

THE **Journal** OF
RACE & POLICY

Spring/Summer 2006
Volume 2 ♦ Number 1

Leaving Black Males Behind: Debunking the Myths of Meritocratic Education

Robin L. Hughes, Ph.D.

Indiana University and Purdue University, Indianapolis

Fred A. Bonner, II, Ed.D.

Texas A & M University

A fundamental explanation for the dire conditions in which black males are found today can be traced to the mythology promoted by uncritical observation and pseudoscientific analyses widely accepted by the press, the public and school officials. Four core myths are detailed in this paper: (1) all the research on black males is brand new; (2) black males graduate from high school at much lower rates; (3) something is wrong with black males; and (4) those who teach black males are colorblind. An examination of these beliefs from the perspective of Critical Race Theory reveals their self-fulfilling nature, while the underlying realities point to quite different causes and suggests proactive solutions.

In a *Washington Post* article entitled "Degrees of Separation," writer Michael Fletcher takes aim at the organizations he deems responsible for creating the ever-growing conundrum faced by our colleges and universities, namely, "Where are all of the men?" He goes on to state that the cumulative effect of years of tampering with the education of males has led to declining Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores and substandard rankings of men in the United States as compared to their international counterparts. An editorial in another mainstream newspaper, the nationally-distributed *USA Today* states with subtle eloquence, "While girls received extra help in the classroom, boys received prescriptions for *Ritalin*" (2003). These are but two examples from headlines in highly regarded newspapers that have taken on the U.S. educational system — specifically in regards to the ways that they have routinely failed males.

Contrastingly, academic and other scholarly news sources appear to be more ambivalent when discussing this topic. Many of these venues claim that boys are being conspicuously shortchanged by the educational system (Hoff-Sommers, 2000), while others maintain that the general population of males is not being neglected at all (Brownstein, 2000; King, 2000; Fuentes, 2003, Smith, 2005, Gewertz, 2004). In actuality, only boys of color appear to be impacted. To amplify this point, in an article cited in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* more than five years ago, Brownstein (2000) explained that while empirical studies and press releases continued to report the impending national "crisis"— the undermining of education for males — there is little evidence to suggest that all males are represented in these critical discussions. In fact, the author goes on to state that the "crisis" is occurring among males in black and other racial minority populations; other (*i.e.*, white) males were found to be "doing just fine" (Brown, 2000; King, 2000; Fuentes, 2003).

Although some male populations appear to be fairing well in higher education, the fact still

remains that in general, enrollment patterns among both white and black males attending college has decreased (King, 2000; Smith, 2005; Gewertz, 2004). It is important to note in this statement the term "in general." According to King (2000) once race is used as a means to disaggregate the male college-going population, we "generally" find significantly fewer black males left in the pool. Perhaps an even more significant finding is that there is virtually no difference in the number of white, traditional-aged male and female undergraduates. Where we *do* find significant gender gaps are among African American, Native American, and to a lesser degree Hispanic populations. King's research reveals that the true gaps found to exist among males and females in academe are within populations of color. There are simply fewer males of color "in general", which in turn, reduces the numbers of males reported overall. Thus, the revelation is that there is really no revelation at all. We have known for quite some time that higher education applicant pools are not reflective of students from low-income and minority statuses (King, 2000).

This article addresses the disparities in black male participation in higher education by exploring several pervasive myths that have been espoused as rationales for the continued low enrollment of this cohort. A Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework is employed to challenge common assumptions and offer new insight regarding low collegiate enrollment as an outcome of various structural inequities, *e.g.*, the propensity of teachers to pathologize black males in their early school experiences and education tracking that locks black males into substandard classes and ineffective classroom learning environments. We conclude with recommendations for individuals in and outside of educational contexts to assist in not only debunking the myths identified (all the research on black males is brand new, black males graduate at a much lower rate, something is wrong with black males, and those who teach black males are colorblind), but also to improve the current and future educational status of black males in the academy.

