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THE IMPACT OF STUDENT/TEACHER RACE-CONGRUENCY ON A STUDENT'S  
ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY  
SOFIA PANAGIOTOPOULOS

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BETHEL UNIVERSITY

THE IMPACT OF STUDENT/TEACHER RACE-CONGRUENCY ON A STUDENT'S  
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APPROVED

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### Abstract

The purpose of this literature review was to address how race-congruency between students and teachers impacts students' academic achievement and what can be done about the issue. The guiding questions were: *1) does race-congruency between students and teachers impact a student's academic experience? and 2) what are the current efforts to diversify the teacher workforce?* The literature review shows that race-incongruency between students and teachers impacts multiple facets of a student's experience. With the majority of teachers being White and the majority of students being nonwhite, most students find themselves racially-incongruent to their teachers. Race-incongruency between teachers and students is more likely to produce negative results in the following categories: how well students perform on tests, if students are expected to do well in school, if students are expected to move on to college, the value in the feedback students receive, students' expectations in terms of behavior, the likelihood of receiving disciplinary action, and the likelihood of receiving necessary special education services. Because of the negative effects a race-incongruency can have on a student, researchers recommend continued recruitment and retention of diverse teachers. Teacher preparation programs aimed at producing a diverse teacher workforce have been studied throughout the country. Additionally, a need for diversity training among current teachers and pre-service teachers continues to be necessary. A more diverse teacher workforce will provide schools across the country with a faculty that reflects the diversity of America's students. As we continue to evolve as a nation, it is critical that our schools evolve with us. Providing students and teachers the opportunity to better connect and understand each other will only improve our educational systems.

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## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

Across America, race has continued to be an important discussion in businesses, healthcare, social relations, and education. This past year alone, we have seen racial issues and their effects unfold before our very eyes. As society continues to develop its perspective on race and how we discuss, engage, and adjust the ways we interact with each other, it is important to acknowledge the role race plays in our schools.

### **Current Issues Surrounding Race**

The United States is currently grappling with social unrest surrounding the topic of race in our society. The issues range from voter suppression laws to police brutality. Here in the Twin Cities alone, there have been ongoing protests throughout the past year after the murder of George Floyd. Students are aware and conscious of their environment. As an educator of students who live in Brooklyn Center, I have firsthand experience of how death in the community impacts students after the murder of Daunte Wright. Issues with race translate from society into the classroom seamlessly. These issues do not go away when the bell rings, and for some students these issues stick with them throughout the entire school day. In the present, there have been student-organized walk-outs and protests in which students of all races have expressed their concern and wish for change.

As a White teacher, I recognize I will never fully understand the feelings my students of color have on racial tension in America. From personal experience, I know there are teachers out there doing their best to understand these issues and discuss appropriately with their students. However, there are also teachers who do not wish to touch the subject at all and instead wish to

keep all talks of the issues outside the classroom, outside the classroom. Both of these circumstances influence our students. Both of these circumstances also influence the way our students view us as their teacher. I can work to be an educated ally, I can express anger with them, I can empathize with them, I can stand with them, I can continue to fight for justice with them, but I will never personally understand what it feels like to be them. That is something I have to accept. That is also something my students have to accept. Because we are different races, we will never completely understand the differences we hold. It was through this thought process that I developed the basis of this thesis.

### **Race In Schools**

The demographic of American schools are becoming more and more diverse. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), by 2029 it is estimated that 44% of public school students will be White (NCES, 2021). This means that the remaining 54% of students will be Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, or two or more races. Our schools are becoming increasingly diverse in their student body. However, an overwhelming majority of educators in the United States are White. NCES data states that in the 2017-2018 school year, 79% of educators were White, with 7% identifying as Black and 9% as Hispanic (NCES, 2021). The remaining percentage of educators identified as Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, or two or more races. So, while the majority of American educators have historically been White, our student body continues to evolve into a more diverse group of individuals.

Strong student-teacher relationships are essential to a successful learning environment. From the moment a student steps foot in a kindergarten classroom, their experiences become shaped by the relationships that develop between themselves and their teacher. Their teacher is



not only responsible for molding a student's academic success, but also for creating an environment in which the student feels supported, respected, and valued. The disproportionality between the diversity of students and the diversity of teachers has become a glaring concern along the educational landscape. An increasing number of students are being taught by teachers who not only look different from them, but come from very different backgrounds, ethnicities, and traditions. This begs the question, how important is it to have a teacher of the same race?

### **Definition of Terms and Breakdown of Thesis**

This Literature Review will focus on the effects race-congruency among students and teachers has on students in a variety of different elements. The term race-congruency refers to a relationship in which both the student and teacher identify with the same race and will be used frequently throughout this thesis. The effects of race-congruency will be analyzed through a variety of lenses in order to create a holistic view of how the race of the teacher impacts the student in different contexts.

This review is broken into four main sections: Race-Congruency and its Impact on Academic Performance, Race-Congruency and its Impact on Perceived Student Behavior, Current Efforts to Diversify the Teacher Recruit Pool, and Current Efforts to Prioritize Diversity Training for Teachers. When beginning research on this topic, it was quickly evident that a multitude of data exists surrounding the different ways teachers' race impacts students. It also became abundantly clear that efforts have been made to diversify the teacher workforce because of the importance race has in schools. Thus, different facets of the issue emerged and the sections of this paper were naturally formed.

Race-Congruency and its Impact on Academic Performance addresses the academic impact race-congruency plays on student's educational success. This section is broken into the

following subsections for review: Race-Congruency and Test Scores, Race-Congruency and Teacher Expectations of Academic Success, Race-Congruency and Feedback, and Race-Congruency and Special Education. These subsections highlight the research surrounding the different ways in which students' academic success varies based on if they have a race-congruent teacher or not.

Race-Congruency and its Impact on Perceived Student Behavior addresses the different ways in which teachers perceive the behavior of their race-incongruent and race-congruent students. This section is broken into the following subsections for review: Race-Congruency and Teacher Evaluations of Student Behavior, Race-Congruency and the Achievement Gap as it Relates to Behavior, Race-Congruency and Disciplinary Action, and Race-Congruency and Student Evaluations of Teachers. This section highlights the importance of shared understandings of intended behavior. Most students operate based on the environment in which they were raised. Different cultures and races produce different environments. When teachers do not understand the behavior of their students, it can be determined as "bad," when, in reality, students are expressing themselves in ways that reflect their home environment. This section evaluates the research surrounding this issue and the significance race-congruency plays in the perceived behavior of students at school.

The magnitude of research found on the first two sections of this chapter transitions smoothly into the following section in which I dissect the Current Efforts to Diversify the Teacher Recruit Pool. Majority of researchers conclude that there is a desperate need to diversify the teacher workforce, which begins with recruiting and retaining teachers of color. This would allow more race-congruency between teachers and students, especially given that the student population continues to become more diverse in race. A number of programs have been studied

through different facets to try and achieve this diversification. The section begins with a study that identifies the issues in producing more teachers of color. The remainder of this section is broken up as follows: Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool- Grow Your Own Programs, Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool- Collegiate Programs, Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool- Recruiting from Within School Staff, Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool- Recruiting from Local High Schools, Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool- Recruiting Diverse Special Education Educators, and Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool- Recruiting in Rural Communities. These subsections highlight different efforts that have been made to create programs aimed at recruiting and retaining diverse pre-service teachers, with the intention that they will then go on to work in the teacher workforce.

Chapter Two ends with a review of the current efforts being made to prioritize diversity training for current pre-service and in-service teachers. The section is broken down into two subsections: What Can Current Teachers Do and Diversity Training for Pre-Service Teachers. The first subsection addresses ways in which current educators can evaluate their own racial sensemaking and tested methods they can apply to their own practice. The latter section addresses the needs of pre-service teachers in terms of diversity training and being prepared to enter the educational field in a time when the student population is becoming increasingly diverse.

### **Research Question**

These sections all aim to answer two crucial questions: *1) does race-congruency between students and teachers impact a student's academic experience? and 2) what are the current efforts to diversify the teacher workforce?* This thesis will provide review of literature addressing race-congruency between students and teachers as an important consideration when analyzing

student success. It is important that educators understand the influence their race plays in their classroom and how we can create a teacher workforce that reflects the diversity of our student body.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Literature Search Procedures**

The information and literature addressed in this thesis were found using the search tool in Bethel Library's CLICsearch tool. This search tool allowed me to filter search results to show me only Peer-Reviewed Journals. Additionally, I was able to narrow down the search results to only show articles written from 2000 to 2020. Some of the keywords that were used in my searches included "diverse teaching staff," "diverse teachers," "teacher and student race-congruency," "same race student and teacher," "race and student teacher relationships," "different race student and teacher," "different race teacher," "race and students," "race and student behavior," "race and student success," "does race matter in schools," and "race and student success." These keywords produced peer-reviewed journals from the following databases: SAGE Premier 2020, American Economic Association, JSTOR Arts and Sciences I, Education Database, and Elsevier ScienceDirect Journals. This chapter will review the impacts of race-congruency between students and teachers in the following order: Race-Congruency and its Impact on Academic Performance; Race-Congruency and its Impact on Perceived Student Behavior; and Current Efforts to Diversify the Teacher Recruit Pool.

### **Race-Congruency and its Impact on Academic Performance**

A primary question regarding race-congruency between student and teacher is whether a student will have more success academically when matched with a same-race teacher. Research on the topic is varied. Some studies conclude that there are academic benefits to racially-congruent students and teachers, while others conclude that it is not a significant factor in a students' academic performance.

## **Race-Congruency and Test Scores**

Joshi et al. (Joshi, 2018) conducted a study answering the question: To what extent do students experience improved test scores when assigned to a race-congruent teacher? Using data from both the 2009-2010 school year and the 2014-2015 school year collected by the Tennessee Education Research Alliance at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College, they were able to assess 1,088,166 student standardized test scores for English and Math in grades 3-8. By analyzing the data in the sample set, they were able to see significant and positive effects for elementary math students with a race-congruent teacher (Joshi, 2018). Upon further analysis of the elementary school sample, the data showed statistically significant and essential effects in both reading and math when Black students had a race-congruent teacher (Joshi, 2018). While the data cannot tell us anything beyond test scores, it is clear that Black elementary students produced higher academic achievement when paired with a Black teacher. This study found a larger effect in their review of race-congruency among elementary student-teacher pairs, opposed to secondary education (Joshi, 2018). The author concludes that the findings of this study support efforts to diversify the teacher workforce, something that will be addressed later in this chapter (Joshi, 2018).

The results of the previous study echo those of one conducted by Dee (Dee, 2004) using Tennessee's Project STAR dataset, a four year study that encompassed urban, rural, and suburban schools across Tennessee. Over the four years of the study, 11,600 first, second, and third graders participated. The dataset has limited Hispanic, Asian, and Native American students so researchers focused on Black and White students with either Black or White teachers. Project STAR was intended to analyze class sizes throughout the state and how student

achievement varies by size. Because of this, students and teachers were paired randomly throughout the study. This allowed researchers a unique opportunity to analyze the academic success of students with race-congruent teachers, as race was specified in the dataset. By using the dataset to assess test scores during years the students had race-congruent teachers, the results indicated that both Black and White students displayed substantial achievement gains when paired with a race-congruent teacher (Dee, 2004). The results showed that after spending a year with a race-congruent teacher, math and reading scores increased by roughly 2-4 percentile points (Dee, 2004). Additionally, the results imply that exposure to a race-congruent teacher does not produce a one-time gain, but can have positive effects on the said student's achievement as they age (Dee, 2004). The authors conclude that there are large educational benefits for Black and White students when assigned to a race-congruent teacher in early grades (Dee, 2004). Additionally, the authors also note that these results provide support for continuing efforts to diversify the teacher workforce (Dee, 2004).

A similar study was conducted in Florida by Egalite et al (Egalite et al., 2015), where researchers set out to answer the question, "whether or not assignment to a teacher of the same race/ethnicity is related to student achievement." The researchers used a dataset provided by the Florida Department of Education that follows approximately 3 million test-taking students and their 92,000 teachers from 2001-2009. The dataset is used to obtain achievement changes of each student as they progress through grades 3-10, being assigned to teachers of various races and ethnicities along the way. The races analyzed were "Black," "White," and "Asian/Pacific Islander." It is important to note that minority teachers are underrepresented in the Florida Public Schools system, so it can be assumed that a large percentage of the teachers during this time frame are White (Egalite et al., 2015). By following such a large number of students from

elementary to high school over this seven year period, researchers were able to compare years when students had a race-congruent teacher vs. years when the same student did not have a race-congruent teacher. This data provided a substantial amount of crucial information regarding academic achievement.

Researchers found significant reading achievement impacts for both Black and White students when placed with a race-congruent teacher. Students of all three races (Black, White, and Asian/Pacific Islander) showed significant math achievement when placed with a race-congruent teacher (Egalite et al., 2015). Interestingly, results for Black and White students were strongest at the elementary level, while results for Asian/Pacific Islander students were strongest at the middle/high school level (Egalite et al., 2015). Researchers also examined the effect of a racially-congruent teacher by analyzing students' prior performance level before entering the racially-congruent teacher's class. They found that low performing Black and White students benefited academically when they were assigned to a race-congruent teacher after previously being assigned to a teacher of a different race than their own (Egalite et al., 2015). The authors conclude that racially-congruent teachers could theoretically narrow the performance gap among different races of students (Egalite et al., 2015). They argue that race-congruent teachers can serve as "high -quality, academic role models," who are "more inclined to hold high expectations for a student's potential" (Egalite et al., 2015).

### **Race-Congruency and Teacher Expectations of Academic Success**

Fox (Fox, 2016) hypothesized that a teacher's expectations and recommendations for a student are influenced on whether the teacher is race-congruent with the student. The purpose of this study was to address race-congruency on two outcomes: teacher expectations for postsecondary attainment and teacher recommendations for advanced coursework.



To test her hypothesis, she used the ELS:02 data set of 752 schools across the country in which teachers were surveyed regarding their expectations for individual students (Fox, 2016). From this data set, 26 tenth graders from each of the 752 schools were randomly selected. In this group, 60% of students were White, 15% were Black, 15% were Hispanic, and 10% were Asian (Fox, 2016). Two-thirds of the students used in the study had a same-race teacher, meaning one-third of the students were racially-incongruent with their teacher. For each student selected, surveys were given to both the math teacher and English teacher of said student. Of the teachers surveyed, 89% were White. Teachers were asked two questions, 1) “How far in school do you expect this student to get?” and 2) “Have You recommended this student for academic honors, advanced placement, or honors classes?” (Fox, 2016). Each question was paired with a list of possible answers, each containing a binary value. For question one, teachers were given seven possible answers, each with a different binary value: Less than high school graduation (value=0), high school graduation or GED only (value=0), attend or complete 2 year college or school (value=1), attend 4-year college but not complete (value=1), graduate from college (value=2), obtain master’s degree or equivalent (value=2), obtain PhD, MD, or other advanced degree (value=2) (Fox, 2016). For question two, teachers were given two possible answers: Yes (value=1) and No (value=0) (Fox, 2016). It is critical to note that this study required the two teachers surveyed to agree in their responses on each student (Fox, 2016). If the teachers did not agree, their responses were discredited (Fox, 2016).

The results of this study show significant data in terms of race-congruency and the expectations and recommendations of teachers in regards to Black and Hispanic students. Of the teacher pairs surveyed, the results for the agreement rate regarding whether a student will complete high school were as follows: 86% of teacher pairs agreed yes in regards to Asian

students, 73% agreed yes in regards to White students, 58% agreed yes in regards to Hispanic students, and 56% agreed yes in regards to Black students (Fox, 2016). It is critical to note that while 19% of teacher pairs agreed no in regards to Hispanic and Black students, only 10% agreed no in regards to White students, and only 4% agreed no to Asian students (Fox, 2016). When this is expanded to the teacher pair agreement rate regarding whether a student will graduate college or more: 62% of pairs agreed yes in regards to Asian students, 42% agreed yes in regards to White students, 26% agreed yes in regards to Hispanic students, and 24% agreed yes in regards to Black students (Fox, 2016). Again, it is critical to note that 15% of teacher pairs agreed no in regards to Asian students, 36% agreed no in regards to White students, 48% agreed no in terms of Hispanic students, and 51% agreed no in regards to Black Students (Fox, 2016). Lastly, the results for the agreement rate of teacher pairs about recommending a student for advance courses are as follows: 17% of teacher pairs agreed yes in regards to Asian students, 11% agreed yes in regards to White students, 5% agreed yes in regards to Hispanic students, and 4% agreed yes in regards to Black students (Fox, 2016). It is critical to note that 57% of teacher pairs agreed no in regards to Asian students, 70% agreed no in regards to White students, 81% agreed no in regards to Hispanic students, and 83% agreed no in regards to Black students (Fox, 2016).

This study provides substantive data in terms of race-congruency and the expectations and recommendations of teachers in regards to Hispanic and Black students (Fox, 2016). With 89% of the teachers surveyed being White this study overshoots the national average of White teachers by about 10% (approximately 79% of working educators are White), but is still representative of the majority of classroom settings across the country: a White teacher teaching minority students (Fox, 2016). Fox's study showed that race-incongruent teachers were less

likely to have expectations of Black and Hispanic students beyond high school, and were also less likely to recommend them for advanced coursework (Fox, 2016).

Researchers Sarah Gershenson, Stephen B. Holt, and Nicholas W. Papageorge also set out to investigate biases in teachers' expectations as it relates to race-congruency between teachers and students (Gershenson, 2016). They hypothesized that if differences in teachers' expectations among students are related to the racial match between the student and teacher, then the teachers possess a systematically biased belief about student potential. To conduct this research, they used the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 from the National Center for Education Statistics, which was nationally representative of 10th grade students. Through a cross analysis of the data set, researchers were able to conclude that non-Black teachers had significantly lower academic expectations for Black students than Black teachers have for Black students (Gershenson, 2016). Additionally, it was noted that non-Black teachers were 12 percentage points less likely to expect Black students to complete a four-year college degree in comparison to Black teachers (Gershenson, 2016).

### **Race-Congruency and Feedback**

Constructive feedback from teachers is critical for student growth and development. Without adequate feedback, students are unable to understand their strengths and weaknesses for given tasks and assignments. Harber (Harber, 2012) conducted a study to test whether public school teachers display a positive feedback bias. In this study, positive feedback bias refers to White teachers providing more praise and less criticism to race-incongruent students than to equivalent White students for equivalent work. Researchers hypothesized that White educators would provide more positive feedback to their racially-incongruent students because of their own insecurities regarding race (Harber, 2012).

Teachers were recruited from three middle schools and two high schools from two school districts in the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut tri-state area (Harber, 2012). One of the districts selected was a small, rural, mostly White district. The other was a large, urban, and ethnically diverse district. From the five schools, 126 public school teachers participated (Harber, 2012). Of the 126 that participated, 89.7% of teachers were White (Harber, 2012). All teacher participants were highly experienced teachers with an average of 12 years teaching experience (Harber, 2012).

To test for feedback bias, the teachers were instructed to give feedback on a poorly written essay they believed to be written by either a Black, Latino, or White student. In reality, the essays were developed by the researchers with intentional errors within them for teachers to grade and provide feedback on. Researchers developed four essays (two middle school essays and two high school essays) that represented C grade quality work for 8th grade and 11th grade (Harber, 2012). Teachers delivered feedback in three ways: a grade rating on the essay, copy-edit comments penned onto the actual essay, and a follow-up essay evaluation (Harber, 2012). This follow-up evaluation was dubbed the “Essay Rating Form” in which teachers rated the amount of additional work required for the essay to improve in mechanics, content, and overall quality (Harber, 2012).

Additionally, teachers were given a “Writer Description Sheet” that was used to subtly convey the race and gender of the student through a variety of ways (Harber, 2012). First, race and gender were indicated by the fake-student’s name (Harber, 2012). For example, researchers used names like Levon or Jarell for Black male students, Lucia or Teresa for Latina female students, or Mark or Kyle for White male students. They continued this method by also including the fake-student’s siblings names, which were also culturally based (Harber, 2012). They also

provided an item on the sheet that inquired into the students' race, labeling them as either Black, Latino, or White (Harber, 2012). Lastly, researchers also included the fake-students' age, grade level, favorite class, and favorite movie so as to not make the race and gender information overly conspicuous (Harber, 2012).

The data gathered from these surveys proved the researchers' hypothesis to be correct, primarily when it comes to Latino students. When looking at student race as a main effect, positively biased feedback was only evident for Latino students (Harber, 2012). However, teachers provided more positive feedback on essays they believed to be written for Black or Latino students than essays they believed to be written by White students (Harber, 2012). In the case of Black students, it is important to note that only teachers who lacked school-based social support displayed the positive feedback bias (Harber, 2012). Those who worked in schools with social support did not respond with more positive feedback for Black students than White students (Harber, 2012). School-based social support did not affect the positive feedback bias for Latino students (Harber, 2012).

The authors conclude that majority-White public school teachers, when provided work of equal merit and quality, provide more positive feedback to Black and Latino students than White students (Harber, 2012). However, the reason for the positive feedback is different for Black and Latino students. White teachers who work in schools without social support provided more positive feedback, which indicates Whites view the delivery of feedback to Black students as stressful and therefore bias their feedback in order to alleviate the stress (Harber, 2012). The positive feedback to Latino students was not conditioned by school-sponsored social support, so the authors note that it is caused by something other than racial tension (Harber, 2012). The author concludes that the following consequences can result from positive feedback bias due to

racially-incongruent teachers and students: less clarity to the student about where to exert more effort, less challenge for the student to excel, less faith for the student in receiving praise, and overall less academic growth and development (Harber, 2012).

### **Race-Congruency and Special Education**

It is universally accepted among educators that special education services are necessary to academic success for some students. Fish (Fish, 2019) proposed two critical research questions regarding race and special education: 1) How does teacher racial composition shape students' odds of special education receipt? And, 2) How does teacher racial composition differentially shape the odds of receipt for students of different racial backgrounds? To examine her questions, Fish used a dataset from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction that included all students in Wisconsin public schools for the 2010-2011 school year. The dataset contains information on 429,009 students across 2,040 public schools. The race of each participating student was recorded. Additionally, the race of each teacher in participating schools was recorded. It is important to mention that Wisconsin "faces chronic staffing shortages in special education across the state," (Fish, 2019). Using mixed-effects logistic regression models, Fish was able to estimate the odds of special education receipt overall, as well as the odds of receipt under different disability categories: specific learning disability, autism spectrum disorder, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, speech-language impairment, or other health impairment (Fish, 2019). She was then able to use cross-level interactions between the student's race and the school's reporting of teacher racial makeup to test for race-congruency effects between the student and the teacher racial composition (Fish, 2019). A number of critical results emerged, the most significant being that there is a positive correlation between proportion of teachers of color and odds of special education receipt, regardless of student race (Fish, 2019).

Fish found specific outcomes for different races of students. White students that attended a school with a significant number of teachers of color had an increased odds of receiving special education in regards to specific learning disabilities, speech-language impairments, intellectual disabilities, and other health impairments (Fish, 2019). Compared to their White peers, Asian students as a whole are less likely to receive special education for any disability (Fish, 2019). Latinx students have lower odds than White students of receiving special education services for the outcome of speech/language impairment (Fish, 2019). As a whole, the odds that Latinx students receive special education services are not increased when the proportion of teachers of color increases (Fish, 2019). Lastly, she uncovered that Black students are less likely than White students to receive special education for the outcome of emotional disturbance (Fish, 2019). Fish concludes that a higher proportion of teachers of color in a school correlates to increased odds of special education services for all students regardless of race (Fish, 2019).

While Fish's study concludes that a diverse teaching staff is beneficial to students receiving special education services necessary for their academic success, a study conducted by Gottfried (Gottfried, 2019) concluded that there is no evidence that race-congruency between students and teachers is associated with increased support for students with disabilities. Their study was guided by two research questions: 1) Does having a kindergarten teacher of the same race/ethnicity improve achievement or social-emotional outcomes for students of color with disabilities? And, 2) How do these associations differ compared to students without disabilities? (Gottfried, 2019). The study used data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 (ECLS-K:2011). Collected by the National Center for Education Statistics, ECLS-K:2011 contains data regarding kindergarten students in terms of test scores and parent, teacher, and administration surveys (Gottfried, 2019). Participating students'

and teachers' races were recorded. The researchers analyzed the data for Black and Latinx general education teachers and students (Gottfried, 2019). White teachers and students served as the reference group (Gottfried, 2019). As in many studies, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American students were not included in the study because there is very little race-congruency between students and teachers of these racial groups. The researchers focused on students who were assessed by the same teacher in both the fall and spring surveys (Gottfried, 2019). Additionally, only those with IEP's on file were included in the group of students with disability status (Gottfried, 2019). This resulted in 7,980 students sampled in their study (Gottfried, 2019). After analyzing the data, they discovered that kindergarteners with disabilities did not experience any notable academic benefit from a race-congruent teacher (Gottfried, 2019). Additionally, there was no evidence that social-emotional outcomes for the kindergarteners were benefited by a race-congruent teacher (Gottfried, 2019). However, this study concluded that Black and Latinx students did positively benefit from having a race-congruent teacher in terms of reducing externalizing problem behaviors, something that will be addressed in the next section of this chapter (Gottfried, 2019).

### **Race-Congruency and its Impact on Perceived Student Behavior**

Race-Congruency between students and teachers can impact more than just a student's academic performance. Literature suggests that there is a major discrepancy between teacher's perception of student behavior for students of their own race and students of a different race. This perception can influence everything from the student's comfort level in the classroom, to the type of disciplinary action taken against the student. Vice versa, there is research regarding student's perception of different race teachers, as well.



## **Race-Congruency and Teacher Evaluations of Student Behavior**

Wright (Wright, 2017) set out to find out if our most virtuous of students, kindergarteners, were impacted by having a racially-incongruent teacher in terms of behavior evaluations. The researchers examined whether or not students of color receive higher social-emotional ratings when paired with a race-congruent teacher opposed to those matched with a race-incongruent teacher (Wright, 2017). They hypothesized that racially-congruent teachers would be able to leverage common cultural experiences with their students, which in turn would enhance educational outcomes (Wright, 2017). Utilizing the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study of the Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 (ECLS-K:2011), researchers were able to evaluate 9,140 students (Wright, 2017). The dataset contained surveys done by teachers, which housed questions related to social-emotional attributes of students. The attributes were broken into different scales: externalizing behaviors (frequency in which the student got angry, acted impulsively, argued, fought, or was disruptive), internalizing behaviors (extent to which the student displayed anxiety, low self-esteem, sadness, anxiety, or loneliness), interpersonal skills (frequency in which the student got along with others, formed friendships, helped others, showed regards to others feelings, and expressed feelings or ideas in a positive way), and approaches to learning (frequency in which the student kept their belongings organized, adapted to change, paid attention, followed class rules, was eager to learn, and completed tasks) (Wright, 2017). White teachers and students served as the reference group, while Black and Latino teachers and students were analyzed (Wright, 2017).

Researchers found no evidence that race-congruency was related to teacher's ratings of student's internalizing behaviors, interpersonal skills, and approaches to learning (Wright, 2017). However, they did find that students with a race-incongruent teacher did receive higher ratings in

terms of externalizing behaviors (Wright, 2017). When Black and Latino students had a race-congruent kindergarten teacher, they discovered a .26 standard deviation decline in externalizing behaviors (Wright, 2017). By the end of kindergarten, the externalizing behavior gap was nearly diminished for Black and Latino students with a race-congruent teacher (Wright, 2017).

Interestingly, they also found that when paired with a Latino teacher, Latino ELL students demonstrated low externalizing behaviors (Wright, 2017). But, when Latino ELL students were paired with a non-Latino, Spanish-speaking teacher, there was no improvement in externalizing behaviors (Wright, 2017). This important finding allows the authors to conclude that a shared cultural identity, opposed to just the ability to communicate via a common language, is critical in reducing externalizing behavior ratings (Wright, 2017).

A similar study was conducted by Thomas S. Dee (Dee, 2005) that aimed to determine if assignment to a race-congruent teacher influenced the teacher's evaluation of student behavior. Dee utilized the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) in which 24,599 8th grade students and teachers were surveyed. Students and teachers identified as one of four possible racial categories: Black, Hispanic, White or Other. The teacher survey included questions regarding how the teacher perceived the classroom performance and personal traits of individual students (Dee, 2005). It is important to note that of the students included in NELS:88, only 6% of White students had a race-incongruent teacher, while 67% of Black students and 89% of Hispanic students had a race-incongruent teacher (Dee, 2005).

Dee focused on three teacher surveys that asked whether they viewed the student as disruptive, consistently inattentive, or rarely completed homework. From analyzing the dataset, Dee was able to discover that students with a race-incongruent teacher were 1.36 times more likely to be rated as disruptive compared to those with a race-congruent teacher, 33% more likely

to be rated as inattentive, and 22% more likely to be rated as rarely completing homework (Dee, 2005). Because NELS:88 was a nationally representative dataset, Dee was able to take his research even further in terms of location throughout the nation. He was able to determine that the effects of racial-congruency and teacher perception of student behavior were only statistically significant to the Southern United States (Dee, 2005).

Douglas B Downey and Shana Pribesh (Downey, 2016) set out to answer a similar question: Do Black students act out more when placed with White teachers than when placed with Black teachers, or do White teachers rate black students more harshly than they deserve? They hypothesized that Black students matched with Black teachers would receive better evaluations than Black students matched with White teachers (Downey, 2016). To test this hypothesis, they analyzed kindergartners in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K) and eighth graders from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS). Their idea was to compare race matching effects among kindergartners and eighth graders (Downey, 2016). If they observed that the effects of race matching in kindergarten were similar to those in eighth grade, the idea that “White teacher bias” exists when it comes to student evaluations, would gain credibility (Downey, 2016).

To analyze the ECLS-K, the researchers constructed two measures. The first, Externalizing Problem Behavior Scale, gave numerical labels to teachers’ evaluations of how often kindergarten students argued (1), fought (2), got angry (3), acted impulsively (4), or disturbed activities (5) (Downey, 2016). The second scale, Approaches to Learning Scale, was created from teachers’ ratings of kindergarten students’ attentiveness (1), task persistence (2), eagerness to learn (3), learning independence (4), flexibility (5), and organization (6) (Downey, 2016). These qualities were then rated on their frequency in appearing in race-congruent and non

race-congruent teacher evaluation (Downey, 2016). To analyze the NELS data on eighth graders, researchers chose indicators of students' behaviors that are conceptually similar to those recorded for kindergarteners in ECLS-K (Downey, 2016). Based on teachers' answers to the following questions, they developed a composite variable titled Effort in Eighth Grade: 1) Is the student inattentive in class?, 2) Does the student perform below his or her ability?, and 3) Does the student rarely complete his or her homework (Downey, 2016)? It is important to note that this study was limited to 1,493 Black students and 7,388 White students. Of the English teachers questioned in NELS, 91% were White (Downey, 2016).

Based on the analysis of the two data sets, researchers discovered that kindergarten teachers rated Black students as exhibiting more Externalizing Problem Behaviors *and* demonstrating less Approaches to Learning skills in comparison to their White peers (Downey, 2016). Additionally, they found that when evaluated by a Black teacher, Black students are rated as exhibiting fewer problems than White students who are evaluated by White teachers (Downey, 2016). The data proved consistent across kindergarteners and eighth grade students. Therefore, researchers were able to draw a handful of conclusions. The first of which is the fact that race matters in the classroom due to the fact Black students are rated more negatively than their White peers when matched with a racially-incongruent teacher (Downey, 2016). In fact, when both Black students and White students are matched with racially-congruent teachers, Black students are actually rated more favorably than White students (Downey, 2016). Most notably, they concluded that difficulties with race-incongruence in regards to Black students does not eventually emerge during adolescence, but rather begins as soon as Black children attend kindergarten (Downey, 2016).

Researchers Patrick B. McGrady and John R. Reynolds (McGrady, 2013) took these ideas even further. They recognized that most research is focused on comparisons of only Black and White students and teachers, rather than directly testing if other nonwhite students have better experiences and experience more positive evaluations when taught by nonwhite teachers. Using this basis, they set out to explore how White teachers' views of students differ according to various combinations of racially congruent and incongruent teachers and students. They developed two critical research questions: 1) How do White teachers view nonwhite students compared to White students? And, 2) How does the way White teachers view nonwhite students compare to how nonwhite teachers view nonwhite students (McGrady, 2013)? The researcher believed that White teachers hold stereotypical viewpoints on students that are racially-incongruent to themselves (McGrady, 2013). They hypothesized that, "If mismatch effects are based on more racially specific stereotypes, broader cultural messages that favor Asian students as hardworking and negatively cast Hispanic and Black youth as possessing little academic potential will emerge in the analysis" (McGrady, 2013).

To test this hypothesis, they assessed if nonwhite students would experience better evaluations from having race-congruent, or even just nonwhite teachers (McGrady, 2013). They examined 12 perceptual measures from reports by 10th grade English and math teachers (McGrady, 2013). Using the 2002 Educational Longitudinal Study, researchers had access to data regarding 15,362 high school sophomores (McGrady, 2013). The data included student and teacher information, parent surveys regarding student behavior, the students' cognitive abilities, involvement in extracurricular activities, and information regarding parent and teacher backgrounds (McGrady, 2013). Additionally, teacher interviews were included in the dataset with one math teacher and one English teacher per student (McGrady, 2013). Researchers

narrowed the data to focus on Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White 10th graders (McGrady, 2013). They examined the effects of teacher evaluations in different racially matched pairings between students and teachers (McGrady, 2013). Then they dove deeper into the actual rating students received in their evaluations by teachers. They tested whether nonwhite students received better behavioral and academic evaluations from nonwhite teachers and race-congruent teachers, in comparison to the ratings they received from White teachers (McGrady, 2013). Using a postestimation parametric test of whether there was a significant difference between the rating by the White English teacher and Black student for attentiveness and the rating of the nonwhite English teacher and Black student for the same metric (McGrady, 2013).

The results of their analysis were abundant. Their results showed clear evidence that teacher bias exists when comparing how White teachers rated White students compared to nonwhite students (McGrady, 2013). When evaluated by a White teacher (regardless of subject), Black students had lower odds of being rated as attentive compared to their White peers (McGrady, 2013). White teachers were more likely to rate Black students as having less scholastic aptitude than their White peers, and Asian students as having *more* scholastic aptitude than their White peers (McGrady, 2013). Among all the students rated by White teachers, it was clear that Asian students were viewed more positively than all other students, and Black students were rated more negatively than all other students (McGrady, 2013). In fact, White teachers rated Asian students more positively than White students in terms of attentiveness, how hard they work, and how little they disrupt the class (McGrady, 2013). In four out of twelve cases, White teachers rated Asian students more positively than nonwhite teachers (McGrady, 2013). Most notably, relative to White students taught by race-congruent teachers, Black students had a 23% lower chance of being rated as using good grammar (McGrady, 2013). Similar negative

differences are prevalent in White teachers' ratings of Black 10th graders in measures such as organization of ideas in English and level of difficulty in math (McGrady, 2013). In regards to Hispanic students, White teachers' ratings were more similar to those of White students, aside from the rating of likeliness to falling behind in math class (McGrady, 2013).

The researchers concluded that there was never a positive gain in terms of rating for Black and Hispanic students having a White teacher (McGrady, 2013). They conclude that the opposite is true. Black and Hispanic students were more likely to be rated favorably by race-congruent teachers (McGrady, 2013). Based on the data, Hispanic and Black students never received worse ratings from nonwhite teachers in comparison to the ratings they received from White teachers (McGrady, 2013). In summary, they believe that racial bias does exist among teachers in terms of rating their students on different measures (McGrady, 2013). This racial bias is evident in the data used throughout this study.

### **Race-Congruency and the Achievement Gap as it Relates to Behavior**

Research explored by Naman (Naman, 2009) aimed to detail why race-incongruency between teachers and students, particularly Black students, is a factor in the achievement gap between White students and students of color. Naman explains how White teachers, and even some teachers of color unfamiliar with a culture operating within a lesser socioeconomic demographic, may already view students of color as “damaged and dangerous caricatures.” Naman investigated a wide variety of data and research to try and pin down the root of the achievement gap in terms of racial-congruency between the teacher and student.

Naman states that a lack of cultural synchronization between students of color and White teachers is a key player in lower expectations and test scores, lower behavior ratings, and higher rates of students being assigned to behavior management classes (Naman, 2009). Because White

teachers do not have the experience and knowledge of their students' cultural background, it is unlikely that they can understand the students' intended behavior and actions (Naman, 2009). To close this achievement gap, Naman stresses that efforts need to be made to not only educate White teachers on how to better relate to their students of color, but also efforts to reduce the teacher turnover in low-income schools with heavy students of color populations (Naman, 2009). Naman also notes the importance of recruiting and retaining Black educators and other educators of color.

### **Race-Congruency and Disciplinary Action**

Disciplinary action in K-12 school has long been a topic of discussion among educators. Racial disparities within schools are often a concern over potential inconsistency in who is receiving disciplinary action. Gage (Gage, 2016) set out to discover, at its base, what is causing office discipline referrals (ODRs) in public schools, if race is out of the question. They collected data from 3,797 students, across elementary, middle, and high schools, from a diverse New England school district. Of the 3,797, 40% of students were White, 42% were Hispanic, and 15% were Black.

To collect data, researchers delivered an online survey to students in which they could record their perceptions about school discipline (Gage, 2016). Additionally, researchers were given access to school databases that record ODR data for each student, including the type of problem behavior and the administrative action that followed (Gage, 2016). Of the total students surveyed, 1,190 had received at least one ODR and most ODRs given were for student disrespect (Gage, 2016).

Based on survey data and physical data given to researchers by the district, the authors were able to conclude that the three most important factors contributing to ODRs include: 1)



having school-involved parents, 2) having a caring adult at school that models and reinforces appropriate behavior, and 3) having the desire to feel safe at school (Gage, 2016). Unfortunately, many students do not have all three of these necessary characteristics (Gage, 2016). Therefore, the author notes that schools need to 1) work with parents to reinforce the value of school and reinforce appropriate behavior for positive learning environments and 2) provide both academic and social-behavioral support to students that exhibit problem behaviors to avoid ODRs (Gage, 2016). An important takeaway from this study is the importance of parental involvement in school (Gage, 2016).

Lindsay (Lindsay, 2017) conducted research aimed at examining whether race-congruency between teachers and students affects the rate at which students receive detentions, suspensions, or expulsions. They posed the question: Are students with race-congruent teachers more or less likely to be subjected to exclusionary school discipline (Lindsay, 2017)? To study this question, researchers tapped into ongoing data collection in North Carolina. The data looked at nearly one million students and 50,000 teachers across elementary schools in the state (Lindsay, 2017). They were able to gather information on individual student races and said individual's exposure to disciplinary measures. This data followed individual students over several years in elementary school, which allowed researchers to compare the disciplinary action taken against a student in years when they had a race-congruent teacher to the years when they did not (Lindsay, 2017). In the data, 7% of students had received some sort of exclusionary disciplinary consequence since they began school (Lindsay, 2017).

By analyzing the data, they discovered clear evidence that students were less likely to be subjected to disciplinary action when they were placed with a racially-congruent teacher (Lindsay, 2017). Students with a race-congruent teacher were less likely to be placed in detention

or receive a suspension or expulsion when assigned with a race-congruent teacher (Lindsay, 2017). When students were placed with a race-congruent teacher, there was a 12% decrease in the number of students who experienced exclusionary discipline (Lindsay, 2017). This data was driven almost exclusively by Black students, in particular Black boys . Data proved that Black boys were less likely to receive exclusionary discipline when taught by race-congruent teachers (Lindsay, 2017). When paired with a White teacher, 16% of Black male students received some sort of exclusionary discipline (Lindsay, 2017). This percentage drops to about 14% when Black male students are assigned to a race-congruent female teacher, and about 13% when assigned to a race-congruent male teacher (Lindsay, 2017). Researchers also had access to student and teacher gender, so they were able to discover that for both Black male and female students, the effects of race-congruency with their teacher is larger than the effect of gender-congruency (Lindsay, 2017). In contrast, teacher gender and race prove to not have any regular impact on exclusionary discipline rates (Lindsay, 2017).

The authors conclude that, when assigned to race-congruent teachers, Black students are subjected to less exclusionary discipline than when they are assigned a race-incongruent teacher (Lindsay, 2017). Because of this, they suggest recruiting and employing more teachers of color to help minimize the likelihood of nonwhite students being subjected to exclusionary discipline that removes them from school (Lindsay, 2017).

### **Race-Congruency and Student Evaluations of Teachers**

It can be assumed that a teacher identified as “caring” would be more highly favored by students than one who could not be identified as such. However, human perception of how care is expressed is rooted in our respective cultures and languages. Researcher Brandelyn Tosolt knew it was important to understand what students themselves perceive as evidence of teacher

caring in order to discover where there is a need for improvement (Tosolt, 2008). Tosolt stated that the benefits of a caring teacher for students include: increased motivation and achievement in academics; increased confidence and self-esteem; and a decreased risk of disruptive behavior (Tosolt, 2008). She created a study investigating differences of 825 sixth-graders' perceptions of caring behaviors from teachers based on race, ethnicity, and gender.

The participating students attended any one of seven schools located within an economically-diverse county in a midwest state (Tosolt, 2008). To uncover what exactly students perceived as caring behaviors, Tosolt designed a survey to assess a variety of possible caring behaviors that can be categorized into three categories: interpersonal caring, academic caring, and fairness caring (Tosolt, 2008). Using a four point modified Likert-type scale, students were asked to assess whether each behavior was evidence of a caring teacher (Tosolt, 2008).

Tosolt's survey showed that perceptions of teacher caring do in fact vary based on race, ethnicity, and gender. An interesting result emerged: White females were more likely to identify an item as evidence of a caring teacher than any other subgroup of students (Tosolt, 2008). She notes that this may indicate the survey was created with items that most closely aligned with a White female's perception of a caring teacher (Tosolt, 2008). Her survey also revealed that different subgroups of race and gender perceived different items of interpersonal caring, academic caring, and fairness caring in very different ways (Tosolt, 2008). This leads to the direct conclusion that students have different perceptions about what behaviors a teacher can exhibit to show they care (Tosolt, 2008). This result of different perceptions among subgroups demonstrates that students who experience different home cultures are going to perceive what is happening in the classroom drastically different. This emphasizes the importance of teachers acknowledging and understanding the differences of cultures within their classrooms. If a teacher

wishes to be deemed as caring by their students, they must engage in conversation about what care looks like in their students' eyes and then they must be willing to display care in ways that racially and culturally incongruent students can perceive as caring.

Tangled within a study conducted by Burt et al (Burt et al., 2009) addressing reading skills of fourth grade students at a one-race school is a series of surveys in which students had the opportunity to answer questions regarding how they felt about their teachers. The research question that guided this study was: What impact does the ethnicity of teachers have on students' reading skills (Burt et al., 2009)? However, the researchers also realized that to answer their research question, they also needed to understand student attitudes and perceptions of their teachers and learning environments (Burt et al., 2009). Research was focused on students and teachers at Cooper Road Elementary School in northern Louisiana, where all students are Black (Burt et al., 2009). Researchers focused on fourth grade students. It is important to note that 90% of the student body at Cooper Road is on free and reduced lunch, and the school has a very low parent participation rate (Burt et al., 2009). Researchers selected four teachers for the study, two White and two Black (Burt et al., 2009). All four of the teachers chosen were labeled "highly qualified" as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Burt et al., 2009).

Researchers developed surveys to measure each student's attitudes towards their teachers in regards to fairness, concern/care for the students, treatment, classroom management, understanding, motivation, and individual attention (Burt et al., 2009). These questions were read aloud to each student by the researcher and the students wrote yes or no responses to the questions (Burt et al., 2009). These questions attempted to answer the following questions: What are African-American students' attitudes towards caucasian teachers (Burt et al., 2009)? What are African-American students' attitudes toward African-American teachers (Burt et al., 2009)?

They were able to gather important information regarding how Black students felt about their teachers and how this impacted their learning. The survey revealed a few negative perceptions held by students. First, a large percentage of Black students placed with race-congruent teachers reported that their teacher did not embarrass them in the classroom (Burt et al., 2009). Similarly, these same students felt their teacher treated them the same way they were treated at home (Burt et al., 2009). The percentage of students with race-incongruent (White) teachers who responded that their teacher praised them was lower than those who had a race-congruent teacher (Burt et al., 2009). As a whole, however, this study indicated that students generally had positive attitudes to their teachers, regardless if the teacher was racially-congruent or not (Burt et al., 2009).

The authors' conclusion notes that it is important to recognize the limitations of this study (Burt et al., 2009). Most notably, the fact that Cooper Road Elementary School only services Black students. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the possibility that students did not feel significant prejudice because there was no other race of students in the school for them to be compared to (Burt et al., 2009). Regardless, the authors are able to conclude that the differences in this survey indicate that Black students may feel more comfortable in classrooms with a race-congruent teacher (Burt et al., 2009). Their research supports efforts to recruit minority teachers and develop training programs that prepare all educators to build successful relations with students of races, cultures, and socioeconomic status different from their own (Burt et al., 2009).

### **Current Efforts to Diversify the Teacher Recruit Pool**

As many of the previously mentioned studies concluded, it is clear that a more diverse teacher workforce would alleviate many of the struggles students face when matched with a race-incongruent teacher. Throughout the United States, many programs are already underway to try

and diversify the teacher recruitment pool. Additionally, training amongst the already established teacher workforce, as well as all incoming educators, on how to better interact with race-incongruent students has also proved necessary.

### **Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool - Identifying the Issue**

A study was conducted by researcher T.J. Plachowski to examine the experiences of pre-service teachers of color with the intention to shed more light on the issues that have resulted in the teacher diversity gap (Plachowski, 2019). Plachowski aimed to answer the following question: Is the teacher diversity gap a recruitment issue or are there more factors causing it (Plachowski, 2019)? The researcher proposed that multiple factors, including positive and negative k12 experiences, reasoning for choosing teaching as a career, and individual persistence/resilience, all play a role in the teacher diversity gap (Plachowski, 2019). To test this hypothesis, the researcher conducted eight interviews with preservice teachers of color (Plachowski, 2019). All participants came from different backgrounds and were race-incongruent with k12 teachers (Plachowski, 2019). The researcher recorded their interviews and detailed positive and negative k12 experiences, the connections between these experiences and choosing teaching as a career, and where the participants drew their perseverance and resilience from (Plachowski, 2019).

From this data, it was concluded that the diversity gap is more than just a recruitment problem for teacher preparation programs (Plachowski, 2019). Pre-service teachers of color experienced their own positive and negative k12 situations growing up that have influenced their views on teaching (Plachowski, 2019). Additionally, in their field experiences required for their teacher preparation program, pre-service teachers of color experienced situations like racism, which ultimately can lead to a decrease in desire to be a teacher (Plachowski, 2019). However,

many participants drew on both negative and positive experiences as reasons for choosing, and sticking with, teaching as a career (Plachowski, 2019). Additionally, many credited their experiences and their loved ones for maintaining their perseverance through negative experiences (Plachowski, 2019). Plachowski notes that teacher training programs must hold themselves accountable for teaching and modeling culturally responsive practices that cause disruption to the racism present in schools and universities today (Plachowski, 2019).

### **Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool - Grow Your Own Programs**

Gist et al. (Gist et al., 2019) stated that Grow Your Own (GYO) Programs are a viable option for universities, colleges, and communities looking to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of teachers, however scholarship on GYO programs is minimal. They note that the largest supply of diverse teachers is found in public high schools and that it is necessary to examine early recruitment efforts aimed at encouraging high school students of color to pursue a career in teaching (Gist et al., 2019). The researchers examined data sources from 1996 to 2016 to answer the following questions: (a) What recruitment frames and designs do GYO programs employ? (b) What types of preparation practices do GYO programs offer? and (c) What retention supports do GYO programs implement (Gist et al., 2019)? To answer these questions, they compared GYO programs that pull from schools and communities vs. those that created pipelines with middle and high school students (Gist et al., 2019).

From the data, the researchers were able to find that even though current GYO programs have a focus on recruiting teachers from local communities, there is evidence that programs that recruit from school and community pipelines were more likely to reflect community cultural commitments (Gist et al., 2019). This means that these programs were more effective in maintaining a commitment to diversity. This is due to the fact that teachers of color from school

and community pipelines were able to draw on their experiences within the community in ways that enabled them to remain in the program, where middle and high school pipeline students did not have as much experience (Gist et al., 2019). However, researchers also noted that there was little evidence of program retention support across the board beyond program completion (Gist et al., 2019). The researchers conclude that consistent funding is necessary to execute retention support and continued research to understand the long-term impact of teachers that matriculate through these programs (Gist et al., 2019). Additionally, they conclude that in order for GYO programs to succeed, they must ensure a system of support at each point in the teacher development process (Gist et al., 2019).

### **Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool - Collegiate Programs**

One program working to diversify the teacher recruit pool is the TEAMS Teaching Fellowship Program. TEAMS stands for Teacher Education for the Advancement of a Multicultural Society. This program, detailed by researchers Marci Nuñez and Mary Rose Fernandez (Nuñez, 2006) from the University of San Francisco, works as a collaborative model to recruit diverse teachers, paraprofessionals, and counselors in urban public schools. The goal is simple: increase the academic success of *all* students. The basic model for the program is the assumption if there is: 1) financial support to earn a teaching license, 2) focus on trainings related to diversity, multiculturalism, and effective teaching strategies for urban schools, 3) development of a network for like-minded educators, 4) and the intentional targeting of communities of color for recruitment, then there will be an emergence of a diverse group of teachers committed to public school education (Nuñez, 2006).

TEAMS was established in 1998 in a joint effort by the University of San Francisco School of Education, the Multicultural Alliance, and some K-12 schools in the area (Nuñez,



2006). Eventually, USF became the fiscal agent and host institution for TEAMS. Since its inception, TEAMS has supported over 3,000 aspiring new teachers (Nuñez, 2006). TEAMS receives funding from Ameri-Corps, which helps provide financial support for Fellows entering the program (Nuñez, 2006). Each Fellow earns funding for their education by serving in an urban public school as either a teacher of record, a paraprofessional, or counselor (Nuñez, 2006). Because many urban schools are already sacrificing requiring specific teaching credentials to meet their immediate needs, Fellows within TEAMS are granted access to work as teachers or counselors while they earn their credentials (Nuñez, 2006). To prepare teachers, TEAMS developed four specific methods: 1) Enrollment in a credential program, 2) Service as a teacher or school counselor, 3) Participation in pedagogical seminars, and 4) a required service-learning project (Nuñez, 2006).

TEAMS focuses heavily on guaranteeing support for teacher development. According to the authors, “Newly hired, inexperienced teachers who do not receive induction and mentoring are more than twice as likely to leave their position after the first year, and a higher percentage leave the teaching field entirely as opposed to moving to another position” (Nuñez, 2006). TEAMS works to build networks of support among the Fellows called “families.” Fellows are broken up into their “family” based on either grade levels, subject area, or teaching speciality (Nuñez, 2006). Each “family” is led by a veteran teacher. These groups allow Fellows to develop stronger connections to their fellow educators, draw on experiences, discuss ideas learned in seminars, share best practices, visit other classrooms, and overall build a network of support while in the program (Nuñez, 2006).

Through the creation of TEAMS, the University of San Francisco successfully developed a model for diverse teacher recruitment and development with a strong network of educators.

The authors conclude that even though TEAMS has been a successful program, more work remains (Nuñez, 2006). They state that vigorous efforts to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse pool of teachers must continue if future needs are to be met (Nuñez, 2006). By “developing well-prepared, critically-minded, and professionally-supported teachers,” TEAMS believes that more teachers will not only enter the profession, but more teachers will also *stay* in the profession (Nuñez, 2006).

A similar program was developed at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Waddell et al (Waddell et al., 2012) set out to examine the success of the Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP) relative to recruitment, preparation, and retention of diverse teacher candidates. Researchers hypothesized that UTEP’s method of recruiting, preparing, and retaining diverse and competent teachers was the most powerful weapon to eliminating the teacher-student demographic gap (Waddell et al., 2012).

To recruit teacher candidates, UTEP targeted University of Missouri-Kansas City students of color, first-generation college students, those with experiences in urban schools, students with a desire to teach in urban schools, students who live in urban communities, and those with experiences working with diverse populations of students (Waddell et al., 2012). UTEP aims to admit 12-18 students a year (Waddell et al., 2012). At the time of this article, UTEP had a total of 60 participants (Waddell et al., 2012). Of the 60 participants, 62% were students of color (Waddell et al., 2012). Students admitted to UTEP had to follow a six step admission process, which included a two-phase interview process aimed at predicting successful teachers for urban schools (Waddell et al., 2012).

Designed by a group called The Community Immersion Experience Planning Group, a group composed of civic leaders and national scholars on urban education, UTEP focused on 12

key factors: retention, high expectations, close interaction with faculty, curriculum, diversity and social justice, multicultural education, urban education seminars, community immersion, extended field experiences, urban school immersion, a year long internship, and an induction program (Waddell et al., 2012). UTEP was deemed as a success in meeting the needs of urban schools based on four main characteristics: increased diversity of candidates and graduates, success of graduates, expanded collaboration with the community, and the fact that UTEP was identified as a model for urban teacher education. UTEP boasts a 88% retention rate of graduates teaching in urban school communities (Waddell et al., 2012).

Researchers Ana Maria Villegas and Danne E Davis (Villegas et al., 2007) recognized that teacher education programs were given no choice but to take on a more active and thoughtful role in recruiting students to their teacher education programs due to the declining popularity of teaching in conjunction with the increased demand of teachers. They examined the success of the Multilingual/Multicultural Teacher Preparation Center at California State University- Sacramento (Villegas et al., 2007).

The goal at California State University-Sacramento is to recruit undergraduates of color with undeclared majors into Teacher Education programs, with the notion that these students are already on campus as the basis for the program (Villegas et al., 2007). The recruitment team identifies potential students and communicates the valuable contributions teachers make to society, the various opportunities afforded with a teacher credential, and the extensive preparation and support that comes with enrolling in the program within the Multilingual/Multicultural Teacher Preparation Center (Villegas et al., 2007). Once students are admitted into the program, they receive access to a multitude of support services that will stay with them until they graduate (Villegas et al., 2007). This includes assistance navigating the

intricacies of higher education, financial aid support, advisor support to help track academic progress, and access to a wide network of peer support through the use of cohort groups (Villegas et al., 2007).

Through their analysis of the program, researchers found California State University-Sacramento's most valuable asset to be the continued assistance delivered to its students (Villegas et al., 2007). By recruiting directly from the university, they are accessing students already within the university system with a goal of graduation (Villegas et al., 2007). Once recruited, the consistency of support keeps students in the program and ultimately delivers more teachers of color into the workforce (Villegas et al., 2007).

### **Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool - Recruiting from Within School Staff**

Paraeducators are essential members of school faculty. A paraeducator can be defined as someone other than a credentialed teacher who provides instructional support for students. They are typically unlicensed and earn an hourly wage. Rader et al. (Rader et al., 2019) hypothesized that, if provided accessible ways to earn their teaching credentials, paraeducators are well-positioned to help bridge racial, cultural, and linguistic gaps between staff, students and families. This hypothesis is based on the notion that paraeducators tend to mirror student demographics, as they often live in the communities they serve (Rader et al., 2019).

The University of Nevada- Reno, in partnership with the Washoe county School District created The Northern Nevada English Learning Initiative to help paraeducators earn their teaching credentials (Rader et al., 2019). The initiative included 57 paraeducators who worked in classrooms that ranged from prekindergarten to 12th grade (Rader et al., 2019). Of the 57 participants, 27 were bilingual in both Spanish and English (Rader et al., 2019). To recruit for the

initiative, researchers distributed pamphlets, sent emails, and used old fashion word of mouth techniques (Rader et al., 2019).

The program was created as a nine month long, nine-module course intended to serve as a mode to bring more bilingual paraeducators into full-time, licensed teaching positions (Rader et al., 2019). To gather data, researchers issued pre and post tests throughout the modules, recorded extensive observation notes, and required participants to write reflective journal entries (Rader et al., 2019). Through the initiative, participants gained a deep learning on important concepts and programs relating to their communities, practical applications for their classrooms, a stipend aimed at alleviating the financial burden, and the opportunity to complete rigorous, college-level courses (Rader et al., 2019).

The largest gains recorded from the initiative were language acquisition and inquiry-based science learning (Rader et al., 2019). All paraeducators who participated recorded they both enjoyed and learned from the professional learning (Rader et al., 2019). As a result, five of the participants went on to become full-time teachers (Rader et al., 2019). Three participants moved to other positions within the district in which their gained knowledge and skills would be better utilized (Rader et al., 2019). The remaining participants remained in their paraeducator position (Rader et al., 2019). Researchers viewed the fact that the majority of participants remained in their paraeducator roles as a positive indicator of workforce stability and potential for later movement (Rader et al., 2019).

### **Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool - Recruiting from Local High Schools**

Developed at a predominantly White mid-western university, BESITOS (Bilingual/Bicultural Education Students Interacting to Obtain Success) is an integrated teacher preparation program that seeks to increase Latinx students' access to higher education and

provide institutional support to facilitate a high rate of graduation in teaching fields. Researchers Herrera et al. (Herrera et al., 2011) explain that BESITOS' recruitment and retention goal was pursued in conjunction with the goal of increasing the amount of "qualified, cross-culturally sensitive bilingual educators" to support the differential learning needs of students in the Midwest. Students who participate in the BESITOS program enroll in the same classes and are instructed by the same faculty as the other students within the College of Education at the unnamed university (Herrera et al., 2011). Researchers aimed to answer the question: Which aspects of the BESITOS program proved most successful in the recruitment and retention of diverse students (Herrera et al., 2011)?

Program staff worked on recruiting bilingual/bicultural, first generation students from school districts within the unnamed, mid-western state (Herrera et al., 2011). In this study, researchers used a sample of 30 undergraduate students that were recruited from five local school districts (Herrera et al., 2011). Majority of the students, 18 exactly, identified as Latinx. The remaining students were a variety of White, Black, Middle Eastern, and Eastern Asian (Herrera et al., 2011).

For this study, researchers collected data over a six year span. Their data include focus groups, participant observations, and interviews aimed to elicit participant reflection and an authentic and notable participant voice (Herrera et al., 2011). Researchers were given permission to access students' academic records (GPA, ACT scores, Pre-Professional Skills Test scores, preservice/internship performance evaluations, and feedback surveys from school administrators) as they participated in BESITOS (Herrera et al., 2011). Additionally, participants completed reflection journals and essays that provided researchers ample information regarding their experiences in public schools (Herrera et al., 2011). Researchers organized their data using the

Prism Model, a model that focuses on four factors that reflect the background and shape the education of non-White students: sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive (Herrera et al., 2011). By using the Prism Model, they were able to consider key elements of the program as they relate to the four factors (Herrera et al., 2011).

After analyzing the BESITOS program for six years, data suggested that the program is grounded in the sociological and cultural experiences of students to take a more comprehensive approach to recruitment and retention (Herrera et al., 2011). BESITOS staff worked diligently to conduct purposeful recruitment of students often considered college material by teachers and counselors, based simply on test scores or family history (Herrera et al., 2011). A fundamental piece of the BESITOS recruitment model was recruitment staff entering schools, churches, and community schools to engage in conversations with students and families in their native language (Herrera et al., 2011). Home visits were made by recruitment staff who looked and talked like the student. Once recruited, BESITOS staff provided enrollment support for students and their families by helping them navigate admission and financial aid processes (Herrera et al., 2011).

Once students began their college education, BESITOS required they participate in an Advocacy Seminar, a seminar designed to be an ongoing forum for students to reflect and discuss issues like racism, isolation, and fear (Herrera et al., 2011). Students who are English Language Learners are given the opportunity to use their existing native language while they engage instructional scaffolding, differentiated language support, and authentic assessments of their proficiencies through the Literacy Seminar (Herrera et al., 2011). Additionally, provisions are built into the program that allows participating students to work part time in the school's ESL

office which fully immerses them in academic and professional language. BESITOS requires its participants to hold a 2.78 GPA or higher (Herrera et al., 2011).

In terms of the academic success of BESITOS participants, the most effective strategies imposed by the program were: minimizing the effects of negative educational experiences, creating safe and supportive learning communities, and accelerating participant learning (Herrera et al., 2011). The average cumulative GPA of BESITOS students was a 3.36 on a 4 point scale (Herrera et al., 2011). In a focus group, participants expressed their satisfaction with the program and noted that their ability to trust the program staff was one of the most critically important factors of the program (Herrera et al., 2011). Of the 30 participants in this study, 24 graduated from the College of Education (Herrera et al., 2011).

### **Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool- Recruiting Diverse Special Education Educators**

According to the 25th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 86% of special education teachers in the United States were White females, while 39% of special education students were nonwhite- a number that is only increasing with time (Valle-Riestra et al., 2011). Researchers Valle-Riestra, Shealey, and Cramer conducted a study of a graduate program for special education educators who had already obtained their B.S. or B.A. degree in special education (Valle-Riestra et al., 2011). The researchers hypothesized that through responsive action to structural barriers inherent in higher education institutions and enacting retention strategies based on cultural responsiveness, teacher preparation programs will be able to better respond to the ongoing decline of teachers prepared to effectively work with students and families of diverse backgrounds (Valle-Riestra et al., 2011). The program was held at a large, unnamed public research university identified as the top producer of Hispanic graduates in the United States (Valle-Riestra et al., 2011). The student



body of the university is 60% Hispanic, 17% White, 12% Black, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 7% other (Valle-Riestra et al., 2011).

The program aggressively recruited throughout the university and community. Some examples include presentations and deliverance of recruitment material in undergraduate courses, electronic and physical informational pamphlets, personal communications with local agencies and organizations, and a collaboration with the Monarch Center and the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems to reach potential students throughout the country (Valle-Riestra et al., 2011). Once recruited students were provided opportunities for mentorship programs, financial support, community building, field experiences, and professional development. Graduate students were assigned a mentor in their second year (Valle-Riestra et al., 2011). Mentees were asked to participate in consistent online reflection during the mentorship process in order to facilitate dialogue with their mentor. All students who enrolled in the master's degree program received full financial support for in-state tuition as well as federal funding to cover books and travel reimbursement (Valle-Riestra et al., 2011). Additionally, students participated in a series of professional development seminars aimed around current issues not covered in depth in their other program courses (Valle-Riestra et al., 2011).

Researchers established seven recommendations for program development based on their study at USC-Sacramento: 1) Continuously engage in dialogue with community members, teacher candidates, and various faculty, 2) Develop professional development assignments for current faculty in understanding the needs of diverse candidates, particularly those with a cultural or language barrier, 3) Provide financial support, 4) Increase the presence of diverse faculty and provide students with a commitment to diversity issues, 5) Utilize a formal system to support data collection and program improvement, 6) Create cohort structures, and 7) Commit to

ongoing professional development and mentorship opportunities (Valle-Riestra et al., 2011). The authors conclude that in order to develop successful special education teacher programs, Universities must prioritize the role diverse cultures play in teaching and learning (Valle-Riestra et al., 2011).

### **Diversifying the Teacher Recruit Pool- Recruiting in Rural Communities**

Lohfink et al. (Lohfink et al., 2018) conducted a study to evaluate a collaborative effort between a number of institutions to diversify a rural region's teachers by designing and delivering a teacher preparation program grounded in cultural responsiveness. They acknowledged as a whole, development and delivery of teacher preparation programs is limited in rural areas of the country (Lohfink et al., 2018). This study was created because the Midwest region of the United States is experiencing an increase in Lantix students, while simultaneously not being able to recruit and retain experienced and diverse teachers (Lohfink et al., 2018). Researchers understood that a program to recruit teachers who were part of the local community was necessary (Lohfink et al., 2018).

This study focused on 15 Mexican-American students at a state university in the Midwest (Lohfink et al., 2018). Students were recruited throughout the community, which was primarily Latinx (Lohfink et al., 2018). Once admitted, students participated in a cohort model throughout the program (Lohfink et al., 2018). Researchers monitored the program's effectiveness throughout different implementation phases through faculty surveys, the academic progress of participants, video recording of participant teaching performances, lesson plans, feedback and evidence forms, reflections, student teaching evaluations, and anecdotal field notes (Lohfink et al., 2018).

The program partnered with local school districts that were geographically located in rural and remote Midwest areas with high Latinx populations (Lohfink et al., 2018). For the first two years of the program, students completed their general education course work at local community colleges that were close to their homes (Lohfink et al., 2018). Researchers established cross-institutional planning teams to simplify the process of transferring credits for students (Lohfink et al., 2018). Easy to understand curriculum maps were developed for each community college which detailed the coursework required at each partner community college to fulfill the university's education degree requirements (Lohfink et al., 2018). Additionally, a research grant provided students with tutors (Lohfink et al., 2018).

After completing their first two years at a community college, students then transferred to the university where they were taught by both university professors and faculty members of local school districts (Lohfink et al., 2018). The program provided technology courses to address technological literacy issues for its students (Lohfink et al., 2018). Most courses at the university were taught online, given that students did not live close. However, some courses did occur in person at the university, in which lodging and travel was provided for the students by the research grant (Lohfink et al., 2018). The curriculum at the university was broken into four categories: Perspectives and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Professional Responsibilities, and Instruction. Additionally, students were required to complete a 16 week student teaching internship in a district near their local community (Lohfink et al., 2018).

Results from faculty and instructor reviews noted that students in the program excelled in cultural awareness and possessed a strong ability to communicate and connect with Latinx and ELL students (Lohfink et al., 2018). These results also stated that candidates were able to effectively use a variety of teaching approaches and resources to help *all* students in their

classrooms learn (Lohfink et al., 2018). Researchers noted that the challenge to both students and instructors was language barriers (Lohfink et al., 2018). To conclude, the researchers emphasized that the Grow Your Own Program approach is an excellent option for rural districts to recruit teachers, however this study shows how extensive and detailed the collaboration of the partnerships throughout the program need to be (Lohfink et al., 2018). They state that funding is essential and in order to be successful in the recruitment of diverse staff for rural districts, local school districts, colleges, and universities must work together (Lohfink et al., 2018).

### **Current Efforts to Prioritize Diversity Training for Teachers**

While the recruitment and retention of a more diverse teacher workforce is essential, it is clear that educators already in the field or already in a teacher preparation program would also benefit from increased diversity training. We know that by 2029, students of color are expected to make up 54% of the student body in the United States.. Throughout the nation, professional development programs are underway to train current educators on the importance of understanding the diversity of current students.

### **What Can Current Teachers Do?**

According to researcher Amanda J. Taylor (Taylor, 2017), it is critical that teachers understand their own racial sensemaking and how it impacts their everyday teaching and interactions in the classroom. Taylor examined teacher's racial sensemaking throughout the complexity of their every day practice in the Manchester County School District (Taylor, 2017). Manchester County was chosen because the district's comprehensive race and equity policy requires that teachers stay focused on the impact of race in regards to school policy, teaching, and educational opportunities (Taylor, 2017). Taylor observed four teachers for one academic semester from two of the district's high schools. In total, she conducted 70+ hours of observation

for each teacher. Taylor's observations were both formal and informal, with formal interviews happening with each teacher at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester (Taylor, 2017). As Taylor observed, she looked for contextual factors that could unknowingly shape the way in which each teacher took up and negotiated racial meaning (Taylor, 2017).

From her observations, Taylor concluded that racial sensemaking can easily sideline itself in a teacher's priority list and, in turn, limit the teacher's pedagogical opportunities to address racism (Taylor, 2017). She noted that the teachers drew on their own personal experiences, like traveling abroad, in order to attempt to relate (Taylor, 2017). Instead, however, they conflicted the two constructs of race and culture and derailed the entire productivity of the conversation (Taylor, 2017). Taylor's study proved that understanding how to navigate race in the classroom is complex and requires adequate professional development (Taylor, 2017).

Cousik (Cousik, 2015) set out to answer the question: What can teachers do to enhance their own understanding of how cultural and ethnic diversity affect student performance and improve classroom practice in inclusive settings? The authors developed a four step framework for schools to implement to help educate their workforce. The framework reads as follows: 1) Teachers examine their prior knowledge and attitudes towards diversity, 2) Teachers work to increase their knowledge of other cultures by getting to know their students and families personally, 3) Teachers draw from their increased knowledge about students' home lives and model acceptance to create a healthy and sustainable social environment in the classroom, and 4) Teachers reassess their instructional practices and curriculum to find room for positive academic learning experiences for all children (Cousik, 2015). The authors conclude that this four step process is absolutely necessary to improve teacher knowledge in the area of best practices when teaching a diverse student body (Cousik, 2015). They emphasize the importance of modeling in

the classroom (Cousik, 2015). By modeling acceptance, they have the power to reduce harmful effects of prejudice, regardless of the racial makeup of their classroom.

### **Diversity Training for Pre-Service Teachers**

Diversity training for pre-service teachers has been a priority for some time. Well before modern research, Mungo (Mungo, 1989) identified that the issue of predominantly White teachers working with an increasingly diverse student population would only continue over time. They developed the “Teaching Cross Culturally” program for the Junior High/Middle School Education Program at Illinois State University to address this issue (Mungo, 1989). Their program was based on four main components. Component One focused on generic approaches to cultural diversity in which students engaged in cross cultural experiential activities and approaches (Mungo, 1989). Students also participated in simulations around the “General Cultural Assimilator,” which is usually reserved for students preparing to study abroad (Mungo, 1989). Component Two focused on engaging students in multicultural education and ethnic studies (Mungo, 1989). Component Three revolves around providing students a summer experience (Mungo, 1989). Prior to student teaching, students were required to participate in an eight week summer field experience program with diverse populations (Mungo, 1989). They were required to attend five days a week for eight weeks and could be placed in different settings such as mental health centers, drug and alcohol programs, alternative education, correctional programs, drop out facilities, or recreational programs (Mungo, 1989). Lastly, Component Four required students to student teach in schools with unfamiliar student populations (Mungo, 1989). For this, students were sent to student teach in Hawaii with Hawaiian, Somoan, Filipino, and Japanese students (Mungo, 1989). This unique experience really pushed students out of their comfort zone and proved valuable in providing them a diverse educational experience. The

researchers conclude that this program was effective in developing awareness around cultural diversity through experiences first at the local level, then expanding those concepts to a global scale (Mungo, 1989). Researchers emphasize the importance of extensive use of experiential approaches (Mungo, 1989).

Toms et al. (Toms et al., 2019) created a study to assess the diversity-related professional development needs of pre-service teachers in their university. They created a survey based on a single open ended question: “Please list topics of diversity training that should be offered to students in the college” (Toms et al., 2019). They then provided a text box for students to give a written response. The researchers noted that this method was chosen because it gave students the freedom to say exactly what they felt, as opposed to if they had been given a list of predetermined responses to choose from (Toms et al., 2019). In total, 163 students were surveyed (Toms et al., 2019). From their responses, six distinct themes were identified as perceived needs. Students responded that they desired professional development in the areas of cultural competence and awareness, disabilities and mental illnesses, LGTBQA+ and gender, conversations about diversity, and deisiscrimination regarding race and ethnicity (Toms et al., 2019). Based on these responses, the authors concluded that teacher preparation programs need to assess students’ perceptions, knowledge, and experiences as they relate to diversity (Toms et al., 2019). They also should survey pre-service teachers on these topics to address any gaps in the diversity training the program is currently providing (Toms et al., 2019). Additionally, they note that pre-service programs would benefit from challenging their pre-service teachers’ beliefs to guarantee an equitable education to the diverse students they will go on to teach (Toms et al., 2019).

## CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### Summary

This paper explored the literature and research surrounding the effects of race-congruency to answer two questions: *1) does race-congruency between students and teachers impact a student's academic experience? and 2) what are the current efforts to diversify the teacher workforce?* This topic reflects the current racial issues circulating America and Minnesota in the present, as well as historical issues revolving around race and education. As the student body in the United States continues to diversify, the teacher workforce remains primarily White. This means the majority of students are of color and the majority of teachers are not. Therefore, the majority of students will be educated by a teacher that is a different race than them. The literature reviewed covered a variety of impacts of race-congruency, specifically the impact it has on students' academic performance, students' perceived behaviors, and the efforts being made to diversify the teacher workforce and educate those already in it on racial discrepancies.

The first section of the review focused on Race-Congruency and its Impact on Academic Performance. Three studies analyzed address the proven notion that students produce stronger test scores when they spend one year in a classroom with a race-congruent teacher. Both the study conducted by Fox and the study conducted by Gershenson et al. concluded that race-congruency impacts the way teacher's view the academic expectations of their students, in that teachers are more likely to have higher expectations for their White students than those of color. Additionally, Harber et al.'s study proved that in addition to being held to higher academic standards and expectations, White students are more likely to receive constructive feedback from their White teachers, as opposed to racially-incongruent students who receive simple feedback



due to teachers' positive feedback bias. Lastly, this section ends with how race-congruency impacts special education. Fish's study concluded that Black, Asian, and Latinx students are less likely than their White peers to receive special education needs. While race-congruency impacts the rate at which students are recommended for special education, Gotfried et al.'s study proved that there is no evidence that race-congruency between students and teachers is associated with increased support for students with disabilities.

The next section of the literature review addressed how race-congruency impacts the perceived behavior of students by teachers. Wright concluded that students with race-incongruent teachers did receive higher ratings in terms of externalizing behaviors (Wright, 2017). Thomas S. Dee also discovered that students with a race-incongruent teacher were more likely to be rated disruptive, inattentive, and more likely not to complete their homework (Dee, 2005). Additionally, Downey concluded that Black students are rated more negatively than their White peers when matched with a racially-incongruent teacher and this inconsistency begins as early as kindergarten (Downey, 2016). McGrady showed that there was never a positive gain in terms of teacher ratings when Black and Hispanic students were paired with a White teacher and, in turn, received favorable ratings when matched with a race-congruent teacher (McGrady, 2013). Additionally, studies by Gage (Gage, 2016) and Lindsay (Lindsay, 2017) proved that students are more likely to receive disciplinary action when matched with a race-incongruent teacher.

Lastly, this thesis dissected the current efforts to diversify the teacher recruit pool as well as the current efforts to prioritize diversity training for teachers. A number of tested programs are analyzed: Grow Your Own programs, collegiate programs, programs that recruit from within school staff, programs that recruit from local high schools, programs aimed to recruit diverse

special education educators, and programs that recruit from rural communities. The goal of all of the programs analyzed in these studies was to model ways to recruit and retain diverse teachers. These programs have all concluded that their efforts have been successful, but continued efforts are needed to diversify the teacher workforce. Additionally, researchers have studied what teachers who are already in the field and pre-service teachers soon to enter the field can do to better understand and work within their ever-changing classrooms. Teachers in the field must take an active role in identifying the gaps in their diversity training and working towards understanding the needs of their race-incongruent students. Efforts have also been made to train pre-service teachers of all races on educating students of races different from their own.

### **Professional Application**

As the country continues to become more and more diverse, this information is critical for school districts to understand. Race-congruency between students and teachers matters. Schools across the country, from rural communities to urban ones, are expected to become less White over the next decade. Teachers in the field need to be prepared and educated on how to properly meet those students' needs. School districts need to actively hire and retain nonwhite teachers to meet the needs of their nonwhite students. This research shows that a diverse teacher workforce is necessary to complement the increasingly diverse student body. In Minnesota, racial issues continue to be an ongoing topic of discussion and protest. Circumstances have resulted in teachers having to have conversations with their students that they may not be totally comfortable with. It is clear that the impact of race-congruency can be seen in test scores and in other tangible ways. However, a lot of this impact is seen in the different perceptions students hold of their teachers. As society continues to develop in terms of racial acceptance, educators must be aware of the role their race plays in their students' experiences, whether they are

comfortable with that reality or not. Schools and districts need to create policies emphasizing continuous teacher development around the impact race-congruency has on their students.

Continued work by colleges and universities to recruit and retain future Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American educators is absolutely necessary if the diversity of our teacher workforce is ever to reflect that of our students. Additionally, teachers need to accept an increased self-awareness and the willingness to be trained on how to meet the needs of racially-incongruent students in order to eliminate the discrepancies between White students and nonwhite students.

### **Limitations of the Research and Implications for Future Research**

A limitation of this research is that aspects are based on student perception. Different students have different opinions. However, it is important to go back to the statistics found in the research and understand that these perceptions are held by a wide variety of students. When I first began research on this topic, I originally chose to review literature on both the impact of race-congruency and gender-congruency on student experience. While I experienced no issues finding research regarding gender-congruency between teachers and students, the data was broad and would not have been able to be condensed into this thesis with race-congruency.

Additionally, I had hoped to include a section in this thesis regarding how race-congruency impacts parent/teacher relationships. Unfortunately, there was not ample data on this topic and thus it had to be removed from this paper.

I think additional data surrounding how racial-congruency impacts parent/teacher relationships is necessary. Additionally, I believe it would be beneficial for researchers to assess this issue strategically throughout different regions of the country. The current research explores urban and rural communities, but communities throughout the country operate differently. I'd

like to know how the issue of race-incongruency in the classroom impacts students in urban New York City, compared to rural North Dakota, compared to suburban Florida.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this literature review was to address how race-congruency between students and teachers impacts students' academic achievement and what can be done about the issue. The guiding question was: *does race-congruency between students and teachers impact a student's academic experience?* The literature review shows that race-incongruency between students and teachers impacts multiple facets of a student's experience. With the majority of teachers being White, and the majority of students being nonwhite, most students find themselves racially-incongruent to their teachers. When students are race-incongruent to their teachers they are more likely to experience negative results on the following topics: how well they perform on tests, if they are expected to do well in school, if they are expected to move on to college, the value in the feedback they receive, their expectations in terms of behavior, the likelihood of receiving disciplinary action, and the likelihood of receiving necessary special education services. Because of the negative effects a race-incongruent teacher can have on a student, researchers recommend continued recruitment and retention of diverse teachers. Teacher preparation programs aimed at producing a diverse teacher workforce have been tested throughout the country. Additionally, a need for diversity training among current teachers and pre-service teachers continues. A more diverse teacher workforce will provide schools across the country with a faculty that reflects the diversity of America's students. As we continue to evolve as a nation, it is critical that our schools evolve with us. Providing students and teachers the opportunity to better connect and understand each other will only improve upon our educational systems.

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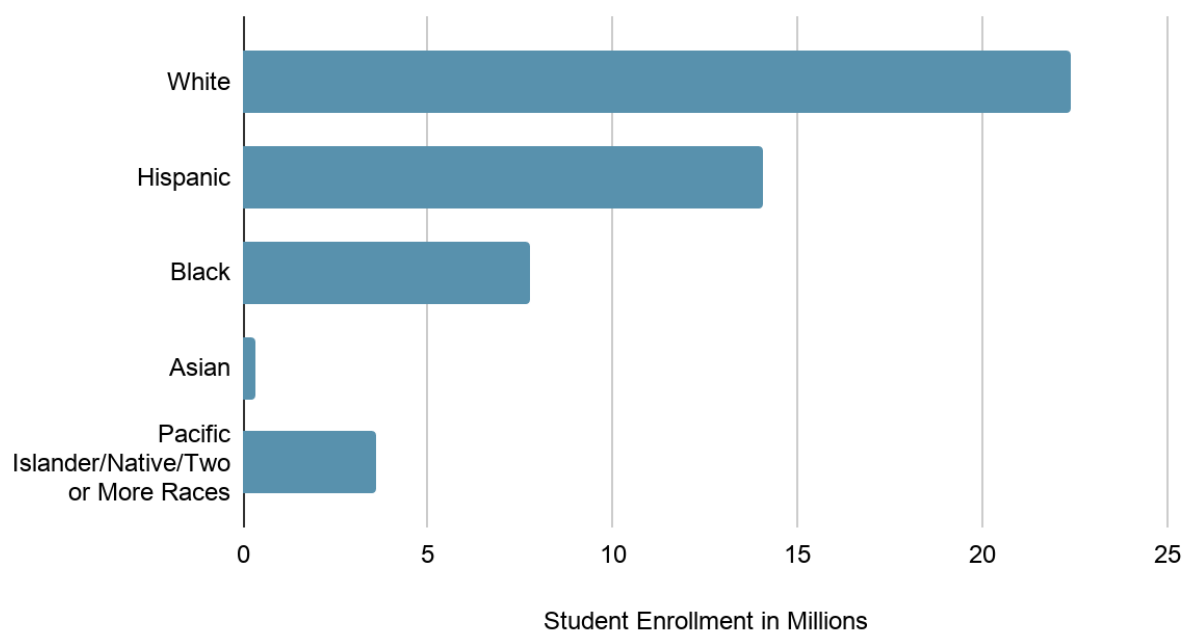
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## Appendices

### Expected Make Up of U.S. Student Body in 2029



### Percentage Distribution of U.S. Teachers by Race/Ethnicity: 2017-2018 School Year

