

West Chester University

Digital Commons @ West Chester University

West Chester University Master's Theses

Masters Theses and Doctoral Projects

Spring 2024

Not Enough Of Us

Christelle M. Alce

West Chester University of Pennsylvania, ca895837@wcupa.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wcupa.edu/all_theses



Part of the [Other Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Alce, Christelle M., "Not Enough Of Us" (2024). *West Chester University Master's Theses*. 322.
https://digitalcommons.wcupa.edu/all_theses/322

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Masters Theses and Doctoral Projects at Digital Commons @ West Chester University. It has been accepted for inclusion in West Chester University Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ West Chester University. For more information, please contact wcressler@wcupa.edu.

Not Enough of Us

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the
Department of Educational Foundations & Policy Studies
West Chester University
West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science:
Transformative Education & Social Change

By

Christelle Mclearn Alcé

May 2024

© Copyright 2024 Christelle Mclearn Alcé

Abstract

Together we are diving into the pressing issue of the underrepresentation of African American teachers within the contemporary educational landscape, recognizing it as a critical concern deeply rooted in systemic inequalities. As an African American female educator, I bring a personal and scholarly perspective to this thesis, driven by a commitment to fostering inclusive learning environments and addressing longstanding disparities within the teaching profession. Central to my investigation is the recognition that the scarcity of African American educators not only deprives students of diverse role models but also diminishes the quality of education by overlooking unique perspectives and cultural nuances essential for holistic learning experiences. Drawing upon a conceptual framework, I explore the philosophical foundations guiding my inquiry, delve into the extensive history of African Americans in the United States, examine the systemic barriers contributing to their underrepresentation in the teaching profession, and propose actionable strategies for fostering greater diversity and equity.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	iv
Chapter 1 - Introduction & Positionality	1
Chapter 2 - Thematic Concern, Conceptual Framework, & Definitions	16
Chapter 3 - Narrative.....	27
Chapter 4 - Design.....	88
Program Organization	99
Example Lesson Plan #1	101
Example Lesson Plan #2.....	105
Chapter 5 – Assessment & Evaluation.....	112
Example Survey	114
References.....	120

Dedication

I dedicate this fine work to my loving and caring mother Irlande Alc  who has never left my side for my entire educational career. You pushed me to be only the best I could be, and I would like to say thank you for being the best mom. I love you.

And to my future husband Aaron Rodgers, I couldn't have done this without you. We met when I began writing my thesis, and you were so supportive in one of the hardest years of my life. Your patience, love, empathy, and compassion made this possible for me in every way. I thank you for sticking by my side. I love you.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Positionality

In a world where classrooms strive for diversity, it's time to shine a spotlight on the conspicuous absence of African American educators, as both a scholar and a member of that community, I am uniquely positioned to address this. In this portion of my thesis, I will introduce the dimensions of my personal identity and my concern, the underrepresentation of African American teachers. By carefully examining my positionality the aim is to unravel the complexities associated with this identified concern within the framework of my educational beliefs. Understanding one's positionality is paramount in acknowledging the lenses through which we perceive the world, especially within the context of education. This exploration is crucial for fostering self-awareness, refining pedagogical approaches, and addressing thematic concerns within the educational landscape.

Understanding one's positionality is paramount in acknowledging the lenses through which we perceive the world, especially within the context of education. Similarly, a philosophy of education serves as a guiding framework that shapes our approach to teaching and learning. This exploration is crucial for fostering self-awareness, refining pedagogical approaches, and addressing thematic concerns within the educational landscape. In my educational journey, my teaching philosophy is like a personal fingerprint, shaped by who I am and what I believe in. I'm all about education being a mix of preparing students for careers, getting them to think critically, and helping them grow as individuals. As an educator, I'm not just there to guide the class, I see myself more as a mentor, a friendly face in their academic journey. This outlook is rooted in my own experiences and values. I'm big on students actively taking part in their learning,

understanding not just the 'what' but the 'why' behind what they're studying. I love throwing in collaborative projects and hands-on learning to make lessons stick. Creating a positive vibe in the classroom, especially for students facing challenges, is crucial. I believe offering extra support and digging into the real issues they might be dealing with helps them succeed, not just academically but personally too. And my philosophy ties right into the concern of not having enough African American teachers. It's all about equity to me, every student, no matter their background, should get the same shot at a great education and feel valued in any school. Even how I assess students leans towards progress and projects, not just traditional tests. It's not just about what you know; it's about everyone getting a fair shot at success, no matter where they're from. So, my teaching philosophy, personal identity, and the concern of not having enough African American teachers are all intertwined, showing my commitment to making education inclusive and giving every student the chance to shine, academically and personally. In this section of my thesis, we will explore the connection between my personal identity, my teaching philosophy, and my concern, underscoring the commitment to fostering an inclusive educational environment for all students.

My full name is Christelle Mclearn Alce, given to me by my father, Paulin Alce, and my mother, Irlande Alce. I am a twenty-four-year-old female, a native of Upper Darby, PA. My parents, originally from Haiti, made the transformative decision to immigrate to the United States, specifically Miami, Florida, where I came into the world in 1999. In addition to my parents, I share my journey with two older brothers and a younger sister, a unique familial constellation in the context of 2023. These fundamental details provide a foundational understanding of who I am as an individual, forming the building blocks upon which my identity takes shape.

Family plays an integral role in shaping one's identity. Therefore, it is imperative to offer a succinct glimpse into my family background, embracing facets such as our cultural heritage, deeply held values, and intricate dynamics. An understanding of my family's background is paramount in understanding the origins of my identity and how it has been intricately molded by the nurturing environment in which I was raised. My family's cultural heritage weaves a vibrant tapestry of traditions, customs, and practices that have left an indelible mark on my identity and worldview. Hailing from a Haitian background, our familial essence is a blend of respect, determination, curiosity, and wit, reflecting the essence of our heritage. Central to our cultural legacy are the festivities that revolve around the celebration of God, including Easter, Christmas, and New Year's Day, which coincides with Haiti's Independence Day. These gatherings serve as threads that unite our extended family, allowing us to reconnect with our roots and fortify our bonds. The rituals and ceremonies during these events provide us with a profound sense of continuity and belonging, reminding us of our rich cultural legacy. Religion also holds a profound place in our family's value system, with Catholicism serving as our guiding faith. From faithfully attending Sunday services throughout my upbringing to participating in essential religious rituals and festivals, our faith not only nurtures our spirituality but also serves as a moral compass through life's trials. Language is another integral facet of our cultural heritage; we communicate in Haitian Creole, a language that not only eases communication but also serves as a vessel for preserving our cultural narratives, melodies, and wisdom. Speaking our native tongue at home has been instrumental in passing down our cultural heritage to the younger generations, and our fluency in French has proven helpful.

The cultural heritage within our family has played an instrumental role in molding my identity. It has instilled within me a deep reverence for the traditions and values of my culture, fostering an unshakeable sense of belonging and a profound connection to my roots. This cultural influence shapes my perception of the world and my interactions with others, fueling my pride in my cultural identity and my commitment to preserving and sharing these cherished traditions with generations yet to come. In our household, ethical conduct stands as a cornerstone of our value system. Honesty, integrity, and compassion have been instilled in us from a young age. Our belief in treating everyone with respect and fairness, irrespective of their background or beliefs, transcends familial boundaries, guiding our interactions within the broader community and informing our choices in personal and professional realms. Furthermore, moral values, including empathy, kindness, and a strong sense of social responsibility, are deeply woven into our family's fabric. Our tradition of volunteerism and community engagement passed down through generations, underscores our commitment to social justice and compassion, shaping our worldviews and instilling a sense of duty to make a positive impact on the lives of others. Additionally, my parents have imparted a profound lesson of humanitarianism, consistently aiding newcomers in their journey to America from Haiti and helping them start anew. These actions have expanded our family beyond bloodlines, reinforcing the principle of giving back to our community and offering support to those in need. In essence, the values and beliefs within our family are a testament to our religious, ethical, and moral principles, carried forward through generations. These values not only define our familial culture but also serve as guiding lights, shaping our individual and collective actions. They are at the core of our identity, shaping the lens through which we perceive the world and influencing the values we hold dear.

The dynamics within my family have wielded a significant influence over my upbringing, shaping my identity and molding the way I engage with the world around me. Our family unit is characterized by unbreakable bonds, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and cherished traditions that have collectively etched our identity. Within our closely-knit family, relationships are constructed upon a foundation of love, trust, and unwavering mutual support. We place paramount importance on open communication, attentively listening to one another's concerns. The warmth and sense of belonging that permeates our relationships among siblings, parents, and extended family members have crafted an environment where security thrives, providing a sturdy support system that accompanies me in my daily life. Our journey has not always been devoid of challenges, but with time, we have steadily grown to understand one another better.

The distribution of roles and responsibilities within our family structure is another noteworthy aspect. These roles, often influenced by age and experience, serve to bolster our cohesion and functionality. Older family members often assume roles of guidance and mentorship, while younger members are encouraged to learn and contribute in ways that align with their developmental stage. In my specific family context, as the eldest daughter, I hold a unique position where, in my culture, I step into my mother's shoes when she's absent, particularly when she's out providing for our family. My father, the primary breadwinner, is typically, at work, thus underscoring the significance of women making decisions in the absence of a male figure in Haitian culture. This division of responsibilities has imparted essential lessons on leadership, teamwork, and the intrinsic value of cooperation in achieving shared goals.

Substantially, the dynamics within my family are characterized by robust relationships, clearly delineated roles and responsibilities, and treasured traditions. These dynamics have

played a pivotal role in shaping my upbringing, instilling in me a profound sense of belonging, responsibility, and a deep appreciation for the values that steer our family's collective identity.

Throughout my life, I have been blessed with the opportunity to know only one set of grandparents, who happen to be my maternal grandparents. Regrettably, my father lost both of his parents to diabetes before he turned 22. My maternal grandfather, whom I hold dear in memory, battled cancer and passed away when I was about ten years old. Consequently, my maternal grandmother stands as the sole surviving grandparent in my life, currently living in Haiti alongside our extended family in our cherished family home. While my family has been a wellspring of love and support, we have encountered challenges and conflicts like deportation for example, that have significantly affected my personal development and identity. These experiences, although demanding, have been invaluable in nurturing my growth and resilience. Growing up in a culturally rich family within a multicultural environment, such as Upper Darby, has heightened my cultural awareness and broadened my perspective. I've had the privilege of partaking in diverse cultural traditions and learning from many perspectives within my family and the broader community. This exposure has enriched my worldview, fostering acceptance and appreciation for cultural diversity on a global scale. In essence, my family background is a reservoir teeming with cultural richness, deeply rooted values, and a wealth of experiences that have left an indelible mark on my identity and perspectives. It has given me a robust foundation of cultural pride, unwavering ethical principles, and essential interpersonal skills. As I journey through life, I carry with me the invaluable lessons and values taught by my family, serving as a guide that shapes the person I am today and illuminate the path toward the person I aspire to become in the future

In this section, I will provide a glimpse into my educational journey, a path that has led me to my current academic pursuits. It's a journey marked by significant milestones and experiences that have profoundly shaped my intellectual interests and personal growth. My educational voyage began within the culturally vibrant town of Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, where I attended public schools from kindergarten through high school. Upper Darby, celebrated for its remarkable cultural diversity, is a community that embraces individuals from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, including African American, Caucasian, Asian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern and many more. This diversity, a hallmark of the township, is a source of cultural enrichment and is intricately entwined into the fabric of Upper Darby's identity.

The rich demographic of Upper Darby is further enhanced by a substantial immigrant population, representing countries from across the globe. This compilation of diverse backgrounds has cultivated a dynamic blend of languages, traditions, and cuisines, thereby enriching the local culture and fostering an environment where inclusivity and multiculturalism thrive. Within Upper Darby, one can also see a spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds, spanning a range of income levels. The coexistence of affluent neighborhoods alongside areas facing economic challenges contributes to a diverse economic landscape that characterizes the Community.

Upper Darby High School, my alma mater, stands as a testament to the community's dedication to education and diversity. With its roots dating back to the early 20th century, UDHS has grown to become one of the largest high schools in the state, consistently enrolling a student body that often exceeds 4,000 students. The school's history is intertwined with the cultural diversity of the Upper Darby area, as it has welcomed students from a myriad of cultural backgrounds, further solidifying its reputation as a diverse and inclusive institution.

Academically, Upper Darby High School boasts a tradition of excellence, offering many academic programs. It also offers extracurricular activities to cater to its students' diverse interests and talents. The school has steadfastly pursued its mission to provide quality education, preparing students for higher education and future careers. Beyond academics and extracurriculars, UDHS maintains deep-rooted connections with the Upper Darby community. It has been a focal point for community events, cultural celebrations, and gatherings, embodying the spirit of community engagement. The school's active involvement in community service and outreach programs underscores its commitment to making a positive impact within the township. (Upper Darby High School, n.d.)

During my time as a student at UDHS, I graduated within the top 10% of a remarkably large class of 1,000 students. I embraced a challenging academic curriculum, participating in numerous Advanced Placement and Honors courses while actively engaging in a diverse range of extracurricular activities. These activities included membership in our renowned choir, and participation in sports such as volleyball, softball, and track and field, which contributed to a well-rounded and enriching educational experience. My tenure at Upper Darby High School provided me with the invaluable opportunity to learn and interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds, fostering an openness to different perspectives and ideas. This enriched perspective has proven to be an asset as I transitioned to West Chester University, where I have continued my higher education journey. My ability to understand and appreciate various viewpoints has offered me a distinct advantage in comprehending the intricacies of the world, an advantage that continues to shape my academic and personal experiences in graduate school.

In conclusion, my educational journey, rooted in the culturally diverse community of Upper Darby, has played a pivotal role in shaping my worldview and intellectual pursuits. It is an upbringing that has instilled in me a unique perspective, one that recognizes and values the diverse voices and experiences that make our world a multifaceted tapestry of cultures and ideas. This perspective continues to guide me as I navigate the landscape of graduate school and move forward.

My journey into higher education at West Chester University for my graduate studies began with the pursuit of a master's degree in mathematics. However, as I delved deeper into the program, I discovered that the advanced mathematical concepts and intensive research involved did not align with my passion and left me feeling unfulfilled. Fortunately, a pivotal moment came when my cooperating teacher from my student teaching experience at Upper Darby High School introduced me to an innovative and transformative educational program at WCU. The academic path I am currently treading leads right back to the doors of West Chester University, where I am pursuing a Master of Education in Transformative Education and Social Change (TESC). This program represents a significant chapter in my educational journey, and it seamlessly aligns with my strong dedication to the realm of education and my unwavering commitment to catalyzing positive societal transformations.

The Transformative Education and Social Change (TESC) program at West Chester University stands as a dynamic and interdisciplinary beacon, illuminating the fields of education, social justice, and community engagement. Tailored for individuals who possess a burly desire to enact positive metamorphoses within educational systems and society at large, this program embodies a spirit of progressive change. At its core, the TESC program seeks to equip students with the knowledge and skills requisite for addressing pressing social issues through the unique

prism of education. It fosters the development of critical thinking, reflective practice, and a profound comprehension of the intricate and interconnected challenges that define our contemporary world. ("West Chester University," n.d.)

Within the TESC program, I have deliberately chosen to specialize in mathematics. This specialization serves as a profound testament to my deep-seated passion for the world of numbers and my intense aspiration to leave an enduring mark in this field. As I embark on this journey, I am immersing myself in specialized coursework and research opportunities that are progressively expanding my comprehension of how mathematics education can be a potent catalyst for social change. It is within these academic pursuits that I explore innovative pedagogical approaches, intending to enhance mathematical literacy and accessibility, particularly within underserved communities.

In summary, the Transformative Education and Social Change program at West Chester University embodies profound significance in my educational and personal odyssey. It beautifully encapsulates my love for mathematics, my unwavering commitment to social justice, and my steadfast desire to bring about substantive change through the medium of education. As I continue to traverse this academic landscape, I do so with a resounding confidence that my journey will not only deepen my expertise in education but also empower me to contribute meaningfully to the broader mission of nurturing a more equitable and just society through the transformative power of education.

As I embark on the journey to explore my positionality, it becomes evident that life experiences have played a profound role in sculpting the person I am today. These experiences have functioned as potent catalysts, molding my identity, shaping my values, and influencing my perspectives. Whether navigating through challenges, savoring triumphs, or embarking on

journeys of self-discovery, each of these life events has etched indelible marks on the canvas of my existence, leaving an enduring imprint on how I perceive the world and my role within it.

Drawing from my explorations and personal experiences, my focal point has crystallized into one main concern; the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the United States and its impact on student outcomes.

In reflecting on the connection between my concern, my identity, and my experiences, my deep-seated worry emerges from a strong desire to witness greater representation of educators who share my cultural background in positions of influence. Recognizing that issues of representation in education are entwined with broader societal inequalities, I view addressing these concerns as an integral part of a comprehensive effort to champion fairness and equity. The presence of diverse identities in educational roles, I believe, holds the potential to cultivate a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment. My own educational experiences have undoubtedly molded my perspective, with positive encounters underscoring the significance of representation and negative experiences emphasizing the potential consequences of underrepresentation. Additionally, my concern aligns with my philosophical beliefs regarding the transformative power of education and the importance of diverse perspectives in shaping young minds. As someone aspiring to be an educator, this concern is intricately tied to my professional aspirations, driven by a sincere desire to positively impact students' lives and provide representation for those who share my cultural background. Drawing from personal experiences with challenges in my educational journey, I am committed to addressing systemic issues and actively taking part in networks promoting diversity, not only to navigate challenges within my career but also to contribute to systemic change, fostering a more equitable and representative educational environment.

The concern regarding the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the United States and its consequential impact on student outcomes encompasses several key features. Central to this concern is a heartfelt desire to witness greater representation of educators from an African American cultural background in influential roles within the education system. It is intricately connected to broader societal issues, as the effort to address this concern is seen as a vital component of a larger movement toward promoting fairness and equity in society. Emphasizing the importance of diversity in educational roles, there is a belief that such representation can contribute significantly to fostering an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment. Firsthand experiences within the educational system, both positive and negative, play a pivotal role in shaping the perspective on the critical importance of representation. The concern aligns with broader philosophical beliefs regarding the transformative power of education and the significance of diverse perspectives in shaping young minds. For those aspiring to or working in education, the concern is intertwined with professional aspirations, driven by a sincere desire to positively impact students' lives and provide representation for those who share a similar cultural background. There is a palpable commitment to addressing systemic issues within the education system, with an active role in advocating for inclusivity and participating in networks that promote diversity. Ultimately, the goal is not only to navigate challenges within one's career but also to contribute to systemic change, advocate for fairness, and foster diversity in education, creating a more equitable and representative educational environment.

The concern surrounding the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the United States and its repercussions on student outcomes borders a broad spectrum of impacts across various stakeholders and parts of the education system. Foremost, students bear a direct

influence as the lack of diverse role models may shape their sense of belonging, engagement, and academic performance. Concurrently, African American teachers are significantly affected, encountering challenges related to representation, professional development opportunities, and career advancement. The educational environment is molded by the representation of diverse teachers, contributing to a richer and more inclusive learning atmosphere. Moreover, the concern extends its reach to influence cultural and social dynamics within the education system, impacting the representation of diverse perspectives, cultural responsiveness, and overall inclusivity. The issue is deeply entwined with systemic inequalities, fostering disparities in educational outcomes and opportunities. Communities served by educational institutions are also impacted, with a more diverse teaching force better positioned to understand and address the unique needs of diverse populations. It has a cascading effect on professional development and recruitment programs, inspiring efforts to create pathways for African American individuals to enter and thrive in the teaching profession. Teacher training programs, too, may undergo a transformation, incorporating diversity and cultural competency training to better prepare educators for diverse classrooms and foster a more inclusive learning environment. Ultimately, the concern resonates with the long-term educational outcomes, as the presence of diverse teachers emerges as a potential catalyst for closing achievement gaps and improving overall educational experiences for students.

Addressing the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the United States yields widespread benefits across various domains. Most prominently, students experience a more enriching educational environment, characterized by increased engagement and a greater sense of inclusivity when the teaching force reflects diverse cultural backgrounds. African American teachers directly benefit through improved professional development opportunities,

career advancement prospects, and a more supportive workplace. The broader educational environment becomes more vibrant and inclusive, fostering cultural and social dynamics that value diverse perspectives. Communities served by educational institutions profit from a teaching force better attuned to the unique needs of diverse populations, strengthening community ties. Systemically, greater equity is achieved, reducing disparities in educational outcomes for underrepresented students. Educational policies and practices undergo positive transformations, becoming more inclusive and culturally responsive. Professional development and recruitment programs thrive with increased diversity initiatives, opening avenues for underrepresented individuals to enter and excel in the teaching profession. Teacher training programs adapt to incorporate diversity and cultural competency training, ensuring educators are well-prepared for diverse classrooms. In the long term, the educational landscape benefits from a more diverse teaching force, contributing to the closure of achievement gaps and enhancing the overall educational experiences of students.

The underrepresentation of African American teachers operate as a multifaceted concern in schools and communities, shaping various aspects of educational dynamics. In schools, the lack of representation can impact cultural responsiveness, affecting the ability to understand and meet the unique needs of students from diverse backgrounds. The absence of African American teachers may also limit diverse role models for students, potentially impacting their sense of inspiration and academic achievement. Conversely, a more diverse teaching force has the potential to positively influence student engagement and performance, addressing achievement gaps by providing tailored support. In communities, the underrepresentation concern influences the level of trust and collaboration between schools and community members, with a diverse teaching force fostering more meaningful connections. It also contributes to perceptions of

education within communities, shaping the image of schools as inclusive institutions that value and represent the diversity of the community. Addressing underrepresentation may empower communities by providing opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to pursue careers in education, fostering a sense of agency and community advocacy for policies promoting educational equity. Overall, this concern serves as a catalyst for positive change, impacting relationships, perceptions, and collaborative efforts toward creating more inclusive and equitable educational environments in schools and communities.

My concern about the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the United States is intricately shaped by a web of interconnected factors. Firstly, the historical legacy of racism has left an indelible mark on the education system, perpetuating systemic inequities that hinder opportunities for African American individuals. Structural disparities within education, including unequal access to quality schooling and biased hiring practices, contribute to the persistent underrepresentation issue. Societal stereotypes and biases further influence hiring decisions, limiting the opportunities for African American individuals to enter and advance within the teaching profession. Economic disparities and restricted access to educational resources in certain communities compound the challenge, affecting the ability of individuals to pursue careers in education. Moreover, teacher recruitment and retention policies, such as barriers to entry and inadequate support for professional development, contribute to the dearth of African American teachers. The broader educational policy landscape, influenced by political divides and ideologies, plays a pivotal role in shaping the opportunities available for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds.

Chapter 2

Thematic Concern, Conceptual Framework, Critical Lexicon, and Philosophy

Statement on Critical Action Research

Action research in school-related settings is a systematic and reflective approach to inquiry designed to address specific challenges within an educational context. It involves collaborative and repetitive cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, to improve educational practices. Educators engage in action research to actively contribute to the resolution of real-world issues in their classrooms or schools. This process emphasizes the importance of practical, hands-on solutions generated through the collective expertise of teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders. The key distinguishing feature of action research is its emphasis on localized problem-solving and continuous improvement, making it a valuable methodology for addressing complex issues within the dynamic and evolving landscape of education. A participatory approach is integral to the success of action research in education, particularly when addressing complex issues. Involving all stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and administrators, ensures a comprehensive understanding of the problem and increases the likelihood of developing effective solutions. By fostering collaboration and shared decision-making, a participatory approach taps into the collective wisdom of the educational community, resulting in more nuanced insights and innovative strategies. This inclusive method not only promotes a sense of ownership and commitment among participants but also acknowledges the diverse perspectives that contribute to a holistic understanding of the issue at hand. A participatory approach is, therefore, not just a methodological choice but a fundamental

principle for achieving meaningful and sustainable change in educational settings. Action research catalyzes positive educational change by providing a structured and evidence-based framework for continuous improvement. As educators engage in the iterative cycles of action research, they actively contribute to refining instructional practices, curricular approaches, and organizational structures. The close connection between research and practice ensures that interventions are grounded in the specific needs of the educational community. By emphasizing reflection and adaptability, action research facilitates the identification of successful strategies and the modification of approaches that may be less effective. This dynamic process not only leads to immediate improvements but also cultivates a culture of ongoing learning and responsiveness within educational institutions. Ultimately, the link between action research and positive educational change lies in its ability to empower educators to proactively shape and enhance the learning experiences of students, resulting in a more effective and equitable educational system. (Structural Learning, 2021)

The first crucial step in the action research process is the identification of a clear and well-defined research problem. In this context, the focus is on addressing the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the education system. Once the research problem is identified, the next step involves formulating research questions and hypotheses. These inquiries guide the action research process by providing a roadmap for investigation. Research questions may revolve around the causes of underrepresentation, its impact on students, or the effectiveness of existing diversity initiatives. Choosing proper research methods and data collection strategies is essential to gather relevant and reliable information. In the case of action research on the underrepresentation of African American teachers, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods may be employed. Surveys, interviews, and focus groups could provide valuable

insights into the experiences and perceptions of educators, students, and administrators. The careful selection of methods ensures a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the research problem. Ethical considerations play a pivotal role in the action research process, emphasizing the need for responsible and respectful inquiry. The research design should prioritize equity, avoiding any harm or exploitation. This commitment to ethical conduct ensures that the action research process is conducted with integrity and upholds the dignity and rights of all individuals involved in the study. (Structural Learning, 2021)

Thematic Concern Statement

The underrepresentation of African American teachers stands as a critical concern in contemporary education discourse. This issue reflects systemic inequalities deeply ingrained within educational structures. The scarcity of African American educators not only deprives students of diverse role models but also undermines the quality of education by neglecting unique perspectives and cultural nuances essential for fostering inclusive learning environments. Addressing this disparity demands multifaceted approaches, including targeted recruitment efforts, supportive mentorship programs, and comprehensive reforms in teacher training and retention policies. By amplifying the voices and contributions of African American educators, we not only enhance educational outcomes but also cultivate a more equitable and enriching educational landscape. In crafting my thesis, I've positioned myself within a conceptual framework that revolves around four key questions. Firstly, I delve into the philosophical underpinnings guiding my investigation, examining the lens through which I approach my concerns. Secondly, I explore the extensive history of African Americans in the United States, tracing their journey and the socio-political context that has shaped their experiences. Thirdly, I investigate the troubling underrepresentation of African American teachers within the

educational system of the United States, probing into the systemic barriers and societal dynamics contributing to this disparity. Lastly, I propose actionable strategies and solutions to address this underrepresentation, aiming to foster greater diversity and equity within the teaching profession. Through this structured approach, I aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue and offer meaningful avenues for progress.

Conceptual Framework

1. What is the philosophical framework from which I am considering this concern?
2. What is the history of African Americans in the United States?
3. Why is there an underrepresentation of African American teachers in the United States?
4. How can we increase representation of African American teachers in the United States?

Critical Lexicon

Constitutive:

Pedagogy

the study of the methods and activities of teaching
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionay/english/pedagogy>

Cultural Competency

the ability to understand and respect different cultures, and to respond to those differences in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs
<https://nccc.georgetown.edu/curricula/culturalcompetence.html#:~:text=Cultural%20competence%20is%20the%20ability%20of%20an,health>

[%20education%20and%20promotion%20programs%20and%20interventions](#)

Culturally Responsive

students' customs, characteristics, experiences, and perspectives as tools for better classroom instruction
<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/culturally-responsive-teaching-culturally-responsive-pedagogy/2022/04#:~:text=culturally%20responsive%20teaching:%20a%20pedagogy,as%20belonging%20in%20academic%20spaces>

Operative:

For the purpose of this paper, the following definitions will apply

Educational Philosophy

the branch of applied philosophy that investigates the nature of education as well as its aims and problems

Cultural Background

the customs, traditions, beliefs, values, and practices that shape an individual's identity and worldview.

Representation

the portrayal or depiction of something, whether it be an idea, group, concept, or individual, through various mediums such as language, imagery, symbols, or media. It involves presenting something in a way that conveys its essence, characteristics, or attributes to others.

Inclusivity

deliberate and conscious efforts to create environments, policies, and practices that embrace and accommodate the diversity of individuals, ensuring fair participation and representation for all regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics. It involves fostering a sense of belonging, respect, and fairness, where every individual feels valued and has equal opportunities to contribute and thrive

Educational Philosophy

To summarize my education philosophy, it reflects who I am and what I believe in. I advocate for a balanced education approach, preparing students for careers, fostering critical thinking, and nurturing personal growth. As an educator, I see myself as both a guide and mentor, shaped by my unique experiences and values. This philosophy aligns seamlessly with the concern of underrepresented African American teachers, emphasizing the need for equitable education. The connection between my personal identity, teaching philosophy, and the concern underscores my commitment to fostering an inclusive educational environment for all students. The underrepresentation of African American teachers stands as a critical issue within the educational landscape. The shortage of diverse role models affects students' perceptions, hindering their ability to connect with educators who share similar cultural backgrounds. This lack of representation can perpetuate stereotypes, limit diversity in perspectives, and contribute to a less inclusive learning environment.

The concern of underrepresented African American teachers directly aligns with my philosophy of education, which advocates for equity and inclusivity. My belief in equal educational opportunities for students of all backgrounds clashes with the evident disparity in the representation of African American educators. This misalignment emphasizes the urgency of addressing the issue to create a more inclusive educational space. The underrepresentation of African American teachers has profound implications for teaching and learning. It hampers the cultivation of a diverse and enriched educational experience, limiting exposure to varied perspectives. Addressing this concern is crucial for fostering a more inclusive learning environment where students can connect with educators who understand their cultural backgrounds, promoting a holistic and effective approach to education.

The underrepresentation of African American teachers has profound implications for teaching and learning. It hampers the cultivation of a diverse and enriched educational experience, limiting exposure to varied perspectives. Addressing this concern is crucial for fostering a more inclusive learning environment where students can connect with educators who understand their cultural backgrounds, promoting a holistic and effective approach to education.

My background, shaped by different cultures and experiences, helps me understand and tackle the issue of underrepresented African American teachers. Growing up in diverse settings has shown me firsthand how crucial it is to see diverse role models in education. I get what it feels like for students when there's not enough diversity among their teachers, and it makes me really committed to fixing that. Drawing from my own experiences, I want to support programs that celebrate diversity and push for a teaching workforce that reflects our communities better. Whether it's backing mentorship initiatives, pushing for fair hiring, or advocating for inclusive

policies, my varied background is both my inspiration and my tool for making a real difference in creating a more inclusive and diverse education system.

At the core of my educational philosophy is a steadfast commitment to equity and inclusivity, principles that intricately guide my approach to addressing the concern of underrepresented African American teachers. To concretely embody these principles, I envision implementing targeted recruitment strategies designed to actively seek out and attract aspiring African American educators. This involves creating channels and opportunities specifically tailored to individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, ensuring a more diverse pool of talent in the education sector. Moreover, I am eager to champion mentorship programs aimed at providing guidance, support, and encouragement to budding educators from African American communities. These programs serve not only to facilitate professional growth but also to establish a network of support that acknowledges and addresses the unique challenges faced by aspiring teachers from underrepresented groups. Additionally, I see the value of investing in professional development initiatives that equip educators with the necessary skills and resources to thrive in their roles. By aligning these comprehensive solutions with my philosophy, I aspire to play a vital role in dismantling systemic barriers, fostering an environment where diversity is celebrated, and actively contributing to the creation of a more inclusive educational landscape.

Acknowledging my identity and philosophy brings both challenges and opportunities to the forefront in addressing the concern. Challenges may include navigating systemic barriers and advocating for policy changes to promote diversity in the teaching profession. However, the opportunities lie in leveraging my unique perspective and commitment to inclusivity to drive meaningful change. Engaging in open dialogue, collaborating with like-minded individuals, and

actively participating in initiatives that promote diversity become avenues through which my identity and philosophy can be powerful catalysts for positive transformation.

Although this may seem difficult to achieve, we have other countries who successfully changed their education system to better their students and share a similar philosophy such as mine for equal education for all. Delving into Finland's esteemed education system affirmed my conviction that the transformation I advocate for in increasing representation of African American teachers is not only feasible but imperative. The 15-minute breaks between classes spent on snacks, games, and gossip, caught my attention as a simple yet effective way to refresh students, ensuring they return to their studies with renewed focus. What sets Finland apart is its lack of intention to become a world-class education system. The absence of high-stakes tests, formal testing, and standardized assessments is a striking feature. Instead, the emphasis is placed on utilizing 100% of the school day for learning, eliminating the achievement gap while fostering a strong teacher union and elevating student achievement. The Finnish education system adopts a unique approach to teaching, led by trust in educators. The absence of high-stakes tests empowers teachers to focus on their craft without the need for constant oversight from principals or outside inspectors. The teachers, considered well-trusted professionals, have the freedom to teach what they want, how they want, fostering a culture of shared ideas and continuous learning among educators. The condensed school day in Finland, spanning from 9 am to 1:30 pm, seems to challenge traditional norms. With 45-minute lessons followed by a mandatory 15-minute recess for all students, the system prioritizes a balance between academics and student well-being. This model recognizes that students learn at different paces, allowing teachers to tailor their lessons accordingly.

The importance of play in fostering social skills and discovering personal interests is evident in Finland's education system. Large breaks of over an hour provide students with the opportunity to engage in extracurricular activities within the school day, eliminating the need for after-school programs. The delay in starting formal education until the age of 7 ensures that children have ample time for social and emotional development, pushing a positive attitude towards education. Public schools are the norm, with no charter or private schools. All students, from grades 1 to 9, attend the same neighborhood public school, fostering a sense of community and equality. This commitment to leaving no child behind is reinforced by the provision of special education support for over half of the students throughout their school careers.

The unique student welfare team, comprised of professionals such as nurses, psychologists, and special education teachers, meets weekly to identify students in need of support and determine appropriate interventions. Teachers, all with at least a master's degree, undergo special education training to identify and address student issues effectively. What stands out in the Finnish education system is the role of trust. Trust in teachers, students and the education system. Tests are viewed as tools for planning rather than instruments for assessment and placement. The focus is on nurturing an environment where students can learn actively during regular instruction time, minimizing the need for tutors. English education from the 3rd grade and a commitment to preserving the native language, Finnish, shows the system's dedication to language proficiency. Elective classes like art and music are taught with the same rigor as core subjects, fostering a well-rounded education. Sports, funded by the city and government, avoid burdening school budgets, ensuring resources are distributed equitably. In essence, the Finnish education system challenges the status quo, providing a glimpse into a world where trust, inclusivity, and an integrated approach to education foster academic success. The

key takeaway is that a clear and successful education system is built on trust, allowing both educators and students to flourish in the best way they can.

I have explored the intricate connections between my identity, philosophy of education, and the identified concern of underrepresented African American teachers and Finland's education system. The exploration of positionality and educational philosophy provided a lens through which to understand the complexities of the concern within the framework of my beliefs. Reflecting on the interconnectedness of positionality, philosophy, and concern reveals a dynamic interplay between who I am, what I believe in, and the issues I find significant in the field of education. My multicultural background and experiences directly inform my commitment to addressing the underrepresentation of African American teachers, emphasizing the transformative power of representation in shaping educational experiences.

Through the lens of my positionality, my thesis is structured around a conceptual framework that delves into questions central to my concerns. Grounded in a philosophical perspective, I contemplate the rich history of African Americans in the United States, examining the intricate layers of their experiences. Within this discourse, I confront the pressing issue of the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the American educational landscape. As I navigate this inquiry, I am propelled by the imperative to explore avenues for fostering greater diversity and inclusion within the teaching profession. Central to my exploration is the quest to discern actionable strategies aimed at amplifying the representation of African American educators in the United States, thereby advancing equity and social justice within the educational sphere.

Chapter 3

Narrative

The underrepresentation of African American teachers in U.S. schools is a longstanding issue that has significant implications for student outcomes. This portion of my thesis explores the historical context of African American education and teachers, highlights the persistent disparities in educational outcomes among African American students and their peers, and examines the impact of the underrepresentation of African American teachers on student outcomes. Despite decades of progress toward greater diversity in the teaching profession, African American teachers remain vastly underrepresented compared to their white counterparts. This thematic concern is of particular importance because research has shown that students of color, particularly African American students, benefit academically and socially from having teachers who share racial or ethnic backgrounds (Gay, 2002). Furthermore, African American teachers bring unique perspectives and experiences to the classroom that can help counteract racial biases and educational policies so that we can promote equity and inclusivity in the education system. Although legal changes have been made over the years, many African American students continue to face educational disparities. Changing these educational policies can be understood as the result or outcome of a larger, society-wide, overly complex balance of forces. This has always been understood as elite versus many others. While these forces have shifted in capitalism and history, they have resulted in monumental shifts in education. This section will continue to discuss the importance of understanding the impact of teacher diversity on student outcomes, including the role of teacher expectations and cultural competency and the impact of role models and mentorship. This history of underrepresentation of African American

teachers and its impact on student outcomes is a multifaceted topic that requires careful examination and consideration. By exploring this history, we can gain a deeper understanding of the ongoing challenges and opportunities faced by African American students, teachers, and the education system and how the balance of forces affected the education system.

The history of African American education in the United States is a complex and often painful story, shaped by centuries of racism, discrimination, and oppression. During the slavery era in the United States, African slaves were systematically denied the right to education. According to historian Carol Berkin (2002), "slave codes in most Southern states specifically prohibited slaves from learning to read or write, believing that education would make slaves discontented with their lot and could lead to slave revolts" (p. 115). Any attempts to educate slaves were often met with severe punishment, including flogging, amputation, and even death. One of the most prominent examples of this prohibition of education was Nat Turner, a slave who led a rebellion in Virginia in 1831. Before the rebellion, Turner learned to read and write, which allowed him to study the Bible and become a preacher among his fellow slaves. After the rebellion was repressed, as Oates (1990) suggested, Turner was captured and executed, and Virginia passed stricter laws prohibiting the education of slaves. The denial of education for enslaved people was not limited to the South. In 1803, the Ohio General Assembly passed a law prohibiting the education of both free and enslaved black children. The law stated that "no black or mulatto person shall be permitted to settle in this state, without giving such evidence of their permanent residence therein, as the Supreme Court or someone of the Judges thereof shall direct, and if any black or mulatto person shall thus settle without such permission, he or she shall be deemed a runaway slave (Ohio General Assembly 1803). Overall, the prohibition of education for enslaved people during the slavery era had a lasting impact on African Americans' access to

education and their opportunities for advancement. In the slavery era, the balance of forces was heavily weighted in favor of slaveholders, who had complete control over the lives of their slaves. African slaves had no legal rights or protection, and any attempt to resist or seek education was met with severe punishments. The imbalance of power was reinforced by law, which treated slaves as property rather than people with inherent human rights. This was the beginning of “whiteness” in the U.S. Slaveholders did whatever they could to strip African Americans from culture and humanity. During this cruel time, it was common for slaves to work to death, as it was cheaper to replace them than to invest in their long-term health and survival. This harsh reality has undoubtedly contributed to the long-lasting effects of systemic racism and inequality that continue to impact African Americans today and have become sheep in the education system.

The Reconstruction Era followed the end of the Civil War and aimed to rebuild the country after the war's devastation. The end of the war also marked the “end” of slavery in the United States, a system that had denied African Americans the right to education and other basic human rights for centuries. However, the transition was not without challenges, as African Americans faced continued discrimination and inequality during the Reconstruction Era. The federal government aimed to rebuild and reconstruct the Southern states that were devastated by the Civil War, and as part of this effort, African Americans were granted the right to education through the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. The war caused the balance of forces to shift in favor of African Americans. These amendments ensured civil rights for newly freed slaves, such as the abolition of slavery, granting citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and prohibiting states from denying the right to vote based on race. The transition from slavery to reconstruction marked a significant shift in the

United States, with African Americans gaining new rights and opportunities, including the right to education.

However, in the Reconstruction era, the establishment of schools for black students was often underfunded and lacked resources, making it difficult for African American students to receive quality education and limiting their ability to fully exercise their newfound rights. Primary sources from the time, such as the *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1871*, provide insights into the challenges faced by black schools during reconstruction. The report notes that while many black schools were established, they were often poorly equipped and lacked basic resources, such as books and supplies. Furthermore, the report states that many Black teachers were not professionally trained or qualified, which further hindered the quality of education provided to Black students. Despite these challenges, African American communities were determined to provide education to their children. The African American educator and activist Booker T. Washington was a civil rights activist who founded the Tuskegee Institute in 1881. The Tuskegee Institute became a model for vocational education for African Americans, offering training in trades such as agriculture, carpentry, and mechanics. Washington believed that education and practical skills were essential for African Americans to achieve economic independence and social equality and dedicated his life to advancing these ideals. In his autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, Washington (1901) shares his struggles with establishing the Tuskegee Institute and his efforts to provide education and opportunities to African Americans in the South. He describes the challenges of securing funding and resources for the school and overcoming racial prejudice and discrimination. Despite these obstacles, Washington remained committed to his vision of education as a means of empowering African Americans. Students at the Tuskegee Institute also faced large challenges, including poverty, limited access

to education, and discrimination. However, they demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination in the face of adversity, working hard to acquire new skills and knowledge that would enable them to build better lives for themselves and their community. These students were able to learn truths about their own history and how to help the battles of systemic racism and the balance of forces. Students from this school gained the knowledge needed to fight the power of whiteness and gain class consciousness. Through the Tuskegee Institute, Booker T. Washington helped create a legacy of African American achievement and self-determination that continued to inspire generations of Americans. Regardless of the progress made by African Americans, the balance of forces was still entitled to white authorities who had taken their places in the government. The government felt pressured by so many blacks on the winning side, which allowed education to be accessed, but the content being taught was selected by people who were considered part of the elites. They chose the material of what black students learned, whom they learned from, at what time it was learned, and with whom they can learn with all to easily set these students up to become obedient low-wage workers and sheep of society. This keeps African Americans as many as possible where the elites can stay and even benefit from the majority's position in society. (Washington, 1901)

In conclusion, the Reconstruction Era brought attention to the challenges encountered by black schools in providing education to African American students. This institute became an exemplar for future educational institutions for African Americans and any minority facing the similar challenges of oppression and discrimination. The Reconstruction Era, which followed the Civil War, was a period of progress for African Americans, as they gained new civil rights and freedoms. However, this progress was short-lived, and the balance of forces swung heavily back in favor of white authorities, as the implementation of Jim Crow laws in the late 1800s and the

early 1900s brought about a new era of segregation and discrimination. These laws mandated racial segregation in public facilities, including schools, which had a consequential impact on black students' education. Despite efforts by African American communities to establish schools, black schools were still often underfunded and lacked basic resources, while white schools received much more funding and resources, particularly from the government. The imbalance of power was reinforced by the legal system, which was heavily skewed in favor of white authorities who had the power to restrict access to education for black students.

The Jim Crow era was a period of legalized segregation and discrimination in the United States, particularly in the south, where laws were enacted to enforce racial segregation in public facilities for black and white citizens. Jim Crow laws were a series of state and local laws in the United States that enforced racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans from the late 1800s until the mid-1960s. These laws were particularly prevalent in the southern states, where they were used to justify the separation of black and white people in all areas of life, including education. This can also be seen in history as a corporate takeover of urban school boards in the late 19th century. This takeover was a mechanism by which capitalist interests pushed back against progressive gains in policy and working-class consciousness. The corporate model of education was stratified and functioned to reproduce social inequality. Corporate interests were able to control the narrative through media outlets, painting their approach as unbiased and neutral and the working-class agenda as political and corrupt (Malott, 2018).

According to a report by the United States Commission on Civil Rights in 1961, "The Southern states required segregation by law in public education, and separate schools were maintained for negroes and whites. (United States Commission, 1961) A report by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) 1929 titled *The Negro in*

American Education, illustrates the impact of Jim Crow laws on education. The report states that "separate schools" for Negroes are in general, inferior schools, and that the education which Negro children receive is in no sense equal to that which white children receive." The report describes how black schools were underfunded and understaffed with inadequate facilities and poorly trained teachers. Another artifact that sheds light on the effects of segregation in schools is a letter written by a group of African American parents in Clarendon County, South Carolina in 1947. The parents wrote to the state governor requesting better schools for their children, who were forced to attend dilapidated, segregated schools with inadequate resources. The letter sent by a representative of the group expressed that the parents, believe that their children have a right to equal educational facilities and that segregation is an unjust burden upon them." (Parents Committee on Action, 1949) This letter later became a part of the landmark *Brown v. The Board of Education* Supreme Court case declared segregation in schools unconstitutional in 1954. The Jim Crow laws also negatively affected African Americans when they came to representation in Congress. The book, *A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution* by Carol Berkin (2002) describes how the framers of the Constitution were forced to compromise on the issue of slavery to avoid potential conflict between northern and southern states, which ironically still ended in a civil war.

This response ultimately led to the adoption of a three-fifths compromise. The Three-Fifths Compromise was a critical agreement proposed by James Madison and adopted by the Constitutional Convention on July 12, 1787. It determined how enslaved people in the southern states would be counted for representation in the House of Representatives. The compromise stated that each enslaved person should be counted as three-fifths of a person to determine the population of each state. This agreement was a major concession to the Southern states, which

had a large population of enslaved people and wanted to include them in their population count to gain greater representation in the Congress. It was a highly controversial decision that was fiercely debated by delegates to the Convention. The Northern states argued that slaves should not be counted for representation because they were not citizens and did not have the right to vote. On the other hand, the Southern states wanted to count enslaved persons as a whole person because it would increase their representation in Congress. The Three-fifths Compromise had profound consequences for the country. It institutionalized the practice of slavery and gave Southern states disproportionate power in Congress. By allowing the Southern states to count enslaved persons as part of their population, the compromise gave them greater representation in Congress and political power.

This political power enabled the Southern states to maintain and expand the system of slavery, which had a profound impact on the country's social, economic, political, and educational development. The Three-Fifths Compromise remained in effect and set the stage for the development of segregation laws until the abolition of slavery during the Civil War with the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution. Looking at this history through the corporate model lens, this includes a remade vision for the superintendent, who is now empowered to reshape schools based on suggestions and directions from corporate-oriented school boards. The corporate managers who took an interest in schooling ridiculed democratic conceptions of common schooling in favor of social efficiency or class, gender, and race-based systems of tracking. This countering of working-class solidarity was done by suggesting that racially mediated social class reflected a natural hierarchy of intelligence, and education should therefore reflect this so-called reality. Overall, the corporate takeover of education is a means of

maintaining social inequality and reproducing the social and economic hierarchy of the United States.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement brought attention to the inequalities in education for African Americans. The landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) declared segregation in schools unconstitutional, leading to the integration of schools. This period was named the Civil Rights Era of history. The Civil Rights Era was a period of remarkable social and political change in the United States, marked by political turmoil and a powerful movement for equal rights and protections for African Americans. The era was characterized by intense activism and organizing, as well as frequent clashes with law enforcement and white supremacist groups. This suggests, the balance of forces began to shift back in favor of African Americans, who organized and mobilized to demand equal rights and access to education.

One of the most crucial events of the era was the march on Washington D.C. for jobs and freedom, held on August 28, 1963. The march on Washington D.C. was a massive demonstration of support for Civil Rights, and it was attended by an estimated 250,000 people. The highlight of the event was a speech delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in which he famously declared, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal (King, 1963)'" The speech was a powerful call to action, and it helped to galvanize support for the Civil Rights Movement. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a prominent leader of the Civil Rights Movement and a powerful voice for the equal rights of African Americans. He believed that the United States was not living up to its founding principles of equality and justice, and he spoke out against the systemic racism and discrimination that he saw in American society. Dr. King often highlighted the

underrepresentation of African Americans in political and social institutions, arguing that this lack of representation was a key factor in the marginalization of African Americans. In his famous "I Have a Dream" speech discussed earlier, Dr. King also spoke about the need for greater representation of African Americans in American society. He called for an end to segregation and discrimination in all aspects of life, and he argued that African Americans should have equal access to education, employment, and political power. Dr. King's vision of a more just and equal society inspired millions of people, and it remains a powerful inspiration for social justice movements today. Dr. King threatened the stability of the elites by raising class consciousness through organizing, protests, teachings, speeches and so much more. MLK was one of the many people who contributed to the shift in the balance of forces towards a more even split between African American activists and their white opponents, with legal victories giving African Americans more leverage to push for change.

Another important event of the Civil Rights Era was the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which aimed to overcome legal barriers that prevented African Americans from voting. The Voting Rights Act was a landmark piece of legislation that helped to protect the voting rights of African Americans and other minorities in the United States and had a profound impact on American politics. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Act into law on August 6, 1965, in a ceremony that was attended by civil rights leaders and members of Congress. The act prohibited discriminatory voting practices such as literacy tests and poll taxes, and it helped to ensure that African Americans could exercise their right to vote. In his remarks at the signing ceremony, President Johnson emphasized the importance of the Act in ensuring that all Americans have the right to vote. He noted that many African Americans had been disenfranchised for decades, and that the Act was a major step toward guaranteeing their full participation in American

democracy. President Johnson also spoke about the challenges that lay ahead in implementing the Voting Rights Act. He acknowledged that there would be resistance to the Act, particularly in the southern states where segregation and discrimination had been most entrenched. However, he emphasized that the federal government was committed to enforcing the Act and protecting the rights of all Americans. President Johnson's remarks at the signing of the Voting Rights Act reflected the deep significance of the Act for African Americans and for the future of American democracy, and his commitment to ensuring that all Americans were able to participate fully in the political process (National Archives and Records Administration, 1963).

In practical terms, the Voting Rights Act shifted the balance of power in several ways. Firstly, this gave African American a voice in the political process, enabling them to influence policy and elect representatives who would advocate for their interests. Secondly, the act shifted power away from state governments and towards the federal government. The federal government was given the authority to oversee elections in certain states and to ensure that they were conducted fairly and without discrimination. This federal oversight was crucial in ensuring that African Americans were able to exercise their right to vote without fear of intimidation or discrimination. Thirdly, the act shifted power within the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party had traditionally been the party of segregation and discrimination in the South, but the Voting Rights Act helped to shift the balance of power within the party towards African Americans. African Americans became an increasingly important voting bloc within the party, and their interests and concerns began to be taken more seriously by Democratic politicians.

An additional landmark case in the Civil Rights era, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) declared segregation in schools unconstitutional, paving the way to the integration of schools.

The case was brought by African American parents on behalf of their children who were being denied admission to white schools in Topeka, Kansas. The Supreme Court's decision stated that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" and violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. This decision marked an unforgettable turning point in the Civil Rights Movement and helped pave the way for more desegregation efforts. The Brown v. Board of Education decision was a pronounced victory for civil rights activists, who had been fighting for an end to segregation in schools for decades. The decision was also a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement, as it galvanized activists and led to a renewed push for equality and desegregation in all areas of American life. However, the decision was also met with resistance and backlash, particularly in the southern states where segregation was most entrenched. Despite the resistance, the Brown v. Board of Education decision set in motion a series of events that ultimately led to the full integration of schools across the country. Over the next few years, many school districts began to desegregate their schools, despite the slow pace and often in the face of intense opposition. The integration of schools was a major step forward for civil rights and helped to pave the way for further gains in the fight for equality. Today, the legacy of Brown v. Board of Education is still felt in the United States, as it remains a symbol of the struggle for civil rights and a reminder of the ongoing fight for equality. While there is still work to be done to ensure that all Americans have equal access to education, the decision in Brown v. Board of Education stands as a landmark moment in American history and a testament to the power of the Civil Rights Movement. In conclusion, the Brown v. Board of Education case, the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, and the Voting Rights Act were all important milestones in the Civil Rights Movement. These events helped to bring about monumental changes in American society and challenged the longstanding practices of segregation and discrimination.

Overall, the Civil Rights Movement was a crucial turning point in the struggle for civil rights in the United States. It helped to shift the balance of power towards African Americans, giving them greater political power and influence, and ensuring that their voices were heard in the political process.

Despite legal changes, many African American students continue to face educational disparities, including lower graduation rates and higher rates of discipline and suspension. Efforts to address these disparities continue today. The Post-Civil Rights Era marked a pivotal moment in American history where the legal landscape of the country changed to combat racism and discrimination against African Americans. These legal changes sought to dismantle institutionalized racism and discrimination against African Americans. However, many African American students still face educational disparities. According to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the high school graduation rate for African American students in 2017-2018 was 77%, compared to 89% for white students (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). These disparities have persisted even as the country has become more diverse, suggesting that more needs to be done to address them. One particular challenge facing African American students in the Post-Civil Rights Era is the achievement gap. Even with the progress in the integration of schools and increased funding for education in low-income communities, African American students continue to perform below their white peers on standardized tests. This achievement gap can limit opportunities for college admission and future employment prospects. According to the same NCES report, the average reading score for African American students in 2019 was 21 points lower than the average reading score for white students (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). This gap persists across other subjects and is a significant factor in the disparity in graduation rates. The report highlights the need for increased attention to closing the

achievement gap, as it remains a critical issue for African American students. Another issue facing African American students is the disproportionate rate of discipline and suspension. According to a report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, African American students are suspended and expelled at a higher rate than white students, regardless of their behavior (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018). Also, African American students are more likely to receive harsher punishments for minor infractions, leading to a higher likelihood of dropping out of school. This tendency and unnecessary discipline have led to the criminalization of African American students and has been called the “school-to-prison pipeline,” as it can lead to a higher likelihood of incarceration. Addressing this issue will require more variation of disciplinary policies and the development of a restorative justice framework that prioritizes repairing harm rather than punishment.

In the post-Civil Rights era, the balance of forces shifted as conservative and neoliberal policies gained momentum. While civil rights legislation had dismantled some of the formal legal structures of racial segregation, it did not fundamentally alter the economic and social structures that perpetuated inequality. Even with the integration of schools the higher class still found ways to practice inequity in education by moving towards decentralization of the education system, with increased power given to local school boards and decreased federal oversight. This shift led to more uneven educational opportunities for students based on their location and available resources. As a result, some schools in poorer areas struggled to provide the same quality of education as those in more affluent areas. This branches to another issue where we are still dealing with the issues of segregation which is perpetuated by factors such as neighborhood demographics and discriminatory housing policies, which results in limited access to better-funded schools in wealthier areas. Additionally, the emphasis on standardized testing

increased during this period. While standardized testing had been used in education for decades, it became more widespread in the post-civil rights era to evaluate school and teacher performance. Standardized testing narrows the focus of education to rote memorization of facts and neglects other important aspects of learning, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. Others argue that standardized testing perpetuates inequities in educational outcomes for marginalized students, as it often does not consider socio-economic or cultural factors that may affect student performance. I argue that these are simply unintended results of school boards working with companies whose intentions are money and do not care about the actual learning that should happen in schools. Furthermore, the use of standardized tests as a primary measure of student achievement can have additional unintended consequences, such as teaching to the test or narrowing the curriculum to focus on tested subjects. This can limit the development of students' broader intellectual and social skills, as well as their ability to think independently and creatively. Overall, the balance of forces in the post-civil rights era led to a mixed bag of educational outcomes. While there were some advances in areas such as desegregation and educational access, there were also setbacks related to funding and curriculum development. These issues continue to be a focus of debate in education policy today.

In the efforts to address these disparities continue today, some school districts have implemented restorative justice practices, which prioritize repairing harm rather than addressing punishment. Other initiatives include targeted support for struggling students, such as tutoring and mentorship programs. Additionally, some schools have focused on culturally responsive teaching, which aims to create a more inclusive learning environment for students of all backgrounds. One such initiative is the My Brother's Keeper initiative, which aims to improve the lives of boys and young men of color. The program works to address disparities in education,

criminal justice, and employment by connecting young men with resources, opportunities, and mentors from backgrounds like theirs. Unfortunately, as efforts have been made in some areas, others still proceed at a very delayed pace to address the disparities continuing today. In conclusion, the Post-Civil Rights Era marked significant legal progress in dismantling institutionalized racism in America, even so many African American students still face educational disparities today persisting across different subjects and affect students at all levels of the educational system. Addressing these issues will require an ongoing commitment and collaboration among educators, policymakers, and communities. By working together, we can create a more equitable and just educational system for all students.

The historical context of African American teachers in the United States has a rich and complex history in the United States, marked by their ongoing fight for civil rights and equal access to education. Despite facing numerous challenges, including discrimination, lack of funding, and limited resources, African American teachers have persevered in their mission to improve the education of their students. Throughout history, African American teachers have served as role models and mentors for their students, providing them with positive examples of black excellence and leadership. Many of these teachers have been the only source of cultural education for African American students, particularly in the era of segregation. The higher class worked hard at this time to make sure there were very few people who could fill these roles for the African American community. This helped make students less knowledgeable about their own history and the battles still being fought today that are very real. As such, they have played a crucial role in preserving and advancing African American culture and history. African American teachers have also made exceptional contributions to the development of American education. Many of these teachers have been leaders in the field, advocating for greater equity in

education and pushing for reforms that benefit all students, regardless of race or ethnicity. Their work has been instrumental in shaping the educational landscape of the United States and ensuring that all students have access to high-quality education. Overall, the historical context and significance of African American teachers in the United States reflect the ongoing struggle for equality and justice in education.

African American teachers emerged during a time in which access to education for black individuals was severely limited. Prior to the Civil War, or as examined before, in the slavery era, it was illegal in many states to teach enslaved individuals how to read or write, and even after the war, black individuals faced momentous barriers to education, including segregation and discrimination. Despite these challenges, a small number of African American teachers emerged, serving as educators for black students in churches, private schools, and other settings. Although, the emergence of African American teachers gained momentum during the Reconstruction Era, when the federal government established the Freedmen's Bureau to provide educational opportunities for newly freed slaves. During this time, many African American teachers were trained and employed by the Freedmen's Bureau, and they played a crucial role in expanding access to education for black individuals in the South. African American teachers also played a key role in the early civil rights movement, advocating for equal access to education and working to eliminate segregation and discrimination in schools. Despite facing significant challenges and barriers, African American teachers have persisted in their mission to provide quality education to their students, and their legacy continues to shape the educational perspective of the United States today.

The first African American teachers in the United States emerged during the early 19th century when black individuals faced compelling barriers to education due to slavery and discrimination. Many of these early African American teachers were trained by religious organizations, such as the American Missionary Association (AMA), which was founded in 1846 to provide education and resources to newly freed slaves (Coleman, 1994). The AMA played a significant role in training and employing African American teachers, particularly in the South, where access to education for black individuals was limited. According to Coleman (1994), "By 1870, the AMA had established over 500 schools for black students and employed more than 2,000 teachers, many of whom were African American." These teachers played a crucial role in educating black communities and promoting greater equity in education. Many of the earliest African American teachers were women, who faced glaring barriers to education and employment due to their gender and race. One such woman was Charlotte Forten, who was born into a free black family in Philadelphia in 1837. According to a biography published by the National Women's History Museum, Forten attended the Higginson Grammar School in Salem, Massachusetts, where she was trained to become a teacher (National Women's History Museum, n.d.). After completing her education, Forten taught at a school for black children in South Carolina and later worked as a teacher and writer in Boston (National Women's History Museum, n.d.). The NEA report notes that African American teachers often served as role models and mentors for their students, working tirelessly to provide them with positive examples of black excellence and leadership. Many of these teachers worked in schools that were understaffed and underfunded, and they often had to provide their own resources and materials for their students. Despite these challenges, they remained dedicated to their work and to the advancement of black education. In addition to their work in the classroom, African American

teachers were instrumental in advocating for greater equity in education and working to eliminate segregation and discrimination in schools. The NEA report notes that many of these teachers were active in the civil rights movement and worked alongside other activists to bring about change in their communities.

As stated before, African American teachers faced a considerable number of obstacles in their efforts to educate black students. As noted by historian Mary Coleman 1994, one of the major challenges facing these teachers was a lack of resources and funding for black schools. In her article "The Emergence of African American Teachers in the United States: A Historical Overview," Coleman points out that schools for black students were often underfunded and lacked essential resources such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, and adequate facilities. This lack of resources made it difficult for African American teachers to provide their students with a quality education. In addition to facing a lack of resources, African American teachers were also subject to discriminatory practices such as lower pay and exclusion from professional organizations. According to Coleman 1994, African American teachers were often paid less than their white counterparts, despite having the same level of education and experience. They were also excluded from professional organizations such as the National Education Association, which denied membership to African American teachers until the 1960s. This exclusion meant that African American teachers had limited access to professional development opportunities, conferences, and other resources that were available to white teachers, which eventually led to a larger achievement gap between African American students and white students. The government always pushed for this achievement gap to become larger because this meant everyone who is considered the higher class had their positions secured. Overall, African American teachers played a pivotal role in educating black students despite facing serious obstacles and

discrimination. Through their dedication and perseverance, they provided black students with access to education and helped to preserve and advance black culture and history. Despite the challenges they faced, African American teachers were instrumental in advocating for greater equity in education and working to eliminate segregation and discrimination in schools which is still happening today.

The efforts of African American teachers to educate black students in the face of discrimination and adversity laid the foundation for the establishment of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the late 1800s and early 1900s. These institutions were founded in response to the exclusion of black students from existing colleges and universities due to racism and segregation. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there are currently 101 HBCUs in the United States, and they continue to serve as important institutions for the education of African Americans. The first HBCU, Cheyney University, was founded in Pennsylvania in 1837, followed by several others in the following decades, including Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in 1854 and Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1867. HBCUs play a vital role in training African American teachers, providing them with access to higher education and teacher training programs. These institutions focus on preparing students for teaching careers in the black community, with an emphasis on education as a means of uplifting and empowering African Americans. Many HBCUs also place a strong emphasis on community service and social justice, with a mission of providing education and leadership opportunities for underrepresented communities. In the words of Mary McLeod Bethune, an influential educator and founder of Bethune-Cookman University, “The drums of Africa still beat in my heart. They will not let me rest while there is a single Negro boy or girl without a chance to prove his worth.” HBCUs have played a significant role in the education of African

Americans, producing many notable educators, leaders, and professionals who have made impressive contributions to American society.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) played a significant role in shifting the balance of forces in education and civil rights in the United States. HBCUs were established during the era of segregation as institutions of higher education for African American students who were excluded from attending predominantly white colleges and universities. HBCUs were not only institutions of higher learning but also centers of community organization and activism. They provided a space for African American students to develop their skills and knowledge while also engaging in civil rights activism and advocating for social justice. Many HBCUs were at the forefront of the civil rights movement, and their students and alumni played key roles in the fight for equal rights and opportunities for African Americans. For example, students from HBCUs were instrumental in organizing the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, which was a major turning point in the civil rights movement. HBCUs also played a significant role in providing African American teachers and leaders for communities across the country. These historically black colleges provided a platform for African American leaders to develop their skills and knowledge and to take an active role in shaping the direction of their communities. Overall, HBCUs were critical in shifting the balance of forces in education and civil rights in the United States and played a critical role in developing African American leaders who went on to become educators, politicians, and civil rights activists, and who continue to shape the direction of the country today.

The Civil Rights Movement had a remarkable impact on African American teachers and the education system in the United States. During the initial stages of the movement, African

American teachers who taught in segregated schools played a critical role in educating and empowering black students. These teachers often faced discrimination and underfunding of their specific schools due to these choices, but they remained committed to providing their students with a quality education and promoting racial equality. Discrimination against black teachers was prevalent during the Civil Rights era. Black teachers were often paid less than their white counterparts and were excluded from professional development opportunities and promotions. The lack of opportunities for black teachers contributed to a very wide achievement gap between black and white students. According to historian Robert A. Margo (1990), "In 1954, the average black teacher earned about \$1,500 less per year than the average white teacher and the average black school had about \$5,000 less in annual funding than the average white school" (pg.54). With the efforts to making educators more equitable, desegregation and the integration of African American teachers into predominantly white schools was a substantial step forward for educational equality. However, integration also posed striking challenges for African American teachers. They were often faced with hostility and racism from white colleagues and administrators, and they had to adapt to new teaching environments with different expectations and cultural norms. Despite these challenges, African American teachers continued to advocate for educational equality and social justice working to promote diversity and inclusion in the classroom and to challenge discriminatory practices and policies within the education system.

One notable example of an African American teacher who played a key role in the Civil Rights Movement was Mary McLeod Bethune. Born to parents who were former slaves, Bethune understood the importance of education in achieving social mobility and improving the lives of African Americans. She founded the Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls (now known as Bethune-Cookman University) in Florida in 1904, which provided

black girls with access to education and vocational training. In addition to her work as an educator, Bethune was also deeply involved in the civil rights movement. Being the founder of the National Council of Negro Women and an advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Bethune was a powerful advocate for educational and social equality for African Americans. Bethune was also a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and worked to desegregate schools and other public institutions. She also served as a consultant to the National Youth Administration, where she advocated for the employment and training of African American youth. Bethune was an educator, activist, and advisor to several U.S. presidents. Bethune's Last Will and Testament, written in 1955, reflects her commitment to the cause of African American education and civil rights. In it, she expressed her belief in the power of education to transform lives and communities, and her desire to see her life's work continue after her death.

The Civil Rights Movement, and the activism of African American teachers paved the way for progress in the fight for educational equality and social justice. However, despite these efforts, African American teachers still face significant challenges in the current education system. African American teachers remain underrepresented in the U.S. teaching profession, despite efforts to increase diversity. According to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics, in the 2017-2018 school year, only 7% of public-school teachers were African American, while African American students made up 15% of the student population (NCES, 2019). This disparity has large implications for students of color, as research shows that having a teacher who shares their racial or ethnic identity can have positive effects on academic achievement and social-emotional development (Dee, 2004). One of the major challenges still being faced today by African American teachers is discrimination and bias in the hiring and

promotion process. While open discrimination in classrooms may have decreased, there are still prominent issues facing African American teachers in the process of gaining entry to the profession. A study by the Center for American Progress found that teachers of color, including African Americans, are often overlooked for leadership positions and receive lower performance ratings than their white counterparts (American Progress, n.d.). African American teachers also face unequal pay, with a wage gap between white and African American teachers of about 2.9% (Liu, 2019). Despite these challenges, there have been some recent efforts to increase diversity in the teaching profession. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2019), there has been a gradual increase in the percentage of minority teachers in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States from 12 percent in 1987-1988 to 21 percent in 2015-2016. This increase can be attributed to several initiatives and programs aimed at increasing diversity in the teaching profession. One such initiative is the Teach to Lead initiative launched by the U.S. Department of Education in 2015. This initiative aims to increase the diversity of the teacher workforce by recruiting and retaining a more diverse group of teachers. It also provides support for states and districts to develop strategies to recruit, prepare, and retain a diverse teaching workforce (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). In addition, there have been efforts to close the pay gap for black teachers, who historically have been paid less than their white counterparts. One organization making strides in closing the pay gap is the National Education Association (NEA). The NEA has been advocating for equal pay for black teachers for many years, and in 2021, they launched the "Racial and Social Justice" campaign, which includes a focus on closing the pay gap for black educators. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has also been advocating for equal pay for black teachers. In a statement, AFT President Randi Weingarten said, "Black teachers have been systematically underpaid and undervalued for far too

long. It's time to right this wrong and ensure that all teachers are paid fairly for the important work they do." While progress has been made in recent years to increase diversity and close the pay gap in the teaching profession, there is still more work to be done to ensure that all students have access to a diverse group of highly qualified teachers being paid a fair amount for their work.

In conclusion, the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the United States is a critical issue that has historical roots dating back to the era of slavery. Despite progress made through the Civil Rights Movement and the desegregation of schools, African American students still face educational disparities, which highlights the continued importance of African American teachers today. The historical context of African American teachers focuses attention on the pivotal role they have played in educating the Black community, advocating for educational equality and social justice, and overcoming discrimination and lack of resources. While challenges such as discrimination and unequal pay persist for African American teachers, progress has been made in recent years to increase diversity in the teaching profession. As the United States strives toward equity and inclusion in education, the importance of African American teachers cannot be overstated.

The underrepresentation of African American teachers in the United States has been an ongoing concern, given the persistent disparities in educational outcomes between African American students and their peers. Research has shown that teacher diversity can play a critical role in addressing these disparities and improving student outcomes. In this context, we will examine the impact of the underrepresentation of African American teachers on student outcomes, focusing on the role of teacher expectations and cultural competency, the impact of role models and mentorship, and the potential role of teacher diversity in addressing these

disparities. The lack of diversity among teachers has long been identified as a contributing factor to the achievement gap between African American students and their peers. The research article "Diversifying the Teacher Workforce: A Retrospective and Prospective Analysis" by Villegas and Irvine (2010) explores the impact of teacher diversity on academic outcomes, cultural competency, and school climate. According to the authors, increasing teacher diversity can lead to improved academic outcomes for students, particularly for African American and Hispanic students. The study found that African American and Hispanic students who were taught by teachers of their own race showed higher academic achievement and had more positive attitudes toward school. Furthermore, increasing teacher diversity has been shown to positively impact the cultural competency of teachers, which in turn leads to better outcomes for all students. Teachers who are culturally competent are better equipped to address the unique needs of their diverse students, resulting in a more inclusive learning environment. Ultimately, increasing teacher diversity can have a positive impact on school climate. The authors note that having a diverse teaching staff can promote a more welcoming and inclusive school environment, which can lead to improved student engagement and academic achievement. The study suggests that when students see themselves reflected in their teachers, it can promote a sense of belonging and increase their motivation to succeed. In conclusion, research by Villegas and Irvine (2010) highlights the importance of increasing teacher diversity in improving academic outcomes, increasing cultural competency, and promoting a positive school climate for all students. Addressing the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the United States should be a priority, as it can have a remarkable impact on the success of African American students and contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable education system.

Teacher expectations play a critical role in student outcomes, and research has found that white teachers tend to have lower expectations for African American students compared to their white peers. However, African American teachers are more likely to have elevated expectations for African American students and provide a more positive classroom climate (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). This research suggests that increasing the number of African American teachers in schools could help to improve teacher expectations for African American students and ultimately improve their academic outcomes. In addition to academic outcomes, African American teachers can also serve as positive role models and mentors for African American students. Studies have shown that having a same-race teacher can increase academic motivation and self-esteem for African American students (Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009). African American teachers can also provide guidance and support for African American students who may face unique challenges and barriers in the education system. Cultural competency is another crucial factor in student outcomes. African American students often face cultural barriers in the classroom, such as a lack of cultural sensitivity and understanding from teachers (Gay, 2002). Research has found that teachers who are more culturally competent can provide a more supportive and inclusive learning environment for African American students, leading to improved academic outcomes (Howard, 2003). African American teachers may be better equipped to understand and address the cultural needs of African American students and provide a more culturally responsive classroom environment than white teachers. Many students fall under the umbrella of being labeled an “at risk” student due to teachers from different races not being able to properly instruct the student. It is important to note the disparities in educational outcomes among African American students and their peers. African American students are more likely to face disciplinary action, have lower graduation rates, and have lower test scores (National Center for

Education Statistics, 2020). Increasing the representation of African American teachers in schools may help to address these disparities and provide a more equitable education system for African American students.

The effort to create a more fair and just education system often encounters opposition and resistance from both the educational institutions and the government. This can manifest in numerous ways, such as unequal funding for schools in predominantly African American communities, discriminatory disciplinary practices, and biased standardized testing. Since they were unable to separate the schools, the state found a way to create inequity inside the school. African American students are more likely to come from low-income families and attend underfunded schools with fewer resources. This can lead to inadequate educational opportunities, lower-quality instruction, and fewer opportunities for academic and extracurricular enrichment. Having African American teachers who more than likely came from a similar background can give a unique perspective on dealing with these challenges while navigating through the school system. African American students may come from distinct cultural and linguistic backgrounds than their teachers, which can lead to misunderstandings and difficulties in communication. This can also result in cultural dissonance in the classroom, where the educational practices and values of the school do not align with those of the student's home and community. This also leads students who are a different race than their teacher to be disciplined harsher than others due to misunderstandings of the students' culture or home life. This tends to lead students to feelings of isolation, disengagement, and low motivation to learn. All results of inequity of African American teachers and students in the school system (Gay, 2022).

In conclusion, increasing the representation of African American teachers in schools can have a positive impact on student outcomes. African American teachers can provide a more

positive classroom climate, higher teacher expectations, increased cultural competency, and serve as positive role models and mentors for African American students. Given the persistent inequities in educational outcomes for African American students, it is critical to address the underrepresentation of African American teachers and increase diversity in the teaching profession. In closing, the historical context of African American education and teachers in the United States features the multifaceted and often painful story of racism, discrimination, and oppression. Despite the progress made since the Civil Rights Era, African American students continue to face persistent educational disparities often leading to fewer successes than their white peers. The shift in the balance of forces has brought about innovative ideas on how to organize and effect change for African Americans in America. Increasing teacher diversity, including the representation of African American teachers, has been found to lead to improved academic outcomes, increased cultural competency, and a more positive school climate for all students. Research suggests that teacher expectations, cultural competency, role models, and mentorship play a significant role in teacher diversity's impact on student outcomes (Gay, 2002). As Oprah Winfrey once said, "Education is the key to unlocking the world, a passport to freedom" (Winfrey, 2010). Addressing the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the education field is crucial for enhancing the academic achievements and prospects of African American students, promoting equity and social justice, and responding to the changing dynamics that have led to a shift in the balance of forces.

Psychology of Underrepresentation of African American Teachers

Education has been a cornerstone of American society since its introduction to the Native Americans by Spain in 1492. It has also been used as a tool for oppression and marginalization. African Americans have been particularly affected by this, as they have faced significant barriers

to accessing quality education throughout history. Education has always had its role in the decolonization and the oppression of minorities, especially African Americans. For this reason, we must introduce trauma-informed education (TIE) and the need for an equity-centered approach to it (Venet, 2021). Despite the advances made since the abolition of slavery, segregation, and the Civil Rights Movement, the underrepresentation of African American teachers in education remains a critical issue in the United States. The legacy of segregation has contributed to unequal opportunities for education, inadequate school funding, and ineffective teaching practices that have had a significant impact on the academic performance of African American students. In this section we will explore the impact on students due to the underrepresentation of African American teachers, drawing on the psychological impact of the legacy of segregation. By understanding these factors and mechanisms, we can work towards developing evidence-based strategies that address these disparities and improve educational outcomes for African American students.

The underrepresentation of African American teachers in American classrooms is a significant issue that has persisted for many years, and it is one that is closely related to the field of educational psychology. Despite efforts to diversify the teaching profession, African American teachers continue to be underrepresented in schools across the country. Research has shown that having a teacher of the same race can have positive effects on academic outcomes, including higher test scores, reduced absenteeism, and fewer disciplinary incidents (Gay, 2002). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, during the 2017-2018 school year, only 7% of public-school teachers in the United States were African American, while 48% were White, 20% were Hispanic, and 2% were Asian. This lack of representation is particularly pronounced in urban areas. In some of the largest urban school districts in the United States, the

percentage of African American teachers is well below the percentage of African American students. For example, in the New York City public school system, only 26% of students are White, while 58% are Hispanic and African American. However, only 37% of teachers are Hispanic and African American. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). This lack of representation among minority teachers specifically African American teachers can have a significant impact on African American students. Self-efficacy, or an individual's belief in their ability to achieve their goals, is closely linked to the representation of minority teachers, particularly African American teachers, in the classroom. When students from marginalized backgrounds have teachers who share their cultural experiences and identities, it can lead to a greater sense of belonging and empowerment, which can enhance their self-efficacy. Conversely, the lack of representation among African American teachers can contribute to a sense of disconnection and lack of validation for African American students, ultimately impacting their self-efficacy and academic outcomes. Studies have shown that having African American teachers can improve academic achievement and reduce disciplinary actions among African American students. Therefore, it is essential to address the underrepresentation of African American teachers and promote a more diverse and inclusive teaching workforce to support the self-efficacy and success of African American students (Milner & Hoy, 2003).

Several factors contribute to the underrepresentation of African American teachers, including low recruitment and retention rates, unequal pay, and limited access to professional development opportunities. Addressing this issue requires increasing funding for teacher training programs at historically Black colleges and universities, providing scholarships and loan forgiveness for African American students who pursue teaching careers, and creating mentoring programs to support African American teachers. However, these efforts are often underfunded

and not widespread enough to address the root causes of the underrepresentation of African American teachers in America. Educational psychologists can play a crucial role in understanding the factors that contribute to this issue and developing effective strategies to address it.

One famous American educational psychologist was John Dewey who made significant contributions to the fields of education, psychology, and philosophy. His article "My Pedagogic Creed" has ideas that draw connections to the issue of the underrepresentation of African American teachers in American classrooms. Dewey believed that education is a process of social reconstruction and should be based on learners' needs and interests. He argued that the teacher's role is to facilitate learning by creating an environment that encourages active participation and engagement with the subject matter. Dewey believed teachers should be trained to be reflective practitioners constantly assessing and adapting their methods to meet their students' needs. In the context of the underrepresentation of African American teachers, Dewey's ideas suggest that the education system should be restructured to ensure that all students have access to teachers who understand their cultural background and can relate to their experiences. This means that teacher training programs should be designed to promote cultural competence and to prepare teachers to work effectively with students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, Dewey's emphasis on active learning and engagement suggests that teaching methods should be adapted to incorporate culturally relevant materials and to create opportunities for students to engage with the subject matter in ways that are meaningful to them. Overall, Dewey's Pedagogical Creed provides a framework for addressing the issue of the underrepresentation of African American teachers by emphasizing the importance of reflective practice, cultural competence, and active learning. By incorporating these principles into teacher training programs and classroom practices, it may be

possible to create a more inclusive and equitable education system that meets the needs of all students, regardless of their background.

The burden of underrepresentation faced by African American teachers can be attributed to various factors in educational psychology. This research can inform efforts to address disparities in education such as stereotype threat, lack of access to resources and opportunities, discrimination and bias, and cultural differences. One of the psychological factors that contributes to the underrepresentation of African American teachers in education is stereotype threat. Stereotype threat refers to the phenomenon where individuals from stigmatized groups may experience anxiety and reduced performance when faced with situations that activate negative stereotypes about their group (Steele & Aronson, 1995). According to Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist and epistemologist, widely recognized as one of the most important figures in the field of developmental psychology, cognitive development occurs through a process of assimilation and accommodation, where individuals use their existing mental structures to make sense of new information and adapt their mental structures to accommodate new information. Stereotype threat can disrupt this process of cognitive development by creating anxiety and reducing cognitive resources, which can lead to a negative impact on performance (Smith, 2009). African American teachers who experience stereotype threat may have difficulty assimilating new information or accommodating their mental structures to adapt to new teaching strategies. These negative stereotypes can create a sense of self-doubt, decreased confidence, motivation, and anxiety for African American individuals considering teaching careers, leading them to feel that they may not be effective or successful as teachers. Moreover, Piaget's theory suggests that cognitive development is influenced by social and cultural factors. African American teachers may face cultural differences in predominantly white teaching environments, which can lead to

feelings of exclusion and a lack of belonging. This can contribute to reduced motivation and performance, as individuals are more likely to engage in activities that they perceive to be meaningful and relevant to their identities (Smith, 2009). Furthermore, African American individuals who do enter the teaching profession may continue to experience stereotype threats in their roles as educators. Research has shown that African American teachers may feel additional pressure to perform well in the classroom, as they may feel that their students, colleagues, and superiors hold them to higher standards due to their race (Milner & Hoy, 2003). This added pressure and anxiety can contribute to job dissatisfaction and burnout among African American teachers.

Lev Vygotsky (1978), a well-known psychologist, proposed the sociocultural theory, which asserts that learning occurs through social interaction and cultural tools. Applying Vygotsky's perspective, the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the teaching profession can be viewed as a result of societal and cultural factors that contribute to the marginalization of African Americans in education. Negative stereotypes can limit African American students' aspirations and opportunities, while structural and systemic barriers can make it challenging for African Americans to enter and succeed in the teaching profession. The negative stereotypes about teaching as a low-paying and low-status profession can also be more reasons to discourage African American students from pursuing a career in education. Moreover, the lack of African American teachers in schools may reinforce negative stereotypes about African Americans as being less educated or less capable of becoming teachers. Addressing the underrepresentation of African American teachers necessitates recognizing and addressing the cultural and societal factors that contribute to this issue. This entails addressing negative stereotypes about teaching and African Americans, as well as creating opportunities and support

systems that enable African American students to pursue careers in education (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

In conclusion, both Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and Piaget's (Smith 2009) developmental epistemology theory shed light on the underrepresentation of African American teachers in education, specifically in relation to stereotype threat and cultural differences. Stereotype threat can have significant implications, discouraging African American students from pursuing teaching careers due to negative stereotypes about the profession and reinforcing stereotypes that limit their perceived capabilities. By addressing these negative stereotypes and promoting positive perceptions of African American teachers and students, we can alleviate the psychological barriers that hinder greater representation. This involves creating a more inclusive and supportive environment that fosters the self-efficacy, motivation, and persistence of African American teachers. By embracing the perspectives of Vygotsky and Piaget, we can work towards a more equitable education system that values diversity, promotes social justice, and ensures equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background.

Another factor contributing to the underrepresentation of African American teachers is a lack of access to resources and opportunities, which is influenced by societal and systemic factors. According to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics, schools with high percentages of African American students are more likely to have lower funding and fewer resources, which affects the quality of education and the opportunities available for teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). This lack of resources and opportunities can discourage African American students from pursuing a career in teaching, as they may not see it as a viable option for themselves. Moreover, some societal stereotypes and biases perpetuate the notion that teaching is a profession for white women, which further limits the access of African

American teachers to resources and opportunities and leads to the exclusion of minority groups as educators. Discrimination and bias are also significant educational psychological factors contributing to the underrepresentation of African American teachers. African American teachers have reported experiencing microaggressions, which are subtle and often unintentional acts of discrimination. These experiences can lead to feelings of isolation, decreased job satisfaction, and higher levels of stress. Over and above that, African American teachers are often held to different standards than their white counterparts, which can result in unfair evaluations and lower opportunities for career advancement. This can also lead to, as stated before, lower levels of self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to succeed, which can further worsen the underrepresentation of African American teachers in the education system (Milner & Hoy, 2003). Addressing discrimination and bias in the education system is crucial to increase the representation of African American teachers. This includes implementing policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in hiring and evaluation processes, providing cultural competency training for educators and administrators, and creating a supportive and inclusive work environment for African American teachers. Additionally, it is imperative to recognize and address the impact of discrimination and bias on the mental health and well-being of African American teachers to promote their persistence and success in the education profession.

Drawing upon Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, this issue can be understood within the framework of cultural-historical factors and the role of social interactions in shaping cognitive development. According to his theory, individuals acquire knowledge and skills through their interactions with more knowledgeable others and by utilizing cultural artifacts and practices. In the case of African American students aspiring to become teachers, limited access to resources

and opportunities can hinder their cognitive development and progression within the profession. Access to quality education, mentorship programs, and supportive networks is essential for individuals pursuing a teaching career. However, systemic inequities often restrict African American students from accessing these resources. Insufficient funding for schools in marginalized communities, limited availability of advanced placement courses, and a scarcity of qualified teachers in these schools create significant barriers for African American students interested in pursuing a teaching profession. Furthermore, the lack of diverse role models and mentors within the education system perpetuates the underrepresentation of African American teachers. Vygotsky's theory highlights the importance of social modeling and guidance from more knowledgeable individuals in shaping cognitive growth. Without sufficient representation of African American teachers in schools, aspiring African American students may lack the necessary support and encouragement needed to pursue a career in education. To address the underrepresentation of African American teachers, it is crucial to dismantle systemic barriers and provide equal access to resources and opportunities. This can include equitable funding for schools, targeted mentorship programs, and initiatives to recruit and retain diverse teaching staff. By creating an inclusive educational environment that reflects the cultural diversity of students, Vygotsky's ideas can be applied to foster greater representation of African American teachers. This, in turn, will provide students with role models who share their cultural backgrounds and experiences, inspiring and empowering them to pursue teaching as a viable and fulfilling career path.

The last factor contributing to the underrepresentation of African American teachers is cultural differences. African American students may benefit from having teachers who understand and are sensitive to their cultural experiences and perspectives. However, African

American teachers may be less likely to enter and persist in the teaching profession due to a cultural mismatch with the dominant culture of schools, which can lead to feelings of isolation and exclusion. According to research, African American teachers may face challenges related to cultural differences, such as conflicts with school culture and expectations, and feeling pressure to assimilate into the dominant culture of schools. Additionally, African American teachers may feel a sense of responsibility to serve as cultural ambassadors for their students, which can create additional stress and pressure (Ladson-Billings, 1995). One article that addresses the challenges African American teachers encounter related to cultural differences is "Black Teachers on Teaching: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy as an Anti-Racist Practice" by Gloria Ladson-Billings, published in the Harvard Educational Review in 1995. In the article, Ladson-Billings discusses the need for culturally relevant pedagogy, which involves incorporating the cultural experiences and perspectives of students into teaching practices, to address the cultural mismatch that exists between many African American students and the dominant school culture. She argues that African American teachers are in a unique position to provide this type of instruction but, sometimes may face challenges related to conflicting expectations and pressures to assimilate into the dominant school culture. Ladson-Billings also discusses the importance of giving professional development opportunities for teachers to learn about culturally relevant pedagogy and to develop their own ethnic competency. This can help African American teachers navigate the challenges related to cultural differences and better serve the needs of their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). All in all, the article highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing the cultural barriers that may limit the access and success of African American teachers in the education system.

The underrepresentation of African American teachers in education can contribute to deficit thinking, which can have negative impacts on student outcomes. Deficit thinking is a theoretical perspective that views students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds as deficient and responsible for their academic struggles. This can manifest in various ways, such as low expectations, labeling, tracking, and cultural encapsulation. Unfortunately, deficit thinking can be subconscious and perpetuated by well-intentioned educators who are not aware of its impact. For example, a teacher may assume that a student of color is not interested in academic achievement and may not provide them with the same opportunities or resources as other students. To combat deficit thinking, educators must be aware of their biases and work towards creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment. They can seek professional development opportunities to learn about culturally responsive teaching practices and examine curriculum and pedagogy through an equity lens. By addressing deficit thinking and promoting a more inclusive educational environment, we can help to promote academic success for all students, regardless of their racial or cultural backgrounds.

To address the issue of deficit thinking, educators must first recognize and acknowledge their own biases. They should actively work towards creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment by seeking professional development opportunities to learn about culturally responsive teaching practices and examining curriculum and pedagogy through an equity lens. Moreover, they should make a concerted effort to build positive relationships with students and their families, recognizing and valuing their diverse backgrounds and experiences (Venet 2021).

In addition to deficit thinking, stereotype threat also contributes to the underrepresentation of African American teachers in education. Stereotype threat is particularly

evident in predominantly white teaching environments, where African American teachers may experience decreased confidence and motivation. Research has shown that African Americans who are interested in becoming teachers may experience stereotype threats, particularly in relation to perceptions of low teacher efficacy and negative stereotypes about African American students. Discrimination and bias further perpetuate a cycle of low expectations, underachievement, and limited opportunities for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These negative consequences of underachievement can have significant effects on students, including lower self-esteem, decreased motivation, and limited opportunities, further fueling the cycle of discrimination and bias among African Americans. To address these factors, a shift towards culturally responsive approaches is necessary. Such approaches would affirm and value the diverse backgrounds and experiences of all students and educators, mitigating the negative effects of deficit thinking, stereotype threat, and discrimination, and promoting equal opportunities for all individuals in the field of education (Venet, 2021).

Alex Shevrin Venet's (2021) book, *Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education*, sheds light on the profound influence of societal and cultural factors on student outcomes, with a particular focus on marginalized populations like African American students. A critical aspect explored in the book is the underrepresentation of African American teachers in American classrooms, which significantly contributes to adverse outcomes across various domains. Venet (2021) underscores the urgent need to establish an educational environment that is equitable and inclusive, aiming to dismantle systemic barriers that hinder academic success and positive development for students from marginalized backgrounds. The absence of African American teachers perpetuates negative stereotypes and exacerbates the lack of cultural understanding and responsiveness in educational settings, effectively constraining the academic and career

opportunities available to students. To challenge and combat these detrimental stereotypes, Venet proposes the concept of trauma-informed education (TIE) as a vital framework. TIE acknowledges and responds to the prevalence of trauma within society, particularly among marginalized communities who are disproportionately affected by systemic oppression. By cultivating classrooms grounded in safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment, TIE strives to create a conducive learning environment. However, Venet acknowledges that TIE has faced criticism for its individualistic focus, often failing to address the underlying causes of trauma. Therefore, an equity-centered approach is essential, one that not only attends to the immediate needs of students but also confronts the structural inequalities and injustices that contribute to traumatic experiences. Venet advocates for an equity-centered TIE framework, which causes recognizing and confronting systemic oppression, centering the voices and experiences of marginalized communities, and actively working towards transformative justice. In essence, Venet's work highlights the urgency of adopting trauma-informed education and an equity-centered approach to address the underrepresentation of African American teachers.

The underrepresentation of African American teachers in American classrooms can have consequential impacts on student outcomes across multiple domains, including academic achievement, educational attainment, social and emotional development, and long-term career aspirations and opportunities. Several well-known psychologists have examined these impacts and provided insight into the underlying psychological factors contributing to these disparities. African American students who have access to African American teachers may experience higher academic achievement than those who do not. Both Dewey and Piaget would argue that providing African American students with access to teachers who share their racial and ethnic

backgrounds is important because it helps to create a more personalized and relevant learning experience. In 2004 Dee's study found that having an African American teacher in elementary school is associated with higher test scores for African American students. This could be because African American teachers may be better able to connect with their students on a personal level and create a learning environment that is culturally relevant and meaningful to them. Similarly, in 2018 Gershenson's study found that having just one African American teacher in elementary school significantly increases the likelihood of African American students pursuing college. This could be because African American teachers may serve as role models for their students, showing them that success in higher education is possible and attainable. These studies support the idea that representation matters in education and that providing African American students with access to African American teachers can have a positive impact on their academic achievement and long-term educational outcomes. By contextualizing education to the needs and experiences of individual learners, teachers can create a more engaging and meaningful learning environment that promotes academic success.

African American students' educational attainment has also been affected by the lack of representation of African American teachers. As early as 1933, Carter G. Woodson drew attention to the crisis in education facing African American students, highlighting the lack of resources and opportunities available to them in, *The Crisis in Education*. In, *The Negro and the Schools*, James B. Conant (1947) also noted the disparities in educational opportunities and resources for African American students. These disparities were further reinforced by James S. Coleman's (1966) influential report, "Equality of Educational Opportunity", which found that African American students attended schools with fewer resources and experienced lower academic achievement than their white counterparts. However, the impact of the

underrepresentation of African American teachers on educational attainment is not only limited to resource disparities. In the book, *The Miseducation of the Negro* categorized as groundbreaking work by Carter G. Woodson, first published in 1933. Woodson discusses the ways in which African American students were being taught by teachers who did not understand their cultural and historical experiences, leading to a form of miseducation and low self-efficacy. Woodson argues that the education system in the United States was designed to perpetuate the existing power structures, and this was particularly damaging for African American students, who were being taught by teachers who did not understand or appreciate their cultural heritage. He pointed out that the curriculum was based on European history and culture, and there was little room for African American history or culture. The systematic stripping of African American students' cultural heritage has been a persistent challenge for the ruling class since the time of slavery. The dominant group in society has long sought to control the education of African American children, with the goal of shaping them into compliant and subservient workers who do not question the status quo. This has involved a deliberate effort to erase the cultural and historical experiences of African Americans from the curriculum, and to replace them with the dominant culture's values and norms. This means placing white educators at the forefront of education to achieve this challenge. As a result, generations of African American students have been deprived of the opportunity to learn about their own cultural heritage and have instead been taught a version of history that portrays their people as inferior and powerless (Woodson, 1933). This system of miseducation has had far-reaching consequences for African American communities, contributing to the perpetuation of systemic racism, poverty, and social inequality.

Despite these challenges, many African American educators and leaders have worked tirelessly to resist this system of miseducation and to create alternative educational systems that affirm the cultural heritage of African American students. Woodson also believed that this approach to education was a major factor in perpetuating racism and segregation. He advocated for a new approach to education that would allow African American students to learn about their own history and culture, and to be taught by teachers who could relate to their experiences. It is imperative to recognize the impact of underrepresentation on educational attainment and work toward creating a more inclusive and equitable education system. Furthering these ideas, the impact of the underrepresentation of African American teachers goes beyond educational attainment and extends to the social and emotional development of African American students.

African American students' social and emotional development is notably affected by the lack of representation of African American teachers in schools. *The Role of Teachers in the Socialization of Students*, by Hetherington and Tinsley (1979) highlights the crucial role that teachers play in shaping the social and emotional development of students. The article highlights the fact that teachers are not only responsible for imparting academic knowledge but also for guiding students in their social and emotional growth. Teachers are seen as influential socializing agents who are responsible for shaping students' behavior, attitudes, and values. The article discusses the various ways in which teachers can impact students' socialization, including through their own behavior, interactions with students, and the use of reinforcement and punishment. The authors argue that teachers should be aware of their role in shaping students' socialization and take responsibility for creating a positive learning environment that promotes social and emotional growth.

Another thorough analysis of the relationship between teacher ethnicity and student outcomes was found in, *The Relationship Between Teacher Ethnicity and Student Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis*, by Grissom in (2016). The authors conducted a study to find that having more African American teachers in the classroom can have a positive impact on academic achievement, disciplinary actions, and graduation rates of African American students. The research suggests that African American teachers are more likely to have high expectations for their students, provide cultural relevance in their teaching, and offer more social and emotional support to their students. Furthermore, the study found that African American students who had at least one African American teacher in elementary school were more likely to graduate from high school and enroll in college. Research suggests that seeing African American adults in more authority positions can have a positive impact on students' sense of belonging, motivation, and academic achievement. When there is a lack of representation, students may feel isolated and disconnected from the learning environment, which can lead to a range of negative social and emotional outcomes.

When students see people who look like them in positions of authority, such as teachers, principals, or other school administrators, they are more likely to feel a sense of connection and belonging to their school community. Additionally, seeing African American adults in leadership positions can serve as positive role models for students, helping them to envision their own future possibilities and goals. This can be particularly important for students who may face systemic barriers to success, as it can provide them with a sense of hope and inspiration. In *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Student Learning* by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995), the author highlights the importance of incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum. Ladson-Billings argues that a one-size-fits-all approach to education does not work

for all students and that it is crucial to consider the cultural context of each student. She suggests that culturally relevant pedagogy involves using instructional materials, teaching methods, and assessments that reflect students' cultural experiences and norms. This approach can help students feel more engaged and connected to the curriculum, leading to improved academic achievement and a sense of pride in their cultural heritage. As mentioned before these types of approaches must be used introduced in a trauma informed educational setting along with the need for an equity-centered approach to it. By acknowledging the importance of cultural relevance in the classroom, educators can create a more inclusive learning environment that benefits all students, regardless of their background. Overall, many of these studies highlight the importance of representation and the positive impact that it can have on student outcomes.

The representation of African American teachers in schools has been a longstanding issue in the United States, with research indicating that it can have significant long-term effects on students' career aspirations and opportunities. In the study "The Importance of Minority Teachers: Student Perceptions of Minority Versus White Teachers" by Travis J. Bristol and Conra D. Gist, the authors explored the impact of teacher diversity on student perceptions and achievement. The study involved surveys of over 2,000 students in grades 6-12 in a diverse urban school district in the southeastern United States. The results showed that African American students generally had more positive perceptions of teachers who shared their racial or ethnic background. Specifically, African American students reported feeling more comfortable approaching their minority teachers and believed that minority teachers better understood their experiences and challenges. These positive perceptions of minority teachers can have important implications for student motivation and engagement in the classroom. Students who feel connected to their teachers and who believe that their teachers understand and care about their

experiences are more likely to be engaged and motivated learners. In turn, increased engagement and motivation can lead to improved academic achievement and career aspirations. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of promoting teacher diversity in schools, particularly in diverse urban districts where students may come from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. By increasing the number of minority teachers in these districts, schools can help to create more positive learning environments that are better equipped to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Ultimately, the study by Bristol and Gist provides compelling evidence for the importance of minority teacher representation and its positive impact on students' career aspirations and opportunities.

To better serve the needs of these students, in the study "Race-Conscious Professional Development for Teachers: The Case of an Urban School District" by H. Richard Milner IV, Chance W. Lewis, and Donna Y. Ford, the authors highlight the importance of giving race-conscious professional development opportunities for teachers to better serve the needs of diverse student populations. The study focused on an urban school district with a high percentage of African American and Latino students and aimed to improve teacher effectiveness and cultural responsiveness through professional development. The authors argue that professional development that considers race and culture can help teachers understand and address unique experiences and challenges faced by students of color. Specifically, the study highlights the importance of developing teachers' understanding of culturally responsive teaching practices, such as using students' cultural backgrounds as a foundation for learning and encouraging the development of positive racial identities. The results of the study showed that teachers who participated in the race-conscious professional development program reported greater awareness and understanding of the cultural backgrounds of their students, as well as increased confidence

in their ability to address cultural issues in the classroom. Additionally, teachers who participated in the program reported improved relationships with their students, and students reported feeling more engaged and supported in their learning. Overall, the study by Milner, Lewis, and Ford provides evidence for the importance of race-conscious professional development for teachers. By providing opportunities for teachers to learn about and develop culturally responsive teaching practices, schools can help to create more inclusive and supportive learning environments for diverse student populations.

All in all, the ideas of these famous psychologists all connect in this sense of the underrepresentation of African Americans. Ultimately, Woodson argues, that African American students were being educated in a way that did not consider their unique cultural and historical experiences. He believed that the education system was designed to perpetuate a system of oppression and to teach African American students to be subservient to white people. Venet builds upon Woodson's ideas, arguing that the underrepresentation of African American teachers in American classrooms perpetuates this same system of oppression and limits the opportunities and experiences of African American students resulting in poor self-efficacy. Piaget's theory of cognitive development emphasizes the importance of active, hands-on learning and the importance of social interactions in the learning process. Vygotsky's theory of sociocultural development emphasizes the importance of culture, language, and social interactions in shaping learning and development. Both theories suggest that a diverse teaching force can bring a range of perspectives and experiences to the classroom that can benefit all students, including African American students. Venet also argues that the underrepresentation of African American teachers in American classrooms limits the diversity of perspectives and experiences that are brought to the classroom, which can be detrimental to African American students' social and emotional

development. Without teachers who share their cultural background and experiences, African American students may feel alienated and disconnected from the education system, leading to negative outcomes such as lower academic achievement and decreased motivation. In conclusion, the ideas of Venet, Woodson, Piaget, and Vygotsky all point to the importance of a diverse teaching force and the potential negative consequences of the underrepresentation of African American teachers in American classrooms.

In conclusion, the history of African Americans has had a lasting impact that continues to affect them today in ways that others may not fully comprehend. The underrepresentation of African American teachers in American classrooms is just one example of how historical injustices continue to manifest in the present. However, there are ways to address these issues and promote equity in education. By implementing practices such as Trauma Informed Education with an equity approach, educators can begin to address the issues of low self-esteem and a lack of belonging that can impede academic success. Educators must learn how to teach each student and create a supportive and inclusive environment that values diverse backgrounds and experiences. By taking a proactive approach to promoting self-efficacy and addressing historical injustices, we can help to ensure that all students can achieve their full potential, regardless of their racial or cultural background.

Underrepresentation of African Americans in the Technology Industry

From a historical exploration of African American experiences to the realm of technology unveils the enduring impact of past injustices on contemporary landscapes. The historical narrative of African Americans in the United States, characterized by resilience in the face of systemic oppression, lays the groundwork for understanding present-day disparities. These inequities extend beyond education, permeating sectors such as technology, where

underrepresentation persists as a stark manifestation of systemic biases. By bridging the historical context with technological landscapes, we illuminate the interconnectedness of past struggles with current challenges, underscoring the imperative for comprehensive solutions that address both historical legacies and contemporary manifestations of inequity.

The underrepresentation of African American teachers has implications beyond the classroom and affects the lack of representation in the technology industry. With only 7% of teachers in the U.S. being African American, while over 13% of the population identifies as such, this can perpetuate stereotypes and biases, contribute to achievement gaps, and limit opportunities for students of color. African Americans and other underrepresented groups are disproportionately underrepresented in the technology workforce, with only 5% of tech workers being African American. Increasing the number of African American teachers can address this issue by exposing more students to technology careers and creating a more inclusive educational environment. This, in turn, can create a more diverse pipeline of future tech talent.

The technology industry is a rapidly growing and influential sector that can drive economic growth and innovation. However, the industry has struggled with diversity and inclusion, with African Americans and other underrepresented groups being disproportionately underrepresented in the sector's workforce. According to a report by the Kapor Center for Social Impact, only 5% of tech workers in the United States are African American, compared to 12% of the overall workforce. This lack of representation is even more striking when looking at leadership positions, where only 2% of executives in tech companies are African American. The report also found that African American women are particularly underrepresented in the industry, holding only 1% of computing-related jobs. Increasing diversity in the tech industry is not only a matter of social justice but also critical for business success. A diverse workforce can

bring a variety of perspectives and experiences that can lead to improved problem-solving and innovation. A study by McKinsey & Company found that companies in the top quartile for ethnic and racial diversity were 36% more likely to have financial returns above their industry average. Additionally, a report by the National Center for Women & Information Technology found that diverse teams are more innovative and better able to solve complex problems than homogeneous teams.

The lack of representation in the technology industry can have significant consequences on society and perpetuate inequality. It can lead to the development of technologies that do not consider the needs and experiences of underrepresented groups, further exacerbating social and economic disparities. One study published in the journal “Science” found that facial recognition technologies exhibit racial and gender bias, which can lead to discrimination and harm for people of color and women. These issues can be addressed by promoting diversity and inclusion in the tech industry. Increasing the representation of underrepresented groups, including African Americans, in the tech industry can lead to the development of technologies that are more inclusive and considerate of different perspectives and experiences. This is where the role of teachers becomes essential. By increasing the number of African American teachers, students of color can be exposed to technology careers and be encouraged to pursue these opportunities. African American teachers can serve as role models and mentors, helping students to overcome the barriers and challenges that they may face in pursuing technology careers. Furthermore, increasing the diversity of teachers can help create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment that promotes diversity and cultural understanding. This, in turn, can help create a pipeline of future tech talent that is more diverse and representative of the population.

Teachers play a crucial role in promoting diversity in the tech industry by exposing

students to the possibilities of tech careers and providing them with the support and guidance they need to pursue these opportunities. African American teachers can serve as role models and mentors for students of color, helping to provide guidance and support for pursuing technology careers. Research has shown that having a teacher of the same race can have positive effects on student outcomes, including increased academic achievement, higher graduation rates, and more positive attitudes toward school. In addition to these benefits, having more African American teachers in the classroom can also help create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment that promotes diversity and cultural understanding. This, in turn, can help create a pipeline of future tech talent that is more diverse and representative of the population.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in the 2017-2018 school year, while 13.8% of the US student population was African American, only 7.8% of the teacher workforce identified as African American. This disparity is even greater in high-minority schools, where African American teachers make up only 6% of the teaching staff. Additionally, the percentage of African American teachers has been declining in recent years, with a 32% decrease in the number of black teachers between 2002 and 2017. These statistics demonstrate a significant underrepresentation of African American teachers in the US education system. It wasn't until my junior year of college that I had my first African American teacher, which means that it took me around 15-16 years in the U.S. education system to have a teacher who shared my racial identity. Seeing a professor at my university who shared my racial identity as a teacher made the possibility of pursuing an academic career feel more attainable. It was inspiring to have someone like me to look up to, and I wish I had the opportunity to have her as a mentor. The underrepresentation of African American teachers has a significant impact on African American students. Research studies have found that students of color perform better academically when

they have teachers of the same race or ethnicity as them. However, due to the low representation of African American teachers in the U.S. education system, African American students are less likely to have teachers who share their cultural background. This lack of representation can lead to feelings of disengagement and alienation from the school environment, which can result in lower academic achievement and higher dropout rates. The underrepresentation of African American teachers in the U.S. education system is caused by a variety of systemic barriers and discrimination. These barriers can include unequal access to quality education and professional development opportunities, as well as hiring practices that privilege candidates with certain educational backgrounds or experiences. Discrimination can also play a role in underrepresentation, as African American teachers may face biases and stereotyping in the hiring process or workplace. A report from the Learning Policy Institute highlights the need for policies that address these systemic barriers and increase the recruitment and retention of African American teachers in the U.S. education system.

Teachers play a crucial role in exposing students to tech careers and encouraging them to pursue these fields. They can help students understand the opportunities available to them and provide guidance on how to prepare for a technology career. According to a report by the National Science Foundation, teacher influence is a key factor in shaping students' interest in pursuing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) careers. Teachers can also provide students with access to resources such as internships, mentorship programs, and extracurricular activities that can help to build their skills and experience in tech. African American teachers are particularly valuable in promoting tech careers among African American students, as they can serve as role models and provide culturally relevant perspectives. African American teachers can help to counteract stereotypes and biases that can discourage African American students from

pursuing tech careers. Having the ability to counteract stereotypes and biases is a valuable skill set that can also be beneficial inside the classroom. African American teachers can also help prevent bias inside the classroom by providing a counter-narrative to stereotypes and biases that can exist within the education system. All teachers can teach the explicit curriculum in a subject because that's what their specific skill set calls for. They can help students understand the opportunities available to them and provide guidance on how to prepare for a technology career. This curriculum does not appear in any written standard, syllabus, or lesson plan but can be taught to students intentionally or unintentionally through the daily activities of the classroom. Minority teachers bring a unique perspective and experience to the classroom that can benefit all students. They can serve as role models for minority students who may not have seen people who look like them in positions of authority or intellectual leadership. In addition to promoting representation and diversity, minority teachers can also bring a culturally responsive approach to education, which involves acknowledging and valuing the cultural backgrounds of students in the classroom. By incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences into the curriculum, students can develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of different cultures and communities. It is important to note white teachers cannot ever be able to provide this type of education to students no matter how much effort is given.

For example, a study published in the *Journal of Teacher Education* found that African American teachers were more likely to challenge deficit-based assumptions about African American students' academic abilities and to provide culturally responsive pedagogy. This approach can help to create a more inclusive learning environment that promotes positive academic outcomes for all students, especially those from historically marginalized communities. By being visible and active participants in promoting inclusivity and equity in the classroom,

African American teachers can help to ensure that students feel valued and supported regardless of their background or identity. In my limited teaching experience, I have been able to connect with many minority students who look up to me simply because of my racial identity and the position I hold at only 23 years old. I receive numerous questions about my journey and find that many students believe they cannot achieve what I have accomplished. Through sharing my own experiences and insights, I have been able to give these students a sense of hope and confidence. They become excited to come to school and see me, knowing that there is someone in a position of authority who understands them and their experiences. As a teacher, I am thrilled about the impact I will be able to make wherever I go.

Increased representation of African American teachers can impact the tech industry by diversifying the talent pipeline and promoting more inclusive workplaces. Increasing the number of African American teachers can help to create a more diverse pool of candidates for tech jobs and promote more inclusive workplaces that reflect the communities they serve. A study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that more diverse workplaces are associated with increased innovation, higher productivity, and better financial performance. Firstly, having more African American teachers can expose more African American students to technology-related subjects and careers, which can help to diversify the talent pipeline in the tech industry. This is important because research has shown that a lack of diversity in the tech industry is a significant problem, leading to biased products, a lack of innovation, and an inability to serve diverse communities effectively.

In 2015, Waters emphasized the importance of representation in the tech industry by a quote stating, “This doesn’t just matter because computer science leads to “good jobs” or that tech startups lead to “good money.” It matters because the tech sector has an increasingly

powerful reach in how we live, work, communicate, and learn. It matters ideologically. If the tech sector drives out women if it excludes people of color, that matters for jobs, sure. But it matters in terms of the projects undertaken, the problems tackled, the 'solutions' designed and developed". Biased products from different technology companies have never had a positive effect on African American students. Educational technology using AI exacerbates current racial injustices in education and adds to them with assumptions embedded in algorithms (Hebbar & Jacobs, 2021). These biases are seen in various aspects of education that utilize AI, such as content and curriculum, assessment and grading, tracking and recommendation, and data and privacy. EdTech platforms have the potential to perpetuate biases through their content or curriculum, which can reinforce harmful stereotypes and discriminatory narratives about certain racial or ethnic groups. This not only results in unequal educational experiences but also exacerbates existing educational inequalities, limiting the learning opportunities available to minority students. For instance, an AI-powered language learning platform might use biased examples or scenarios that depict people of color in service roles or as victims of poverty or violence, while portraying white individuals in more positive or dominant roles. Such portrayals can have a detrimental effect on the self-esteem and academic performance of students from underrepresented backgrounds. This is like learning probability in a math class without being taught all the types of cards in a deck, where some students may lack access to common knowledge outside of the school environment.

AI-based grading systems have been known to have underlying biases that often result in inequitable treatment of minority students. Such grading algorithms may be programmed to favor certain writing styles or language patterns that are more commonly used by white students, thereby leading to discriminatory outcomes that do not accurately reflect the unique perspectives

and experiences of students from diverse backgrounds. This could lead to minority students being unfairly criticized for not being able to communicate or write in a certain way that the algorithm deems "proper". Unfortunately, this is still a persistent issue today, and many students continue to face such biases and discrimination in the classroom. EdTech platforms rely on algorithms to provide personalized course recommendations, resources, and career paths to students. However, these algorithms may perpetuate existing biases, resulting in limited or biased recommendations for minority students, which further reinforces existing disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes. This can lead to students making choices based on incomplete or inaccurate information, as they may not be aware of the underlying biases present in the recommendations they receive. A crucial aspect of EdTech platforms is the collection and analysis of vast amounts of student data on performance, behavior, and demographics. Additionally, there may be privacy concerns for minority students, who are more likely to be singled out based on their race or ethnicity due to the collection and use of this data. As a result, students from minority backgrounds are often viewed as outliers in the technology's understanding, and any deviation from the norm may raise red flags.

Various aspects of education that use AI, such as content and curriculum, assessment and grading, tracking and recommendation, and data and privacy, are plagued with biases that perpetuate existing inequalities. Personalized-learning software like IXL, Dream Box, and Knewton utilize AI algorithms to adapt the learning content and pace to each student's strengths and weaknesses. However, students have criticized these platforms for not being able to correctly place them at the appropriate level of learning. On the other hand, language-learning software like Duolingo and Memrize are popular among students as they offer gamified lessons in various languages, making learning fun and engaging. Administrative tools like behavior trackers have

also been criticized for perpetuating biases and discrimination. Algorithms used in these systems monitor student behavior, attendance, and academic performance, potentially leading to inaccurate or unfair assessments of students. Similarly, facial recognition systems used in schools may be biased based on race, gender, and age, leading to false positives or false negatives. It is crucial to critically evaluate the use of AI in education and ensure that these systems are developed and implemented in a way that is fair, transparent, and equitable for all students.

To address the issue of underrepresentation in the technology industry, it is crucial to develop strategies aimed at increasing the number of African American teachers. When addressing these concerns, it is essential to consider Ellul's "76 Reasonable Questions." Specifically, when it comes to the African American community, we must start asking critical questions about the technology being provided to our children and the community as a whole. We need to focus on answering questions such as, who benefits from this? What is its purpose? Where was it produced? Where is it used? What are its effects on the least advantaged in society? Does it undermine traditional forms of community? How does it affect our way of seeing and experiencing the world? Does it serve to commodify knowledge or relationships? What does it allow us to ignore? By asking these critical questions, African Americans can become more mindful of the technology they use and how to use it effectively. This will prevent them from being coerced into the system and viewed as outliers, ultimately allowing them to conform to social norms.

Several strategies can be implemented to increase the number of African American teachers in the education system. One such strategy is to focus on recruitment and retention efforts. Scholarships, mentorship programs, and professional development opportunities can be

provided to encourage African American students to pursue careers in teaching. For example, the Call Me Mister (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) program is a national initiative that provides mentorship and financial support to African American male students who want to become teachers. The program offers scholarships, leadership training, and professional development opportunities to help students succeed in their teaching careers (Hagood & Watson, 2017). Another example is the Thurgood Marshall College Fund offers scholarships to African American students pursuing degrees in education. Mentoring programs like the Minority Scholars Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison provide support for students of color in the teaching profession. Additionally, professional development programs like the National Black Child Development Institute offer training and support for African American teachers. Another strategy is to address systemic issues in education that disproportionately affect African American teachers. Underfunding and bias in teacher evaluations can discourage African American students from pursuing careers in teaching or lead to them leaving the profession. According to a report by the Learning Policy Institute, "Black and Hispanic teachers are more likely to teach in schools with fewer resources, less experienced colleagues, and lower salaries, which can undermine both teacher recruitment and retention." Studies have shown that schools with higher proportions of African American students receive less funding than schools with higher proportions of white students (Boser, 2019). This lack of funding can lead to inadequate resources and lower teacher salaries, making it harder to recruit and retain teachers of color.

Increasing the number of African American teachers in the profession not only benefits students of color but also has a positive impact on the overall teaching profession. Studies have also shown that teacher evaluations are often biased against teachers of color. A study conducted

by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that evaluations of Black teachers were more likely to be based on subjective measures such as "likability" and less likely to be based on objective measures such as student test scores or teaching experience (Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009). This bias can result in Black teachers receiving lower scores and ultimately being passed over for promotions or not being retained in their positions. This can create a hostile work environment for teachers of color and contribute to their underrepresentation in the profession. Having more African American teachers in the profession can help raise awareness of these biases and lead to more equitable evaluations, ultimately creating a more inclusive and diverse teaching environment for all educators. Addressing systemic issues such as this is crucial in increasing the number of African American teachers and creating a more equitable education system for more African American students who may be encouraged to pursue teaching careers and remain in the profession.

Finally, industry partners can play a crucial role in increasing the number of African American teachers by providing funding and support. According to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics, "In the 2015-16 school year, about 90 percent of public-school teachers were paid using funds from state and local sources." This means that industry partners, such as corporations and foundations, can provide much-needed funding to support programs that encourage African American students to pursue teaching careers. For example, the State Farm Companies Foundation provides grants to support diversity in education. By partnering with industry leaders, education organizations can increase the number of resources available to support African American students pursuing careers in teaching. Another example is the Teach for America program which partners with corporations and foundations to provide funding for their initiatives. In addition to funding, industry partners can also provide mentorship and

professional development opportunities for current and aspiring African American teachers. Such opportunities can help African American teachers to develop their skills, expand their networks, and gain exposure to a wider range of career paths within the education field. This support can help to attract and retain more African American teachers in the profession, which can ultimately lead to a more diverse and equitable education system for all students.

In conclusion, it is imperative to focus on increasing the number of African American teachers to combat underrepresentation in the technology industry. The lack of diversity in the industry can be attributed to several factors, including a lack of access to quality education and bias in the hiring process. To address this issue, strategies such as recruitment and retention efforts, addressing systemic issues in education, and industry partnerships can be implemented. Addressing systemic issues in education involves addressing underfunding and bias in teacher evaluations. Industry partners can also play a crucial role in increasing the number of African American teachers by providing funding and support. It is important to note that increasing the number of African American teachers not only benefits students of color but also helps new teachers be aware of biases in the profession that could result in black teachers ultimately being passed over for promotions or not being kept in their positions. In summary, promoting diversity in the tech industry requires increasing the number of African American teachers, and this can be achieved through collaborative efforts from educational institutions, government, and industry partners. It is our responsibility to act towards increasing the number of African American teachers and ensure that every student has access to a quality education, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

Chapter 4

Design

Purpose

My program's purpose is strategically crafted to foster diversity and inclusion in the teaching profession, recognizing the transformative impact of a representative teaching workforce on student outcomes. The primary objectives of "EquityEducate" center on dismantling barriers to entry, enhancing cultural competence, and creating a more inclusive educational environment. The program outlines three primary goals to systematically tackle the underrepresentation challenge. The first goal is to increase the recruitment and retention of African American teachers. "EquityEducate" aims to actively address the systemic obstacles that hinder the recruitment and retention of African American educators. By implementing targeted initiatives and support systems, the program seeks to amplify the presence of African American teachers in schools. The second goal is to enhance cultural competence among all educators: Recognizing the importance of cultural competence for educators of all backgrounds, the program endeavors to provide opportunities for professional development. By fostering a deeper understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives, "EquityEducate" aims to create an environment where educators can effectively connect with students from various backgrounds. The third and last goal is to foster a supportive and inclusive school environment: "EquityEducate" is dedicated to cultivating a school environment that embraces diversity and inclusivity. Through intentional efforts to build a supportive community, the program seeks to empower educators, students, and administrators to contribute to a positive and inclusive educational culture.

To achieve its goals, "EquityEducate" incorporates a range of initiatives and activities. The program offers targeted workshops to enhance the cultural competence of educators. These workshops provide practical strategies for creating inclusive classrooms and fostering positive interactions among diverse student populations. Recognizing the importance of mentorship in career development, "EquityEducate" establishes mentorship programs to support aspiring African American teachers. Experienced educators serve as mentors, providing guidance and support throughout their journey in the teaching profession. Also, the program initiates recruitment campaigns specifically designed to attract individuals from underrepresented groups into the teaching profession. These efforts aim to diversify the pool of prospective educators, addressing the root causes of underrepresentation. "EquityEducate" also advocates for and supports the development of inclusive curricula that reflect the diversity of cultures and experiences. By incorporating diverse perspectives into educational materials, the program contributes to a more representative and culturally responsive learning environment. The current underrepresentation of African American teachers is a pressing concern that demands immediate attention and targeted intervention. To comprehensively tackle this challenge, it is imperative to employ a strategic and evidence-based approach. Action research, with its focus on collaboration, reflection, and iterative problem-solving, presents an ideal methodology to explore the root causes, implement effective solutions, and contribute to a more equitable and representative teaching profession. The following section aims to explore the rationale, processes, and outcomes of action research in the context of addressing the underrepresentation of African American teachers in our schools.

Center for Black Educator Development

Another notable and effective initiative deserving of recognition is The Center for Black Educator Development (CBED). CBED is a non-profit organization with a focused mission on addressing the significant underrepresentation of African American educators within the American educational system. Founded on the principles of equity and social justice, CBED is dedicated to the recruitment, retention, and professional development of Black teachers, administrators, and education professionals. Central to CBED's ethos is the recognition of the profound impact that diverse representation within the teaching workforce can have on students of color, as well as on broader educational equity objectives. Understanding that Black educators serve as role models and mentors who can positively influence academic outcomes and foster a sense of belonging among students, CBED is committed to providing comprehensive support and resources to aspiring Black educators. Additionally, the organization actively engages in advocacy efforts aimed at promoting policies and practices that facilitate diversity and inclusion within educational settings. Through strategic initiatives, collaborative partnerships, and targeted programs, CBED endeavors to cultivate an educational environment that is not only more equitable but also more representative of the diverse communities it serves. By empowering Black educators to thrive professionally, CBED seeks to catalyze positive change and make a lasting impact on the lives of students and communities alike. The inclusion of CBED in this discussion is warranted due to its exemplification as a successful model organization for my program referred to as EquityEducate. ("Center for Black Educator Development," n.d.)

The current underrepresentation of African American teachers is a pressing concern that demands immediate attention and targeted intervention. To comprehensively tackle this challenge, it is imperative to employ a strategic and evidence-based approach. Action research,

with its focus on collaboration, reflection, and iterative problem-solving, presents an ideal methodology to explore the root causes, implement effective solutions, and contribute to a more equitable and representative teaching profession. This following section aims to explore the rationale, processes, and outcomes of action research in the context of addressing the underrepresentation of African American teachers in our schools.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of EquityEducate is rooted in critical pedagogy, which views education as a means for social transformation, particularly for marginalized groups. Informed by the works of Paulo Freire and Bell Hooks, this framework encourages educators to challenge oppressive structures and cultivate critical consciousness among students. By intertwining Paulo Freire's pedagogical principles with the issue of underrepresentation among African American teachers, it becomes apparent that his transformative concepts provide a potent framework for empowering marginalized communities and reshaping educational norms. Freire's concept of problem-posing education aligns strikingly with the need for empowerment. By encouraging critical thinking, students gain the tools to question prevailing norms and actively engage in their own learning process. This approach fosters a sense of ownership over knowledge and instills the confidence needed to challenge ingrained inequalities. Freire's pedagogical framework also extends its transformative potential to empower marginalized communities by challenging established norms and fostering dialogue for change. Freire's pedagogy inherently empowers minority communities to challenge the status quo. By initiating critical dialogues around societal issues, students and educators alike become equipped to question, critique, and seek solutions. This empowerment lays the groundwork for communities to forge their path toward equitable representation, dismantling barriers that hinder progress in minorities.

EquityEducate, a dynamic intervention mentorship program tailored for aspiring African American educators, operates as a multifaceted initiative aimed at addressing the systemic underrepresentation of African American teachers in the educational sector. At the heart of the program lies its robust mentorship component, where seasoned educators serve as mentors, providing invaluable guidance and support to emerging teachers on their professional journey. These mentorship relationships extend beyond mere skill development, offering essential social and emotional scaffolding as aspiring teachers navigate the complex landscape of the teaching profession. Through personalized mentorship, participants gain not only practical insights but also confidence and resilience, equipping them to overcome challenges and seize opportunities in their career trajectory.

In tandem with its mentorship endeavors, EquityEducate launches targeted recruitment campaigns strategically crafted to attract individuals from underrepresented groups to the teaching profession. Leveraging a network of community partnerships, outreach initiatives, and culturally sensitive messaging, these campaigns aim to broaden the pool of diverse educators and challenge prevailing barriers to entry. By actively engaging with local communities and educational stakeholders, EquityEducate fosters a collective consciousness around the importance of diverse representation within the teaching workforce, igniting a passion for educational equity and inspiring individuals to pursue impactful careers in education.

Operating under the support of a non-profit organization dedicated to educational equity, EquityEducate thrives on a collaborative governance model. Led by a team comprising experienced education professionals and community leaders, the program benefits from a wealth of diverse perspectives and insights, ensuring its relevance and effectiveness. By involving community members in program leadership and decision-making processes, EquityEducate

fosters a sense of ownership and investment in its mission, fostering sustainability and maximizing impact. Through these concerted efforts, EquityEducate envisions a future where every student has equitable access to a diverse team of culturally responsive educators, fostering an inclusive educational landscape where all learners can flourish academically and personally.

EquityEducate further enriches its approach by integrating principles from culturally responsive teaching (CRT) theory, a pedagogical framework that places a strong emphasis on affirming students' cultural identities and experiences within the classroom context. This theory directs educators to infuse their instructional practices with culturally relevant content and teaching methods, thereby creating a learning environment that celebrates diversity and fosters inclusivity. By recognizing and valuing the cultural backgrounds of all students, EquityEducate endeavors to cultivate a sense of belonging and respect among learners, ultimately enhancing their engagement and academic performance. Moreover, by centering students' cultural perspectives in the learning process, EquityEducate seeks to promote equity and social justice within the educational sphere, ensuring that every student has equitable access to quality education that resonates with their lived experiences.

Content and Pedagogy

Through mentorship, dialogue, and reflection, educators within EquityEducate delve into critical issues of power, privilege, and systemic inequities, while concurrently prioritizing experiential learning and community engagement to empower students as active agents of change. As an intervention mentorship program dedicated to supporting aspiring African American teachers, EquityEducate relies on seasoned educators to serve as mentors, offering invaluable guidance and support throughout the aspiring teachers' professional journey. These mentors play a pivotal role in nurturing the growth and development of participants, leveraging

their expertise to navigate the complexities of the teaching profession and address systemic barriers to success. Central to its approach is the provision of mentorship opportunities, where experienced educators serve as mentors, guiding and nurturing aspiring teachers throughout their professional journey. These mentorship relationships foster not only practical skills development but also provide invaluable social and emotional support, helping aspiring teachers navigate the challenges and opportunities within the teaching profession. The program also initiates recruitment campaigns specifically designed to attract individuals from underrepresented groups into the teaching profession. EquityEducate takes proactive steps to address the root causes of underrepresentation by implementing targeted recruitment campaigns. These campaigns are strategically designed to attract individuals from underrepresented groups into the teaching profession, leveraging community partnerships, outreach initiatives, and targeted messaging to expand the pipeline of diverse educators. By actively engaging with communities and educational stakeholders, EquityEducate seeks to raise awareness of the importance of diverse representation within the teaching workforce and inspire individuals to pursue careers in education. In terms of governance and operations, EquityEducate could be funded by a non-profit organization committed to educational equity and run by a team of experienced education personnel and community members. This collaborative approach ensures that the program is rooted in the expertise and insights of those intimately familiar with the challenges and opportunities within the education system. Additionally, by involving community members in program leadership and decision-making processes, EquityEducate fosters a sense of ownership and investment in the program's mission, enhancing its sustainability and impact over time. Through these concerted efforts, EquityEducate strives to create a more equitable and

representative educational landscape where all students have access to diverse and culturally responsive educators who can support their academic and personal growth.

Content Organization

EquityEducate could be structured to align with the existing infrastructure of schools, operating either as an after-school activity funded by educational grants or as a school-affiliated club. This integration into the school system ensures accessibility and continuity for participants, allowing them to engage with the program within familiar and supportive environments. The program could be overseen by a team comprising experienced education personnel, community leaders, and school administrators, who collaborate to design and implement mentorship initiatives, recruitment campaigns, and other program activities. By embedding EquityEducate within the fabric of the school community, participants benefit from seamless coordination with school resources, facilities, and networks. Moreover, this integration fosters a sense of belonging and ownership among participants, as they become active contributors to shaping the culture and climate of their educational environment. Through this synergistic approach, EquityEducate not only addresses the systemic underrepresentation of African American educators but also cultivates a culture of inclusivity, support, and empowerment within schools.

In terms of governance and operations, EquityEducate could be seamlessly integrated into the fabric of schools, offering a multifaceted approach to addressing the underrepresentation of African American educators. Operating as an after-school activity funded by educational grants, EquityEducate could provide a structured and supportive environment for participants to engage in mentorship programs, professional development workshops, and community outreach initiatives. This after-school model ensures flexibility for participants, allowing them to balance their academic commitments with their involvement in EquityEducate. Additionally, by

leveraging educational grants and partnerships with local organizations, EquityEducate can access resources and funding to support program activities, including transportation, materials, and guest speakers. The program could also be facilitated by a team of dedicated educators, community leaders, and volunteers passionate about promoting diversity and inclusion in the teaching profession. This collaborative approach ensures that EquityEducate benefits from a diverse range of perspectives and expertise, enriching the experiences of participants and maximizing the program's impact.

Furthermore, EquityEducate could extend its reach beyond the confines of traditional school hours by operating as a school-affiliated club. By establishing EquityEducate as a club within the school, participants have the opportunity to engage with the program during designated club meetings, workshops, and events held on school premises. This model not only fosters a sense of belonging and camaraderie among club members but also provides a platform for students to take ownership of their educational experiences and advocate for change within their school community. Additionally, by aligning with the school's extracurricular offerings, EquityEducate can tap into existing networks and resources, including faculty support, administrative guidance, and access to school facilities. Moreover, by promoting EquityEducate as a club, the program can attract a diverse range of participants who share a common interest in promoting diversity, equity, and social justice within the education system. Through these innovative approaches to governance and operations, EquityEducate strives to create a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape where all students have access to diverse and culturally responsive educators who can support their academic and personal growth.

In addition to its structural integration within the school system, EquityEducate will align its activities with the academic calendar, specifically with the marking periods. This alignment

ensures that the program's offerings coincide with the school's schedule, maximizing accessibility for participants and minimizing disruptions to their academic commitments. Furthermore, a dynamic approach will be adopted whereby a rolling number of mentors and students can be added at the beginning of each marking period. This rotation not only allows for the continuous influx of fresh perspectives and experiences but also accommodates the evolving needs and interests of participants over time. Additionally, each marking period will feature a curated selection of topics relevant to the program's objectives, ranging from culturally responsive teaching practices to strategies for promoting equity and inclusivity within educational settings. By tailoring program content to align with the themes of each marking period, EquityEducate ensures that participants receive a comprehensive and relevant educational experience that addresses their needs and aspirations within the teaching profession.

EquityEducate, my proposed program, is designed to operate twice a week, allowing participants ample time to prepare and integrate program learnings into their practice. Within the program structure, participants will engage in various formats, including group discussions, paired activities, and whole-group sessions. This diverse approach ensures that participants benefit from both collective learning experiences and personalized interactions. Each session will focus on a different topic, building upon previous discussions while revisiting key concepts to reinforce understanding. This iterative approach not only fosters continuous learning but also encourages participants to critically reflect on their growth and development over time.

At the heart of EquityEducate is a mentorship component aimed at connecting participants with experienced educators who can serve as guides and mentors. By the program's conclusion, participants will ideally have established meaningful relationships with multiple mentors who can offer guidance not only in academic pursuits but also in navigating life's challenges,

including college preparation. Moreover, by addressing the underrepresentation of African American teachers, EquityEducate aims to empower participants to become advocates for diversity and equity within their educational communities, thereby contributing to broader societal change.

Several frame factors play integral roles in shaping the effectiveness and outcomes of EquityEducate. Firstly, societal attitudes and perceptions towards education, particularly concerning race and diversity, can significantly influence the program's reception and success. Addressing systemic biases and fostering a culture of inclusivity within educational institutions is paramount for creating an environment where EquityEducate can thrive. Additionally, governmental policies and funding allocations for education play a crucial role in supporting the program's initiatives and sustainability. Advocating for equitable policies and securing adequate resources are essential components of ensuring EquityEducate's long-term impact. Furthermore, community engagement and collaboration serve as foundational pillars for the program's success. Building strong partnerships with local communities, educational stakeholders, and advocacy groups enhances EquityEducate's reach and effectiveness, fostering a sense of ownership and investment in its mission. Moreover, the availability of mentorship resources and professional development opportunities for educators is pivotal in equipping them with the necessary skills and support to serve as effective mentors within the program. By addressing these frame factors comprehensively, EquityEducate can navigate systemic challenges and maximize its potential to empower aspiring African American teachers and promote equity within the education system.

Program Organization: Marking Period Example

Week	Topic	Activity
1	<i>Introductions:</i> Establish a supportive and inclusive learning community where participants feel valued and connected	Introduction to Equity Educate Icebreakers
2	<i>Cultural Competence:</i> Understanding and respecting diverse cultural backgrounds to create inclusive learning environments	Cultural Immersion Experiences by Guest Speakers from Diverse Backgrounds
3	<i>Implicit Bias Awareness:</i> Recognizing and mitigating unconscious biases to promote fairness and equity in teaching practices	Implicit Bias Assessments Reflective Journaling Workshop on Stereotype Threat
4	<i>Intersectionality in Education:</i> Exploring the interconnected nature of social identities (e.g., race, gender, socioeconomic status) and their impact on educational experiences	Intersectionality Mapping Exercises Panel Discussion with Individuals Representing Diverse Identities
5	<i>Culturally Relevant Pedagogy:</i> Incorporating students' cultural backgrounds and experiences into curriculum design and instructional practices	Cultural Relevance Curriculum Audits and Lesson Planning Workshops Sharing Personal Cultural Narratives
6	<i>Social Justice Education:</i> Promoting critical consciousness and activism to address systemic injustices within society and the education system	Social Justice Debates Community Service Projects Historical and Current Social Justice Movements
7	<i>Trauma-Informed Teaching:</i> Recognizing and responding to the impact of trauma on students' learning and well-being	Trauma-Informed Care Training Case Studies on Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms Self-Care Practices for Educators
8	<i>Equity in Assessment:</i> Ensuring fairness and inclusivity in assessment practices to minimize bias and support diverse learners	Assessment Design Workshops Stimulate Implementing Alternative Assessment Methods

9	<i>Cultivating Student Voice:</i> Empowering students as active participants in their own learning and decision-making processes	Student-led Discussions Democratic Classroom Practices Student-Driven Community Projects
10	<i>Allyship and Advocacy:</i> Developing skills and strategies to support marginalized students and challenge inequitable systems	Allyship Training sessions Advocacy Training Sessions
11	<i>Family and Community Engagement:</i> Building partnerships with families and communities to support student success and strengthen educational outcomes	Family Engagement Workshops Community Resource Fairs Projects with Community
12	<i>Professional Development and Career Readiness:</i> Enhancing educators' skills and preparing students for post-secondary education and careers	Resume Writing Workshops College Application Aid Networking with Experienced Educators

Example Lesson Plan 1

Trauma-Informed Teaching

Day 1

Objective:

- Students will understand the principles of trauma-informed teaching and recognize the impact of trauma on students' learning and well-being.
- Students will explore strategies for creating trauma-sensitive classrooms and practicing self-care as educators.

Materials:

- PowerPoint Presentation on Trauma-Informed Teaching
- Case Studies on Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms
- Handouts on Self-Care Practices for Educators
- Large Whiteboard and Markers

Lesson Outline:

Engagement: Begin with an engaging activity to introduce the concept of trauma-informed teaching. For example, show a short video clip depicting a classroom scenario where a student exhibits signs of trauma.

Discussion: Facilitate a brief discussion on students' observations and reactions to the video. Ask guiding questions such as:

- What did you notice about the student's behavior?
- How do you think trauma may impact a student's ability to learn?
- What role do educators play in supporting students who have experienced trauma?

Presentation:

Provide a brief overview of trauma and its effects on students' learning and well-being. Use the PowerPoint presentation to cover key concepts such as:

- Definition of trauma and common sources (e.g., abuse, neglect, violence, loss)
- Impact of trauma on brain development and behavior
- Signs and symptoms of trauma in students

Group Activity:

Divide students into small groups and assign each group a case study on trauma-sensitive classrooms. Instruct groups to analyze the case study and identify strategies that educators can implement to support students who have experienced trauma.

Day 2

Trauma-Informed Care Training

Interactive Workshop: Conduct a trauma-informed care training session where students learn practical strategies for creating trauma-sensitive classrooms. Topics to cover may include:

- Building trust and rapport with students
- Establishing predictable routines and safe environments
- Using trauma-informed language and behavior management techniques
- Role-Playing: Divide students into pairs and assign each pair a role-playing scenario depicting a classroom situation involving a student who has experienced trauma. Students will take turns practicing trauma-informed responses and communication techniques.

Self-Care for Educators:

Discussion: Facilitate a discussion on the importance of self-care for educators and the challenges they may face in managing their own well-being while supporting students who have experienced trauma.

Self-Reflection Activity:

Distribute handouts on self-care practices for educators and encourage students to reflect on their own self-care routines and identify areas for improvement.

Closing Reflection:

Lead a closing reflection where students share one key takeaway from the lesson and how they plan to apply what they have learned in their future practice as educators.

Artifact Creation: Assign students to create artifacts summarizing key concepts from the lesson, such as posters on trauma-informed teaching strategies or self-care plans for educators.

Assessment:

Written observations of student participation in group discussions and activities.

Optional Homework:

Encourage students to conduct further research on trauma-informed teaching and self-care practices for educators, and to reflect on how they can integrate these strategies into their future practice.

Example Lesson Plan 2

Allyship and Advocacy

Day 1

Objective:

- Students will understand the concepts of allyship and advocacy.
- Students will develop skills and strategies for becoming effective allies to marginalized groups.

Materials:

- PowerPoint presentation on allyship and advocacy
- Handouts on allyship principles and strategies
- Role-playing scenarios depicting allyship situations
- Whiteboard and markers

Lesson Outline:

Engagement: Begin with an engaging activity to introduce the concept of allyship. For example, share a short video clip or personal anecdote that highlights the importance of allyship in promoting equity and social justice.

Discussion: Facilitate a brief discussion on students' understanding of allyship and their prior experiences with advocating for marginalized groups. Encourage students to share their thoughts and perspectives.

Presentation:

Provide a comprehensive overview of allyship, including definitions, principles, and examples.

Use the PowerPoint presentation to cover key concepts such as:

- Definition of allyship and its importance in social justice movements
- Principles of effective allyship (e.g., listening, learning, amplifying marginalized voices)
- Strategies for confronting bias and discrimination as allies

Group Activity:

Divide students into small groups and assign each group a role-playing scenario depicting a situation where allyship is needed. Instruct groups to role-play the scenario and brainstorm effective allyship responses.

Interactive Workshop:

Conduct a series of interactive workshops on allyship strategies and skills. Topics to cover may include:

- Active listening and empathy
- Interrupting microaggressions and challenging biased language
- Using privilege to advocate for marginalized groups

Role-Playing: Invite students to participate in role-playing exercises where they practice applying allyship strategies in various scenarios. Provide feedback and guidance to help students refine their allyship skills.

Closing Reflection:

Lead a closing reflection where students share one key takeaway from the allyship training sessions and how they plan to apply what they have learned in their daily lives.

Homework: Encourage students to reflect on their personal experiences with allyship and to identify opportunities for practicing allyship in their communities.

Assessment:

Formative assessment: Observations of student participation in group discussions, role-playing activities

Day 2: Advocacy Campaigns

Objective:

Students will develop and implement advocacy campaigns to raise awareness of social justice issues and promote positive change within their communities.

Materials:

- Poster Boards, Markers, and Art supplies
- Laptops or Tablets for research and campaign planning
- Handouts on advocacy strategies and campaign planning
- Presentation Materials for campaign presentations

Lesson Outline:

Campaign Planning:

- Introduction to Advocacy: Begin with a brief overview of advocacy and its role in social change. Emphasize the importance of grassroots advocacy in addressing systemic inequities.
- Campaign Brainstorming: Facilitate a brainstorming session where students generate ideas for advocacy campaigns. Encourage students to identify social justice issues that resonate with them and brainstorm creative campaign strategies.
- Campaign Planning: Divide students into small groups and assign each group a social justice issue and corresponding advocacy campaign. Provide handouts outlining the steps for planning and implementing an advocacy campaign.

Campaign Implementation:

- Campaign Development: Provide time for students to research their chosen social justice issue, develop campaign goals and objectives, and create campaign materials (e.g., posters, flyers, social media posts).
- Campaign Implementation: Allow students to begin implementing their advocacy campaigns. This may include distributing campaign materials, organizing events or activities, and engaging with their school or local community.

Campaign Presentations:

- Presentation Preparation: Allocate time for students to finalize their campaign presentations and prepare to share their advocacy efforts with the class.
- Campaign Presentations: Each group will present their advocacy campaign to the class, highlighting their campaign goals, strategies, and impact. Encourage students to reflect on their experiences and lessons learned from implementing their campaigns.

Reflection and Discussion:

Reflection: Lead a reflection session where students share their thoughts and feelings about their advocacy experiences. Encourage students to discuss the challenges they faced, the successes they achieved, and the lessons they learned.

Discussion: Facilitate a discussion on the role of advocacy in creating social change and the importance of student activism

Implementation

EquityEducate can be integrated into the school curriculum as an after-school program or as a club. This approach allows for flexibility in scheduling and provides students with opportunities to engage in meaningful learning outside of traditional classroom hours. Lessons in EquityEducate will employ a variety of instructional methods to enhance student learning and engagement. Experiential learning activities, including role-playing, simulations, and real-world projects, will deepen students' understanding of complex concepts while promoting active engagement. Collaborative learning strategies, such as group work and collaborative projects, will foster a sense of community and peer learning, enabling students to solve problems collectively and develop critical thinking skills. Recognizing the diverse learning needs and preferences of students, lessons will be designed to accommodate different learning styles and abilities through differentiated instruction, ensuring all students can succeed. Additionally, technology integration, including the use of online platforms, digital resources, and multimedia presentations, will enhance the learning experience by providing students with access to a variety of learning materials and resources.

In EquityEducate, a holistic approach to education will be embraced, encompassing culturally responsive teaching, trauma-informed practices, and equity and social justice education. Culturally responsive teaching practices will be integrated to foster an inclusive learning environment where students feel valued and respected for their cultural backgrounds and experiences. Furthermore, trauma-informed practices will be implemented to cultivate a safe and supportive atmosphere, especially for students who have experienced trauma. This may involve providing additional support services, implementing trauma-sensitive behavior management strategies, and fostering empathy and understanding. Moreover, lessons will be

infused with themes of equity and social justice to deepen students' understanding of systemic inequities and empower them to advocate for change in their communities, thereby promoting a more equitable and just society.

Several frame factors must be considered when implementing EquityEducate, including economic, temporal, political, and cultural factors. Economic factors, such as access to resources, funding, and support services, can significantly impact the program's implementation and sustainability, emphasizing the importance of securing adequate funding and resources for its success. Temporal factors, including scheduling and time constraints, also play a crucial role, as finding the right balance between academic priorities and extracurricular activities is essential to ensure student participation. Moreover, political factors, such as the political climate and policies, can influence the program's implementation, underscoring the need to advocate for policies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in education to create a supportive environment for EquityEducate. Additionally, cultural factors, including norms, values, and beliefs, can shape how EquityEducate is perceived and received within the school community, highlighting the importance of recognizing and respecting cultural diversity to foster an inclusive learning environment for all students.

Chapter 5

Assessment and Evaluation

To effectively evaluate the "EquityEducate" program, a comprehensive data collection approach will be implemented, incorporating various strategies to gain a thorough understanding of its impact. The evaluation of the, "EquityEducate" program adopts a multifaceted approach to comprehensively assess its impact on promoting inclusivity and equity within the educational environment. The evaluation will utilize surveys, interviews, and analysis of recruitment and retention rates.

To gather diverse perspectives, surveys will be distributed to stakeholders, including educators, and program participants. These surveys will delve into perceptions, experiences, and satisfaction levels regarding various aspects of the program, such as its objectives, implementation, and outcomes. Questions will be meticulously crafted to probe attitudes towards inclusivity, satisfaction with program components, changes in teaching practices, and perceived effects on student engagement and academic performance.

Moreover, in-depth interviews will be conducted with a voluntary representative sample of participants, including educators, administrators, and program facilitators. These interviews will offer qualitative insights into the nuanced impact of the program, exploring personal narratives, challenges faced, and recommendations for improvement. Additionally, an analysis of recruitment and retention rates will be undertaken to quantify changes over time, providing quantitative evidence of the program's influence on participant engagement and persistence.

Survey

As for the survey, it will consist of several sections tailored to capture key aspects of participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the "EquityEducate" program. The survey will begin with demographic questions to gather information on participants' roles, backgrounds, and affiliations with the program. Later sections will explore perceptions of inclusivity within the educational environment, satisfaction with program components, changes in teaching practices, and perceived impact on student engagement and academic performance. Likert scale questions will be used to assess agreement levels, while open-ended questions will invite participants to provide qualitative insights and suggestions for improvement. The survey will be distributed electronically through email and online platforms, with tracking items in place to monitor responses and ensure a robust dataset for analysis.

Example Survey

1. Demographic Information

a. What is your role within the educational setting?

- Educator
- Administrator
- Program Participant

b. How long have you been involved with the "EquityEducate" program?

c. What is your racial/ethnic background?

d. What is your gender identity? (optional)

2. Perceptions of Inclusivity

a. To what extent do you feel that the "EquityEducate" program promotes inclusivity within the educational environment?

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

b. How do you perceive the level of diversity and representation within the program?

Very High / High / Moderate / Low / Very Low

c. Have you seen any changes in the educational environment's inclusivity since the program's implementation? Please provide details.

3. Satisfaction with Program Components

a. Rate your satisfaction with the training and resources provided by the "EquityEducate" program.

Very Satisfied / Satisfied / Neutral / Dissatisfied / Very Dissatisfied

b. How effective do you find the program's initiatives in addressing issues of equity and inclusivity within the curriculum and classroom practices?

Very Effective / Effective / Somewhat Effective / Ineffective / Very Ineffective

c. What aspects of the program do you find most beneficial, and what areas do you believe require improvement? Please provide details.

4. Changes in Teaching Practices (Current Educators)

a. Have you incorporated any new teaching strategies or approaches as a result of participating in the "EquityEducate" program? Please describe.

b. How much has the program influenced your approach to addressing diversity and inclusivity in the classroom?

Significantly / Moderately / Slightly / Not at all

c. How do you perceive the impact of these changes on student engagement and learning outcomes?

5. Perceived Impact on Student Engagement and Academic Performance

a. Do you believe that the "EquityEducate" program has positively influenced student engagement in the classroom? Please explain.

b. Have you observed any changes in student academic performance or achievement since the implementation of the program? If so, please describe.

c. In what ways do you think the program could further support student success and academic growth?

Interviews

In-depth interviews will be meticulously conducted with a carefully selected sample of participants, comprising of current educators, administrators, and program facilitators, to gain profound insights into the qualitative dimensions of the "EquityEducate" program's influence. These interviews will serve as a crucial component of the evaluation process, allowing for a thorough exploration of participants' experiences, challenges encountered, and successes achieved throughout their engagement with the program. Through open-ended questioning and active listening, interviewers will encourage participants to share their personal narratives, providing rich and nuanced accounts of their interactions with the program and its impact on their professional practices and perspectives. Participants will also be prompted to reflect on their perceptions of the program's effectiveness in promoting inclusivity and equity within the educational context, elucidating both positive outcomes and areas for improvement. Furthermore, the interviews will offer a platform for participants to articulate their recommendations and suggestions for enhancing the program's efficacy and relevance, ensuring that their voices and insights inform future iterations and developments. Overall, these in-depth interviews will serve as an invaluable means of gathering qualitative data and uncovering the multifaceted dimensions of the program's influence on participants' experiences and perceptions.

Recruitment and Retention Rates

An exhaustive analysis of recruitment and retention rates will be undertaken, spanning both pre- and post-implementation phases of the "EquityEducate" program, aimed at quantifying temporal changes and elucidating its influence on participant engagement and retention. This comprehensive assessment will involve a deep examination of enrollment numbers, dropout rates, and program completion rates over defined time periods, providing a wide-ranged dataset

for comparative analysis. By checking enrollment figures before the program's inception and tracking subsequent fluctuations, the evaluation will discern any shifts in participant engagement levels, shedding light on the program's efficacy in attracting and retaining individuals within its framework. Moreover, the evaluation will scrutinize program completion rates, proving participants' commitment levels and the extent to which they successfully navigate the program's offerings. By pinpointing these data points, the analysis will offer valuable insights into the program's overall impact on participant engagement and retention, serving as a crucial piece for assessing its effectiveness and informing future enhancements. Data analysis will employ both quantitative and qualitative approaches to derive meaningful conclusions. Quantitative analysis will involve scrutinizing survey responses and recruitment/retention rates to identify statistical trends and patterns. Qualitative analysis will explore interview data to provide an in-depth understanding of the program's influence on participants' experiences and educational outcomes.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations will prioritize confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent for all participants. Participants will be fully informed of the purpose and scope of the evaluation, and their voluntary participation will be ensured through informed consent procedures. An ethics committee will provide oversight and review of the evaluation process to uphold ethical standards and safeguard participant rights and well-being. Informed consent will be obtained from educators, administrators, and program participants, ensuring transparency and voluntary participation. To maintain the highest ethical standards, the evaluation process will undergo regular review and oversight by an ethics committee. These measures collectively safeguard the rights and well-being of all participants, fostering a research environment built on trust and ethical responsibility.

Recommendations for Future Teachers

Having navigated the complexities of addressing underrepresentation and historical injustices within the education system firsthand, I offer valuable advice for future teachers embarking on their educational journey. Firstly, immerse yourself in understanding the rich history and experiences of African Americans in the United States. This foundational knowledge will not only deepen your appreciation for diversity but also inform your teaching practices and advocacy efforts. Secondly, recognize the significance of representation and actively work towards increasing the presence of African American educators in schools. Be an advocate for recruitment and retention efforts, and champion policies that promote diversity and inclusivity within educational institutions. Thirdly, prioritize culturally responsive teaching and trauma-informed practices in your classroom. By incorporating culturally relevant content and providing trauma-sensitive support, you can create a nurturing environment where all students feel valued and supported. Remember, your role as a teacher extends beyond academics; you have the power to positively impact students' lives and foster a sense of belonging. Embrace this responsibility with compassion, empathy, and a commitment to equity and social justice in education.

References

- Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(3), 291-309.
- Grissom, J. A., & Redding, C. (2016). Discretion and Disproportionality: Explaining the Underrepresentation of High-Achieving Students of Color in Gifted Programs. *AERA Open*, 2(1), 233285841562217-. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858415622175>
- Ingersoll, R., May, H., & Collins, G. (2018). *Recruitment, retention, and the minority teacher shortage*. CPRE Research Report.
- Ingersoll, R. M., & Strong, M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 201-233.
- Parker, T. L., & Neville, K. M. (2019). The Influence of Racial Identity on White Students' Perceptions of African American Faculty. *Review of Higher Education*, 42(3), 879–901. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2019.0023>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups 2018 (NCES 2019-038)*. U.S. Department of Education.

- Neally, K. (2022). An analysis of the underrepresentation of minoritized groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education. *School Science and Mathematics*, 122(5), 271–280. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssm.12542>
- Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S. Learning Policy Institute.
- Upper Darby School District. Upper Darby High School. Retrieved from [/2023:https://www.upperdarbysd.org/domain/1187#:~:text=Upper%20Darby%20High%20School%20first,of%20nearly%20270%20faculty%20members.](https://www.upperdarbysd.org/domain/1187#:~:text=Upper%20Darby%20High%20School%20first,of%20nearly%20270%20faculty%20members.)
- West Chester University. (n.d.). Transformative Education and Social Change. Retrieved from [/2023:https://www.wcupa.edu/programs/grad/transformEdSocialChange/](https://www.wcupa.edu/programs/grad/transformEdSocialChange/)
- PBS. (n.d.). HBCUs produce nearly half of all black teachers in the U.S. PBS NewsHour. Retrieved [November 24th, 2023] <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/education/hbcus-produce-nearly-half-of-all-black-teachers-in-the-us#:~:text=HBCUs%20play%20an%20outsize%20role,is%20crucial%20for%20ung20Amercans.>
- Charlotte Forten (1837-1914). BlackPast. Retrieved from <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/grimke-charlotte-forten-1837-1914/>
- Berkin, C. (2002). *A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Bethune, M. M. (1955). *Mary McLeod Bethune's Last Will and Testament*. Retrieved from <https://www.cookman.edu/history/last-will-testament.html>
- Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

- Center for American Progress. (2019). The Women's Leadership Gap. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/womens-leadership-gap-2/>
- Coleman, M. (1994). The emergence of African American teachers in the United States: A historical overview. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 63(1), 3-13. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2967348>
- Johnson, C. (2007, November 27). Grimké, Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folk*. A. C. McClurg.
- Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(2), 106-116. Retrieved from <https://www.cwu.edu/teaching-learning/sites/cts.cwu.edu/teachinglearning/files/documents/PreparingforCulturallyResponsiveTeaching,%20Geneva%20Gay.pdf>
- Holcomb, S. (2021, May 26). The History of NEA. National Education Association . Retrieved from <https://www.nea.org/about-nea/mission-vision-values/history-nea>
- Jackson, C. K., & Bruegmann, E. (2009). Teaching students and teaching each other: The importance of peer learning for teachers. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 1(4), 85-108.
- King, M. L. (1963). I Have a Dream. Speech presented at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <https://www.archives.gov/files/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf>
- Malott, C. (2018). *A History of Education for the Many: From Colonization and Slavery to the Decline of US Imperialism*.

- Margo, R. A. (1990, January 1). "Teacher Salaries in Black and White": Pay discrimination in the Southern Classroom. NBER Chapters. Retrieved from <https://ideas.repec.org/h/nbr/nberch/8794.html>
- National Archives and Records Administration. (1954). Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). Retrieved from <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=87>
- National Archives and Records Administration. (1963). March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom: Program. Retrieved from Johnson, L. B. (1965). Remarks on the signing of the Voting Rights Act.
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (1929). The Negro in American education. New York, NY: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups 2018 (NCES 2019-038). U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019038.pdf>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups. U.S. Department of Education.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). The Condition of Education 2020. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020144.pdf>
- Oates, S. B. (1990). The Fires of Jubilee: Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion. Harper Perennial.
- Obama Foundation. (n.d.). About MBK Alliance. Retrieved from <https://www.obama.org/mbka/about-mbka/>

Ohio General Assembly. (1803). An Act to Regulate Black and Mulatto Persons in this Territory.

Retrieved from

<https://www.ohiomemory.org/customizations/global/pages/transcript/view.html?alias=p267401coll32&ptr=19540&pg=19537>

Parents' Committee on Action. (1949, July 9). Letter to Clarendon County Board of Education.

Summerton, SC. Retrieved from <https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/jad/id/623/>

Tyrone C. Howard (2003) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Ingredients for Critical Teacher

Reflection, *Theory Into Practice*, 42:3, 195-202, DOI: 10.1207/s15430421tip4203_5

U.S. Department of Education. (2015). Teach to lead initiative: Increasing diversity in the teacher workforce.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education. (1872). Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1871.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2018). K-12 Education: Discipline Disparities for Black Students, Boys, and Students with Disabilities. Retrieved from

<https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/693711.pdf>

United States Commission on Civil Rights. (1961). Equality under the law: Civil rights report.

Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office.

Villegas, A. M., & Irvine, J. J. (2010). Diversifying the teacher workforce: A retrospective and prospective analysis. *Journal of teacher education*, 61(5), 366-378.

Washington, B. T. (1901). *Up From Slavery*. Doubleday, Page & Company.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). Digest of Education Statistics, 2019 (NCES 2020-010). U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020103/index.asp>

Gershenson, S., Hart, C. M. D., Hyman, J., Lindsay, C. A., & Papageorge, N. W. (2022). The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers. *American Economic Journal. Economic Policy*, 14(4), 300–342. Retrieved From

<https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20190573>

Milner, H. R., & Hoy, A. W. (2003). A case study of an African American Teacher's self-efficacy, stereotype threat, and persistence. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 19(2), 263–276. Retrieved from

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X\(02\)00099-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(02)00099-9)

Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(5), 797–811.

Retrieved from

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.69.5.797>

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice*, 34(3), 159–165. Retrieved from

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1476635>

Valencia, R. R. (1997). Conceptualizing the notion of deficit thinking. In *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice* (pp. 1-12). Falmer Press.

Dewey, J. (1897). My Pedagogic Creed. *The School Journal*, 54(3), 77-80.

- Smith, L. (2009). Piaget's developmental epistemology. In P. Robbins & M. Aydede (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition* (pp. 347-364). Cambridge University Press.
- Dee, T. S. (2004). Teachers, race, and student achievement in a randomized experiment. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 86(1), 195-210.
- Gershenson, S., Holt, S. B., & Papageorge, N. W. (2018). Who believes in me? The effect of student-teacher demographic match on teacher expectations. *Economics of Education Review*, 62, 170-183.
- Coleman, J. S. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity*. National Center for Education Statistics.
- Conant, J. B. (1947). *The Negro and the schools*. Harvard University Press.
- Woodson, C. G. (1933). The crisis in education. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 2(3), 289-296.
- Woodson, C. G. (1933). *The Miseducation of the Negro*. Associated Publishers.
- Hetherington, E. M., & Tinsley, J. L. (1979). The role of teachers in the socialization of students. *Review of Educational Research*, 49(3), 517-542. doi: 10.3102/00346543049003517
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Student Learning*. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 1995(63), 15-28. doi: 10.1002/tl.37219956304
- Bristol, T. J., & Gist, C. D. (2017). The Importance of Minority Teachers: Student Perceptions of Minority Versus White Teachers. *Educational Researcher*, 46(7), 379-389. doi: 10.3102/0013189X17719653
- Venet, A. S. (2021). *Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education*. W. W. Norton & Company.

- Alce, C., & Brennan, E. (2023, April 6). Racial and Gender Bias in Technology. [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from [Racial & Gender Bias in Technology \(Critical Case Study\).pptx](#)
- Ellul, J. (n.d.). 76 Reasonable Questions. Retrieved from <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AtgX0ukrSPNCd8EyJGi8YX1TTYOSap4h/edit>
- Hagood, M. C., & Watson, M. D. (2017). Call Me MISTER: Supporting African American Male Teachers for Social Justice in Urban Education. *Education and Urban Society*, 49(7), 681-701. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1202245>
- Jackson, C. K., & Bruegmann, E. (2009). Teaching students and teaching each other: The importance of peer learning for teachers. NBER Working Paper, 14792. Retrieved from <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/app.1.4.85>
- Kantor, J. (2019, June 26). Why Diversity and Inclusion Efforts in Tech Are Falling Short. *Forbes*. Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Bff4Mb_ngMxP6ifOislzJQ47OC6DqzZw/view
- Kapor Center for Social Impact. (2018). Tech Leavers Study. Retrieved from <https://www.kaporcenter.org/tech-leavers/>
- McKinsey & Company. (2015). Diversity Matters. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). Teacher Demographics in the U.S. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_clr.asp

NCES. (2019). Characteristics of public elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States: Results from the 2017-18 National Teacher and Principal Survey. U.S.

Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020142.pdf>

Waters, A. (2015, March 11). Men (still) explain technology to me: Gender and education technology [Talk]. Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, England. Retrieved from

<https://hackededucation.com/2015/03/11/men-still-explain>

National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). Digest of Education Statistics, 2019 (NCES 2020-010). U.S. Department of Education.

Retrieved from: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020103/index.asp>

Villegas, A. M., & Irvine, J. J. (2010). Diversifying the teacher workforce: A retrospective and prospective analysis. *Journal of teacher education*, 61(5), 366-378.

Structural Learning. (2021, November 26). Action Research in the Classroom: A Teacher's

Guide. Retrieved from <https://www.structural-learning.com/post/action-research-in-the-classroom-a-teachers-guide>

Center for Black Educator Development. (n.d.). Home. Retrieved from

<https://thecenterblacked.org/>