THE MAKINGS OF MYTHS

Current research would have many of us believe that black males are pathological and failing miserably in our nation's schools, when in actuality our nation's schools seem to be the purveyors of pathology and are miserably failing our black males (Dunbar, 2001; Ferguson, 2000; McNalley, 2003). A typical response by K-12 educational institutions when quizzed about the declining academic and social status of black males has been to speak from a position promoting pathology. Their recitations include reference to the group's over inclusion in special education courses (Kunjufu, 2005), their low inclusion in gifted and talented courses (Ford, 1992, 1994; Bonner, 2000), their use of over-prescribed behavior altering drugs (*e.g.*, Ritalin and Aderall), and the categorization of black males in terms of monikers such as ADD and ADHD (Orfield and Losen, 2002; Dunbar, 2001; Ferguson, 2000). These same constituencies rarely if ever question or second-guess their decisions or the inequitable social and structural processes that often place black males in such categories and situations in the first place (Davis, 2002).

When inequities are left to run rampant in the lower schools, the outcome typically results

in fewer black males who have the academic credentials necessary for entrée into institutions of higher learning. According to Lee (1996), "Black males encounter formidable challenges to their educational development and many of them experience a serious stifling of achievement, aspiration, and pride in school systems throughout the country" (5). For black males, the acquisition of an education is often a Catch-22 situation in which to fully understand what academic accoutrements are necessary for success they must possess certain cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997). Yet, the black male is expected to have certain cultural capital in order to understand what academic accoutrements are necessary for success.

Perhaps a teleological approach that looks at the very essence of why black males are underachieving from a standpoint that eschews notions of deficiency and pathology would lead to a different outcome for these young men. As critical theorists, we argue that the low enrollment of black males is a result of the failure to seriously educate, and in some instances a propensity to *miseducate* black males (Woodsen, 1990). These inequities are perpetuated by a lack of appreciation and understanding of what these individuals are bringing to the educational context; hence, through CRT we speak to the importance of allowing these individuals to bring their personal and collective narratives, as well as their social constructions, to the table (Delgado, 1995).

Delgado (1995) further states, "Each of the prime Critical themes — the call for context, critique of liberalism, insistence that racism is ordinary not exceptional, and the notion that traditional civil rights law has been more valuable to Whites than to Blacks" (xv), must be used as grounds to engage in important discourse, especially in our deliberations about the education of black males. Through the lens of CRT, we are able to recognize that race is neither real nor is it objective; rather it is a social construction. As critical writers we use the tools of CRT to present *counterstories* to challenge and combat vitriolic meta-narratives and beliefs in order to give voice to those who have been silenced (43).

Additionally, we agree with the conflict theorists who assert that education for the majority has historically undermined the education of minority students. In speaking to this issue, Irvine (1990) states, "As an agent of ideological control, schools preserve their historical purpose — maintaining the existing social order in which low-income and minority persons are 'educated' for less skilled, routine jobs and conditioned by schools for obedience, the acceptance of authority, and external control" (2).

By blaming black males for their school failure (Irvine, 1990; Kunjufu, 2005), schools are essentially blaming themselves; however, to combat oppression, schools must become complicit in the transformation of the educational experiences of black males. Much like in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* when Friere (1993) asserts in his diatribe concerning the problems found to exist among oppressor and oppressed, "Hence the radical requirement — both for the individual who discovers him- or herself to be an oppressor and for the oppressed — that the concrete situation which begets oppression must be transformed" (32). This transformation must begin with a radical attack on the myths that shape the thoughts and perceptions of individuals responsible for our educational systems; these individuals are ultimately responsible for enacting policies and procedures that are anabolic for black males.

MYTH 1: ALL THE RESEARCH ON BLACK MALES IS BRAND NEW

Perhaps one of the most troubling myths associated with the low enrollment of black males in higher education is the belief that this phenomenon is a relatively “new” development. Contrary to this view, numerous recent studies by scholars have detailed the long history of study of this topic (Delpit, 2003; Lopez, 2003; Davis, 2002; Dunbar, 2001; Ferguson, 2001). Perhaps an even more troublesome dimension to this myth is the evolving rhetoric that tends to downplay the historically specific origins of the black males’ oppression in schools instead placing these discussions in a more generalized framework for debate. These attempts have essentially served to obliterate the nuances of what it has meant historically to be both black and male in our nation’s schools (Hoff-Sommers, 2000).

The result has been a sudden interest by the American public in the ways that males have been treated — it has even been elevated to the level of generating the moniker “male problem.” The irony in this situation is that we have only recently begun to pay attention to these problems now that males in mainstream populations have been impacted, when in fact, we should have been paying attention to these problems years ago. According to Hoff-Sommers (2000),

Under the guise of helping girls, many schools have adopted policies that penalize boys, often for simply being masculine. Boys do need help, but not the sort they’ve been getting ... they need help catching up with girls academically, they need love, discipline, respect, and moral guidance. They desperately need understanding. They do not need to be rescued from masculinity (150).

Given the spurt of studies in this decade, it was as if this statement by Hoff-Sommers (2000) and similar ones by other educational pundits served as a clarion call that elevated the declining performance of males in school to the level of national crisis. Books were written to advise and guide teachers in working with male students, national programs were initiated to serve as blueprints to alleviate the plight of the disappearing male, and mass media showed their support by dedicating popular television and press to solving the boy problem that was now suddenly being perceived by the nation. Yet, when issues of a similar nature were presented and the relative impact on black males was used as the *raison d’être* for the movement of the masses, the call to arms took on a quite different tone. In fact, there was no call to arms to address the “black male problem,” especially from a strengths model approach. Instead, a deficit model with its propensity for ascribing blame and pathology to these males for their perceived abhorrent behavior, was the common perspective. Prescriptions for behavior-altering drugs, classroom settings designed to corral misbehavior (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, and Peterson, 2002) and alternative educational environments (Davis, 2002; Delpit, 2003; Dunbar, 2001; Ferguson, 2000; Lopez, 2003) to sequester these presumably untamable souls were utilized.

It is apparent that the increasingly low enrollment of black males in higher education is a direct correlate to the ways in which those responsible for providing a fair and equitable education in the lower schools have treated this group. This continued malfeasance also

indirectly has led to a number of other social ills for black male populations, not the least of which is the ever widening gap of educational attainment between black males and females. Hoff-Summers (2002, x) highlighted this problem with her question, "What does it mean in the long run that we have females who are significantly more literate, significantly more educated than their male counterparts?" We know from history and lived experiences in the United States that educating one segment of the population creates severe social problems (Lopez, 2003). Therefore, the low enrollment of black males in higher education is not new — only our excuses for ignoring it.

MYTH 2: BLACK MALES GRADUATE AT MUCH LOWER RATES

Some would argue that since the American education system is based on the ideals of meritocracy, black males, just like their white male counterparts, have had equal access and opportunities to take whichever courses they deem profitable for their current and future success (Bennett, 1992; D'Souza, 1996). Many would add (*e.g.*, Herrnstein and Murray, 1994) that black males are obviously choosing not to take college preparation courses due to inherent deficiencies or cognitive limitations in their capacity to achieve. Both of these notions serve as fodder for the myth that black males underachieve and subsequently graduate at lower rates than the "mainstream" masses.

Even a cursory look at the literature highlighting the experiences of black males in K-12 institutions reveals the overwhelming collection of obstacles this group must overcome simply to don a cap and gown on graduation day. Such obstacles include pedagogical practices that overlook and often downplay their unique learning styles (Bonner, 2000; Delpit, 2003; Murrell, 2002; Mincy, 1994; Irvine, 1990; Lee, 1996; Kunjufu, 2005), curriculum content that obliterates the contributions of their ancestors (Delpit, 2003; Hilliard, 1976; Hollins, 1996), and social practices that continually remind them that they are not part of the "norm" (Gordon, 1999; hooks, 2004; Murrell, 2002; Irvine, 1990). Although black males are graduating at rates commensurate with their white male counterparts, and we are continuing to see increases in the overall numbers of black male high school graduates (King, 2000; Smith, 2005), this is but a small victory; the real battle begins once these individuals are supposed to be able to begin college and attain a degree.

It is a widely espoused myth that black males graduate at significantly lower rates than other groups, especially their white male counterparts. On the contrary, King (2002) found that close to 90% of white and African American males aged 25-29 had earned a high school diploma. Hence, one would assume that if black males and white males are graduating from high school at roughly the same rates, then the applicant pool to institutions of higher education should be roughly equivalent. The reality is that black males are entering college at significantly lower rates than their white male peers. Is it safe therefore to assume that there is a proverbial "fly in the ointment". Or, is there a flaw in the available applicant pool argument made by many conservatives in education?

A cogent point of departure for this argument might begin by disabusing individuals of the notion that black males and white males receive the same K-12 education and educational

experiences. The truth is that although black males are graduating from K-12 at roughly the same rates as their white male peers, they are not graduating from the same types of programs. Black males are graduating from special education programs, attending alternative schools, and being tracked into less rigorous vocational programs (Kunjufu, 2005). Meanwhile, their white male counterparts are graduating from gifted and talented programs, enrolling in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and attending summer enrichment sessions for talented and precocious youth. In other words, the graduation rates for these two groups may reveal, at first glance, that all things are equal; however once this data is disaggregated and mined for potential solutions to the presenting problem, a different story is uncovered.

We know that the best predictor of both enrollment and success in college is the rigor of the high school curriculum (Horn and Kojako, 2001). In fact, students who take rigorous coursework in high school account for more than 80% of those students who either persist to a bachelor's degree or who are retained at their initial institution (Warburton, Bugarin, and Nuñez 2001). In addition, data from the American Council on Education (2000) indicates that low-income, young black males are more likely than any of their counterparts to leave high school without completing the necessary college preparatory course work.

MYTH 3: SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH BLACK MALES

Despite our nation's ostensible rejection of cultural deficit models, Darwinian theoretical frameworks, and eugenics explanations to account for school failure among populations of color, we continue to rely heavily on deficiency theories as a means to explain underachievement for these groups (Herring, 1995; Bonner, 1999). One of the most pervasive set of tools used to lead the way in this malevolent means of codifying populations of color, especially black males, have been through the use of standardized tests. It was Asa Hilliard who posited that these assessments seek to ask two essential questions which lead to two fundamentally different approaches to understanding human behavior: 1) Do you know what I know? and 2) What is it that you know?

Amplifying this point, Bonner observes,

The first approach is what most standardized tests measure. The language, culture, and experiences of the individuals who construct these tests become the prevailing benchmarks of success. The tests then become a measure of which students have a better grasp of White, middle-class culture — not what knowledge and information they have acquired (2000, 646).

The misuse of assessment measures and standardized tests often serve to initiate the downward spiral for black males in the educational system. These standardized tests are like a hydra, touching all parts of the student's school experience, often resulting in dire outcomes:

- Black males have a 3.26 greater chance of being labeled mentally retarded than white females, a 2.34 greater chance of being placed in a Learning Disabled (LD) classroom, and an astronomical 5.52 greater chance of being placed in a classroom for the emotionally disturbed (Kunjufu, 2005).
- Black males are three times more likely to be placed in classes for the educable

mentally retarded than in gifted and talented classes (Lee, 1996).

- Black males are far more likely than other ethnic/gender groups to be placed in general education and vocational high school curriculum tracks than in academic tracks (Lee, 1996).

What are the consequences and outcomes of these disparities? Black males are 67% more likely than whites with emotional behavior problems to be removed from school on the grounds that they are a danger to other students, and 13 times more likely than white students with emotional behavior problems to be arrested in school. In addition, of the number of black males who are diagnosed as emotionally disturbed, 58% drop out of school, and of that group, 73% are arrested within three to five years of dropping out (Orfield, *et al.*, 2002, 150).

The literature affirms that black males are not only overrepresented in special education classrooms in every state (Herrera, 1998; Skiba *et al.*, 2002; Smith, 2005), but they are also overrepresented in our penal systems and constitute the highest per capita number of murder victims in our country (Smith, 2005; Orfield, 2002). And, we cannot ignore the fact that this cohort represents the most underemployed population in the country (Herring, 1995; Economic Policy Institute, 2005).

Given these grim statistics, one could easily accept as fact the notion that black males disproportionately suffer from some sort of "mysterious pathology," a condition that defies conventional wisdom on offering viable remedies. Yet these statistics must be couched in terms of the background experiences and lived realities of these men. It is important to talk about such issues as African American worldview (Parham, White, and Ajamu, 2000) and how black males function differently in academic and social contexts based on the different psychological and psychosocial perspectives they bring to the table.

Also, one also cannot ignore perhaps the most significant disparity found to exist among black populations and their white counterparts; namely, the vast and persistent gap in socioeconomic status. Citing data taken from the U.S. Bureau of Census' Current Population survey, the Children's Defense Fund found that, "Black children are far more likely than Whites to grow up in extreme poverty — nearly one million black children live in extreme poverty— below *half* the poverty line (with after-tax income including food and housing benefits). The number of extremely poor black children is now at its highest level in the 23 years for which such data exist." In light of the data presented in this section, the myth that something must be inherently wrong with black males prompts us to recall the old adage, "When you point the finger of blame at others, four fingers are pointing back at you." A more thoughtful question for those who have concluded that failure is endemic to black males would be, "Is something wrong with *them* or is something wrong with *us*?"

MYTH 4: THOSE WHO TEACH BLACK MALES ARE COLORBLIND

There has been little evidence to support the colorblind philosophy. Colorblindness is that mystical trait possessed by some which allows them to see beyond skin color in an effort to combat ethnic and racial discrimination (Chemers and Murphy, 1995). In fact, recent documented evidence reveals the direct opposite of this claim, uncovering the importance of

not only seeing color, but also of attempting to connect race and ethnicity with such important concepts as learning preferences, learning styles, and teaching modalities (Dunn and Dunn, 1992; Hollins, 1996; Murrell, 2002; Shade, 1982; Witkin and Moore, 1975).

To say that we do not see color is to say that we are ignoring critical differences and noteworthy nuances that can potentially mean success or failure for black males (Cose, 1997). To reify this claim, Lowe (2002) says in *Color Blindness: Anti-Discrimination Doctrine or Hegemonic Reproduction of Racial Inequality*, "... color blindness and race neutrality are little more than hegemonic mechanisms designed to reproduce the same, historical social inequalities at the expense of America's non-whites, immigrants, women, and other historically underrepresented and oppressed groups to the economic benefit of a white power elite" (1).

Efforts to address the colorblind claim must begin with those who so readily espouse this philosophy — teachers. In a recent study, Kain, O'Brien, and Rivkin (2005) found that when students were taught by teachers of the same race, their performance levels were significantly higher. However, we find a different set of circumstances in schools systems or cities in which the teaching population and student population are at ethnic and racial odds. Kunjufu's (2005) work provides a key example. He reported that in New York, 36% of students are black, but 67% of the special education students are black males. At the same time, white teachers account for 77% of New York's teachers (24).

The U.S. Department of Education (National Center for Education Statistics Mini-Digest of Education Statistics, 2003) reported a majority of elementary and secondary school teachers in the nation to be both female (74%) and white (87%), whereas the population of African American teachers accounted for a mere 7% of the total population. For black males, this could place them at a greater risk for school failure due to the cultural incongruence that generally exists between them and their teachers (Herrera, 1998; Kain *et al.*, 2005). Data also reveal a relationship between the race of the student, the race of the teacher, and placement into special education classrooms (Herrera, 1998). The work of Hilliard (1976) highlights the constant and disproportionate increases in the numbers of blacks placed in special education courses after the 1954 *Brown* decision. Taken in the aggregate, professing a colorblind approach to educating black males does not actually remove color; it only makes us blind.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

A concerted and dedicated effort to address each of the myths discussed in this essay has to become the goal of those committed to improving educational opportunities for black males. Simply stating that education is meritocratic is not enough when the reality of the conditions for certain populations and their access to social and cultural capital is often severely constrained. Although a myriad of approaches can be implemented to catalyze efforts to support black males, perhaps debunking and offering remedies to allay these myths is a good start.

We have seen from the research that Myth 1, that all the research on black males is brand new, is a gross misrepresentation of reality. Although scant, data that does exist is consistent in its profiles of the learning, growth, and development of black male populations. Unfortunately, getting movement across the data synapse to eliciting action has not been

forthcoming. Our best research uncovers important findings regarding the over inclusion of black males in special education and the under inclusion of this population in gifted and talented courses. Yet, we fail to get at the root cause of why these maladies exist. Perhaps forming task forces or groups at the grass roots level and recruiting individuals who work on the front lines in the educational systems and who have a concomitant interest in enhancing the status of black males, could be employed to offer new insight. The understanding attained must not be added to the ever growing piles of data collected on this population, but must be transformed into actionable items that can ultimately make a difference in policy and programming.

Myths 2 and 3, that black males graduate at lower rates and something is wrong with black males, are critically linked in many ways. The constant reminders that they (black males) as a group are deficient and pathological — that something is wrong with them — results in these young men becoming circumscribed by the negative perceptions of those who operate the educational system. These men graduate at rates closely paralleling their white male counterparts, but are grossly underrepresented among those who go on to seek postsecondary education. It appears, therefore, that the negative self-perceptions developed in black males due to their being tracked in the lower ranges of public education are bearing bitter fruit far past their K-12 experiences, impacting not only their aspirations but also their prospective achievement. A countervailing course of action might be to create opportunities for empowerment which allow, even encourage, these individuals to show, on their own terms, their natural talents and abilities, akin to what Jerome Bruner, in his book *The Culture of Education*, terms an *oeuvre*, a celebration of their creative works and accomplishments.

Finally, Myth 4, those who teach black males are colorblind, is at best implausible and at worst impossible. To assume the position of colorblindness is to assume a position of ignorance: all cultural distinctions and group traditions, not to mention social mores and taboos, would have to be held in abeyance. Yet the harsh reality of our ever present situation in American schools is that students are bringing with them to school their lives from their communities and homes as well as the street. To ignore these realities is to suffer severe and dire consequences. Just as we can not disaggregate gender from the teaching and learning equation, we also can not for reasons of ideological mythology, remove such elements as ethnicity and race. From a strengths perspective, these elements add to the richness of the instructional setting, providing our students with an authentic view of the very concepts we attempt to teach through formal course content. In essence, multicultural approaches reveal to students the importance of diversity in thought and perspective, critical tools in becoming an educated person. Therefore, including the voices and worldviews of black males will only help solidify these approaches. In the end, if our goal is to promote meritocratic education in our nation's schools, then we must get past exclusionary rhetoric to ensure that what we mean by this term in the future is not what it has meant in the past.

REFERENCES

- Ascher, Carol. 1991. "School Programs for African American Males." (ERIC CURE Digest No. 72). East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED334340).
- Bennett, W. J. 1992. *The De-Valuing of America: The Fight for Our Culture and Our Children*. New York, NY: Touchstone.
- Bonner, F.A. 2000. "African American Giftedness: Our Nation's Deferred Dream." *The Journal of Black Studies* 30 (5), 643-63.
- Bonner, F. 1999. *Extraordinary Gifts Often Come in Plain Brown Wrappers*. Retrieved February 15, 2005 from <http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~nrcgt/news/fall99/fall995.html>.
- Bourdieu, P. 1997. "The Forms of Social Capital." In A.H. Halsey, Brown P., & Wells, A.S. (Eds.) *Education, Culture, Economy, Society*, 46-58. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [First published in Richardson, J.E. (Ed.). (1986). *Handbook of Theory for Research in the Sociology of Education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press].
- Brownstein, Andrew. 2000. "Are Male Students in Short Supply or Is This 'Crisis' Exaggerated?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. November 3.
- Cose, E. 1997. *Color-Blind: Seeing Beyond Race in a Race Obsessed World*. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers.
- D'Souza, D. 1996. *The End of Racism*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Davis, J.E. 2003. "Early Schooling and Academic Achievement of African American Males." *Urban Education*, 38 (5), 515-38.
- Davis, J.E. 2002. "Race, Gender, and Sexuality: (Un)doing Identity Categories." *Educational Researcher*, 31(4), 29-32.
- Dee, T. 2004. The Race Connection. *Education Next*, 4, 52-59.
- Delgado, R. (Ed.). (1995). *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Delpit, L. 2003. "Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Distinguished Lecture: Educators as 'Seed People' Growing a New Future." *Educational Researcher*, 32(7), 14-21.
- Dunbar, C. 2001. *Alternative Schooling for African American Youth: Does Anyone Know We're Here?* New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Dunn, R. and K. Dunn. 1992. *Teaching Elementary Students Through Their Individual Learning Styles*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Economic Policy Institute. 2005. "Economic Snapshots 2005 April." Retrieved October 14, 2005 from http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/webfeatures_snapshots_20050406.
- Ferguson, A. 2001. *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Ferguson, R. F. 1998. "Teachers' Perceptions and Expectations and the Black-White Test Score Gap." In Jencks, Christopher and Phillips, M. (Eds.). *The Black-White Test Score Gap*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 273-317.
- Fremon, Celeste and Stephaine Renfrow Hamilton. 1997. "Are Schools Failing Black Boys?" Retrieved October 14, 2005 from <http://www.terry.uga.edu/~dawn/dba/4500FailingBlkBoys.html>.
- Ford, D.Y. 1992. "Determinants of Underachievement as Perceived by Gifted, Above-average, and Average Black Students." *Roeper Review*, 14(3), 130-36.
- Ford, D.Y. 1994. *The Recruitment and Retention of African-American Students in Gifted Education Programs: Implications and Recommendations*. Storrs: University of Connecticut.
- Freire, P. 1993. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Gewertz, C. 2004. "Foundation Tackles Black Males' School Woes." *Education Week*, 4(24), 6.
- Gordon, E. 1999. *Education and Justice: A View From the Back of the Bus*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Greathouse, B. and Sparling, S. 1993. "Issues in Education: African American Male-Only Schools. Is That the Solution?" *Childhood Education* 69(3), 131-32.
- Haberman, M. 2003. "Who Benefits From Failing Urban School Districts: An Essay on Equity and Justice for Diverse Children in Urban Poverty." Retrieved October 1, 2005 from <http://www.educationnews.org/Who%Benifis%20From%20Failing%>.

- Haberman, M. 2003. "What Should a 'Highly Qualified Teacher' Mean?" In Bill Gaetke and Michael F. Shaughnessy. *EducationNews.org*, March 14, 2005. Retrieved October 17, 2005, from <http://www.educationnews.org/writers/michael/an-interview-with-martin-haberman.htm>.
- Hannushek, Kain, D. Obrien, and Rivkin, S.E. 2005. *The Market for Teacher Quality*. Retrieved October 17, 2005, from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11154>.
- Harry, B. and M. Anderson. 1994. "The Disproportionate Placement of African American Males in Special Education Programs: A Critique of the Process." *Journal of Negro Education* 63(4), 602-19.
- Herrera, J. 1998. *The Disproportionate Placement of African Americans in Special Education: An Analysis of Ten Cities*. East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED423324).
- Herring, C. 1995 *African Americans and disadvantage in the U.S. Labor Market*. Retrieved February 3, 2005, from <http://www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu/prba/perspectives/#spr95>.
- Herrnstein, R.J. and Murray, C., 1994. *The Bell Curve*. New York: The Free Press.
- Hilliard, Asa G. 1976. *Alternatives to IQ Testing: An Approach to the Identification of Gifted "Minority" Children* (Report No. PS 009 639). Sacramento: California Department of Education, Special Education Division. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 147 009).
- Hoff-Sommers, C. 2000. *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming Our Young Men*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Hollins, E. R. 1996. *Culture in School Learning: Revealing the Deep Meaning*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Hooks, B. 2004. *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity*. New York: Routledge.
- Horn, L. and L. Kojaku. 2001. "High School Academic Curriculum and the Persistence Path Through College: Persistence and Transfer Behavior of Undergraduates 3 Years After Entering 4-Year Institutions." *Education Statistics Quarterly*, 3(3). Retrieved October 17, 2005 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/quarterly/vol_3/3_3/q4-1.asp.
- Irvine, J.J. 1990. *Black Students and School Failure*. New York: Greenwood.
- Jordan, W. 2002. *Cultural Issues Related to High School Reform: Deciphering the Case of Black Males*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Research in the Education of Students Placed at Risk (crespar).
- King, J. 2002. *Gender Equity in Higher Education: Are Male Students at a Disadvantage?* Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education Center for Policy Analysis.
- Kunjufu, Juwanza. 2005. *Keeping Black Boys Out of Special Education*. Chicago, IL: African American Images.
- Lee, C. C. 1996. *Saving the Native Son: Empowerment Strategies for Young Black Males*. Greensboro, NC: ERIC Counseling and Student Services Clearinghouse.
- Lopez, N. 2003. *Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys: Race and Gender Disparity in Urban Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Losen, D. J., and G. Orfield. 2002. *Racial Inequality in Special Education*. Cambridge, MA: Civil Rights Project and Harvard Education Press.
- Lowe, L.A. 2002. "Color Blindness: Anti-Discrimination Doctrine or Hegemonic Reproduction of Racial Inequality?" Retrieved October 14, 2005 from, http://employment.education.uiowa.edu/lalowe/07b154_ePortfolio/COLOR_BLIND_PAPER.htm.
- McNally, J. 2003. "A Ghetto Within a Ghetto: African American Students Overrepresented in Special Education Programs." *Rethinking Schools Online*. Retrieved September 23, 2005, from http://rethinkingschools.org/archive/17_03/ghet179.shtml.
- Mincy, R. B. 1994. *Nurturing Young Black Males*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press.
- Murrell, P.C. 2002. *African-Centered Pedagogy: Developing Schools of Achievement for African American Children*. Albany, New York: SUNY.
- Orfield, G. and D. Losens. 2002. *Racial Inequity in Special Education*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Publishing Group.
- Parham, T.A., White, J.L., Ajamu, A. 2000. *The Psychology of Blacks: An African-Centered Perspective* (3rd ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Shade, B. J. 1982. "Afro-American Cognitive Style: A Variable in School Success?" *Review of Educational Research*, 52, 219-44.

- Simpson, A. and M. Erickson. 1983. "Teachers Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Patterns as a Function of Teacher Race, Student Gender, and Student Race." *American Educational Research Journal*, 20(2). 183-98.
- Skiba, R., R. Michael, A. Nardo, and R. Peterson. 2002. "The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment." *The Urban Review*, 34(4), 317-42.
- Smith, Rosa A. 2005. "Building a Positive Future for Black Boys." *American School Board Journal*, 192(9), 26-28.
- U.S. Department of Education. 2003. *National Center for Education Statistics Mini-Digest of Education Statistics*. Retrieved October 17, 2005, from http://www.aacte.org/programs/multicultural/enrollment_ethnicity_yr93-94.htm.
- USA Today Editorial. 2003, August 29. Girls get extra school help while boys get Ritalin, A-08.
- Warburton, E., R. Bugarin, and A. Nuñez. 2001. "Bridging the Gap: Academic Preparation and Postsecondary Success of First-Generation Students." *Education Statistics Quarterly* 3(3), Retrieved October 14, 2005, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/quarterly/Vol_3/3_3/q4-2.asp#H4.
- Witkin, H. A. and C.A. Moore. 1975. *Field-Dependent and Field-Independent Cognitive Styles and Their Educational Implications*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Woodsen, Carter G. 1990. *The Mis-education of the Negro*. Trenton, N.J.: African World Press. [Originally published in 1932.]

Robin L. Hughes is assistant professor in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Indiana University - Indianapolis/Bloomington. Her forthcoming co-edited book, *Dismantle This: Deconstructing Policy and Institutionalized "isms" Through Critical Race Theory*, explores how institutions may unintentionally sustain racist policy through long standing administrative and scholarly traditions and culture. She is also co-editor and co-founder of the *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*.

Fred A. Bonner, II is associate professor of higher education administration at Texas A&M University, College Station and a 2005-2006 ACE Fellow in the Office of the President at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA. His publications include articles and book chapters on academically gifted African American male college students, teaching in the multicultural college classroom, and diversity issues in student affairs. He is completing a book with Greenwood Publishers that is tentatively titled, *Gifted African American Male College Students*.

Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Editor's Introduction <i>Michael L. Clemons</i>	2
ARTICLES	
Ideology and Issue Formation <i>Angela K. Davis and Clarissa Peterson</i>	7
Gender and African American Elections: A Longitudinal Analysis of an African American Female's Electoral Campaigns for State Representative and State Judgeship Positions <i>Hanes Walton, Jr. and Kenneth A. Jordan</i>	22
Liberal and Neo-Conservative Black Urban Regimes in Washington D.C. and Atlanta, 1985 to 2000 <i>Manley Elliott Banks II</i>	38
District Composition and State Legislative Votes on the Confederate Battle Emblem <i>Jonathan Leib and Gerald Webster</i>	53
Leaving Black Males Behind: Debunking the Myths of Meritocratic Education <i>Robin L. Hughes and Fred A. Bonner, II</i>	76
BOOK REVIEW	
Cecilia A. Conrad, John Whitehead, Patrick Mason, and James Stewart, eds. <i>African Americans in the U.S. Economy</i> <i>Russell A. Benjamin</i>	91
Call for Papers	95

ISSN 1540845-0



9 771540 845000



Old Dominion University
Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity