The impact of teacher attitudes on academic achievement in disadvantaged schools

Tina M. Soric

The University of Toledo
A Thesis

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The Impact of Teacher Attitudes on Academic Achievement in Disadvantaged Schools

By

Tina M. Soric

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for

The Master of Education degree in Educational Theory and Social Foundations

_______________________________________
Renee Martin, Ph.D., Committee Chair

_______________________________________
Lynne Hamer, Ph.D., Committee Member

_______________________________________
Dale Snauwaert, Ph.D., Committee Member

_______________________________________
Dr. Patricia Komuniecki, Dean
College of Graduate Studies

The University of Toledo
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An Abstract of

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This study uses data from 19 teachers in an underperforming, urban, low-income charter school located in the Midwest to examine the backgrounds and attitudes of the teaching staff. The data collected provides possible areas of improvement for this school. It can be assumed that these results are not unique to this building, but rather indicative of what is taking place in schools throughout our nation. Therefore, this small study can be used to identify ways to improve practices in order to better meet the needs of students who have been historically underserved in schools throughout the country. Some key findings from this study indicate the following: there could be a correlation between student achievement and teacher background; colleges of education may not be adequately preparing pre-service teachers; and there may be a lack of access to curricular materials that represent the student population.
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Chapter One

Introduction

There has been an increase in attention being paid to our nation’s failing schools. Recent events such as the hiring and resignation of Washington D.C.’s chancellor of schools, Michelle Rhee and release of the documentary *Waiting for Superman*, have encouraged a more in depth look into the public school system. National statistics prove that there is a gap between the achievement of low-income, students of color and their more affluent, white counterparts. A review of the literature (Soric, 2010) suggests that there are many reasons that this gap exists and will continue to widen unless the causal factors are identified and reformed. Numerous researchers, including Delpit (1996), Gallavan and Ramirez (2005), Hughes, Gleason, & Zhang (2005), Kailin (1999), Oates (2003), Smith (2000), Takei and Shouse (2008), and Tyson (2003), explore the effect a cultural mismatch between teacher and students has on student academic achievement. In addition, studies done by Gere, Buehler, Dallavis, & Haviland (2009), Jennings (2006), Johnson (2002), McDonough (2009), McIntyre (2002), Milner (2006), and Talbert-Johnson (2006) look at teacher preparation programs. Finally, a review of the literature found research by Gay (2004), Gere et al. (2009), Ladson-Billings (1994), and McNeal (2005) advocating the use of a multicultural, critical curriculum in schools.

This study focuses on the backgrounds and attitudes of teachers in a low-income, predominately African-American school setting. The purpose of the study is to determine if there is a correlation between teacher backgrounds, attitudes, and student achievement. Questions guiding this study include:

1. Do the teachers in this school have similar backgrounds to the students?
2. Do the teachers believe that their beliefs influence their teaching?
3. Are the teachers provided with professional development opportunities that focus on low-income, students of color?
4. Do the teachers feel that their college coursework adequately prepared them to teach in a culturally diverse setting?
5. Do the teachers have a basic understanding of positionality?
The data collected from a survey aimed at answering these questions and standardized test scores will be used to show how multicultural social reconstructionist (MCSR) pedagogy can be beneficial in addressing low academic achievement.

Personal Narrative

I came to understand the realities of education for low-income, students of color during my first years of teaching. The children with whom I worked, entered a building that lacked proper heating and plumbing. There were no doors on the bathroom stalls, or toilet seats, or soap, and mice and roach droppings could often be found on top of the furniture. Classrooms contained out-dated curricular materials discarded by more affluent districts. In addition, students were often more than a year behind, academically. Novice teachers were given little support and struggled with classroom management. When I would share my experiences with friends and family, I was met with disbelief. Multicultural Social Reconstructionist Theory provided me with a framework for understanding the historical context of schooling and social class. My experiences underscored the gravity of these issues in American schools and have led me to an understanding of how imperative it is for members of the dominant culture to become aware of the realities many American children face. These people, in particular, have the power to reject the status quo and challenge injustices. School reform cannot happen until people from more privileged circumstances are willing to provide all students with equal educational opportunities.
Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Schooling in the United States is systematically designed to advance the dominant society, ensuring the achievement gap in the United States will continue to widen (Berlak, 2001). According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2008), white students score an average of 26 points higher on mathematics assessments than their African American counterparts and an average of 21 points higher than Hispanic students. On reading assessments, white students score an average of 29 points higher than black students and an average of 26 points higher than their Hispanic peers. Many scholars have investigated causes and possible solutions to these problems. Some scholars point to of the gap between the primarily white, European American, female, middle-class teaching force and those of low income, students color (Murray & Fallon, 1989). The lack of diversity in the teaching force means millions of students are being deprived an education that adequately prepares them to address the needs and learning styles of the culturally diverse populations that inhabit their classrooms. The vast majority of teachers in the United States come from white, middle-class backgrounds and may lack an understanding of the lives that low-income, students of color lead (Cooper, 2003; Johnson, 2002; Takei, 2008). Too often teachers lack cultural awareness, making it nearly impossible for students to learn about the multicultural society in which we live (Gallavan & Ramirez, 2005). Without an understanding of the culturally complex society in which they live educators are unable to investigate and critique issues of social justice. Until all teachers are afforded the opportunity to become critical thinkers who understand social justice
issues, particularly those related to socioeconomic status and race, millions of children will be left without the same advantages as their middle-class, white counterparts.

Numerous authors have asserted that education in the United States is in need of a major reform in order to ensure that all students are receiving an education that prepares them to understand society, think critically, and participate in democracy. However, many of the approaches that are advocated suggest essentialist paradigms that merely transmit traditional value structures. Few reforms have addressed systemic, causal factors that impede academic success. While many barriers stand in the way of this type of education, multicultural education has the potential to address the needs of racially and economically diverse learners. Colleges of education need to ensure that those entering the teaching force are capable of meeting the needs of our diverse student population. According to Kincheloe (2004), this means educators must:

possess a wide range of education in the culture; TV, radio, popular music, movies, the Internet, youth subcultures, and so on; alternative bodies of knowledge produces by marginalized or low-status groups; the modus operandi (MO) of the way social regulation operates; the complex processes of racism, gender bias, class bias, cultural bias, heterosexism, religious tolerance, and so on; the cultural experiences of students; diverse teaching styles; the forces that shape the curriculum; the often-conflicting purposes of education; and much more.

Teacher education must include coursework that provides students with the opportunity to examine the complex issues Kincheloe outlines. Prospective educators will then be prepared to enter into situations where student experiences are vastly different from their own. They will understand the importance of forming partnerships with parents and community members in order to ensure that curriculum is relevant to the lives of their students. Finally, educators will have the skills necessary to confront practices that unfairly advantage or disadvantage others.
Complex Issues Facing Urban Schools

Urban schools present a unique challenge to educators. They are distinctive because of their large communities, transient students, racial and ethnic diversity, low income, low parental involvement, inexperienced teachers, and limited resources (Milner, 2006). Talbert-Johnson (2006) adds to this list underachievement, lack of pre-school education, discipline issues, and inadequate access to health care. Teachers, who expect to be responsible for educating students, soon find that their responsibilities go far beyond the curriculum. Children bring their outside experiences with them to school each day. These experiences have shaped who they are and foreshadow their futures (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Teachers are expected to overcome all of these obstacles, yet have not been adequately educated to understand how these life circumstances affect the families they serve. Working in low-income, urban schools proves to be more challenging than many teachers expected and is often far different from their own experiences with schooling.

Kozol (1992) brought to light the disparities between low-income, urban schools and the wealthier districts from which most of the teaching force is drawn. Unfortunately, few teachers understand that these disparities are systemic. The Vega Model (see Figure 1) exemplifies the ways in which dominant ideological constructs persist and are replicated in social institutions. According to Martin (1992):

In the model, cultural bias refers to the norms, standards, and values in the society that are maintained and reinforced by the dominant culture…As individuals mature in the society, they are reinforced for their internalization and reiteration of the standards of the dominant culture. The individual develops prejudices or attitudes that are reflected by the dominant culture which become and ingrained behavioral component. These attitudes are perpetuated in the media, in ones’ peer culture, and in all social institutions. (p. 53)
The allocation of school funding is just one issue that can be better understood using this model. Money is imperative for wealthy districts to be successful, but those same districts negate the importance of funding low-income schools in an effort to protect what they believe they deserve (Kozol, 1992). Current policies and practices perpetuate the belief that meritocracy exists in today’s schools. By blaming students for not working diligently enough to succeed, injustices such as inequitable funding and social class structures go unnoticed. While these injustices are a major problem for low-income schools, the true issue is the intentionality behind the disparities. Zeicher, Grant, Gay, Gillette, Valli, & Villegas (1998) state:

Race, ethnicity, gender and social class are closely related to the distribution of power and privilege…In schools, these unequal power relations are manifested in some groups and students being favored more than some others. (p. 166)

The teachers are a part of this system that they often do not fully understand. As a result, educators are likely to engage in behaviors that contribute to the achievement gap. This is particularly dangerous because research shows that the teacher is one of the greatest factors in student success (McNeal, 2005). When teachers are unprepared to cope with the realities of their students’ lives and unaware of how schooling contributes to this reality, success can be difficult to achieve.
Overview of Multicultural Pedagogy

Colleges of education must introduce students to critical multicultural education in order to help teachers develop the skills necessary to meet the needs of a diverse population. Education is key to counter the lack of knowledge teachers have about issues of race, diversity, and white privilege (Kailin, 1999). Coursework with a focus on critical pedagogy is imperative to ensure success for educators working in low-income settings where the population is predominantly students of color (Gay, 2004; Gere, Buehler, Dallavis, & Haviland, 2009; McDonough, 2009; Milner, 2005; Milner, 2006; Sleeter, 1989; Sleeter, 1996). It is important to note that there are various approaches to multicultural education. Sleeter and Grant (1993) described five predominant approaches.
Many scholars advocate the use of an approach grounded in critical theory known as multicultural, social-reconstructionist pedagogy (Martin, 1994). In this approach, students are taught to think critically by considering the beliefs of others and confront issues of social injustice (Banks, 1998; McNeal, 2005; Sleeter, 1993). Educators who practice this pedagogical approach use student backgrounds, focus on issues of social justice, and have high expectations for student achievement (Gere et al, 2003; Milner, 2005). In addition, they work to create a curriculum that includes the experiences of diverse groups of people and help students develop pride in their identities (Sleeter, 1989). According to Sleeter (1989), education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist is particularly powerful because it “can be viewed as a form of resistance to oppressive social relationships. It represents resistance on the part of educators to white dominance of racial minority groups through education” (p. 59). All educators, and in particular white teachers, who dominate the teaching force, must have the opportunity to explore issues of social injustice in education and confront their own beliefs, attitudes, and practices in order to successfully implement a curriculum meant to counter oppressive practices.

Ladson-Billings (1994) states that multicultural education is not merely teaching about diverse holidays, a common approach. Instead, children are taught to think about a variety of perspectives when learning, thus ensuring that multicultural education addresses the complexities that envelop teaching and learning. It should be a pedagogy that affects public policy, curriculum, and instruction (Gay, 2004). Multicultural education, when it is executed critically, allows for those who historically have had little power to challenge the injustices within schools (Sleeter, 1996). Gay (2004) asserts that schooling in the United
States would improve drastically if multicultural social reconstructionist pedagogy was the norm instead of the exception.

Barriers to Critical Multicultural Education

Research available to support the use of a critical multicultural education in today’s schools is plentiful; however there are numerous reasons why so few practice this type of pedagogy. One of the most prominent barriers stems from middle-class, white educators and policy makers. These groups have had little opportunity or reason to understand the implications for policy and pedagogy that are grounded in dominant ideology. In particular, Whites rarely acknowledge their race or the fact that they benefit from it (Sleeter, 1994). They are, therefore, unlikely to have any concept of how dominant ideology relative to race affects others (McIntyre, 2002). When a group of people refuses or is unable to acknowledge that they benefit from the oppression of others, there is little hope for the remediation of policies that are oppressive. Members of the dominant culture who refuse to fight oppressive actions, yet fully accept the benefits of their race, are participating in racism (Ladson-Billings, 1996). Kailin (1999) reinforces this idea by stating, “rarely are people willing to face and counteract the contradictions between the so-called American creed of equality and the American reality of inequality relative to white privilege and power” (p. 742). Multicultural social-reconstructionist education, which is a key to increasing the academic performance of all students, and in particular low-income, students of color, can create a more democratic society, but it requires a shift of power and privilege (Banks, et al., 2001). White people’s lack of consciousness about the imposition of dominant ideology relative to race is a major barrier to achieving this goal.
In addition, white teachers often engage in “color-blindness”. Teachers claim not to see the race of their students and assert that race does not affect their expectations or beliefs about a particular group of students. Scholars warn that this practice is detrimental to the success of students because it undermines teachers’ ability to adequately educate children (Ford, Moore & Milner as cited in Milner, 2006). A student’s race and social class contribute significantly to the education he or she receives. According to Maher and Tetreault (2001):

In all classrooms, positionalities are at work. Teachers may assume, aspire to, and/or directly challenge and undermine the social structures they inhabit, but they cannot completely step outside them. Yet, if the classroom setting can help students to understand the workings of positional dynamics in their lives, to see them through their “third eye,” then they can begin to challenge them and to create change. (p. 203)

Teachers who do not have an understanding of the role such positionalities have played in education or have not had the opportunity to confront their own biases are not likely to implement critical, multicultural pedagogy. Instead, they ignore the experiences of their students in an attempt to appear unbiased. Teachers must acknowledge the race of their students in order to empower them (hooks as cited in Milner, 2006). Students of color need their teachers to see how their race privileges them in order to properly prepare them to confront the injustices racial dominance engenders.

Teachers’ attitudes also stand in the way of coursework that investigates issues of social justice. Educators may have what many researchers have termed a “deficit view” of low-income, students of color. The deficit model blames low-income, students of color for their underachievement. Deficit view theories are dangerous because they potentially make Whites appear and believe that they are superior (Smith, 2000; Takei, 2008). Believing that one culture is superior to others negates and impedes what multicultural
educators are trying to achieve. Instead of changing the system to meet the needs of all students, those who subscribe to the deficit paradigm believe the students need to be changed (Weiner, 2003). This belief system is a direct result of teachers who have not been prepared to be culturally responsive (Zeicher et al, 1998). Consequently, low-income, students of color are forced to conform to the values and norms of a culture that are vastly different from their own (Tyson, 2003). This disadvantages them, making learning more difficult. Until attitudes towards low-income, students of color change, multicultural education will not be implemented in schools.

As a result of the deficit view, some teachers may adhere to negative stereotypes and make assumptions about student ability, resulting in low expectations for achievement (Beady & Hansell 1981; Ladson-Billings, 1994; McDonough, 2009; Oates, 2003; Sleeter, 1996; McCarthy, 1999). Students become aware of the attitudes of their teachers. When they believe their teachers view them negatively, they often feel rejected. This may lead them to behave in ways that are unacceptable to their teachers (Chang & Demyan, 2007; Takei & Shouse, 2008; Zimmerman, Khoury, Vega, Gil, & Warbelt, 2005). Takei and Shouse (2008) warn that “teacher culture idealizes pupils who quickly learn the skills and knowledge the teacher presents, who are easily controlled, and who behave in a morally acceptable manner” (p. 372). Student behavior that is different from a teacher’s perceived ideal only reinforces negative viewpoints for teachers. Their lack of confidence in student ability becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1966). When negative expectations become reality in the classroom, teachers may fail to consider factors beyond the student that contribute to the achievement gap.
The presence of deficit-view thinking may be a result of the lack of diversity in the teaching force, which has created a cultural mismatch for many educators and their students. Conflicting experiences and cultural beliefs can impede the learning of students (Milner, 2005). This is particularly problematic because students who are least like their teachers are most likely to underachieve (Tyson, 2003). The growing achievement gap may be a direct result of cultural mismatch and inadequate teacher preparation. This underachievement is most visible in standardized test scores (Oates, 2003). Under current legislation, these scores directly affect the amount of funding a school receives. Lower scores translate into decreased funding. Instead of providing additional resources to struggling schools, many of which are populated by low-income, students of color, money goes to those that already have an advantage. It is imperative that educators understand mismatch in order to improve educational outcomes for low-income, students of color.

When students and teachers do not share cultural experiences, there is a good possibility that students will find it difficult to connect with their teachers (Hughes, Gleason & Zhang, 200; Milner, 2006). In addition, the lack of a connection can result in teachers and students having a difficult time developing a trusting relationship (Weiner, 2003). Teachers who are culturally different from their students are likely to misunderstand student abilities and behavior because they do not understand how to communicate effectively (Delpit & Ravitch, 1995). Tyson (2003) warns that when not taught in culturally responsive settings, students of color are at risk for developing a negative view of their own race and culture. Subsequently, negative stereotypes are reinforced for teachers, students of color, and their white peers. According to Oates (2003):
The combination of a tendency for perceptions of African-American students to be negative in racially dissonant African-American student-white teacher contexts, and for white teachers’ perceptions to be especially consequential to African-Americans’ performance would foster perpetuation of the black-white scholastic performance gap. (p. 511)

Educators must be aware of how a cultural mismatch can negatively affect low-income students of color.

Researchers have found that students benefit from being educated by teachers and curriculum to which they can relate. Teachers and school districts that fail to understand the needs of their students are likely to utilize curricular materials that have no relevant meaning to the every day lives of their students (Gay, 2004; McCarthy, 1999). The achievement gap will continue to widen without a multicultural pedagogy, which is essential in order to support the success of low-income, students of color and the creation of a more democratic society (Gay, 2004). Students will be most successful in learning environments where teachers look, behave, and speak similarly to the adults in their lives. The actions of these role models provide a sense of comfort for students (Gallavan & Ramirez, 2005). In addition, students benefit when teachers understand the inherent dynamics of social and racial class positions. According to Takei and Shouse (2008), “Racial symmetry between a person in authority and his or her clients or subordinates is typically believed to yield positive consequences for the latter (p. 370). This is not to say, however, that all teachers of color are successful with students of color or that white teachers cannot be successful educators of students of color. It is important to understand that teachers of color often have a connection to their students because they attend the same churches, stores, and community events (Milner & Howard, 2004). Cultural mismatch does not have to be a barrier to achievement. Instead, white teachers need to be
better prepared to educate students of color, must be committed to creating trusting relationships with their students, and must have access to curriculum that represents their student’s experiences.

Teachers must be able to form authentic relationships and partnerships with parents. Unfortunately, the home-school connection is not achieved in many culturally diverse urban schools (McCarthy, 1999). Research shows that there are a variety of reasons this connection is so difficult to achieve. White teachers often lack the historical knowledge necessary to understand the parents of their students and interact in a supportive way. As a result, they often blame the parents for their lack of involvement (Kailin, 1999). Epstein & Dauber (1991) reinforce this idea by stating:

If teachers believe parents are not interested in becoming involved in their children’s schooling, teachers make fewer efforts to contact, inform and work with them—especially those parents who are hard to reach and especially on more difficult types of involvement such as involving parents in learning activities at home. (p. 299)

Multicultural social reconstructionist education requires teachers, parents, and community members to form a partnership. Educators must be completely committed to creating positive relationships, even though it is often time consuming and difficult.

Like the student-teacher relationship, parent-teacher communication can be made difficult because of cultural mismatch. When there is a lack of shared experiences or mutual understandings, Lareau and Horvat (1999) found that parents who bring up concerns or disagree with their practices easily offend some teachers. An educator’s comfort level with parents directly correlates with their expectations for student achievement and behavior (Hughes, Gleason & Zhang, 2005). Parents from less well-educated, low-income families are often unaware of the ways they can interact and participate in their child’s education (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). In addition, their own
schooling experiences often make it uncomfortable for them to participate in their child’s education (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). If teachers had a better understanding of the populations they serve, positive interactions with family members would become a priority. It is imperative for teachers to form positive relationships because student achievement improves when parents are informed and supported (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). One way teachers can achieve this is by understanding the discriminatory practices within schools and how those practices affect parental involvement. (Rowley, Helaire & Banerjee, 2010). Critical multicultural education cannot happen in schools unless parents are valued and provided with opportunities to participate in their child’s education.

Transforming Schools

While there are many barriers to the implementation of critical multicultural education in today’s schools, there are many steps educators can take to make education a more just institution. Due to the lack of academic success for low-income, students of color, it is important for colleges of education to evaluate their teacher preparation programs. There are a multitude of reasons that reform in teacher education is necessary. First, there is little being done under No Child Left Behind Legislation to ensure that a range of students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds are being taught by highly qualified teachers (Talbert-Johnson, 2006). Teacher education in most institutions is not set up to specifically address the needs of low-income, students of color. Therefore, teachers entering the field are inadequately qualified. As diversity among students increases and the teaching force become less diverse, colleges of education must do a better job preparing pre-service teachers (Milner, 2006; Takei & Shouse, 2008; Talbert-
Institutions of education must produce educators who are able to consider the diverse student population and meet their needs (Talbert-Johnson, 2006).

According to leaders in the field of multicultural and urban education, there are a variety of steps colleges of education must take in order to meet this goal. First, the admissions process should be re-evaluated. More competitive standards for admission into colleges of education are necessary (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Johnson, 2002). Colleges should have high academic standards, require advanced degrees and implement reliable assessments for teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Beyond academic ability, admissions should actively seek to recruit students with diverse experiences in order to provide a counter to white viewpoints and create opportunities for authentic discussions about race (Johnson, 2002). According to Ladson-Billings (2005), “the point of creating a more diverse teaching force and a more diverse set of teacher educators is to ensure that all students, including white students experience a more accurate picture of what it means to live and work in a multicultural and democratic society” (p. 231). The character and attitudes of applicants should be examined as part of the admissions process (Zeicher et al, 1998; Talbert-Johnson, 2006). A more selective admissions process is the first step towards creating a more capable teaching force.

Next, colleges of education need to look closely at their faculty in order to ensure that pre-service teachers are being taught by professors committed to critical multicultural pedagogy. Jennings (2006) found that faculty who showed a disinterest or discomfort in discussions of diversity resulted in students with the same discomfort. If faculty members are not committed to creating teachers who understand the impact of issues of social justice on education, students of color may continue to underachieve. Colleges of
education must also ensure that educators are focusing on how teachers can meet the needs of diverse students, not just why it is important (Milner, 2006). Also, it is important to note that single courses are not effective and multicultural education cannot be isolated within the curriculum (Hagiwawa & Wray, 2009; Jennings, 2006; McDonough, 2009; Zeicher et al, 1998). The entire college must be committed to multicultural pedagogy in order to successfully prepare teachers for the diverse student population they will serve. Institutions of education will be most successful when they have recruited diverse, capable students and faculty.

Once this diverse group of individuals has entered into teacher preparation programs, it is imperative that coursework prepares them to understand positionality. According to Maher and Tetreault (2001) positinality refers to the idea that “people are defined not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be analyzed and changed" (p. 164). Gender, race, and social class influence the practices of classroom teachers. Positionality can provide or deny power and access. Scholars believe that it is important for pre-service teachers to recognize themselves as racial beings and be able to see how that affects others (Milner, 2006). According to Kailin (1999), teacher background greatly affects attitudes towards diversity and racism. In order to get educators to teach from a critical multicultural perspective, they must first examine their own positionalities. In particular, critical educators assert that pre-service teachers should have coursework that requires them to acknowledge their whiteness and the power it gives them (McIntyre, 2002; Sleeter, 1989). When teachers fail to understand their race and social class, it is difficult for them to engage in real learning about others. In addition, these courses should foster a sense of
responsibility to engage in reform efforts (McIntyre, 2002). One way that this can be accomplished is by engaging students in discussions that make them think critically about race and social class provide them with opportunities to work toward social change (McDonough, 2009). In addition to recognizing their own race and its effects on others, pre-service teachers need to have discussions about race-based tension in order to prepare them for multicultural classrooms and must develop an understanding of race and its effects in the classroom (Gere et al, 2009). In addition to threading social justice issues throughout the teacher education curriculum, as critical multicultural educators suggest, this can be accomplished by having courses on the history of African-American and Hispanic-American education (Cooper, 2003). This will not only help teachers have a better understanding of institutional racism within American schools, but also help them develop a sense of responsibility to serve as change agents by challenging policies, implementing culturally-relevant lessons, and empowering students. By examining race, teachers will be able to identify and alter places in the curriculum where biases exist (Sleeter, 1989). Providing pre-service teachers with the opportunity to understand and discuss their own race and social class and how those positions have affected education throughout history is key in preparing educators to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Another key component in preparing pre-service teachers is their involvement in diverse communities. Students must be required to engage in a variety of cultural settings (Hagiwawa & Wray, 2009; McDonough, 2009; Zeicher et al, 1998). When they are able to connect what they are learning within the classroom to actual experiences in the field, pre-service teachers will develop a greater understanding of the need for multicultural pedagogy and its implementation. Pre-service teachers must have the opportunity to apply
theory to practice before entering the work force. If students are not supported in using a theoretical framework before they enter the field, they are unlikely to do so early in their careers (Milner, 2006). For teachers and their students to be successful, there must be a connection between educators and the families, students, and communities they serve (Ladson-Billings, 2005). This connection cannot be made without pre-service teachers having the opportunity to experience diversity while being supported by faculty in understanding those experiences.

Colleges of education are not the only parties responsible for ensuring teachers are prepared to meet the needs of their students. School districts must be committed to multicultural education, as well. Schools must find ways to create a culturally sensitive environment in order to ensure academic success for all learners (McKay, McKeman, Atkins, Hawkins, Brown & Lynn, 2003). There are number of key steps schools should be taking in order to meet the needs of all students:

1) Professional development should help teachers understand how behavior is related to culture;

2) Culturally responsive teaching should be required in order to help students make sense of their world;

3) Schools should afford all students the same access to learning;

4) Students should be exposed to multiple perspectives and races beyond their own;

5) Students should learn mechanisms for understanding positionalities such as race and social class;

6) Students should be guided towards peaceful cooperation with others;

7) Teachers should engage in critical reflection;
8) Students must be taught to think critically and have opportunities to challenge injustice;

9) Open communication between schools, parents and community members is essential;

10) Collective decision-making should be practiced.

(Banks et al, 2001; Epstein, & Dauber, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings & Gomez, 2001; McIntyre, 1997; Milner, 2006; Sleeter, 1996)

Schools must be committed to implementing practices that are grounded in critical multicultural theory in order to ensure achievement for all students.

Research of successful teachers in low-income, urban environments demonstrates common themes. First, teachers must be aware and respectful of the values and norms within the communities they serve (Cooper, 2003). In order to truly understand values and norms, Zeicher et al (1998) say it is imperative for educators to interact with the local community. Teachers can successfully meet the needs of their students by “understanding the individual child within the broader context...using talk to connect with students’ lives, and communicating with parents” (McCarthy, 1999, p. 92). Teacher involvement within the greater community allows educators to connect with students and their families. According to Milner (2006), pre-service teachers that were the most successful in the classroom were those who could make connections between the lives of their students and schooling. Next, research shows that teacher expectations and attitudes directly correlate to student achievement. Teachers who are able to care about and respect their students will create an environment where children feel safe and are able to learn (Talbert-Johnson, 2006). Educators must also have positive attitudes towards diversity (McNeal, 2005).
Successful teachers are those who have an understanding of racism in our society (Ladson-Billings as cited in Delpit, 1996). Therefore, teacher attitudes toward low-income, students of color will be affected by the amount of background knowledge they possess. Finally, successful teachers expand the curriculum and serve as advocates for change. When teachers are committed to culturally relevant pedagogy, they make connections to student experiences in an attempt to help students gain an understanding of social injustices (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Once social injustices are identified, teachers must be able to help students confront and attempt to change the inequalities in education (Tyson, 2003). To help students become change agents, they need to be taught to act politically in order to ensure that they can participate in our democracy. Teachers and students who are committed to changing the structure of schools will be able to join with parents and community members to implement needed improvements (Sleeter, 1996). Students will benefit greatly from educators who understand race and social class and their affects on schooling, are committed to learning about the community they serve, implement a curriculum that confronts social justice issues, and provides students with the tools to become change agents.
Chapter Three

Methodology

Given the disparities between the educational opportunities of the dominant culture and those that have been historically marginalized, the study intends to identify contributing behaviors and attitudes amongst educators. Data was collected from teachers through an Internet-based survey. Each survey (Appendix 1) was completed by a licensed, qualified educator as determined by the State of Ohio. Participants were given a two week time period to complete the survey. An email reminder was sent out after one week of when the survey was made available to participants. Within the allotted time frame, all but one participant completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 95%. The survey identified demographic characteristics of the teaching staff, pre-service field experience, professional development opportunities, and attitudes towards issues of race, social class, and multicultural education.
Chapter Four

Data Analysis

Of the 19 survey respondents, ninety-five percent are Caucasian and five percent are African American. Eight-nine percent of the teachers are female and eleven percent are male. Sixty-three percent attended high school in a suburban setting, twenty-six percent in a rural setting, and eleven percent in an urban setting. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers have 0-5 years of classroom experience, sixteen percent have 6-10 years, and sixteen percent have more than 10 years of experience. From the demographic data, it can be determined that the staff is representative of most low-income, urban schools in the United States. The majority of the teachers are entry-level, white, females who grew up in an environment that differs from their students.

The school selected for this study is located in an urban community. It serves 354 students in grades K-5. Ninety-four percent of the students attending this school are economically disadvantaged. Sixty-eight percent of the students are African American, fourteen percent are Caucasian, fourteen percent are Multi-Racial, three percent are Hispanic, less than one percent are American Indian, and less than one percent are Asian Pacific.

In addition to the economic and racial composition of the student population, the results from the Ohio Achievement Assessment (see Figure 2) taken by third-fifth graders during the 2009-2010 school year made this an ideal site for this survey.
Figure 2: Academic Achievement Results 2009-2010

These results demonstrate that this school is not only under-performing when compared to the state average, but also under-performing when compared to the schools within the local city district.

According to the State of Ohio, under No Child Left Behind Legislation, this school is under Academic Watch. It did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress and is, therefore, in the first year of School Improvement. The school administration is responsible for meeting state mandated requirements. These requirements include the goals to:

• Develop a school improvement plan to cover a three-year period. The plan must be developed within three months of being put into SI status.

• Spend not less than 10% of the building’s Title I funds on professional development.

• Promptly notify parents (in a language they can understand) and explain:

  Identification means;

How the school compares in terms of academic achievement to other schools in the district and the state;
Reasons for the identification and what the school, district and state are doing to address the problem of low achievement;

How the parents can become involved in addressing the academic issues that caused the school to be identified for school improvement;

An explanation of the parent’s options to transfer the child.

(School Improvement/District Improvement Questions and Answers, Center for School Finance, Office of Federal Programs, Ohio Department of Education, 2004).
Chapter Five

Discussion:

One of the most difficult tasks for struggling schools to accomplish is identifying and remediating the issues that are causal factors for low academic achievement scores. In order to make progress towards school improvement, it is imperative to look closely at all components of the school, including the teaching staff. The survey results show that the backgrounds and attitudes of educators in this building could affect educational outcomes in a variety of ways.

All of the surveyed teachers agreed or strongly agreed that there is a widening achievement gap in the United States. However, sixty-three percent disagree or strongly disagree that poorly prepared teachers are responsible for this gap. Research shows that one of the greatest determinants of a student’s ability to succeed in a classroom is the effectiveness of the teacher (Rice, 2003). Therefore, the survey participants’ response to this question indicates that some educators may not recognize the magnitude of their influence on achievement. When teachers do not see themselves as responsible for failing to meet the needs of the population they teach, students will suffer. According to Gallavan et al (2005) Teachers, especially at the novice level, are not aware of the vastly different worlds their students live in. Instead, they assume that their students are just like them. This assumption allows for many teachers to utilize educational approaches that they witnessed growing up. As a result, when their own students struggle to succeed, they blame the child because the methodology had been effective in their own schooling. Multicultural Social Reconstructionist coursework and professional development are advocated because they require educators to recognize that there is a gap in achievement
and support them in understanding how their beliefs, attitudes, and practices may be contributing to the gap. Once this has been accomplished, teachers may be better able to evaluate their methods and make improvements based on the specific needs of the population they are serving.

Another indicator that teachers in this building may not be meeting the academic needs of their students is that eighty-nine percent of the participants do not believe that they were adequately prepared to teach low-income students. The teachers recognize that they have not had the training necessary to adequately meet the needs of the ninety-four percent of students in the school who fall into the low-income category. In addition, seventy-four percent of participants do not feel that they were adequately prepared to teach students of color who compromise eighty-six percent of the student population. Children who fall into both of these categories are at a high risk for low academic achievement. It is alarming that so many teachers in the study feel unprepared, yet claim that poorly prepared teachers are not to blame for low academic achievement. It is imperative the teachers in this building understand that if they were not properly prepared to teach low-income, students of color they may not be meeting their needs and they are, in turn, at least partly responsible for the achievement gap. Educators who are products of Multicultural Social Reconstructionist coursework would recognize that this lack of preparation is an injustice to a large population of our nation’s students. They would have the ability to not only identify this prevalent social justice issue, but also to challenge its very existence (Jennings, 2006).

Teachers may also benefit from multicultural social reconstructionist learning experiences because sixty-three percent of the surveyed teachers believe being color blind
to race is appropriate. Sixty-eight percent teachers go on to claim that they do not notice race when interacting with someone from another cultural group. According to Johnson (2002), color blindness is often claimed by white teachers. Researchers have found that this is often because white teachers do not see their whiteness or understand the effects of race on schooling (Gere et al, 2009). Race must be examined during teacher preparation. According to Milner (2006), “…cultural and racial reflection is necessary for all teachers—even preservice teachers of color—because many preservice teachers of color have internalized, validated, and reified pervasive, counterproductive stereotypes about themselves and others” (356).

One of the most important components of preparing multicultural social reconstructionist educators is understanding the historic importance of race in America and how it has affected schooling. Milner (2006) states that pre-service teachers often lack the knowledge base necessary to understand the impact of racial diversity on education. It is imperative for educators to explore what it means to be a person of color in our society in order to work toward a more just system of education. To ignore race is to ignore the marginalization and discrimination students in our country face. According to Seldon (1980):

To be “color-blind” requires me to deny color which is important to me and to hundreds of my friends. To be “color-blind” requires me to ignore a history and a present fact of prejudice, discrimination and racism built on assumptions that white people are superior to people of color. To be ignorant of racism is to assure that we cannot move beyond it.
It is necessary to question the intent behind claims of color-blindness. Teachers, who have not had access to multicultural social reconstructionist pedagogy, may fear that seeing color is racist. However, the needs and experiences of low-income, students of color can be vastly different from their more affluent, white counterparts. It is imperative that educators not only notice the race of their students, but also have the knowledge to understand what privileges, injustices, and needs exist for those students. It is only then that teachers will be able effectively meet their academic needs.

A belief in color-blindness is not the only misconception that teachers have. Eighty-four percent of surveyed teachers believe that meritocracy exists in the United States. Educators who lack an understanding of the realities of meritocracy may be doing a disservice to their students. It is dangerous to tell students from historically marginalized groups that all they have to do is work hard in order to accomplish the same things as their peers from the dominant culture. In reality, the American Dream is not attainable for all who try to achieve it. (McNamee & Miller, 2004). Michelle Rhee, former chancellor of Washington D.C. public schools, stated on a nationally syndicated talk show that a child’s future success can be predicted simply by looking at their zip code. The idea of meritocracy is that anyone can succeed as long as they put in the effort and work hard. Unfortunately, the reality of the situation, as Ms. Rhee points out, is that students do not have that much control over their futures. While their will always be exceptions, for many low-income, students of color, the education that they receive will not adequately prepare them to move up the social class ladder. It is dangerous for teachers to believe and pass on the idea that students simply need to do is work hard in order to succeed. Instead, we need educators who are aware of the injustices in our
society that impede meritocracy and who can create classrooms where students are given
the tools to overcome these obstacles. For many teachers, this means working twice as
hard. They may need to spend more time calling parents, visiting homes, seeking outside
resources, challenging school practices, critiquing curriculum, creating opportunities for
critical thought and self reflection, staying after, coming in early, and working with the
community. Multicultural Social Reconstructionist education can provide teachers with
the tools necessary to help students overcome the obstacles that come with their social
class and race.

One hundred percent of surveyed teachers believe race does not affect students’
ability to learn in the classroom. This needs to be examined closely when considering that
so many teachers felt unprepared to teach students of color. Teachers need to understand
that “race has consequences” which means that a child’s racial make-up may ultimately
affect the quality of education they receive (McDonough, 2009, p. 529). Teachers may
believe that responding in the affirmative to this question would make it appear that they
are engaging in racial stereotyping. The teacher responses could be indicative of a lack of
a concrete understanding of positionality. Educators who have been taught from a
multicultural social reconstructionist perspective understand that race matters in our
society; that it affects educational opportunities. It is their goal to provide students with
an education that helps make sense of social injustices (Ladson-Billings, 1998). This
knowledge will empower students to successfully navigate through a system that has been
designed to under serve. If teachers are unwilling to admit that race can determine the
quality of education a student receives, they will not be successful in meeting the specific
needs of diverse populations.
Advocates of Multicultural Social Reconstructionist pedagogy believe that all children regardless, of race, social class, ability level, or gender should have access to high quality education. When asked, 84% of the teachers surveyed would not send their child to this school. When the vast majority of teachers admit that this school is not good enough for their own children, we must ask why it is okay for other people’s children. Teachers need to have coursework and professional development opportunities that focus on helping educators understand the ways education in the United States privileges the dominant culture, while denying so many others. More importantly, they would have the skills necessary to advocate against any injustices towards non-dominant cultures. This awareness, along with effective teaching methods, will create educators who can meet the needs of diverse learners.

Ninety-five percent of teachers surveyed disagree or strongly disagree that their experiences growing up were similar to their students’. According to Takei et al. (2008), young, inexperienced teachers who are unfamiliar with the community they are serving often staff today’s schools. Many researchers refer to this a cultural mismatch and it needs to be addressed because the implications are serious (McNeal, 2005). Teachers, who have experiences that are vastly different from their students, may lack the knowledge and experiences necessary to understand these differences. As a result, their expectations for behavior, achievement and parent interactions may not be appropriate. Multicultural Social Reconstructionist coursework would support educators in understanding the importance of adapting to the student population instead of creating an environment where students and families feel uncomfortable or are forced to conform in order to succeed.
Initial coursework, followed by ongoing professional development opportunities are necessary to support teachers in countering cultural mismatch.

One of the complex issues that educators face in urban schools, is classroom management. When surveyed, Seventy-nine percent of participants believe behavior is a problem in their classroom. Academic growth will not take place without an effective behavior management plan. The majority of students attending this school are being taught in classrooms where behavior is problematic. Cultural mismatch and a lack of understanding of the population contribute to the difficulty teachers have managing behaviors. According to Anyon (1980), teachers in working-class schools often make choices for students without considering their opinions or explaining the reasoning behind the decision. Students, who are not given the opportunity to make choices for themselves, often battle with teachers for control.

Teachers may have different behavioral expectations for their students than they experience at home and in the community. According to Gallavan & Ramirez (2005), for students who come to school experiencing a cultural mismatch, it is imperative educators have the knowledge to help students successfully navigate the dueling environment. While it is important for teachers to help students understand conflicting expectations and experiences, classroom management is an area where Multicultural Social Reconstructionist educators would be careful to make sure that their expectations are formed based on the student population. Pre-service coursework or professional development is necessary to help teachers create a classroom where cultural mismatch and behavior management do not result in low academic achievement.
Sixty-eight percent of surveyed teachers believe that low-income parents are less likely to participate in their child’s schooling. Teachers need to have background knowledge about socioeconomic status and cultural capital in order to understand why participation can be difficult for low-income families (Takei & Shouse, 2008). Without this knowledge base, teachers, especially those at the novice level, are not aware of the vastly different worlds in which their students live. Instead, they assume that their students are just like them (Gallavan & Ramirez, 2005). The study found that seventy-four percent of survey participants believe that if parents cared more, the students would do better. Teachers who have been prepared to be multicultural, social reconstructionist educators understand that the problem with achievement is not that low-income parents do not care enough, but rather that these parents have been deprived the opportunity to gain the cultural capital necessary to participate more effectively in their child’s schooling. Student achievement will increase when parents are purposefully included in their child’s education. This can be done most effectively when teachers have a true understanding of the community in which these families come from and use those experiences to guide learning (McCarthy, 1999). Negative views of parents will ultimately affect home-school relationships and achievement.

Seventy-four percent of teachers surveyed were willing to place blame for student achievement on parents, but eighty-nine percent do not feel that their own beliefs affect students’ ability to learn. It is imperative that educators are supported in confronting their own beliefs. According to Milner (2005), properly prepared teachers participate in coursework where the “specific focus is on teachers’ beliefs, cultural and racial mismatch, color-blindness, and teachers’ deficit thinking” (768). Professional development that
addresses these topics is imperative in a school building where so many teachers are
unaware that their beliefs may be contributing to low academic achievement.

While Colleges of Education are responsible for preparing educators to teach in
diverse settings, schools must also provide continuous support and training opportunities
for staff members (McNeal, 2005). Fifty-eight percent of participants at the selected site
do not believe that the school’s professional development opportunities addressed the
needs of students of color. Similarly, 53% of participants do not believe professional
development addressed the needs of low-income students. During the 2009-2010 school
year, staff members participated in the following professional development opportunities:

*Crisis Prevention Training*

*How to implement Foss Science Curriculum in the Classroom*

*How to use Nystrom Social Studies Materials in the Classroom*

*Staff Development and Team Building*

*Implementation of Reading Mastery Curriculum*

*COACH- Classroom Management Training*

Of these opportunities, none are specifically designed to help teachers meet the needs of
low-income, students of color. Schools should be purposefully seeking opportunities that
are directly related to the academic needs of their student population.

Besides providing professional development opportunities to help staff meet the needs of
diverse learners, schools must also implement a multicultural curriculum that requires
critical thought and reflection. Sixty-eight percent of surveyed teachers do not believe the
school’s curriculum represents racially diverse perspectives. One hundred percent believe
it is important for the curriculum to represent these perspectives. According to Smith
(2000), many schools lack a curriculum that relates to students experiences, represents various perspectives, or sensitivity to diverse cultures. This particular school utilizes curricular materials that require direct instruction to students. The lessons are often scripted for teachers, require little to no critical thinking, and tend to only represent the ideas and beliefs of the dominant culture. The following curricula are used for teaching core subjects:

*Direct Instruction-Reading Mastery*

*Saxon Math*

*Nystrom Social Studies*

*Foss Science*

Materials such as Reading Mastery and Saxon Math are problematic because they require teachers to follow a script, which results in students having fewer opportunities for active engagement or critical thinking. While experienced teachers may be able to work around the scripted nature of the curriculum, it is important to remember that most of the teachers in low-income, racially diverse schools are novices. According to Parnell (2005), Direct Instruction students are “generally poorer and more likely to be minority than non-DI students” (Since direct instruction curriculum is not usually found in schools where students represent the dominant culture, we must question its use in other schools.

The survey results show that teachers at this school may have beliefs and experiences that can negatively affect student achievement. Significant findings include beliefs in colorblindness and meritocracy, blaming parents over poorly prepared teachers for low academic achievement, curriculum and professional development that fail to reflect the needs of the student population and a cultural mismatch. Multicultural Social
Reconstructionist coursework and professional development has the potential to prepare teachers to better meet the needs of students from historically marginalized groups.
Chapter Six

Suggestions for Additional Research

While this study advocates the use of a Multicultural Social Reconstructionist approach to educating pre-service teachers and students, it is limited in that it does not prove that this method will be effective. It would be beneficial to use the results of the teacher survey to create and implement professional development programs that address the unique needs of low-income, students of color. Ideally, this work would begin at the pre-service level, however reform on that large of a scale is more difficult to accomplish. Through observation, further surveys, and achievement scores, researchers could evaluate the effectiveness of professional development aimed at supporting teachers in their use of a multicultural social reconstructionist approach to education. The outcomes could then be used to further support the need for coursework at the collegiate level that challenges and prepares teachers to meet the unique academic needs of a diverse population.
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Appendix

Demographic Data:

Please place an X next to the appropriate response for each of the following.

1. Gender:
   ________ Male
   ________ Female

2. Age:
   ________ 18-25 years old
   ________ 26-40 years old
   ________ over 40

3. Years of teaching experience:
   ________ 0-5
   ________ 6-10
   ________ more than 10

4. I attended a high school that can best be characterized as:
   ________ Urban
   ________ Rural
   ________ Suburban

5. The racial group with which I primarily identify is:
   ________ Asian American
   ________ Black/African American
   ________ Caucasian/European American
   ________ Hispanic American
   ________ Native American/American Indian
   ________ Other
Directions: Please respond to the following questions by circling the letter of the response that best characterizes your own experience or feelings.

6. Social class is a factor in a student’s ability to be successful in American schools.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

7. Racism is a serious problem in the United States.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

8. The academic achievement gap continues to widen in The United States of America.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

9. Being color blind is the best way to think about race.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

10. Most wealthy people in the United States have inherited their wealth.
    a. strongly agree
    b. agree
    c. disagree
11. I regularly (once every week or so) socialize (see a movie, have dinner etc.) with friends from racial groups other than my own.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

12. Students who are successful in American society owe their success to hard work.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

13. I have some beliefs that may affect my ability to effectively teach students of color.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

14. My teacher preparation courses adequately prepared me to teach low-income students.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

15. Schools in the United States are racially integrated.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
d. strongly disagree

16. The curriculum provided by the school in which I teach represents racially diverse perspectives.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

17. Schools do a good job of providing low-income students with an education.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

18. During methods or field experiences, I had multiple experiences working with students of color.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

19. Students benefit when there is racial diversity in the classroom.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

20. Students of color are less likely to misbehave in school than their white counterparts.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
21. During methods/field experience, I had multiple experiences working with low-income students.
   a. **strongly agree**
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. **strongly disagree**

22. Racism was common in the high school that I attended.
   a. **strongly agree**
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. **strongly disagree**

23. My experiences growing up were similar to my students.
   a. **strongly agree**
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. **strongly disagree**

24. Among my friends, negative comments about people of color are common.
   a. **strongly agree**
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. **strongly disagree**

25. The government allocation for food stamps is sufficient for people to purchase nutritional food.
   a. **strongly agree**
   b. agree
26. My family has been the primary influence in my life regarding how I feel about issues of race.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

27. My high school education adequately informed me about the contributions of people of color to American society.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

28. Poorly prepared teachers are to blame for the achievement gap in low-income schools.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

29. I feel comfortable interacting with the parents of my students who are from racial groups other than my own.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

30. Multicultural education can be accomplished by celebrating specific holidays.
   a. strongly agree
31. All students in my classroom have access to nutritional food.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

32. Low-income parents are just as likely to participate in their child’s schooling as high-income parents.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

33. Schools should educate students about the contributions of all racial groups in the United States.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

34. The school I teach at provides professional development to help teachers be more effective educators of low-income students.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

35. All students, regardless of race can achieve academically in my classroom
a. strongly agree  
b. agree  
c. disagree  
d. strongly disagree  

36. It is unreasonable to expect math teachers to include multicultural education in the curriculum.  
a. strongly agree  
b. agree  
c. disagree  
d. strongly disagree  

37. Lack of nutritional food access affects my students ability to perform academically.  
a. strongly agree  
b. agree  
c. disagree  
d. strongly disagree  

38. My racial identity provides me with some privileges in society.  
a. strongly agree  
b. agree  
c. disagree  
d. strongly disagree  

39. Multicultural education courses should be taught in all colleges.  
a. strongly agree  
b. agree  
c. disagree  
d. strongly disagree  

40. When I interact with people I don’t notice their race.
41. The school I teach at provides professional development to help teachers be more effective educators of students of color.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

42. Schools do a good job of providing students of color with an education.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

43. Behavior is a problem in my classroom.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

44. My teacher preparation adequately prepared me to teach students of color.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree
45. If parents cared more, their students would do better academically.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

46. Multicultural education courses should be taught in all schools.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

47. I would send my child to the school where I teach.
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree