Every student could benefit from increased encouragement and mentorship. For Black girls, this key component could help them learn behaviors and techniques useful for navigating the institution of education. Structured encouragement in terms of mentorship opportunities is a key component of this area. Mentorship will help not only the mentee, but the experience would also provide a wealth of information for the mentor. Both peer mentorship and adult/child mentorship opportunities should be provided. Mentors should be well vetted prior to engaging with students. Alternative forms of mentorship (using technology for example), should be considered as viable options.

Integrating strategies such as mentorship using F²AME and CARE can only enhance the experience of Black girls in education. The most vital component is to ensure that resources are to implement these strategies.

Conclusion

Education has played an important and historic role for Black people in the United States. Particularly active in education have been Black women who have acted as teachers, administrators, and students throughout the decades. Despite this active and visible role, Black women (and now Black girls) have not been placed at the forefront of educational policy discussions. Instead, these discussions continue to ignore the intersectionality of oppression, and instead focus on programming that is tailor made per group. This is problematic, as none of this programming acknowledges gendered racism. Complicating this issue is the current narrative of post-racialism in the nation. This narrative suggests that there is no longer a need to discuss issues of race in America.

These oversights add to the invisibility of Black females and continue to support narratives of resistance and/or acting out. To support Black females and ensure their academic success, programs and initiatives that address the gendered racism present in educational settings will have to be created. These initiatives must look at both individual and systemic solutions. Mentoring programs and models, such as Ford's F²AME model, are excellent examples of programming and initiatives that disrupt the narrative. Instead of labeling, ignoring and overlooking Black females, it is imperative the schools address the unique needs of this population.

AUTHOR NOTES

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Are Black Girls Not Gifted? Race, Gender, and Resilience

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Current research and theoretical models that address racial inequity or gender disparities in gifted education often overlook the underrepresentation of Black girls in gifted programs. Race-based conceptual frameworks and methodologies that focus on gifted education often fail to critically examine and interpret the multiple identities of Black female students thus, overlooking Black girls' underrepresentation in gifted programs as well as their potential to thrive academically in these programs. Similarly, policies and procedures often only consider gender disparities in gifted education from a White middle class female perspective. In this article, a call for theoretical and methodological models are put forth that place Black girls' gender and racial identities at the center of discussions on gifted education reform.

Keywords: gifted Black females, resilience, underrepresentation, Black feminism

The 2009 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) report revealed that 8.1% of girls participated in gifted education, compared to 7.4% of boys. This report also revealed that approximately 5.2% of Black girls were identified as gifted and talented, compared to 35% of White girls (CRDC, 2011).

The underrepresentation of Black students in gifted education is a national inequity issue that is present in most school districts. Black students are and have been underrepresented in gifted programs by almost 50% in most years and in every CRDC report (Ford, 2013b). While Black males are most disproportionately underrepresented in gifted education (i.e., over 50%), this does not discount that Black females are underrepresented by approximately 40%.

Inadequate access to gifted education placement and programming for Black female students remains significant. Turning percentages to numbers, the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) revealed that over 100,000 Black females were not identified as gifted (Ford, 2013b). Black girls not being identified may be due to race, class, and gender disparities in gifted education identification and placement. The story of access and opportunity is different for White females who are overrepresented in gifted education. White girls represent the majority of students in gifted education programs (CRDC, 2011).

A different picture is evident when considering race and gender. African American (Black) female students are more likely to report feeling unsafe and engaging in or being victims of violence at school than their White counterparts (NCES, 2010). Thus, it is apparent that although African American female students experience more risks than their peers, they are able to buffer adversity and persist in education. With this in mind, how we might utilize educational resilience

research on Black girls for gifted education reform and what models exist for framing how giftedness presents and manifests in Black girls?

Using Black feminism (Collins, 1998; King, 1988) as a theoretical lens and drawing upon school resilience literature, it is evident that school resilience alongside cultural frameworks in gifted education are viable tools for critically analyzing gender and culturally relevant gifted education initiatives (e.g., recruitment and retention). Whereas cultural frameworks in gifted education research brings attention to the lack of representation of students of color in gifted programs, which are generally due to racial and class discrimination in schools and society (Ford, 2013b), this discussion has implications for gifted education policy, urban education reform, gender studies, and educational policy and practice.

Resiliency Literature and Gifted Black Girls

As defined by Ashford, LeCroy, and Lortie (1997) and O'Connor (1997), resiliency is the ability to recover from or adjust to problems, adversity, and stressors in life. Terms that are synonymous with resiliency in urban education are positive coping, persistence, adaptation, and long-term success despite adverse circumstances (Winfield, 1991). Resilience as currently understood is a dynamic, multidimensional construct that incorporates the bidirectional interaction between individuals and their environments within contexts (family, peer, school and community, and society) (American Psychological Association, 2008, p. 3).

Resilience is always defined in relation to risk factors, specifically the number and intensity of risks. For example, African American female students who live in low-income neighborhoods with high crime rates and low high school completion rates are considered to be a high-risk group because they are at a greater or increased risk of school dropout and other negative life outcomes (e.g., early pregnancy) than their counterparts (see <http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18>). Moreover, due to the combination of sexism and racism, Black girls face a double whammy socially, educationally, and professionally. They share issues of racism with Black and other non-White males and issues of sexism with White and other females. For Black girls, this stress can be related to independent and interdependent combinations of racism, sexism, and/or classism in addition to the normal stressors that students contend with, such as peer pressures and social acceptance, gender identity, racial identity, and overall perception of self (self-esteem and self-concept development).

Resiliency studies with urban students have revealed that educators, families, and communities are able to strengthen the protective processes and promote resiliency when students are faced with external risk factors. This research has also shown that the presence of positive prevention and early intervention(s) by an individual, school, or organization at critical moments in a student's life can counteract risks and vulnerabilities (American Psychological Association, 2008; Masten, 2011; Search Institute, 2014; Winfield, 1991).

For practitioners considering Black girls' potential for success in gifted programs, it is important to take into consideration the supports of these girls or those who can intervene during stressful circumstances related to in-school or out-of-school factors. Taylor's (1994) early yet still timely

examination of research conducted with Black students and their families showed the following patterns that promote school resiliency:

1. Parents who are involved in their adolescent's schooling, emphasize its importance, and inform students of racial discrimination tend to produce more competent students;
2. In poorer families, support from extended kin reduces parental psychological distress, in turn benefiting adolescent competence and adjustment; and
3. Intellectual skills are protective factors that help form strategies for sustaining academic performance.

Similar findings were reported by Clark (1983) in his seminal studies on Black families with children who were low versus high achievers. Taylor's research also revealed that Black students learn to define for themselves rules of adaptation pertinent to survival in an unjust society.

Resilient African American girls are more likely to be engaged in community organizations such as a religious institution or afterschool programs, and they are more apt to adopt culturally relevant values, attitudes, and behaviors to help guide decision-making. Research on school resiliency and African American girls has focused on the role of family, community, and school in promoting resilience (see Adams, 2010; Cauce et al., 1996; Ford, 2011; Girl Scouts, 2011; Ianni, 1996; McCubbin et al., 1998; Sullivan, 1996; Ward, 1996). Although the research on educationally resilient Black girls reveals that at least one adult female caregiver or role model (e.g., an older sibling, aunt, grandmother, etc.) in the immediate or extended family supports academic efforts, it also reveals that resilient Black girls can identify with at least one positive adult female in the school environment that encourages academic excellence.

While the race of the female adult at school has some bearing on the resiliency of Black girls, this adult must also be culturally responsive and aware of their needs based on race *and* gender, with attention to income/class (Evans-Winters, 2011). Thus, one can surmise that the concept of resilience in education can be used to better understand the academic motivation and persistence of students in schools. Discipline and rigor in classroom practices are essential for fostering educational resilience for both gifted and high-achieving Black female students.

The question emanating from this discussion is: How can resilience be used to identify the academic strengths of Black girls to lead to a better understanding of their potential for achievement in gifted education? Research on educational resilience must ask: What are the available resources that these girls, who are at a higher risk of school failure, can rely upon to support educational success? With Black girls at the center of the discussion, one might ask: What resources are available to gifted Black girls that might prevent underachievement and promote high academic achievement? Although failure and traditional Eurocentric-Westernized ideas of "achievement" dominate most of the literature in this area, more studies are looking beyond the notion of students as simply passive agents of schooling (see Rigsby, 1994; Evans-Winters, 2011). Fortunately, scholars are exploring resiliency-fostering factors that help buffer negative school outcomes, yet too little of this work addresses and hones in on the needs of this specific group of students.

Self-Esteem and Resiliency of Black Girls

During the school years, academic achievement is a significant contributor to self-esteem development. Self-esteem is the evaluative dimension of the self that includes feelings of worthiness, pride, and discouragement. The American Association of University Women (AAUW, 1992) found that African American girls, in spite of lower academic achievement, possesses higher levels of self-esteem than their White female counterparts. The work of Buckley and Carter (2005) and Girl Scouts of America (2011) reported similar findings. A longitudinal study of school-aged girls found that some Black girls reject high academic achievement out of a sense of self-esteem, while others developed a bicultural identity (one that embraces White and Black culture) so that they could comply with the “White demands of the educational system” (Orenstein, 1994, p. 60).

The self-esteem of resilient Black girls is retained through close contact and interactions within the Black community. Although the Black community has traditionally served as an important resource to African American families and their children, a “community” mentality has been most critical to the development of Black females’ multiple identities. Through a strong identification with their cultural communities, Black girls learn strategies for coping with stressors and are better equipped to achieve their educational goals. Several researchers attribute the high self-esteem of young Black women to a dual consciousness. For example, Martinez and Dukes (1991) studied a group of 7th through 12th grade African American and Chicano students. They found that while some African American and Chicano students had lower levels of self-esteem than Whites in the public domain, they had higher levels of self-esteem in the private domain. More recently, Adams (2010) noted that African American adolescent females possess higher self-esteem than any other racial or ethnic adolescent female group. Her study revealed a significant race by social support interaction; even in low support situations, Black adolescent females reported less self-deprecation than White females. These studies and others (see Evans-Winters, 2011 and Leadbeater & Way, 1996) indicate that many Black girls possess a ‘private’ self that is portrayed in the community and a ‘public’ self that presents itself in their interactions with the larger society, including the school environment.

Black Girls’ Academic Achievement and Gifted Education

Academic Achievement. Ford (2013a) highlighted the psychological, socio-emotional, academic, and cultural characteristics essential to academic excellence for Black girls. However, it is the psychological components (i.e., resilience and high self-efficacy) along with racial and gender pride that are the most important aspects of academic excellence.

In the aforementioned discussion, it was revealed that Black girls as a group possess high levels of school resilience (i.e., the ability to persist and achieve academically, despite risks and vulnerabilities). It was also pointed out that research in psychological studies have reported that Black girls possess high levels of self-esteem compared to their White counterparts. While most resilient Black girls face racial and gender oppression, they still maintain a high level of gender and racial pride. In her F²AME Model (Female Achievement Model for Excellence), Ford (2013a) indicated that Black girls are more likely to be academically successful when they make social sacrifices, are independent, and self-sufficient.

Black girls are more likely to achieve academic excellence when they adopt a bicultural identity alongside cultural pride. Interestingly, in their research with Black female adolescents, Robinson and Ward (1991) described a mentality of *resistance for liberation* whereby Black girls learn their struggle is not individual but collective; and girls are encouraged by their community and schools to work toward social change. Therefore, resilience should be fostered through interdependence between the young woman and her local community; and in the assessment of giftedness, evaluators may want to consider level of community engagement and involvement (e.g., religious services, community organization involvement, volunteering). In a democratic society, interdependence is certainly valued.

Research by Evans-Winters (2011) found that educationally resilient Black girls were able to distinguish between the positive attributes and negative choices of their family members. Specifically, these girls would consciously reject negative attributes of family members (e.g., early pregnancy or drug abuse), draw upon positive attributes (e.g., help with homework or religious beliefs) that contribute to their personal and academic growth, and willingly make decisions not to “hang out” or date boys, because they believed that people in their high crime neighborhoods were not good role models and they wanted to focus on their schooling and not boys (Evans-Winters, 2005). This study and the previously mentioned studies illustrate that Black girls must be nurtured to be independent in thought, which promotes their positive academic growth.

Another component of Ford’s (2013a) F²AME Model that is relevant to this discussion is academic identity. The longitudinal ethnographic study by Evans-Winters (2005) discovered that the most resilient Black female students have a strong academic personality. In fact, Evans-Winters was concerned that the students were overly focus on their grades, student identity, and relationships with teachers. A point that was emphasized is that many Black girls’ who are overly concerned with academic excellence may cause unnecessary stress for themselves, which prevents them from having the opportunity to fully enjoy childhood/girlhood/adolescence. Nevertheless, it appears that Black female students possess most of the characteristics associated with academic excellence put forth by resiliency and gifted scholars, like Ford (2013a).

Gifted Education. Gifted education models lack an appreciation of the abilities of Black girls to navigate different cultural environments -- the White dominated school environment, the male dominated society, and their own cultural communities (see Figure 1). Figure 1 represents the multiple realities of many Black girls who are high achievers and who are able to persist in school not only as girls of African ancestry but also as academically gifted students. However, more research is needed on how Black girls are able to be resilient in the face of adversity and how to design culturally relevant assessment that considers the intersections of race, class, and gender. Ford and Whiting’s (2010) research on culturally relevant gifted education reminds us that achievement continues to be conceptualized and measured from a Eurocentric middle class model of intelligence and achievement. Therefore, as previously mentioned, the conceptualization of giftedness should be expanded to include educational resilience.

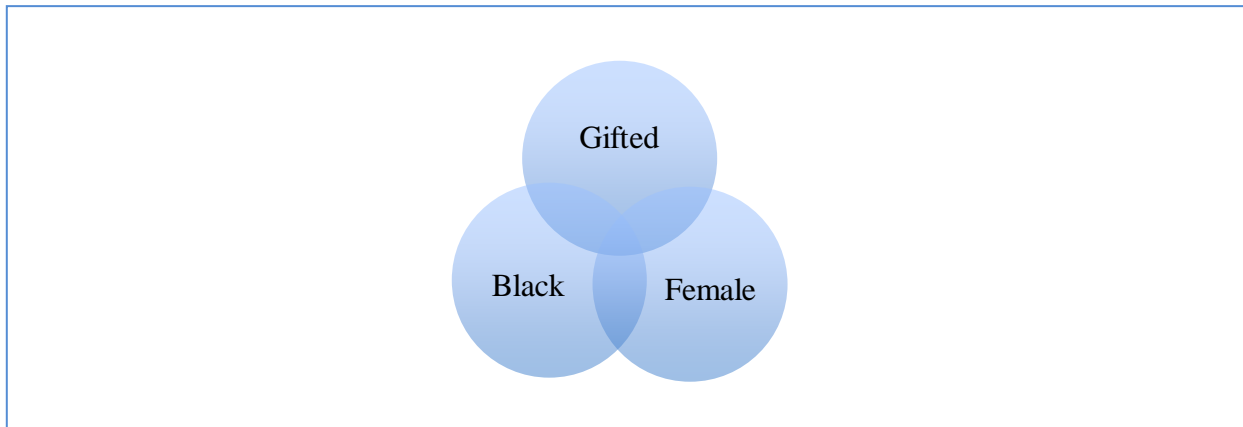


Figure 1. *The overlapping identities of gifted Black female students. Represented are Black girls' experiences in school settings as gifted, Black, and female.*

Compared to Black Males, Black girls are educationally resilient. They persist through schooling, achieve academically, and strive to change their circumstances and the political, economic, and social circumstances of those around them (Evans-Winters, 2011). With this in mind, educators should begin their recruitment of Black girls for gifted education by identifying girls who are able to: (a) recognize and name support systems; (b) adapt to middle class schooling (e.g., bicultural student identity; (c) actively resist and challenge racial, gender, and class oppression; (d) and has the potential of transforming herself, community, and society through education and self-empowerment.

There should also be a more inclusive gender and cultural-specific examination of gifted education placement that utilizes a framework of school resilience that incorporates assessment and evaluation procedures that are more gender and cultural-specific. When using school resilience, race, and gender as the unit of analyses in gifted education reform, gender and culturally relevant practices might be developed. This intersectional approach not only simultaneously benefit girls, it also benefits boys and other racial/ethnic minorities.

While very little attention has been given to the underrepresentation of Black girls in gifted education programs across the nation, it is obvious that “giftedness” like “resilience” is contextually bound in time, place, and culture. Coping with multiple identities and multiple oppressions require one to draw upon unique cultural and gender-specific systems of support to achieve academically. As such, gender and culturally relevant gifted paradigms have the potential to facilitate progress in gifted education reform initiatives. Are Black girls gifted? Yes, Black girls are gifted, but their intellectual gifts remain invisible to the gender and culturally blind paradigms and mindsets.

Conclusion

Research and theoretical models that address racial inequities or gender disparities in gifted education often overlook the importance of the intersections of race, class, and gender on students' school experiences. And, most gifted educators and advocates are not aware of the available literature on Black girls and women, such as literature in sociology, psychology, and

women and gender studies. This literature informs what little is currently known about Black girls' schooling experiences. Consequently, Black girls' are systematically overlooked in gifted education research and theoretical models and are underrepresented in gifted education. Because race-based and gender-focused conceptual frameworks and methodologies fail to critically examine and interpret the multiple identities of Black female students, researchers and practitioners have little knowledge of best practices for recruiting and retaining girls of African ancestry in gifted education programs. With new and emerging research on the developmental needs and schooling experiences of Black girls, gifted advocates must consider culturally relevant theoretical and methodological models that place Black girls' gender and racial identities at the center of discussions of gifted education reform. Lastly, more research is needed on the most effective strategies for retaining Black female students in advanced placement and gifted education programs. Researchers and practitioners interested in gifted education needs to move beyond race and gender to the identification, recruitment, and retention of Black girls in gifted education. Instead, there needs to be a move toward intersectional frameworks to achieve gender and racial equity in gifted education.

AUTHOR NOTES

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College and Career Readiness for Gifted African American Girls: A Call to School Counselors

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Current literature on college and career readiness highlights the role of educators in promoting the success of all students. However, few studies have focused on the specific needs of gifted African American girls. This article discusses the school experiences and career development of gifted African American girls and it provides a culturally responsive and gendered framework for school counselors to promote college and career readiness of gifted African American girls using the components of college and career readiness counseling endorsed by the College Board National Office of School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA, 2010). Implications for future research, school counseling training, and professional development are discussed.

Keywords: gifted African American girls, school counseling, college and career readiness

In one of his weekly addresses, President Barack Obama (August, 2012) stated, “If we want America to lead in the 21st century, nothing is more important than giving everyone the best education possible – from the day they start preschool to the day they start their career...”

Although there have been a number of federal initiatives over recent years addressing educational reform (such as the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and its subsequent amendments), African American students still have lower levels of academic success (Brown, Anthony, Boykin, 2008; Davis, 2003), limited access to rigorous and advanced placement courses, compared to their more privileged White classmates (Ahram, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011; College Board, 2014; Education Trust, 2014; Ford, 2013), and are often in classes and schools where the curriculum and school environment does not reflect positive images or contributions of themselves (Banks, 2008). As a result, they are caught up in the achievement gap. They achieve at low levels or underachieve (Ford, 2010, 2011; Strickland-Dixon, 2011), i.e., perform below their potential indicated by intelligence or aptitude tests.

African American students are also likely to drop out of high school at disproportionate rates and they are more likely to receive disciplinary action that is often discriminatory, when compared to their White peers (Gardner & Mayes, 2013; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Strickland-Dixon, 2011; Vincent, Tobin, Hawken, & Frank, 2012). Whereas educators are often called upon to target low-performing students for remediation and intervention in an effort to promote academic and career success, other students, particularly girls with gifts and talents from underrepresented groups (i.e., African American and Latino girls), have needs that remain neglected and unmet.

In general, gifted students are regarded as self-sufficient, self-directed, mentally healthy, and not needing additional supports to ensure success (Maxwell, 2007; Peterson, 2006). However, some research suggests that gifted students face challenges related to asynchronous development, perfectionism, achievement, and career decisiveness (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010; Grantham & Ford, 1998; Peterson, 2006; Smith & Fleming, 2006).

While there are a number of studies examining various aspects of students in gifted programs, many of these studies rarely include gifted African American students, and gifted African American girls, in particular. And, there are fewer studies that have focused specifically on the academic and career needs of gifted African American females (Grantham & Ford, 1998).

This article focuses on the representation of African American girls in gifted education programs and highlights some of the unique experiences and needs of this population. It also provides strategies that school counselors can use to promote college and career readiness of gifted African American girls. In addition, the article discusses implications for future research, school counseling training, and professional development.

Identification of African American Girls for Gifted Programs

Ford (2013) noted that African American females are underrepresented by almost 40% in gifted education nationally. Among the variables that hinder their representation in gifted education programs are: racial bias (racism), gender bias (sexism), and lack of teacher referrals/nominations that are meshed in deficit thinking.

When gifted identification procedures include teacher nominations, race is one variable that teachers consider when referring or not referring students for gifted programs. Research has shown that teachers are more likely to refer Asian and White students for gifted programs, not likely to refer African American students, and less likely to refer Latino students (Ford, 2013; Ford & Grantham, 2003; Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008; McBee, 2006). Research has also shown gender bias in teacher nominations and educational practices in gifted education (Bianco, Harris, Garrison-Wade, & Leach, 2011; Henfield, Moore, & Wood, 2008). For example, Bianco and colleagues found that when teachers were provided similar profiles of gifted characteristics only differing by gender, they were more likely to identify male profiles as being gifted (Bianco et al., 2011).

Moreover, racial and gender studies suggest that teachers are influenced by their expectations and preconceived notions about giftedness, particularly on what is gifted and who can be gifted as it relates to gender and racial status (Ford, Trotman Scott, Moore, & Amos, 2013). Such stereotypes and biases, fueled by deficit thinking (e.g., Valencia, 2010), have led to significantly lower overall nomination rates of African American girls for gifted education screening and services. Therefore, it is not surprising that gifted African American girls take fewer Advanced Placement (AP) classes when compared to their high achieving peers – White males and White females (The Education Trust, 2014).

Experiences of Gifted African American Girls Following Identification and Placement

Once African American girls are identified as gifted, their participation in gifted programs may be quite challenging, both academically and socio-emotionally. Not only do they have to adjust to the increased rigor of gifted programs, they must also adjust to peer pressures. Some students may feel pressured to be perfect and all-knowing because they have been labeled as gifted (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010; Peterson, 2006) and have surpassed the achievements of their less-stressed White female counterparts who contend with sexism but not racism. As a result, gifted African American girls may not ask for assistance or counseling when working on difficult issues or problems (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010; Henfield et al., 2008; Maxwell, 2007; Peterson, 2006) for fear of being viewed as not gifted – a false positive.

Also, gifted African American girls may not see themselves represented in the curriculum (and the school as a whole), which can potentially cause them to disengage from academics and be at risk for underachievement (Ford, 2010, 2011; Grantham & Ford, 1998). And, their achievement may also be affected by their socio-emotional needs, which includes their racial and gender identity.

For gifted African American girls, being placed in a gifted program can be an isolating experience. Some gifted African American girls are unable to relate to their gifted counterparts; are susceptible to negative, stereotypical, and racist messages; (Ford, 2010, 2013) and have lower self-concepts and self-esteem when in such school programs or educational settings (Greene, 2006; Maxwell, 2007). In short, gifted African American girls are consistently exposed to stereotypes about Black inferiority in which, to be intelligent, means that the student is ‘acting White’ (Ford et al., 2008; Ford, 2010; Henfield et al., 2008).

Because academic and socio-emotional development are interrelated to career success (ASCA, 2012), the challenges that gifted African American girls face in academic and socio-emotional development will undeniably have an impact on their career development; and, as cultural-based academic preparation and experiences lead to greater career opportunities, gifted African American girls are influenced at an early age by societal expectations of the types of careers females should have as well as the pressure to choose between having a family, an education, and/or a career (Greene, 2003; Maxwell, 2007). These societal expectations have been perpetuated in schools and they have influenced gifted African American girls to take fewer math and science courses, and opt for more stereotypical female careers (Booth & Myers, 2010; Greene, 2003, 2006; West-Olatunji, Shure, Pringle, Adams, Lewis, & Cholewa, 2010) such as teachers, nurses, and caregivers.

Research on College and Career Readiness of Gifted African American Students

To understand the college and career needs of gifted African American girls, the authors conducted a comprehensive literature search. Initially, the authors searched for articles focused on college and career development of solely gifted African American girls. Because this search yielded few articles, the authors broadened the search to include career development of gifted

girls, gifted students, African American girls, and African American students. These studies provided a framework for understanding the college and career needs for gifted African American girls.

Factors Influencing Career Decision Making

Career decision-making is often influenced by cultural and familial attitudes and by family of origin experiences (Booth & Myers, 2010; Greene, 2006; Smith & Fleming, 2006). For gifted African American girls, college and career aspirations are shaped by the collectivistic cultural background of these girls, and they may incorporate multiple roles (i.e., spouse and parent) into their future planning, which influences their overall career aspirations (Maxwell, 2007).

When gifted African American girls experience career indecisiveness, their college decision and enrollment can be challenging. They may be reluctant about being admitted to college and doubt their ability to be successful as a college student. They may also struggle in their efforts to identify sources to fund their college education and support their success, which creates more challenges in retaining gifted African American girls in postsecondary institutions (Greene, 2006; Olszewski-Kubilius & Scott, 1992).

Thus, when gifted African American girls hold high expectations for their future and for themselves (i.e., obtaining college degrees), they are more likely to be academically successful and have fewer relationships with peers that engage in risky behaviors that hinder school success (Cunningham, Corprew, & Becker, 2009). Also, as gifted African American girls develop a positive sense of self (that includes racial and gender identity), they are more likely to be academically successful and better able to negotiate tasks associated with career decision-making—despite the presence and magnitude of stereotype threat (Gushue & Whitson, 2006; Moore, Madison-Colmore, & Smith, 2003; Steele, 1997).

When students do not have a positive sense of self, they lack the skills to stand strong in the face of stereotypes and are at risk for falling into a self-fulfilling prophecy that confirms the negative stereotypes and messages made about their identities (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Creating high expectations can be challenging if the school environment fails to promote the success of these student. When schools fail to recruit and retain gifted African American girls, and when they promote or support negative perceptions about their abilities, it can result in these girls struggling to see a promising future beyond high school.

Counseling Gifted African American Girls

Gifted African American girls often underutilize counseling services (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011). Their underutilized use of these services may be due to a lack school counseling services, school counselors performing non-counseling related task, or schools employing undertrained or culturally unaware school counselors, thus, limiting the opportunity for these students to take advantage of school counseling services (Ford, 2010; McDonough, 2005; Plank & Jordan, 2001; West-Olatunji, et al. 2010).

While a lack of trained school counselors (or school counseling services) pose a challenge for schools, school counselors are necessary for fostering college and career readiness of students (Bryan et al., 2011). Having a supportive relationship with a school counselor can help gifted African American girls mitigate the effects of a negative school environment and champion their overall success both academically and socially, and especially in the areas of college and career readiness (ASCA, 2012; Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Chen-Hayes, Ockerman, & Mason, 2014; Gardner & Mayes, 2013).

As such, school counselors must facilitate college and career development activities and disseminate information to prepare gifted African American girls for a postsecondary education (ASCA, 2012; Chen-Hayes et al., 2014). In addition, they must cultivate a college-going culture to foster an environment where going to college is the norm and not the exception (Chen-Hayes et al., 2014).

Components of College and Career Readiness

School counselors are in an ideal position to assist gifted African American girls in developing their career aspiration and they can help them create a pathway to college and career readiness. To support gifted African American girls with college and career readiness, school counselors are encouraged to use the eight components of college and career readiness endorsed by The College Board National Office of School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA, 2010). They include: (1) college aspirations, (2) academic planning for college and career readiness, (3) enrichment and extracurricular engagement, (4) college and career exploration and selection process, (5) college and career assessments, (6) college affordability planning, (7) college and career admissions processes, and (8) transition from high school graduation to college enrollment. These components provide a systemic approach that all school counselors can implement, across elementary, middle, and high school to ensure equity both in process and results (NOSCA, 2010).

1. *College Aspirations.* NOSCA encourages school counselors to develop the confidence of students by creating a college-going culture that cultivates early college awareness; and to assist students in overcoming barriers they may encounter.

School counselors can work with gifted African American girls by conveying high expectations and encouraging academic success and the belief that college attendance is achievable. One example of providing support for gifted African American girls is through group counseling. School counselors can facilitate a group counseling session with gifted African American girls around college and career aspirations using techniques like bibliotherapy or cinematherapy. Bibliotherapy and cinematherapy will allow these girls to craft their own stories and identify their own heroes and heroines that have overcome trials and tribulations just as they would (Maxwell, 2007).

Since peer influence impacts college applications and enrollment (Hines, Harris, & Ham, 2014; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987), school counselors should encourage gifted African American girls to share their experiences about giftedness and how this characteristic will help them get to college. School counselors can also work with parents of gifted African American girls in nurturing the college aspirations of their daughters (Peterson, 2007).

Several researchers have recognized the positive impact that parental involvement has on encouraging students to attend college (Bergerson, 2009; Hines et al., 2014; Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013; Perna & Titus, 2005; Sandefur, Meier, & Campbell, 2006). Engaging gifted African American girls in conversations about college, helping them choose courses appropriate for college readiness, and identifying resources for these students are some of the activities school counselors need to share with parents as tools for helping their daughters enroll in and succeed in college.

2. *Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness.* NOSCA encourages school counselors to ensure that students are engaged in an academic curriculum with rigorous, engaging content that aligns with their career interests and aspirations.

To do this, school counselors must: (a) create an academic plan to ensure that gifted African American girls are properly identified and placed in courses matching their intellectual ability; (b) collaborate with teachers consistently to support them; and (c) connect academic coursework to gifted African American girls' career interests (Harris, Hines, & Ham, 2013; Hines et al., 2014). Reid and Moore (2008) noted that academic planning maximizes students' ability to obtain a college education.

3. *Enrichment and Extracurricular Engagement.* NOSCA recommends that school counselors engage students in extracurricular experiences to develop their leadership abilities, academic talents, and nurture their career interests.

School counselors can create (if one does not exist) a debate club for gifted African American girls to develop their public speaking skills, formulate arguments/counter-arguments, and improve their research skills. Developing skills in this area will help gifted African American girls gain confidence in speaking with others and prepare them for various interactions with students and professors in college.

4. *College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes.* NOSCA suggests that school counselors provide activities, experiences, and information to help students make the best decisions when discussing or choosing colleges.

One way is to do this is to take gifted African American girls on a college tour and expose them to college culture. This can be followed by an exercise (such as a writing marathon) for students to reflect on their experience during the tour to better gauge if this college is suitable for their career interests (Radcliffe & Bos, 2013; Radcliffe & Stephens, 2009). School counselors can use this exercise to assist gifted African American girls in creating an academic plan that coincides with their career interests or the type of post-secondary institution that fits their needs.

5. *College and Career Assessments.* NOSCA recommend that School counselors encourage and prepare all students to take career assessments and nurture their career aspirations.

School counselors are charged with the responsibility of fostering the career development of their students (ASCA, 2012), including gifted African American girls, and promoting their preparation for college and career assessments. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is

a career assessment personality inventory that school counselors can use to assist gifted African American girls in not only gaining insight about themselves but also help them understand their interests, personal characteristics, and preferences. The Self-Directed Search (SDS, Holland, 1994), is another career assessment tool designed to help students match their personalities with potential jobs, careers, college majors, etc.

6. *College Affordability Planning.* According to NOSCA, the goal of this component is for school counselors to provide students and parents with detailed information about college costs, options for paying for college, and eligibility requirements.

School counselors should provide gifted African American girls and their parents with comprehensive information about college costs, different ways of paying for college (e.g., scholarships, financial aid), and explore eligibility requirements. This will help the girls and their families to create a plan to ensure an affordable college education.

At the middle and high school levels, school counselors should have conversations with both the gifted African American girls and their parents about academic success and its correlation to financial aid. School counselors can communicate with parents the importance of their girls doing well in school as it could lead to more scholarships and grant money to reduce student loan debt or out-of-pocket expenses for college.

Also, school counselors must discuss and explain the Free Application for Financial Aid and the timeline for submitting requisite materials for student eligibility. In addition, school counselors should have a parent-student meeting to discuss the cost-to-benefit ratio of college degrees so parents and students will make the appropriate decision regarding post secondary options. Freeman (2005) noted that African American parents as well as their children looked at salaries and lifestyle benefits (i.e., healthcare) to determine whether college attendance was worth the cost.

7. *College and Career Admission Processes.* NOACA states that school counselors should disseminate information about the college admissions processes to students as early as possible so that they can make the best selection based on their interests.

School counselors can facilitate this endeavor through a curriculum guidance unit on applying for college. They can teach gifted African American girls about the multiple components of the college application process (e.g., submission process, deadlines, reference letters) and work with students in meeting the deadlines of their local and state post-secondary institutions. Additionally, they can collaborate with these institutions to create a pipeline for gifted African American girls to have an efficient and effective way of meeting deadlines and successfully submitting their college application.

8. *Transition from High School Graduation to College Enrollment.* The goal of this NOACA component is for school counselors to help students successfully transition from high school to college by connecting them with community and college resources.

School counselors should collaborate with college outreach programs to give gifted African American girls an immersion experience before the college semester begins to help them in

locating resources (i.e., financial aid office, African American organizations, Disability Support Services, etc.) on college campuses to meet their academic and personal needs. Further, school counselors should work with colleges to pair gifted African American girls with mentors (preferably, other gifted students) to talk about their transition experiences and how they were able to successfully persist and succeed in college (Maxwell, 2007).

Implications for Future Research

There is a paucity of literature and research on the college and career readiness of gifted African American girls. Although current findings on the academic and career needs of gifted students provides school counselors with some insight about the needs of gifted African American girls, it lacks a concerted focus on this unique population. What is clear is that gifted African American girls need school counselors who will provide them with equitable services and supports to address their specific college and career needs. It is also clear that there is a need for preservice training for school counselors to increase their knowledge and skills for working effectively with gifted African American girls, as well as a need for quantitative and qualitative research on college and career readiness which focuses specifically on gifted African American girls to better understand the strengths and challenges these girls experience in preparing for and achieving their career goals. Also needed is research that seeks to develop evidenced-based practices that focus on career development of gifted African American girls and studies that investigate within-group differences among gifted African American girls' career development by exploring the impact of geographical (e.g., urban, rural, and suburban) and socioeconomic variations (e.g., low-income, middle-income, and high-income).

Closing Thoughts

Gifted African American girls face a myriad of challenges in schools. They are likely to be under identified for gifted education and are likely to face negative stereotypes and marginalization while managing their intersecting identities (i.e., race, gender, giftedness). If gifted African American girls internalize negative messages, they may face challenges in actualizing their potential and being successful in school. Therefore, school counselors need to serve as a support system by helping them develop positive racial and gender identities to navigate their school experiences.

School counselors are in a pivotal position to create a pathway for gifted African American girls to attend college. They can do this by creating a college-going culture and providing targeted interventions like group counseling, individual college planning, and mentorship experiences.

Attaining a post-secondary education is imperative for higher salaries and broader career options. As such, school counselors must ensure that gifted African American girls are receiving an equitable education prior to the post-secondary years if they are to be competitive for admission to a college or other post-secondary institutions. One way of ensuring career and college readiness for gifted African American girls is by using the eight components of college and career readiness counseling discussed in this article.

AUTHOR NOTES

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Resisting Dark Chocolate: A Journey Through Racial Identity and Deficit Thinking: A Case Study and Solutions

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Research indicates that Black children with darker complexions experience more difficulty being accepted by Whites and their Black peers; and they are believed to be less intelligent than White and lighter complexion Black students. It also reveals that the innocence young children have regarding differences between themselves and others do not last long. Too often, children of color learn that others do not embrace their race, complexion, and/or cognitive abilities. These encounters can cause many darker complexion African-American children to feel inadequate and incapable of meeting social and academic standards. This case study examined the life events of Celise, an unidentified gifted Black female, through the lens of Cross' racial identity model (Cross, 1991; Vandiver & Cross, 2001) and deficit thinking (Valencia, 2010). Personal and elementary school events by her mother are discussed, and suggestions for educators of gifted Black female students are shared.

Keywords: gifted African Americans, African American girls, under-representation, under-referral, teacher expectations, deficit thinking

Many children living in homogenized and racially segregated communities where they attend schools with children who share their race, income, and background have little contact with those who do not (e.g., American Psychological Association, 2012; Losen, 2013). In such racially segregated communities and schools, these children rarely interact with children from different cultural groups whose lived experiences, beliefs, values, and customs/traditions are not only different from theirs, but can also be contradictory or oppositional.

Additional research reveals that the innocence young children have regarding differences between themselves and others does not last long, with many children noticing physical racial differences around age three, but without judgment (APA, 2012). When presented with an unfamiliar face, infants as young as six months old stared significantly longer at the faces of a different race than the face of their same race (Katz & Kofkin, 1997). Hirschfeld (2008) found that two-year old toddlers used gender to categorize behavior (i.e., the girl was crying), and by the time they reached the age of three, they expressed bias by race (i.e., exclude children from other races from activities) (Aboud, 2005).

Children become aware of race and ethnicity as early as age three but their grasp of these concepts changes over time. Initially, they see race in very literal terms but increasingly become aware of societal prejudices and biases (Quintana, 2006). For example, children in preschool and kindergarten see race in physical terms. They often believe that taking a bath or shower can change racial status, or that race is a function of the amount of time a person spends in the sun.

By the time they are six years old, they begin to understand that racial background is a function of ancestry that influence how people look and the customs and traditions in which they engage. They also develop a literal understanding of race and culture. Around sixth grade, when they enter middle/junior high school, they begin to realize that race is linked to other socio-demographic variables, such as income and socio-economic status. During middle school they grasp that racial prejudice exists and they see how political resources are allocated in neighborhoods and how affirmative action affects non-Whites and those who are less privileged. By the time they become teenagers and are in high school, their view of race matures and they begin to express pride in their heritage and a sense of belonging to a racial/ethnic group; or, they feel pressured to assimilate to the majority culture (Quintana, 2006).

Like self-esteem and self-concept, racial identity plays a major role in children's overall psychological and social well-being and health. A positive or healthy view of self increases and improves social relationships, attitudes toward life, and school performance. In other words, non-White children must learn to value who they are as not just individuals, but also racial beings. Too often, children of color, Black children in particular, learn that their skin color and shade are not viewed as attractive, which was highlighted in the past, via the infamous past doll studies by Clark and Clark (1947) and more contemporary studies in the 2000s by Margaret Beale Spencer (2008), Kiri Davis (2005), and such news broadcasts as CNN Billante & Hadad, 2010 (2010; Spencer, 2008).

Girls Just Want to be Accepted

With the aforementioned in mind, there is a vital need to focus on gender issues and identity among Black girls in general and those formally identified as gifted. Sexism, grounded in gender roles, remains prevalent in the U.S. More so than boys, girls are reared to focus on physical appearance rather than intelligence, achievement and careers. Much appears in the literature and social media about raising females in a sexist society that places the most values on males (see Evans-Winters in this special issue).

In the United States, society places expectations on the characteristics and behaviors that females and males 'should' exhibit along gender lines or 'norms'. The expectation is that males must be decisive, brave, strong, and athletic (Seem & Clark, 2006). In many cultures, men are more socially valued and considered to be more competent than women in a variety of activities and domains (Sadker & Sadker, 1990; Wagner & Berger, 1997; Williams & Best, 1990). Survey data derived from a diverse population across multiple regions of the United States revealed that men were consistently rated higher than women on a multidimensional scale of competence (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2002).

Gender stereotypes continue to persist in classroom settings. For example, boys continue to receive active teacher attention via praise at a higher rate than girls at both the elementary (Halpern, 2000) and secondary levels (Sadker & Sadker, 1990). And, as time progresses, females tend to speak less in classroom settings (Sadker & Sadker, 1990), which can be attributed to a diminishing level of confidence (Bachman, Hebel, Martinez, & Rittmayer, 2009).

For decades, educators have adhered to and promoted the notion that girls are more social, talk more, and are better at recognizing and dealing with emotions compared to their male counterparts (Brizendine, 2006). However, none of these assumptions are scientifically based, nor do they hold any scientific merit (Eliot, 2009). The belief that boys have ‘math brains’ and girls are ‘better with reading and writing’ may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy, causing girls to forgo pursuing a career in math and science fields, and/or lead teachers to continue believe in gender-based stereotypes (Eliot, 2009).

While the workforce is comprised of almost 50% women, only 24% are in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) positions and they earn substantially less than their male counterparts (Beede, et al., 2009). When race is entered into the gender stereotype equation, Black women represent only 2% of those working in science and engineering occupations in 2010 (National Science Foundation, 2013). However, the number of minorities (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and Native Americans) earning bachelor degrees in STEM fields in 2010 increased, as did those who earned masters degrees from approximately 3% to 11% and 6% to 8% respectively (NSF, 2013). In addition, Black women are now being portrayed in STEM positions in the media and they have found their way into animation with Disney’s 2012 creation of Doc McStuffins which features a little Black girl who wants to become a doctor like her mother (Ayot, 2013). Doc McStuffins’ positive portrayal of a Black female in STEM (in this case medicine) was so influential that a group of Black female medical doctors created a collage of themselves and sent it to Disney’s headquarters proclaiming “We are Doc McStuffins”. This movement led to the founding of the Artemis Medical Society, an organization devoted to attracting Black females into the medical profession (Ayot, 2013).

The positive portrayal of Black females has been long overdue, so is the need for Black females of all ages to embrace the color of their skin. . So, what does this mean for gifted Black girls? Gifted students are inquisitive and insightful learners who are quick to sense problems and inconsistencies. While it is developmentally typical for a 4 year old to notice race, a gifted student may notice race at an earlier age and be more inquisitive about such differences. An earlier and heightened sense of awareness and the need to focus on racial issues, including racial identity, is important for caregivers and educators so that they can promote a healthy development socially, psychologically, and academically.

Given the on-going studies, blogs, and concerns about racial identity, a focus on race and racial issues is in order. This case study examines the life events of Celise, an unidentified gifted fifth grade student as shared by her mother through the conceptual and theoretical lens of Cross’ racial identity model (Cross, 1991; Cross & Vandiver, 2001) and the general notion of deficit thinking (e.g., Valencia, 2010). Personal stories and elementary school events are discussed and teacher suggestions are shared.

Celise: Background and Context

Currently (i.e., 2014), Celise is a 12-year-old sixth grade student. This is retrospective case study of her development from birth through fifth grade narrated through the voice of her mother, Vivian. Celise lives in a blended family with her mother, stepfather, and older stepsisters. She is very close to her father who lives in another state.

Celise in an unidentified gifted student, which is described later. She met the school district's criteria for formal identification but teacher checklists have prevented her from being identified. As Ford (2013) has written extensively about Black students more than other children of color being gravely underrepresented in gifted education, Celise is one such child. How does a child (of any racial background) receive A's throughout grades K-5, excel on statewide tests, and not get identified as gifted?

Anyone asked to describe Celise would mention her extremely dark skin. She is typically the darkest child in her school and participant in extracurricular activities. Strangers often comment on her skin tone by stating "she is so beautiful to be so dark." Lupita Amondi Nyong'o, the Academy Award winning, Kenyan actress, comes to mind when describing Celise's complexion.

The following events took place when Celise was in the third grade and the story from this narrative serves as the backdrop for this case study:

Teacher/Mrs. Phillips: "You all did so well on your test; I am going to give you a treat!"

Students: "YAY! What kind of treat?"

Mrs. Phillips goes to the drawer and pulls out a bowl full of Hersey's miniatures. The level of excitement heightens as Mrs. Phillips walks to the front of the class with the clear, crystal cut, bowl.

Students: "Ssshhh! Be quiet! She won't call on us to pick our candy if we're not quiet."

Mrs. Phillips waits patiently and the students become silent, but some are on the verge of explosion.

Mrs. Phillips: "I am so proud of each and every one of you. I will call you by rows. When your row is called, please come up and choose one piece of candy from the bowl. You have a choice of milk chocolate, white chocolate, and dark chocolate."

Mrs. Phillips called the children row by row. Each student picked his or her bar of chocolate and rushed to sit down to indulge in one of America's favorite pleasures.

As the last students approached the front of the classroom, disappointment began to ensue. The pickings were slim and all that was left in the pretty bowl were several bars of dark chocolate.

Student 1: "I don't like that kind."

Student 2: "Dark chocolate is nasty".

Student 3: “Well, I earned this candy, so I’m going to take it. It’s better than nothing”.

He unwrapped the bar on his way back to his seat. Once the bar was opened, he burst out “this chocolate bar sure is dark”.

He took a bite and before he sat in his seat, he immediately spat the chocolate in the wrapper, threw it in the trash, returned to his desk, mumbling, “I don’t really like chocolate, anyway.” He then laid his head down on his desk in dejection.

What messages have students learned that seem applicable to race? And, what are the implications for gifted students, many of whom are insightful at an early age and emotionally over-excitabile (Piechowski, 2006)? What messages are sent to Black students who are often affective oriented and harmonious oriented (Boykin, Tyler, & Miller, 2005)? As Ford (2010, 2012) noted for several decades, at least three lens are essential to be responsive to students who are gifted *and* Black *and* female. She asserts that a comprehensive frame of reference is needed that is inclusive of being gifted, female, and non-White.

Delivering Dark Chocolate

Vivian, Celise’s mother, recalled the day her daughter was born. She immediately became defensive because of the issues she knew her daughter would face as a child with a dark complexion:

“She was the darkest baby I had ever seen. Out of the womb, I knew that I would have to affirm her on a daily basis; tell her that she was beautiful and smart, that her skin was beautiful, that she looked like she was dipped in chocolate. I intentionally purchased the darkest shades of dolls so that Celise would know her skin tone was beautiful and special. If someone asked my daughter why was her skin so dark, I wanted her to reply, because I am special.”

From birth, Vivian knew her daughter would experience more than one encounter based on the color of her skin that would affirm that Celise was indeed, a Black girl. She wanted her daughter to embrace her race.

Karyn Washington launched the website *For Brown Girls*, to empower Black women, more specifically, dark skinned women who “don’t always feel the love” of society. Prior to launching the website, she developed and maintained a blog after feeling better about herself upon venting with her cousin. Her self-esteem and racial pride suffered because of her skin complexion (Uwumarogie, 2014).

Karyn had drive... Karyn had initiative... but Karyn committed suicide. Karyn Washington was unable to withstand the negative comments and callused treatment she received because of her dark skin. Karen experienced self-hatred (Vandiver & Cross, 2001) to the point of committing suicide ... because of her dark skin. Vivian did not want her daughter to experience this. She

wanted to protect Celise as she experienced the psychology of Nigrescence – of becoming Black and into her blackness (Cross, 1991).

The Nigrescence Model

Cross (1991) and Vandiver's (2001) expansion of Cross' original Nigrescence model (1971, 1991) is divided into three categories—pre-encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization—that describe the racial experiences of African Americans.

Pre-encounter. This category is comprised of two identity clusters—*Assimilation and Anti-Black (miseducation & self-hatred)*. Black Americans who experience life with low levels of racial salience *assimilate* to the culture in which they live. They see themselves as Americans who just so happen to be Black. Black Americans, who have been *miseducated* to believe that only White is right and/or have developed *self-hatred* due to their skin color and appearance are said to be experiencing life in the *Anti-Black* phase of the pre-encounter category (Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, O Cokley, & Cross, 2001).

Immersion-emersion. Immersion-emersion also embodies two identities—*Intense Black Involvement* and *Anti-White*. Attitudes of Black Americans experiencing this level of racial development are completely immersed in everything affiliated with the Black race. In other words, they are pro-Black and are only interested in things affiliated with 'Blackness' or, some may develop an anti-White fixation. Nonetheless, Black people who are in this stage of racial development have experienced a type of encounter that brings them to the realization that they are indeed a Black person, meaning their color does make a difference. Their views and attitudes are no longer myopic. Instead, a difference between the races and cultures is realized.

Internalization. The third category, *internalization*, encompasses four levels of identity—Black Nationalist, Biculturalist, Multiculturalist Racial, and Multicultural Inclusive. Black Americans who are identified as Black nationalist have “a strong focus on Black empowerment, economic independence, and heightened awareness of Black history and culture” (Vandiver et al., 2001, p.180). Those who identify themselves as both Black *and* American are considered to be bicultural, while those who identify themselves as Black but also appreciate interactions with those from other cultural and ethnic groups (i.e., Asian, Latino, Native Americans, etc.) are considered to be multicultural racial. Finally, Black Americans who identify themselves as such and also appreciate connections with other cultures such as that include White, gay men, and lesbians are considered or identified as Multicultural inclusive.

Vivian's concerns were valid. She knew that society would pass judgment because of Celise's dark skin, which might in turn cause her to lack self-love. She wanted Celise to realize that although she was different, she was still special; and when she celebrated others, she could be celebrated, too. Vivian wanted to protect her daughter from the presumption that she was dumb, lazy, ill-behaved, and less attractive when compared to her White and lighter skin Black classmates. While these assumptions are false, they are the realities for both White and Black preschool and elementary-aged children. A study conducted by Clark and Clark (1939), which

has been replicated by numerous researchers (e.g Spencer, 2008; Davis, 2005) revealed that, on average, White children believe that darker skinned Black children were mean, bad, and ugly when compared to White and lighter skinned Black children, via the use of dolls and/or pictures. When given the option to choose between darker and lighter skinned Black dolls or illustrations, White and Black students selected lighter skinned children when asked to identify students with whom they had positive attitudes and beliefs, social preferences, and color preferences. Specifically, less than 22% of White preschool children indicated that they would play with a darker skinned doll or person. More disturbingly, less than 4% of them stated that they wanted dark skinned students as classmates. When White elementary aged students were asked the same questions, 29% stated that they would play with a darker skinned doll or person, and less than 15% of them stated that they preferred dark skinned students as classmates (Billante & Hadad, 2010).

In contrast, when Black preschool participants were presented with Black dolls and/or pictures, approximately 60% indicated that they would want to play with dark skinned children, but less than 25% of them wanted dark skinned children as classmates. When Black elementary-aged children were asked, almost half of them preferred to play with dark skinned children, while about 40% wanted them as classmates (Billante & Hadad, 2010). The situation heightens when one puts this into the context of intelligence. Half of the Black preschool students thought that dark skinned children were dumb and three fourths of the White students felt the same (Billante & Hadad, 2010). If this is the perception of children in general, imagine how a ‘dark chocolate’ child, who is gifted, must feel when he or she is stereotyped ... because of such perceptions.

Unfortunately, the negative perceptions of dark skinned people continue into adulthood. Dark skinned Blacks typically maintain a lower socioeconomic status (Hochschild, & Weaver, 2007), are more likely to be raised in segregated communities (Massey et al., 2003), are less likely to marry (Edwards, Carter-Tellison, & Herring, 2004), and are less likely to be elected into political office (Graham, 2006) compared to their lighter skinned Blacks. A recent study also revealed that darker skinned African American men perceived more discrimination from White people, than African American men who were lighter skinned (Ben-Zeev, Dennehy, Goodrich, Kolarik, & Geisler, 2014). Hence, it is necessary to instill racial pride at birth.

Skin preferences are taught. Children are not born thinking that brown skin looks dirty, ugly, or nasty. However, many come to school thinking just that. The “*dark chocolate*” child comes to school and, at times, is left in the bowl to be picked over and rejected, which can lead to a melted mess.

Celise Goes to School

By the time Celise reached school age, Celise’s parents had divorced and Vivian and Celise relocated to the south. Again, Vivian became defensive because she was aware of racial tension that existed in the south. Celise, however, was excited about starting kindergarten! She breezed through the kindergarten entry assessments and as the school year progressed, Vivian saw that her daughter excelled academically. Up to that point, Vivian and Celise had pleasant encounters with the school system. They had not yet experienced a negative encounter that would possibly thrust them to next level of Cross’ (1991) racial identity model.

Deficit Thinking – The Rocky Road

Vivian remarried and relocated to another district. When Celise entered school in the fall as a first grader, she aspired to be in the gifted program. She was aware of the program because both of her stepsisters were identified as gifted.

Vivian was confident that her daughter would continue to flourish and, thus be identified as a gifted student. In December of Celise's first grade year, Vivian inquired about her being assessed for the gifted program. The teacher informed her that Celise did not meet the mental abilities criteria on the CogAT, a cognitive test administered to all first grade students. When Vivian asked the teacher if she recommended Celise using creativity and motivation criteria, she responded, "If students score 8's and 9's, I notify the office. Celise scored 7's and 8's, and 9's so I did not notify the office." Vivian realized the first year teacher was not familiar with the alternative criteria and unfortunately for Celise, her teacher's lack of knowledge denied her the opportunity to be assessed. When Celise realized that she did not qualify for the gifted program, she was devastated. Vivian shared:

"I told her that she would be tested again when she entered the third grade. I assured my baby that things would be different when she got into third grade. I was confident that she would meet the criteria during the next testing cycle."

Celise did well academically for the duration of her first grade year and scored at the advanced level on all of her first grade statewide tests. She also excelled academically during second grade. Celise scored at the advanced level on all statewide high-stakes tests, scoring perfectly on the reading test. Celise was confident when she entered third grade and was eager to share her accomplishments with her new teacher. Vivian also informed the new teacher that she wanted Celise to be challenged academically, that she was interested in her being assessed for the gifted program and would be readily available to discuss Celise's progress. As the year progressed, the teacher contacted Vivian to discuss Celise's deficits, not progress:

"She told me that my daughter was not reading on grade level and that she was not focusing in class. She also told me it took my daughter 2 ½ days to take a test that should have only taken her 20 minutes. I was very confused because she had done so well the year before and I knew that my daughter was smart! When I asked Celise about the testing, she told me that it was hard for her to concentrate because she was distracted. She also told me that her teacher would only allow her to check out books that were on her (mistaken) reading level. I knew I needed to advocate for my daughter. I had to come to her defense."

Deficit Thinking

Deficit Thinking is the thought process of a person or situation focusing on that which is negative (Ford, Harris, Tyson, & Frazier Trotman, 2002; Valencia, 2010). In this instance, discrimination is the negative trait that is learned. Children are not born prejudice. Instead, they watch the actions of those around them and emulate what is seen. Impressionable children grow up to become the adults of whose behavior children will emulate. If a child is taught to think

negatively about a person or situation, then the thought process will most likely continue into adulthood.

Vivian suspected that deficit thinking was at the root of the issues that her daughter was experiencing with teachers. She wanted to pinpoint and/or rule out any issues that Celise may have had, so she agreed to complete an executive functioning assessment. The assessment protocol required both the teacher and the parent(s) to complete the questionnaire, and an analysis of the results showed that the teacher viewed Celise in a negative manner and the teacher and the parent scores were so statistically different, that the teachers' (subjective) scores were determined to be invalid.

Celise and Vivian experienced another encounter. It can also be argued that the deficit thought process was intensified because of Celise's dark complexion (see Hochschild & Weaver, 2007). One teacher's deficit thought process was even more apparent during a parent teacher conference when she stated, "I know that you want her to perform at the highest level, but at times, I can't even get her to perform at the lowest level." Vivian shared:

"When I asked her how she engaged Celise during instruction, she did not respond. And, it wasn't until I requested that she allow Celise to check out books on a higher reading level that she admitted that Celise was now "on grade level" because she scored "a little higher" on the reading level test when she pulled her aside to re-test her. But she insisted that the books that Celise selected were "too high" for her. She was so negative. For every compliment she made a statement to negate any positive academic trait that my daughter had. Even after I reminded her of Celise's perfect score on the state standardized reading assessment, she shook her head and said that since the test was read to the second grade students her score didn't tell her much about Celise's reading ability and that she would know her 'real' reading level when she got her results this year. And she kept on digging. She went on to say that as far as math was concerned, Celise was not at the top, or the bottom, but was just in the middle. By that time, I was furious and I decided not to ask any more questions or make any more comments because I knew that I was dealing with a negative and callused teacher and I didn't want to lose my cool."

Vivian was upset! This was a major encounter. However, she did not progress to the immersion-emersion category in Cross' (2001) revised model. Instead, she moved directly to the internalization category. Vivian understood the concept of deficit thinking. Her thought process was that of a biculturalist; she realized that *because* she was a dark skinned Black, living in America, she and her family would constantly experience discriminatory treatment.

Light in the Dark

Celise's fourth grade teacher was very supportive. She was quick to share that Celise was very bright and a joy to have in class. She believed in Celise, including nominating her for a principal award and modifying her coursework to include higher level thinking assignments., Celise often earned the highest grades in her class. However, in December of the school year, her teacher relocated and a veteran teacher assumed classroom responsibilities. She too was very supportive

of Celise. About two months after her arrival, this veteran teacher asked for permission to send Celise to an enrichment class:

“When Celise got home, she excitedly asked me if I received her teacher’s email. I told her that I had but I also felt compelled to tell her that although it was not the gifted classroom, she would be able to go to the gifted teacher for a class on Mondays. But, Celise didn’t care. She was just excited that one of her teachers finally recognized that she was smart.”

Seeing the Light

As time progressed, Celise’s emotions changed and her level of confidence waned. She went from being an excited, excelling student to one who questioned her own abilities. With encouragement and reassurance from her family, she continued to work hard and excel in school and on state standardized tests. Her family constantly told her that she was beautiful, witty, special, unique, and smart. So, Celise was able to persevere, despite the deficit thoughts of and being overlooked by her teachers.

Suggestions for Change

With Celise’s story in mind, the following suggestions offer some guidance for teachers to advocate for and be proactive with *all* of their students.

1. Recognize your own biases and address them head on. Identify Black students’ strengths, set goals, and share them with students and parents. Inform them of expectations to accomplish during the school year.
2. Multicultural curriculum promotes racial pride. Use the color-coded Ford-Harris Matrix (Ford, 2011; Trotman Scott, in press) as a tool to infuse multicultural content, increase rigor, and ensure differentiation. This tool will allow all students to be seen within the curriculum being used. Such lesson plans will also address skin color so that gifted Black girls do not cave in to colorism.
3. Prepare students of all ages for colorism encounters by surrounding them with multicultural toys, crayons, posters, and books that represent the full ray of skin tones. Use books such as *The Color of Us* or *The Crayon Box that Talked* (DeRolf, 1997).
4. Be mindful of examples, literature, and images used within the classroom. Make sure that males and females of all shades and hues are represented so that students are provided with a daily reminder of their worth and beauty.
5. Utilize parents as resources for professional development and dialogue. Invite them to share their stories, experiences, and suggestions as racial beings.

As educators, it is our duty to not only teach all students, but also affirm them—no exception! Let all students know they are smart and valued. If you leave the dark chocolate in the chocolate bowl, it may melt before it is able to enter into the chosen pool.

AUTHOR NOTES

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Educational Tweets

William E. Moore

My First HBCU Experience

Last year, as an international guest at the NAAAS (National Association of Afro-American Studies) Conference, I heard about HBCUs for the first time and was compelled to learn more about its purpose. Fortunately, at the conference dinner, I happened to sit next to Dr. Barbara Carpenter, a professor at Southern University – Baton Rouge. I learned that HBCUs are institutions that invest in the growth of youngsters' minds, while making up for historical injustices in this country. While this information enhanced my knowledge about American society, one of my favorite topics, it also highly contributed to my reflections on one of the main educational concerns we have had in Brazil over the past decades—inclusion. In the literature, the term inclusion is often referred the practice of integrating students with special needs in the same class as non-disabled students. But as committed educators, we know the concept has a much broader scope,

and the required pedagogical actions are much more demanding. Effective inclusion is reached by providing, apart from the necessary physical resources, adequate social, cognitive, and affective tools to enable people to actively participate in and transform society. In other words, it means to help overcome social barriers imposed by a few self-nominated powerful ones and to contribute to the development of full citizenship, especially for those who never thought they would have the right to enjoy such a privilege. This goes beyond teaching content and ordinary professional skills. If this is not the ultimate and true meaning of education, then, what is?

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Best Practices in Advising: A Course Approach

The Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at Nicholls State University has developed a unique plan to help all advisers set the stage for academic advising in an effort to encourage self-reliance in their advisees. This plan is based on the Noel-Levitz model, which asserts that advising is teaching. It is done in keeping with the core values prescribed by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). The cornerstone of this position is the belief that it is necessary for advisers to collaborate in an effort to find best practices in meeting their advising responsibilities.

Using Moodle, an open-source learning management system, advisers are assigned a course shell that they can download. This shell has resources that provide vital information to advisees 24 hours a day. Although each adviser has the flexibility to design his or her own course, collaboration among advisers has led to the development of specific topics that are common to all courses within the department.

For additional information regarding this novel technology mediated approach to student advisement, contact: Dr. Cathleen Becnel Richard, Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies, Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, LA. E-mail: cathy.richard@nicholls.edu

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Online Resources

Peggy Snowden ♦ Chauncey Carr-McElwee

edTPA – was developed by Stanford University faculty and staff at the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE). It is one of several initiatives created to meet the challenge of measuring preservice teachers' ability to perform at the highest level in practice. This site contains valuable information about the assessment as well as an online community board that offers support for those implementing the assessment. It also has a resource library that includes videos, handbooks, information on candidate support and research.

Center on Great Teachers and Leaders - is funded by the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and based at American Institutes for Research (AIR). This website was developed by state education leaders for the purpose of growing and retaining great educators and leaders specifically for students who are English language learners or students who have disabilities. Technical assistance includes briefs that summarize key research findings and strategies from the field, professional learning modules designed to increase capacity, and a link that allows users to submit questions and make requests for technical assistance. The Tools & Publications tab provides access to a range of resources including presentation, publications, webinars and online tools that assist the design and implementation of systems to support effective teachers and leaders. To encourage active participation users can take part in relevant conversations and share ideas through blogs posted under the Learning Hub tab.

Camp Wonderopolis - is a website for learners for all ages, but it is specifically targeted for learners in grades two through eight. This virtual camp is free for all campers and counselors and it provides a fun and engaging way to keep kids learning over the summer months. The content on the website is designed to improve reading comprehension, build knowledge in different areas of science, and improve vocabulary and literacy skills. The camp experience can be customized and it has 42 individual scientific lessons that can be self-paced. It has a Wonder Wall that includes a Wonder Observatory, Wonder Zoo, Wonder Amusement Park, Wonder Woods, Wonder Dig Site, and Wonder Laboratory. Participation requires registration.

Funbrain - published by Family Education Network, is a part of Pearson, the education services and technology company. This website is created for kids ages preschool through grade eight and can be used by kids, teachers, librarians, and parents. It has more than 100 free interactive educational games, online books, and comics infused under five tabs, which are math arcade, reading, fun arcade, playground, and all games. Among the popular books and comics on the site is Diary of a Wimpy Kid.

The Event Zone

Martha Jallim Hall ♦ Michael J. Maiorano

AERA Annual Meeting

American Educational Research Association
*The Power of Education Research for Innovation
in Practice and Policy*
April 3-7, 2014
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

NSTA Conference

National Science Teachers Association
April 3-6, 2014
Boston, Massachusetts

NCTM Annual Meeting & Exposition

National Council of Teachers of Math
April 9-12, 2014
New Orleans, Louisiana

CEC Convention and Expo

Council for Exceptional Children
April 9-12, 2014
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

NBASHLA Convention

NBASLH National Black Association of Speech-
Language and Hearing Convention
April 10-12, 2014
Charlotte, North Carolina

YAI International Conference on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Young Adult Institute
April 28-May 1, 2014
New York, New York

Chicago International Conference on Education

May 22-23, 2014
Chicago, Illinois

The Teaching Professor Conference

May 30-June 1, 2014
Boston, Massachusetts

National Conference on Student Assessment

*Next Generation Assessment: Turning Theory into
Reality*
June 25-27, 2014
New Orleans, Louisiana

2014 ASCD Conference on Teaching Excellence

June 27-29, 2014
Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center
Dallas, Texas

National Association of Elementary School Principals Conference

Best Practices for Better Schools
July 10-12, 2014
Nashville, Tennessee

Twenty-first International Conference on Learning

Lander College for Women at Touro College
July 14-17, 2014
New York, New York

International Educational Technology Conference

September 3-5, 2014
Chicago, Illinois

EDUCAUSE 2014 Annual Conference

September 29- October 2, 2014
Orlando, Florida

Global Learning in College: Cross-Cutting Capacities for 21st Century College Students

October 16-18, 2014
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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